

## What Jesus Intended: Finding True Faith in the Rubble of Bad Religion

**Todd D. Hunter**

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*What Jesus Intended* imparts a vision of faith based on the person and purpose of Jesus.

An Anglican bishop with four decades of church ministry, Todd D. Hunter has seen lots of “bad religion,” which he defines as church life gone wrong. He also notes that churches are struggling more when scandals go viral; they can no longer cover up their own sins by dehumanizing those who don’t follow the party line. And Hunter notes that many people, especially young people, have walked away from churches altogether, losing their connections with fellow Christians and Jesus in the process. His text voices concerns drawing from a Gallop poll reporting that “only thirty-one percent of Americans still have ‘a great deal or quite a lot’ of confidence in the church.” But Hunter argues that it doesn’t have to be this way: faith focused on Jesus’s intent for his followers, he says, is the way out of the toxic mess of bad religion.

The text is vulnerable in expressing profound grief over the state of the church. Hunter reflects that he too almost left it all behind, but that he survived by focusing on the being, work, and words of Jesus. Without arguing Christian theology or dogma in direct terms, the book muses through Jesus’s understanding of God’s will for humanity. It shares stories from people who are unable to reconcile what churches preach with their actions in the world, and who question the authority of organized religions when it comes to teaching people how to live.

Encouraging Christians to put “communion before conversion” and to “reflect Jesus, and the possibility of such goodness” in their lives, *What Jesus Intended* is an affirming contemporary Christian text with vital solutions for modern churches.

KRISTINE MORRIS (July / August 2023)

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