

Powers, Weakness and the Tabernaciling of God

Marva Dawn.

Softcover. Eerdmans, 2001, 184pp.

This book may well be the most transformative book that I have read in the last two years. In its pages, Dawn paints a picture of the Church, specifically describing how God works in the world through His people. However, this description turns all conventional wisdom on its head. In short, Dawn's thesis is that God lives among us and works through us to the extent that we are living in our human weakness and brokenness. The Church – as Dawn describes – is marked by its submission; it no longer needs to seize power or to control. As followers of Christ, we have been set free through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is precisely through the death and resurrection of Jesus that the powers of the world have been conquered and promised their ultimate demise (cf. Col. 2:11, esp. v. 15). Through Christ's victory, we have been set free to live and serve sacrificially as Jesus did. We have been nailed to the cross with Jesus and it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives in and through us. This Pauline idea is the basis for the "theology of weakness" that Dawn develops in this book. To the extent that we are living as a people gathered in weakness, to that extent will God be pleased to dwell (or to use Dawn's word, to "tabernacle" among us). The full power of God that raises the dead and heals the sick lives in our midst, Dawn says, when we gather as weak and broken people. This may perhaps be the most significant theological book written in the last five years. Our churches cannot afford to ignore its call to live in weakness and brokenness.

Our Price \$13 (Retail Price \$17. You save 23%)

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The Body of Compassion: Ethics, Medicine and the Church

Joel James Shuman

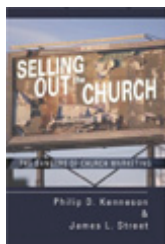
Hardcover. Westview. 2002, 216 pp.

This book is a wonderful treatise on the problems of modern medicine and how the Church is uniquely posed to transcend such problems. The primary problem that Shuman identifies is that medicine typically attempts to apply technology to a patient's disease, without taking into consideration the person in which the disease resides. This tendency is — Shuman argues — simply another incarnation of the modern world's separation of mind and body; i.e., the body is treated medically as if it were an entity isolated from whole person. In the book's introduction, Shuman summarizes how the Church has a different perspective on illness and suffering: "*What finally matters when Christians are sick or dying is not simply that they get well right away or die quickly, painlessly, in control and without being a burden to others, but that they remain faithful to their most basic convictions about what it means to worship a crucified God.*"

Shuman demonstrates a rich knowledge of bioethics and the history and philosophy of medicine. He makes his points poignantly, but his arguments are richly flavored with snippets from the fiction and social commentary of Wendell Berry, stories from his own experience as well as that of the Catholic novelist Flannery O'Connor, and the founder of the L'arche Christian communities, Jean Vanier.

Our Price \$7 (Retail Price \$25. You save over 70%)

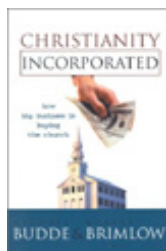
Our Price \$7 (Retail Price \$25. You save over 70%)



***Selling out the Church:
The Dangers of Church Marketing***
Philip Kenneson and James Street
Softcover. Wipf and Stock, 2003, 176pp.

If you are looking for an essential corrective to contemporary church growth mania, you definitely have one in this book. From the gracious Foreword written by the incisive Stanley Hauerwas to the solid ecclesiology found in the Conclusion, this compact work guides the reader through the many versions of today's church, always faithful to the written Word of God and always mindful of the Church's identity as the embodiment of the incarnate Word of God, Jesus. The irenic spirit of both authors lingers throughout, but the destructive consequences of church marketing are confronted head-on. Of course, the work of George Barna gets mentioned with frequency, but Barna's character is never questioned. Target marketing, change, user-friendliness, baby boomers and strategic planning management all make their appearance, and all are fairly scrutinized. However, the clearest critique is saved for the last chapter when Kenneson and Street offer the "embodied question mark" as an alternative to "the responsive church". This book is perfect for beginning a turnaround in peoples' minds as it relates to the direction Evangelicalism has traveled in the past three or four decades.

Our Price \$15 (Retail Price \$21. You save 28%)



***Christianity Incorporated:
How Big Business is Buying the Church***
Michael Budde and Robert Brimlow
Hardcover. Brazos. 2002, 191 pp.

Budde and Brimlow in this book want to expose us to one the "Powers" we have accepted for so long in North America. It is capitalism! Not being alarmist, they take a critical look at the Catholic and Protestant acceptance of capitalism. Examining the increasing corporate take over of funeral homes, the spiritual helpers employed for better production in large corporations, and the impotence of the churches, many questions are raised. At first, it may take you back a little at some of the things they bring to light, but is well worth getting the salt in the wound.

Budde and Brimlow do not let us hanging in the end. They take a look at how the local churches are being expressions of Christ. Suggestions are also offered. It is possible for the church to be a redeeming community, and not so much a chaplain to society and capitalism.

Our Price \$10 (Retail Price \$22.99. You save over 55%)