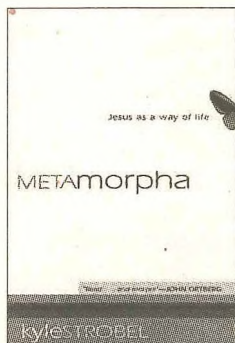


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Chapman, Mark. Review of *Metamorphosis: Jesus as a Way of Life*, by Kyle Strobel. *Christian Week* 22, no. 5 (2008): 10.

Book Reviews

Copy God, not secular society



METAMORPHA: JESUS AS A WAY OF LIFE
BY KYLE STROBEL
GRAND RAPIDS, MI:
BAKER BOOKS, 2007
CDN \$15 272 PAGES
ISBN: 0-8010-6773-1
REVIEWED BY MARK D.
CHAPMAN

Metamorphia is a book about how people change. For author Kyle Strobel,

this process of transformation is not the accumulation of more knowledge but a journey with the living God. Strobel is concerned that we have adopted a worldview based on enlightenment culture rather than the witness of the Spirit, the Word and the community. As a result, we try to serve God through the force of our own will by implementing more and better programs and organizations.

The first section of the book explores why

change is necessary and contrasts a static, data-driven life with a developmental, Christ-driven life. Strobel then discusses the Spirit, the Bible and the community to explore their roles as means for growth in relationship with Christ. He argues for seeing the Bible as history, shepherd and friend rather than as data and describes the Spirit as the agent of change.

He describes community as a means to “greater knowledge, trust, and love of God” and calls for a journey of continuous dependence on God.

The last section develops his argument through discussions of how biblical wisdom, the model of Jesus and the process of becoming a disciple of Christ contribute to this journey of dependence. Strobel challenges dependence on ourselves and our programs and our tendency to become disciples of people rather than disciples of Christ.

In the last chapter Strobel notes that we have made religion into something we do that largely

uses methods copied from secular society. In contrast, he argues that we need to accomplish God’s purposes in God’s ways. It is in knowing God, argues Strobel, that we become like God and only in this way can we change the world.

Clear pointer

Strobel’s passion for setting aside individualistic, enlightenment-based worldviews in favour of entering into God’s story is a clear pointer to the life of transformation so vital to today’s Church. While there is little new here, Strobel is a very readable and accessible author who presents the insights of both classic (Barth, Tozer) and more contemporary authors (Newbigin, Wright) in a relevant and organized way.

Minor quibbles with the book include Strobel’s confusing use of some terminology (e.g., deconstruction) and the limited nature of his illustrations and experiences (which he admits). Strobel

addresses an overemphasis on rationalism over other ways of knowing. However, the book would benefit from a brief discussion of the role of the life of the mind in the journey of dependence on God.

Contemporary churches struggle with the tension between being program oriented and being relationship oriented or between being modern and being emergent. Strobel challenges these approaches as they often focus on something other than the way of Christ. This misdirected focus can lead them to see life through a cultural rather than a biblical lens.

Strobel’s book, and the excellent website which accompanies it, provide resources for seeing life through a Christ-centered lens. It is highly recommended for churches or individuals grappling with how to live the Christ life in contemporary culture.

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