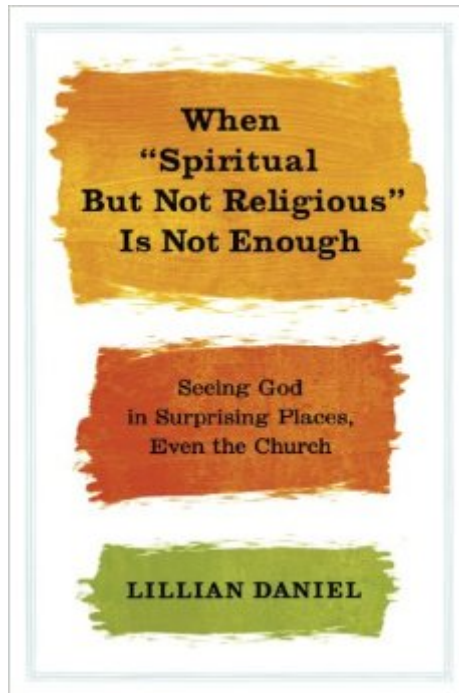


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When "Spiritual But Not Religious" Is Not Enough: Seeing God In Surprising Places, Even The Church



Synopsis

The phrase "I'm spiritual but not religious" has become a cliché. It's easy to find God amid the convenience of self-styled spirituality--but is it possible (and more worthwhile) to search for God through religion? Minister and celebrated author Lillian Daniel gives a new spin on church with stories of what a life of faith can really be: weird, wondrous, and well worth trying. From a rock-and-roller sexton to a BB gun-toting grandma, a church service attended by animals to a group of unlikely theologians at Sing Sing, Daniel shows us a portrait of church that is flawed, fallible--and deeply faithful. With poignant reflections and sly wit, Daniel invites all of us to step out of ourselves, dare to become a community, and encounter a God greater than we could ever invent. Humorous and sincere, this is a book about people finding God in the most unexpected of places: prisons, airports, yoga classes, committee meetings, and, strangest of all, right there in church.

Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Jericho Books; Reprint edition (January 14, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1455523097

ISBN-13: 978-1455523092

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars See all reviews (75 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #61,092 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #32 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Religion #37 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church Growth #88 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Sociology

Customer Reviews

"Spiritual but not religious" (SBNR) is a classification that seems to be appearing in the spiritual autobiographies of more and more people these days. I wouldn't call it new, but at the very least anti-institutional or self-styled spirituality is more present in the public discourse and more widely celebrated than it has been in the past. It should be no surprise. Organized religion, it seems, tends to follow culture. Sociologist Robert Putnam, among others, has been tracking the erosion of institutions and the rise of individualism in the U.S. over the last several decades. The SBNR movement, in my opinion, has been conceived largely of those two trends in our society.

Interestingly, I received my pre-ordered copy of this book during a week in which NPR aired a series titled "Losing Our Religion," which chronicles the decline of organized religion in the U.S.--a trend that is pronounced among people in their 20's and 30's. Being part of that demographic myself, and being the senior minister of a mid-sized mainline protestant church (with a solid contingent of 20 & 30 somethings), this is a matter of great interest to me. Chapter one of "When 'Spiritual But Not Religious' is Not Enough" regaled me by boldly claiming what is often seen as a forbidden sentiment for someone in my position: I find the SBNR narrative (i.e., the "heilsgeschichte" or "salvation story") to be rather boring and self-serving. Daniel captures it perfectly: "Let me guess, you read The New York Times every Sunday, cover to cover, and you get more out of it than the sermon. Let me guess, you exercise and where do you find God? Nature. And the trees, it's always the trees during a long hike, a long run, a walk on the beach. And don't forget the sunset. These people always want to tell you that God is in the sunset."

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