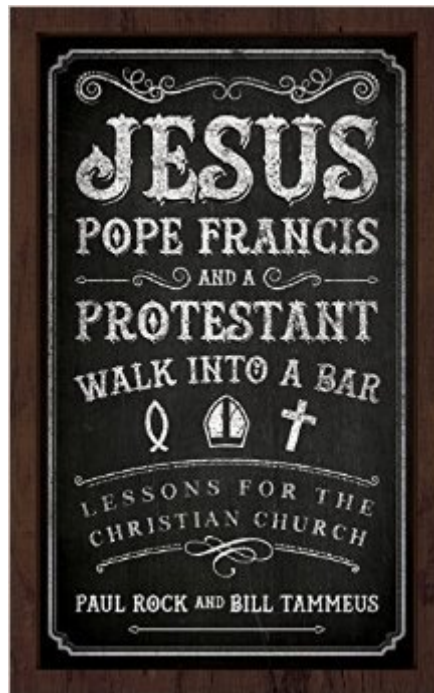


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# Jesus, Pope Francis, And A Protestant Walk Into A Bar: Lessons For The Christian Church



## Synopsis

Pope Francis has taken the world by storm, captivating Catholics, Protestants, and non-Christians alike. Sneaking out of the Vatican at night, washing the feet of inmates, and taking selfies with young fans is certainly unlike any religious leader we've seen in a while, and some of the religious establishment is uneasy about it. The revitalization Francis is bringing to the Catholic Church is not without precedent, however. Jesus had a similar effect in his day, drawing crowds with his humility, kindness, and wisdom—even as he drew the disapproval of established religious leaders. The things that have brought Francis such media attention are the same things that made Jesus so peculiar and attractive in his day. Thoughtful examination of Jesus' example and legacy, as well as an honest look at the similarities and differences between Catholic and Protestant faith, invites reflection on the heart of Christianity and how we relate to our fellow Christians. Readers will discover the power of heartfelt joy, radical love, and passion for justice to shake people out of religious complacency and into dynamic, contagious faith. Jesus, Pope Francis, and a Protestant Walk into a Bar looks at what is universal among Christians, what is unique to Catholics and Protestants, and how all Christians can practice understanding and cooperation across differences. Perfect for individual or group use, discussion questions are also included to encourage further thought and conversation.

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## Customer Reviews

Growing up in a farm/factory small town in Illinois, the divide between Protestant and Catholic was

severe and sometimes harsh. Marriage between the two faiths was difficult if not scandalous, the public and Catholic schools had no contact with each other, unity was not a word one ever used. The attitude was one of "blissful" and "we are superior" ignorance. Our eyes are being opened and attitudes changed because of many factors, including publication of thoughtful books of clarity and hope such as this. Pope Francis is certainly a catalyst, a holy presence reminding us of the radical message of Jesus. Such prophets, comforters, avatars exist in all faiths with their message that we are spiritual not material, that we are indeed One and this is the basis of service to one another. I so appreciated the powerful scripture selections which begin each chapter of this book, from Micah to Galatians. Also, the suggested reading list is excellent. As we reach out to one another either in community, or individually, the questions for discussion will seem helpful, almost easy. The feelings and answers may not be so easy nor filled with unity and love. This is exactly how old wounds and perceptions will be healed and, sadly, must happen before true Re-Unity and Love can occur. My thanks for Dr. Paul Rock and Bill Tammeus for a wonderful book. I hope there will be sequels: Pope Francis giving his place in these conversations to a Rabbi, an Emir, a Swami. Let us open our minds and hearts to all. May I say it will be an spiritual and practical adventure and a genuine revelation!

He's trending right now. #PopeinUSA #popeinphilly #popeindc #pontifex But really, this isn't a big surprise. #popefrancis has captured millions of hearts worldwide. I admit to being a bit smitten myself. And I'm a Protestant. I think what I admire most about this pope is his willingness to question the status quo. He seems (almost) human. Like you. Like me. A believer in Jesus Christ whose faith continues to grow and stretch his beliefs. When I saw this book, I knew I was eager to see what the authors had to offer the ongoing conversation. Paul Rock is the pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in Kansas City. Bill Tammeus is a former Faith section columnist for the Kansas City Star, a blogger and a magazine contributor. This book certainly recognized our differences. There are many elements of the Catholic faith that seem mysterious. But I would imagine, to an outsider, many of our Protestant traditions would seem the same. We could all benefit from focusing more on our similarities. In this book, the authors examine how Pope Francis might help us overcome much of our dissension. Perhaps he can help us see, once and for all, that believers (not any one certain denomination) make up the family of God. Taking us back to Scripture, the authors remind us of how radical Jesus's teachings were in His day. I especially appreciated the portion on how to minister to those who are struggling. It gave a good breakdown of how Jesus handled some of his hardest conversations without causing shame or abandonment. It's a short book meant to be a conversation starter across denominational and

interfaith lines. Maybe together we can all agree on this: Our common mission is about relationship. It's about helping women find their voice. It's about giving people the freedom to determine their own futures. It's about learning from our own mistakes and not continuing to do things that divide and cause resentment.

This short treatise on Pope Francis and ecumenism is a must read for all believers. The authors examine Pope Francis' more open-minded views, his humility, his Christlike love, and his laser focus on living the gospel message. They challenge their readers to examine their own beliefs, and each chapter provides thought provoking questions to promote interfaith dialogue. In a world where thousands of Christian denominations not only exist but thrive, in which people of faith sometimes bunker down in their own denominations where they don't hear opposing views, and in a world where religious wars have been fought for centuries, promoting church unity is not only helpful but absolutely essential. I believe the authors have laid out a wonderful path to bringing people of faith together in common bond. "Jesus, Pope Francis, and a Protestant Walk into a Bar" is meant to be used as a small group study, but individuals can also benefit from reading it. A slow, careful reading and giving myself time to ponder each chapter's message allowed me to get the most out of this book. I pray the book can spark a flame for unity within the church. Thank you Netgalley and John Knox Press for the advance reader copy of the book in exchange for my honest opinion.

Pope Francis has broken new ground, as the first pope from the Southern Hemisphere, but has also brought a new feeling of openness, inclusiveness, and relatebility to the papacy. He has found admirers and popularity within the Roman Catholic Church as well as among secular and Protestant groups. Count Paul Rock, pastor of Kansas City, Missouri's Second Presbyterian Church, among Pope Francis's fans. In his new book *Jesus, Pope Francis, and a Protestant Walk into a Bar: Lessons for the Christian Church*, which springs from a sermon series Rock and two of his fellow pastors preached at Second Presbyterian, Rock sings the praises of Francis. I'm not sure Rock has a negative word for the new pope. . . . The heart of Rock's message is Christian unity, and Francis has certainly reached out to many groups as well. However, Francis gives no indication that he is ready to acknowledge that Protestant churches are part of the The Church. I find it interesting that so many Protestants and unbelievers have embraced Pope Francis. I also find it interesting that Rock and other mainline Christians sound so much more willing to reach out in fellowship to Pope Francis than they are to reach out to their "dumbed down" or "shallow" brethren in more conservative, less stately congregations. The real subject here is Francis and the Catholics. I don't disagree that

Francis seems like a great guy. But I don't see that he's bringing Catholics and Protestants together any more than his two most recent predecessors. Time will tell on that count. In the meantime, we can learn from Francis as he models the character of Christ and the love of God for all of us. I love this assessment: "The beauty of what Francis reminds me is that not only does God die for me but God delights in me." Amen to that. That is good news for all of us. Thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for the complimentary electronic review copy!

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