

Book Review – *Simply Christian*, N.T. Wright, 2006

This is the latest offering from N.T. Wright, the current Bishop of Durham in England. Subtitled 'why Christianity makes sense', it is a brilliant layout of the faith for seekers, doubters and anyone needing a good solid grounding in how the story all fits together. Written in the mould of C.S. Lewis, I recommend it wholeheartedly.

Wright is one of the world's foremost, if not the foremost, New Testament scholar. He has written many books and articles on Jesus, the Gospels and Paul. Perhaps his best known and greatest work has been 'The Resurrection of the Son of God', a book that Dr. Ben Witherington describes as 'magisterial' in its thoroughness of the accounts of the resurrection and of the beliefs of people of the time about the idea of resurrection. Interestingly, Wright has been viewed as being quite conservative in his outlook. However, if being conservative means believing in the physical resurrection of Jesus and believing that the Gospels are an account of what actually happened in history, then I am happy to be on the same side as Wright.

In this book, Wright explains, in a way that is refreshing for our post-modern understanding of life, the deep cries of the human heart for justice, our sense of beauty, our need for relationship and our deep desire for a sense of spirituality. It is these observations about life that Wright says point us to something greater than ourselves. 'Rumours of another world' is another way you might like to put it, to quote the title of one of Philip Yancey's books. As Wright himself says, "I want you to try seeing yourself as part of the picture that we've painted. Or try humming one of the parts of this symphony that we're writing, and see if it doesn't make an awful lot of sense while nonetheless being very challenging".

Throughout the book, Wright describes how the Christian gospel fulfils all of these deep-seated human longings. He does this by unfolding the story of the Bible and telling the story of salvation history as revealed to us over many generations.

As one of the reviews on the back cover of the book states, this offering from Wright is destined to become a classic. C.S. Lewis' 'Mere Christianity', written in 1952, went down as a classic apologetic of faith and the common sense of the Christian gospel and how it all fits together. To say that 'Simply Christian' will be remembered in a similar way in 50 years time is a big call, but one that could well be justified.

However, this is not a simple apologetics book in the mould of a Josh McDowell, in which certain evidences are put forward to show why Christianity is true. This is a book written for the 21st century.

If you are a doubter, a seeker, a new believer, or an old believer who wants to be reminded again of why you believe this stuff, you couldn't do much better than reading 'Simply Christian'. It is easy to read and, like the gospel it proclaims, it makes a whole lot of sense.

by Nils von Kalm
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