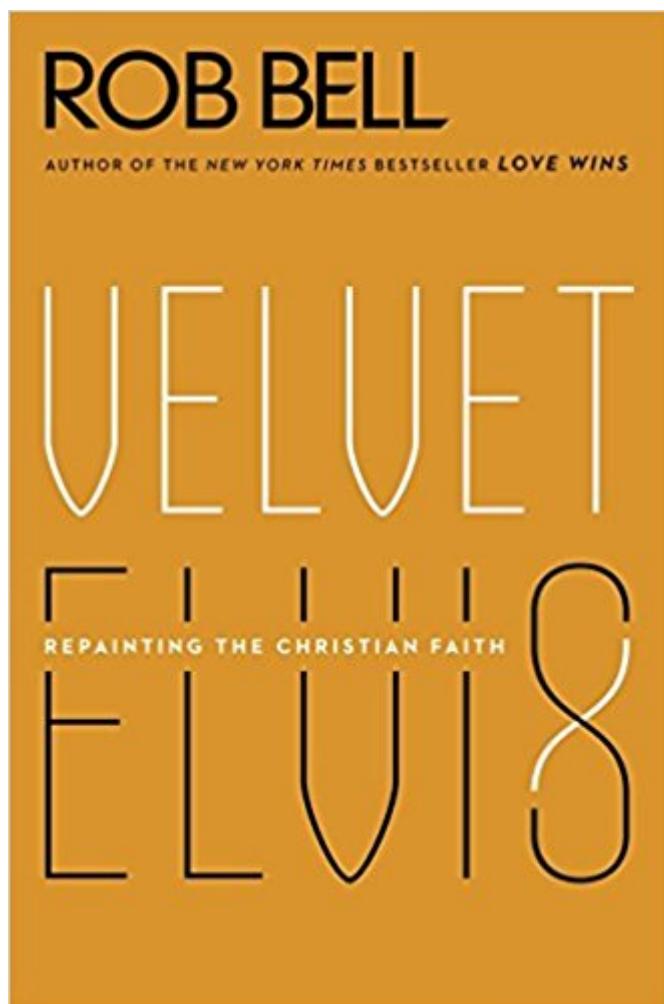


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Velvet Elvis: Repainting The Christian Faith



Synopsis

Velvet Elvis is the first book from Rob Bell, the New York Times bestselling author of Love Wins. Selected as one of 2011's most influential people by Time Magazine, pastor Bell offers original and refreshingly personal perspectives on what Christianity is truly all about in Velvet Elvis. A vibrant voice for a new generation of Christians—the most recognizable Christian leader among young adults—Rob Bell inspires readers to take a fresh look at traditional questions of faith.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bell, pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., offers an innovative and intriguing, if uneven, first book. This introduction to the Christian faith is definitely outside the usual evangelical box. Bell wants to offer "a fresh take on Jesus"—a riff that begins with the assertion that Jesus wanted to "call people to live in tune with reality" and that he "had no use for religion." Bell invites seekers into a Christianity that has room for doubts (his church recently hosted an evening where doubters were invited to ask their hardest, most challenging questions). He mocks literalists whose faith seems to depend on a six-day creation, and one of his favorite people is a woman who turned up repeatedly at his church, only to tell him that she totally disagreed with his teachings. He cites his church as a place of forgiveness, mystery, community and transformation. Bell is well-versed in Jewish teachings and draws from rabbinic wisdom and stories freely. His casual, hip tone can grate at times, and his footnotes, instructing readers to drop everything and read the books

that have influenced him, grow old. Still, this is faithful, creative Christianity, and Gen-Xers especially will find Bell a welcome guide to the Christian faith. (Aug.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Joy, awe, raw honesty, and an appreciation for the mystery of faith permeate the pages.” (Christianity Today) “Bell is at the forefront of a rethinking of Christianity in America.” (Time magazine) “One of the country’s most influential evangelical pastors.” (New York Times) “This is faithful, creative Christianity, and Gen-Xers especially will find Bell a welcome guide to the Christian faith.” (Publishers Weekly) “One of the nation’s rock-star-popular young pastors.” (USA Today) “Rob Bell is one of the hottest names in contemporary evangelical life.” (Boston Globe) “Bell presents a fresh picture of Jesus for those who have trouble with the traditional portrait.” (Kansas City Star) “A sensitive yet radical plea for simple Christian living.” (South Florida Sun-Sentinel)

Easily top 5 books I’ve ever read ever. If you want a fresh take on Christianity in the modern era, Rob Bell is your man. I underlined his eloquent words like crazy and have referenced them multiple times since finishing the book. He addresses questions I’ve had ever since I was an adolescent. And he does so in a way that has never seemed patronizing or preachy. He’s simply presenting his ideas. I’m putting my name in this book and passing it around to friends and family. It will definitely be one that I read multiple times.

A pretty easy and quick read. This book doesn’t shy away from confusing or controversial questions about the Christian faith and historical beliefs in the church. Instead, Bell encourages us to intentionally probe into the Bible with our questions in order to discover new ways of understanding who God is and becoming comfortable with humility in belief. This book brought stories about Jesus into a completely new context for me. As someone who grew up learning the stories of the Gospels, it was refreshing to see a new light cast on these stories and how they can inform the way we live today.

I got this book years ago as a Kindle freebie. I finally got around to reading it. I’ve heard OF Rob Bell, but had not to this point read any of his work. I think he’s been described as one of those

"Emerging Church" pastors. For the most part, I enjoyed this book. It still falls under my hesitation to read books by pastors, because they tend to ramble and not get to the point. Pastor Bell somewhat suffers from this and it got a little tedious at parts. Rob Bell does have a good understanding of doubt and questions and how they fit into the Christian life. I also enjoyed his discussion on understanding the words of Jesus in the context of the culture in which they were originally written and recorded. Many of us 21st century American Evangelical Christians often speak of the Bible in terms of our culture and time context. I appreciate Rob Bell's attempt to discuss them in the proper context. I also appreciated his discussion on sin, particularly one he committed as a mega-church pastor. I always wondered how those guys did it. He discussed how he came to the conclusion that he had to be a superpastor and why it was bad, but didn't really get into what he did to change things. Did he add more staff to the church? Cut down on commitments? I'm not sure. *Velvet Elvis* is a decent discussion on the church and how interpretation of instructions can change through time. It's a short read. I should have been able to finish within 2 hours if not for being on vacation with my wife, stepson, and my own children. Took more like 24.

For some, Rob Bell's thoughts and theology are provocative in the best sense of the word. They may not be groundbreaking, but his writing style and use of language presents an engaging and enjoyable read. I personally love Bell's style and his approach to faith. When *Velvet Elvis* was released it was new, fresh, and refreshing to read. He presented ideas that had been around for a long time, but never out of the evangelical camp. If you've ever grown tired of Christianity or struggled to recognize its relevance for today, give *Velvet Elvis* a read. Bell mentions from the get-go that he is just another voice amongst many voices attempting to speak about a God that is beyond language and comprehension. It is this humility and self-awareness that lends an authentic voice to his writings.

What a refreshing perspective for anyone who has ever wondered about the church or Christianity. I highly recommend this book.

This book gives me a kick in the butt while affirming what I've been trying to tell other people and trying to convince myself for the past few years so I'm writing this review out of my head (literally, most likely) and heart. In most ways *Velvet Elvis* is a book for outsiders. Just as a Velvetized Version of Elvis is an interpretive repainting, repainting the Church into a new look and new vision forms the basic idea behind this book. On page 11 Rob Bell mentions the picture the church of Martin Luther's

day had been painting and presenting. Regarding these 21st century days, I know a lot about the picture the church has painted of itself and maybe even more so, the way outsiders to the church have viewed and interpreted that picture. Page 14: "What I do know is that this pursuit of Jesus is leading us backward as much as forward," evokes the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Maybe more than anything about this book, I love reading the same theological vision and scriptural interpretations as I hold (humility from humble moi) from Rob Bell, someone I'd consider a relative theological conservative. Hospitality is God's first call to the people of God and fundamentally defines them. From the beginning, the uniqueness of the nascent church as it moved outward from Jerusalem was its radical inclusiveness and "see how they love one another." No one lacked anything; everyone had everything in common, a true common-wealth, as the New England Puritans initially believed they'd be able to live. But it was not only about embrace and provision for the already-insiders; the first Christians embraced and provided for everyone, making no distinctions whatsoever. The outsider became incarnate, enfleshed as one of them, becoming an insider. As we've often observed, the old mainline now longer is the central or most prominent expression of Christianity in this country, and being a mainline protestant no longer is a given part of being American. Then there's that other use of mainline, to shoot a drug into your veins. Mainline a hit of Jesus straight into your veins, so the blood of Jesus courses through your entire being? Think about it!

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