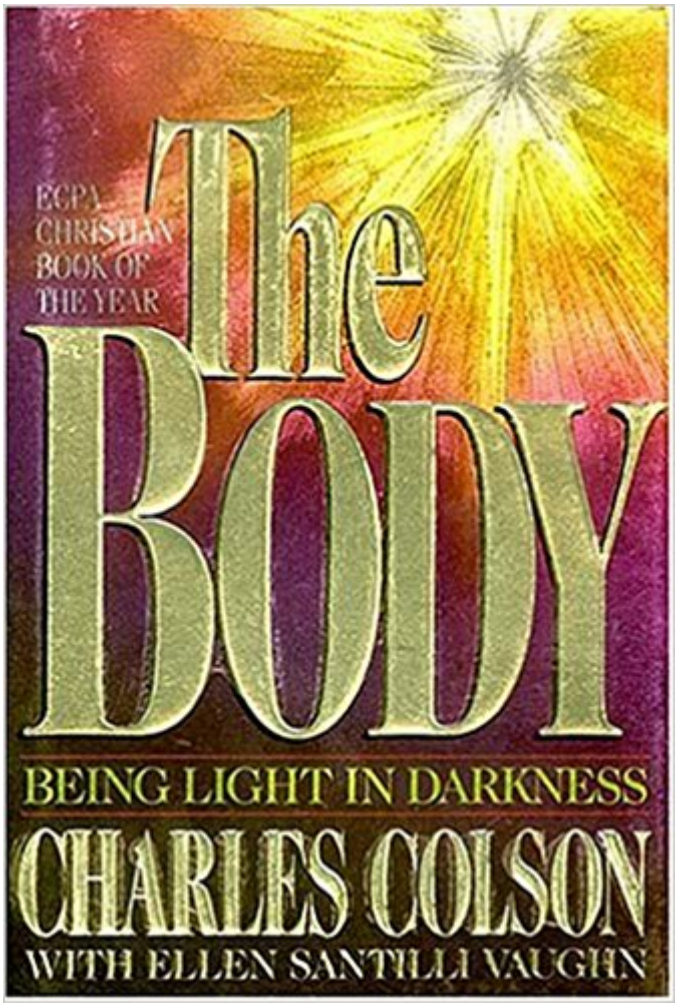
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The Body: Being Light In Darkness



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Synopsis

In this 1993 ECPA Book of the Year, Colson sounds a clarion call for the church to rise above traditional divisions and market-driven programs to be what God has called her to be-His people. In doing so, the Body of Christ can reclaim God's holy vision for His church. Truly a modern-day classic.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Chuck Colson was a popular and widely known author, speaker, and radio commentator. A former presidential aide to Richard Nixon and founder of the international ministry Prison Fellowship, he wrote several books that have shaped Christian thinking on a variety of subjects, including Born Again, Loving God, How Now Shall We Live?, The Good Life, and The Faith. His radio broadcast, BreakPoint, at one point aired to two million listeners. Chuck Colson donated all of his royalties, awards, and speaking fees to Prison Fellowship Ministries.Ã Â Ã Â Ellen Vaughn is an award-winning author and speaker. Her novels include The Strand and Gideon's Torch, which she coauthored with Chuck Colson. She collaborated with Colson on eight other nonfiction works, including Being the Body, The Body, and Kingdoms in Conflict. Her most recent book is Radical Gratitude. Vaughn speaks frequently at Christian conferences and has been featured at writersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ seminars in the United States and Canada. She lives in Virginia with her husband, Lee; daughter, Emily; twins, Walker and Haley; and an enormous dog named after C. S. Lewis.

Charles Colson talk’s to me in his books in a way that conveys the spirit of God’s teachings on everyday issues. Reading this volume helps me see what is happening in my church and what needs to happen to stay in the pattern of loving service that Christ wishes for us.

we love Chuck Colson’s look at life as well as his excellent writing skills. A must for any library about how to live. We also recommend "The Good Life".

"The Body," by Chuck Colson, was relevant when it was first published a quarter century ago. Since then it has become even more relevant. According to Colson the church (the Body of Christ) is far more than a place for Sunday worship and small groups, but more important is a transformative living organism through which Christ reigns and advances his reign on earth. Through numerous examples from daily life, Colson shows how Christ works to advance the Gospel and bring the perishing into his body.

I first read "The Body" by the late Chuck Colson shortly after it first came out in 1992. It was timely then. It’s timely today. For Colson, the church (which is what this book is about) is far more than a place where believers gather on Sunday morning to worship. It’s far more than small groups designed for fellowship and fun. Instead, it’s a living organism and a transformative agent in society. It is the vehicle through which Christ rules over this world (see Ephesians 1:20-23) and extends his reign on this earth.Drawing on a large number of diverse examples, from Christians in Eastern Europe during the reign of communism, to inner-city churches, to a South Carolina prison, Colson illustrates how Christ works to advance the Gospel on this earth and to bring the perishing into the body of Christ. He also contrasts the vision of what the church should be with what it has often become in practice, particularly here in the United States, where there is often little to distinguish it from a social club, and where the focus is typically on the individual and what’s in it for him or her.Despite having been written 22 years ago, what Colson describes is truly relevant for today. And, of course, the message of how the church is to work to advance the Gospel is one that is timeless.

I’ve read most of Chuck Colson’s books, often recommend them to students, and I consider The Body: Being Light in Darkness, with Ellen Santilla Vaughn (Dallas: Word Publishing, c. 1992), one of his best. He’s concerned not with specific Christian churches but with the Church of Jesus Christ, and he demands that the Church be the Church! So he divides this treatise into three sections: 1)

What is the Church?; 2) The Church versus the World; 3) The Church in the World. The Church in America faces an "identity crisis," Colson thinks. Though nearly half the people in this nation "attend" church services, few of them seem deeply transformed in the process. "The hard truth is," he says, "that we have substituted an institutionalized religion for the life-changing dynamic of a living faith" (p. 31). At the heart of the problem lies the understandable desire to "succeed," to amass impressive statistics, to count in a calculating culture. In the midst of such endeavors, the Gospel slips away. For example, the fastest growing church in the world today is found in Japan. It's called the "Perfect Liberty Church," which declares: "we are all children of God who find The Way to eternal peace and welfare by freely exercising our individuality" (p. 39).Now that's the kind of a church lots of us could get into! If only we could believe it's true! You do your thing and I'll do my thing and we'll all move happily heavenward! In our "narcissistic," consumer culture, churches easily swell their crowds by appealing to "felt needs" (the desire to be happy) of individuals. Standing as a symbol for this, Denver's Full Gospel Chapel recently changed its name to the "Happy Church," a strategy which needs no other defense than the fact that it "draws people," the pastor says.Marla Maples, glued to Donald Trump's side (and later pregnant with his child) once chatted with reporters about her religious beliefs. A bit piously, she insisted she believed in the Bible, but added, "you can't always take [it] literally and be happy" (p. 124). So, by all means, be happy! Reacting to such incidents, Colson says: "as alien and archaic as the idea may seem, the task of the church is not to make men and women happy, it is to make them holy" (p. 46). That's a stiff dose of distasteful medicine, I suppose, but it's probably what we need to hear and heed! Certainly we in the "holiness" tradition should be emboldened by Colson's concern (especially since he usually takes a Reformed theological stance).One of the book's heroes, Father Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish monk who founded a Franciscan center which attracted hundreds of followers in the 1930's, then later sacrificed his life to save another man's in Auschwitz, challenged his brothers thusly: "'I insist that you become saints, and great saints! Does that surprise you? But remember, my children, that holiness is not a luxury, but a simple duty. It is Jesus who told us to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. So do not think it is such a difficult thing'" (p. 320). The way to do that is, Kolbe declared, quite simple: totally yield your will to God's will.The church seems to be most healthy, in Colson's judgment, when believers like Kolbe must struggle to survive, where people often pay a heavy price for their faith. He provides up-to-date illustrations of this: in Romania, Timisoara's Hungarian Reformed Church played a central role in challenging and ultimately overthrowing the tyrant Ceausescu; in Czechoslovakia, playwright Vaclav Havel spent years in prison before being elevated to the leader's role in a liberated land; centuries earlier, launching the Reformation, Martin Luther dared stand up

for his convictions.Not all of the heroes are far away in time and space, however. In the United States, Colson praises Joe Gibbs, coach of the Washington Redskins, who in word and deed makes it clear how central Jesus is to all he does. Four days after winning the Super Bowl in 1992, Colson called Gibbs to see if one of the Redskin players could speak for a Prison Fellowship meeting. Gibbs himself volunteered! Five hundred prisoners enthusiastically greeted Gibbs. And he told them this: "'A lot of people in the world would probably look at me and say: "Man, if I could just coach in the Super Bowl, I'd be happy and fulfilled . . . ." But I'm here to tell you, it takes something else in your life besides money, position, football, power, and fame. The vacuum in each of our lives can only be filled through a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Otherwise, I'm telling you, we'll spend the rest of our lives in a meaningless existence. I've seen it in football players' eyes, and I've seen in it men who are on their deathbed. There's nothing else that will fill that vacuum'" (p. 377). Quite a testimony! That's Colson's notion of being salt in our society, making it clear where we stand as Christians. Here, as in other lands, whether or not believers suffer overt persecution, wherever the Church is the Church, people like Gibbs take seriously Jesus' call for self-sacrifice (not self-fulfillment) and live out the Gospel, whatever it costs.This is a fine book! It contains lots of stories, appropriate for use in sermons and lectures. It focuses on a truly significant issue, the health of Christ's Body, the Church. It's rooted in Colson's considerable personal contacts and remembrances of the corridors of power, as well as a familiarity with the basic theological truths central to Christianity

This is an all "5" Star rated book and for good reason.I devour all that the late Charles Colson wrote and I can honestly say this is my favorite one. The theme of "The Body" is identical to Francis of Assisi's famous statement: "Preach the gospel all the time; if necessary use words."Much of the book is directed at unity. Colson was a uniter - "It's amazing how much time people spend judging those who views or church traditions might differ from their own." He proves that this leads fellow Christians away from loving one another as well as slow down and frustrate evangelism.The book is full of wonderful thoughts such as those above. I could not recommend it more.

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