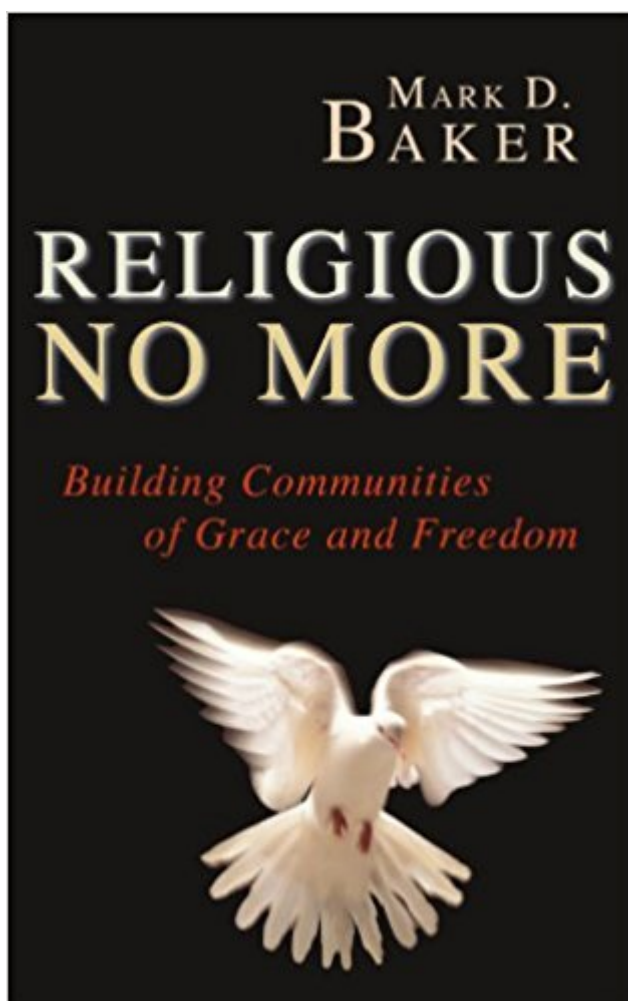


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# Religious No More: Building Communities Of Grace And Freedom



## Synopsis

Too many Christians are "religious" - their faith is more a human endeavor than a response to God's loving initiative. Such religion assumes that our value comes not from God but from what we do. It absorbs principles and postulates from the surrounding society, leading to further misconceptions about God and our relation to our Creator. All this hinders people from experiencing vibrant Christian community, where they could freely love and be loved. Mark Baker suggests that just as car companies test automobiles under severe conditions to uncover weaknesses, North American Christians may detect fallacies in their "gospel" by examining how it plays out under the challenges of poverty, injustice, and entrenched religiosity. Baker's test case is drawn from his ten-year missionary experience in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, at churches born out of North American mission work. Baker observes Honduran church life, draws parallels to the dangers of religion in the North American church and mines from Galatians exciting possibilities of robust Christian grace and freedom. The result is a bracing and refreshing approach to Christian community for laypersons, pastors, missionaries, and mission strategists.

## Book Information

Paperback: 188 pages

Publisher: Wipf & Stock Publishers; First Edition edition (February 28, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1597521051

ISBN-13: 978-1597521055

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #590,356 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #119 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Fundamentalism](#) #155 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Fundamentalism](#) #413 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Ecclesiology](#)

## Customer Reviews

Mark D. Baker (Ph.D. in theology and ethics, Duke University) is associate professor of mission and theology at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California. He was a missionary in Honduras for ten years and has written 'Dios de ira o Dios de amor?' and (with Joel B. Green) 'Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts'.

THIS IS DEFINITELY ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS I HAVE EVER READ IN SEMINARY. I HAVE BEEN RECOMMENDING IT TO MANY FRIENDS. IT IS A GREAT BOOK TO TRY AND UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES OF "RELIGIOUS" CULTURE IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. WHAT THEY CONSIDER AS "POSITIVE PROOF" OF A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST AS OPPOSED TO WHAT OTHERS MAY SEE AS "NEGATIVE" AND A HINDRANCE IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH. IT IS SOMETHING THAT I ALWAYS THOUGHT BUT COULD NOT PUT INTO WORDS. THIS BOOKS HAS THOSE WORDS.

Baker gracefully and practically addresses issues of religion prevalent within American Christianity. He uses his experience as a missionary with his skill as a theologian to help readers rethink Christianity. He does this skillfully using Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Inciting, good reading and timely

This book reminds me on how individualistic many Christians are, and how we tend to add something to the grace of God. Using his ministry experiences in Honduras, Dr. Baker explained the necessity to see grace of God as a sufficient grace, and the importance of building a community of grace pretty well. Though I think Dr. Baker needed to write more about faith, not only as written in the epistle to Galatians, but I think his book deserves a five-star rating.

This is an excellent resource for understanding the connections between mission and the letter to the Galatians. I think this should be any preacher's first book they access when considering preaching a series on Galatians. Can't recommend enough.

This book reminds us that we often make following Jesus more difficult than it needs to be. Shed off the unnecessary, and live life in freedom from humanistic obligations!

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