

Book Notes

Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck. *Why We Love the Church: In Praise of Institutions and Organized Religion*. Chicago: Moody, 2009. 234 pp. \$14.99.

This is a sequel of sorts to *Why We're Not Emergent: By Two Guys Who Should Be* (Chicago: Moody, 2008). This time Pastor Kevin DeYoung and sports-writer Ted Kluck explore why people allegedly like Jesus but not his church.

They write with the same format and style. The format alternates chapters authored by DeYoung and Kluck. DeYoung is more theologically substantive, and Kluck tells stories with humor and wit. Their style is breezy and entertaining (for a theology book!), though some readers may find Kluck a bit too cool and clever for their tastes.

The thesis is reflected in the title: Christians should love the church. The body of the book evenhandedly and soundly refutes four reasons that people don't love the church:

1. Missiological. Many people think that the church no longer works because it is losing people and has lost its mission (chaps. 1–2).
2. Personal. Many outsiders think that the church is filled with judgmental hypocrites and bigots, and many insiders think that the church is filled with controlling leaders, hypocrites, and too many programs (chaps. 3–4).
3. Historical. Some people (like Frank Viola and George Barna in *Pagan Christianity*) argue that the institutional, organized church that we know is unbiblical (chaps. 5–6).



4. Theological. Some people equate “church” with “Christians”—as in more than one Christian together in one place (chaps. 7–8).

The authors uncover the unfounded assumptions behind these objections. For example, “the main reason,” DeYoung argues, “that people don’t like the church is because the church has walls. It defines truth, shows us the way to live, and tells us the news we must believe if we are to be saved” (p. 178).

DeYoung is “not worried for the church” but “for church-leavers” (p. 92). “The church we love is as flawed and messed up as we are, but she’s Christ’s bride nonetheless. And I might as well have a basement without a house or a head without a body as despise the wife my Savior loves” (p. 19).

Andrew David Naselli
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Illinois, USA