



The Body Broken: Answering God's Call to Love One Another

Robert Benson

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A lifelong Christian and seeker, Robert Benson has shared the prayers, rituals, conversations, and practices of many different denominations. His broad range of ecumenical experiences have led to moments of great joy and deep fellowship, but they have also opened his eyes to the misunderstanding and the intolerance that constantly threaten to dismember the whole Body of Christ. *The Body Broken* is an honest and moving meditation on the Gospel imperative to love one another as brothers and sisters, even as we choose to live and express our faith in differing ways.

Benson writes longingly about the things of the faith that bind us together and gracefully about the things that keep us apart. He recounts his own journey from Nazarene to Methodist to Episcopalian and introduces us to the people and the differing expressions of faith he encountered along the way. We meet ordinary folk, including Benson's family and childhood friends, as well as legendary religious thinkers as Henri Nouwen. Some of the stories--particularly the ones about his own brother's suicide--are heartbreakingly painful; others bring to light the joy and grace of Christian love as found in acts of common worship and compassion. Although Benson acknowledges that there are--and always will be--very real differences in the ways that Christians seek to live out their faith, he reminds us of the essential beliefs that we share about God and our common dependency on God's mysterious mercy and grace, even as we look for God as through a glass darkly.

In poetic prose that is reminiscent of the writing of Frederick Buechner and Annie Dillard, Benson illuminates, with wit and wisdom and humility and passion, one of the most difficult challenges that face the Church. *The Body Broken* is a powerful, important examination of the intolerance and divisiveness that have become an all too familiar part of the Church and a gentle, poignant call for a Christian community that embraces a spirit of love and unity even as it honors our differences.

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Lillian Thrasher:

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