

Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear

Far from being an emotion to which some are susceptible and others immune, fear is a primal human instinct. It drives us at the most basic level of our humanness, and as such it is a source of profit waiting to be exploited by those with an interest in shaping us. Scot Bader Saye's book, *Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear*, unpacks the implications of this insight for Christian life in the modern world, in a lively, lucid and fascinating manner.

In business, politics and media, our fears are exploited, fed and used. One need only think of the way that incidents are reported in our media: 'here's what happened to so-and-so; how can we stop it happening to you!' In our politics, the author shows how the Iraq war was justified. Although no link was ever established between Iraq and the events of 11th September 2001, the American political machine frequently crammed elements of each into the same single alarming sentence, forcing fear of Saddam into the popular mind at a sub-conscious level. And Hey Presto – support for the so-called war on Terror. And Business too has much to profit from this: the language of 'security' has now become commonplace, and of course the more you have, the more protective you are likely to become. The bigger our house, the more sophisticated our security system. The nicer our car, the more concerned we become about scraping it. Living the American dream does not free us from fear, but entangles us ever more deeply in it, because the more we have, the more afraid we are of losing what we have.

And yet this seems to be at odds with basic Christian convictions. Although fear is part of being human, the way that we the author encourages us to deal with fear is at the communal level, living out the Christian virtues of Hospitality, Peacefulness and Generosity. By so doing, we embody a 'counter-narrative' to the story that would otherwise define us and our age.

Scot Bader-Saye seems may well have highlighted a genuine 'meta-narrative' for our post-modern age, and offered a lively and exciting alterna(rra)tive: Worship. The worshipping community is the place we encounter the final legitimate object of fear, the Holy God. But worship is where this very God lovingly transforms, liberates and encourages. This book offers a way of being, of worshipping, and of en-couraging as part of such a community. I always hesitate to describe any book as a 'must read' – but if I did, this would be very near the top of my list.

Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear by Scott Bader-Saye is recently published by Brazos Press and can be bought from Amazon at a cost of less than £5.