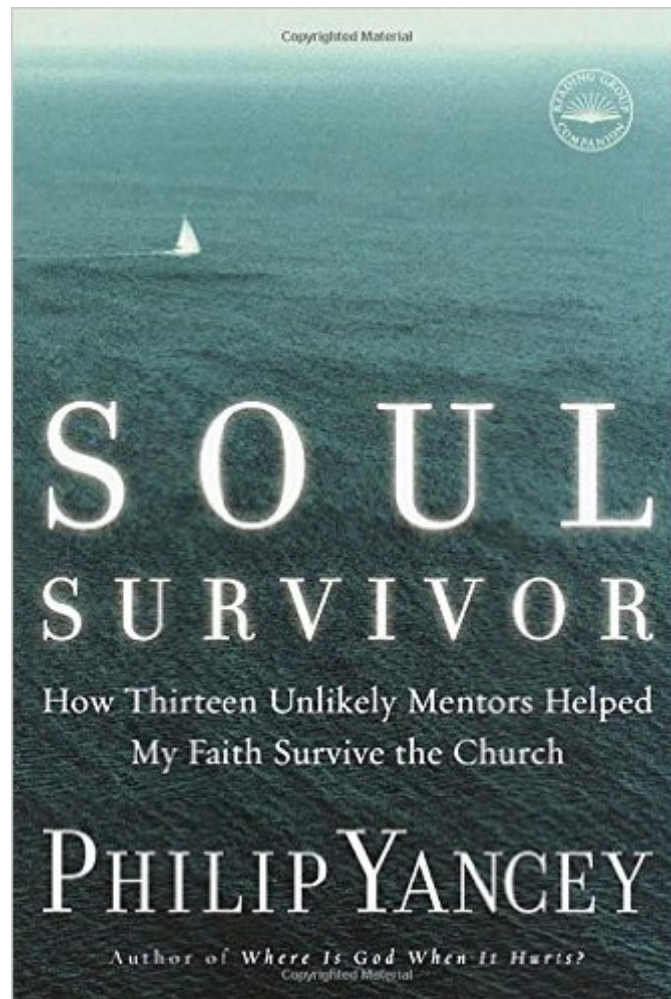


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Soul Survivor: How Thirteen Unlikely Mentors Helped My Faith Survive The Church



Synopsis

Philip Yancey, one of America's leading Christian thinkers and author of more than a dozen books with sales of more than five million copies, returns for his most profound and soul-searching books yet. *Soul Survivor* is the story of his own struggle to reclaim his belief, interwoven with inspiring portraits of notable people from all walks of life who have succeeded in the pursuit of an authentic faith. "I became a writer, I now believe, to sort out and reclaim words used and misused by the Christians of my youth," says Philip Yancey, whose explorations of Christian faith have made him a guide for millions of readers. In *Soul Survivor*, he charts his spiritual pilgrimage through the influence of key individuals: "These are the people who ushered me into the Kingdom. In many ways, they are why I remain a Christian today, and I want to introduce them to other spiritual seekers." Yancey interweaves his own journey with fascinating stories of those who modeled for him a life-enhancing rather than a life-constricting faith: Dr. Paul Brand, G. K. Chesterton, Annie Dillard, Frederick Buechner, C. Everett Koop, Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Henri Nouwen, John Donne, Mahatma Gandhi, Shusaku Endo, Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert COles. Readers will find these inspiring portraits both nurture and challenge for their own understanding of authentic faith. Yancey fans will devour these new glimpses of how he has held onto faith while acknowledging with utter honesty its inherent difficulties. New Yancey readers will be drawn in by the theme of faith versus religion and drawn along a compelling narrative of signposts on a spiritual journey. *Soul Survivor* offers illuminating and critically important insights into true Christianity, which will enrich the lives of veteran believers and cautious seekers alike. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

SOUL SURVIVOR is a big departure from Philip Yancey's usual style of book. It reads more like a pseudo-biography -- both for him and for the thirteen people who have most influenced him in his walk of faith. Much of the territory here will be familiar to long-time readers of Yancey's, but it works because of the different way it is presented. Each chapter is devoted to an individual. Always readable, SOUL SURVIVOR reaches beyond that into more powerful air when the subject becomes more weighty (read: controversial). Chapters on Martin Luther King Jr., Paul Brandt, Mahatma Gandhi, and C. Everett Koop, in particular, I found the most enjoyable and enlightening. Yancey tells their tales in an honest manner, recognizing their shortcomings, and in doing so makes their examples all the more powerful. As I read his (and their) story, I had to marvel at the grace of God, because Yancey has come a long way. No other person, outside of my parents, has had a greater influence on my Christian walk than Philip Yancey. Realizing that this same man was once a blatant racist (among other flaws which he is open about) amazes me. It also gives me hope, as it should his other readers, for if God can take a man and change him this much (using the influence of various authors and historical figures) it should help us to see the possibilities of what God can do in our own lives, as well as recognize the effect that our lives can have upon others. SOUL SURVIVOR is not my favorite Philip Yancey book, nor is it his best (that title still belongs to WHAT'S SO AMAZING ABOUT GRACE). But it is a fantastic, personal journey that I am so pleased to have been allowed to be a part of. If you are disillusioned by the institution of the church here is a book that will help you to see past those flaws to recognize how God really works through individual men and women. And that is what the church is really all about. FOUR 1/2 STARS.

I really enjoyed this book. Yancey writes in his usual conversational tone, with emotion and feeling. However, the book is nothing like what I expected. Frankly, I read it only on his reputation, and based on some of his excellent previous work. The title of the book is very misleading. In reality it is a series of essays on people who had an impact on his life including Martin Luther King, G.K. Chesterton, Paul Brand, Robert Coles, Leo Tolstoy & Feodor Dostoevsky, Gandhi, Everett Koop, John Donne, Annie Dillard, Frederick Buechner, Shusaku Endo and Henri Nouwen. After an initial discussion of his own Church experience in the South, and some honest, direct, and often disturbing revelations about racism and prejudice, he launches into the essays. Each section is written as a critique of the person's Faith and impact of Yancey and others. I found the sections on

Paul Brand, Robert Coles and G.K. Chesterton, especially fascinating, as I had very little knowledge of their work prior to reading the book. I would recommend this book, simply ignore the title and enjoy some wonderful insights into the Faith of some very interesting people. While Yancey spends too little time on the effects of the Church to warrant the title of the book, the insights are worth the effort.

Yancey, once again does tremendous work in this book. He is open about his own failings resulting from growing up in a racist southern church. He sites the influence of the church on his early views of Christianity and how much he has grown over the years. He continually brings the Christian life into perspective as he goes through other lives of people who have had an impact on his own journey as a Christian. I would highly recommend this book to folks who 1) want a great book to read 2) need to hear an open and honest perspective on the church in the life of a Christian and 3) for those who need to see that "going to church doesn't make you a Christian anymore than going to Mac Donald's makes you a hamburger," as Keith Green used to say. Yancey does an excellent job of bringing the lives of Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Paul Brand, Dr. Robert Coles, Gandhi, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky into focus such that one can get a good view of what it means to be a Christian or live a Christian life based on the principles Jesus espoused while here on earth. It's an excellent book for a discussion class and has lots of tough questions along with examples of lives that went beyond the Pollyanna or cliché phrases you hear from many so called Christians. Read it, absorb it, and let its affect cover your whole being. I think you'll grow from it, I know I did.

I love the honesty of Yancey's work. Soul Survivor is possibly his most personal, most effective book yet. Phil Yancey tries to approach life without blinders. Soul Survivor is a wonderful retelling of his journey so far. Yancey does not pull any punches in recounting his past. From being raised in a narrow, racist, legalistic church, to the influences that changed him into the man he now is...it is all told here in Yancey's interesting, engaging manner. I would give my left arm for more honesty in our nonfiction writers. Yancey achieves meaningfulness by confessing his past and present shortcomings in this book. It is a shame that we don't see such openness in more authors. Honesty is probably my favorite thing about Yancey as an writer. I really enjoy Yancey's descriptions of those who have influenced his life. It was great to read about how Yancey's old writing partner Dr. Brand affected his life. I think my favorite part of the book is his profile of Annie Dillard. I have recently started reading Dillard myself, and I am blown away by her. I recommend this book. I encourage you to get a copy today.

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