

*The Fire of the Word:
Meeting God on
Holy Ground*

Available

January 2012

\$15, 192 pages, paper
978-0-8308-3563-8

Former Buddhist Counsels on the Life-Changing Power of Scripture

A devout Buddhist is given a book of koans to aid his times of meditation. Day after day he reads these paradoxical riddles, hoping to glean wisdom from their otherworldly logic. And then, his spiritual master appears . . .

In *The Fire of the Word*, Renovaré president Chris Webb recounts the remarkable transformation that occurred in his early twenties when he pondered the parables of Jesus. As he sought spiritual enlightenment through Zen meditation and reading Buddhist texts, a friend gave him a collection of the sayings of Jesus to assist him in his meditation.

“So, armed with my new book, I began to meditate on the Gospels. I immersed myself in the sayings of Christ. . . . And, in the end, the inevitable happened. . . . I heard the call of Christ through those words of the Gospels, and my world was turned upside down,” Webb explains.

Yet Webb recognizes that many people today read the Bible and fail to have any sort of encounter with Christ or experience any kind of transformation. “It doesn’t have to be this way. It is possible for us to experience the unpredictable sharp edge of Scripture. . . . It has the inbuilt capacity to thrust us into the presence of God. We just need to rediscover how to read it,” Webb writes.

The Fire of the Word is a series of lessons on reading Scripture well. Underscoring the importance of God’s unshakable love for us as a key hermeneutic, Webb offers a helpful distinction between reading as a theorist seeking mastery versus reading as a lover expecting intimacy. Webb also explores the nature of the reader—as a person who perceives, thinks, feels and wills—to further elucidate the process of reading Scripture.

Webb offers several practical ways to read Scripture as a means to encounter God, including practices like the Ignatian exercises and *lectio divina*. He cites classical Christian teaching on holiness and virtue by

LOOK

BOOK DETAILS



Chris Webb is an Anglican priest, speaker, teacher, writer and new monastic. Since 2007 he has served as president of Renovaré USA, a Christian ministry dedicated to helping people experience a richer life with God through spiritual formation.

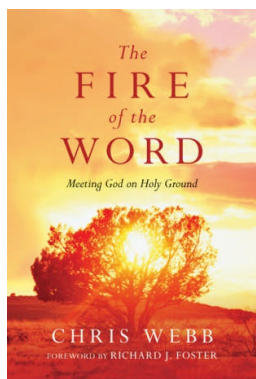
Webb has ministered in a wide variety of churches, including Welsh parishes in urban and rural settings, and a church for the homeless. He has taught in a number of seminaries and colleges and frequently speaks at retreats and conferences.

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Thomas Aquinas and draws from the well of ancient Christian tradition on contemplation. He also features the little-known work of medieval scholar John Duns Scotus.

“Chris’s analysis of Duns Scotus’s concept of ‘the absolute primacy of Christ’ with its multilayered implications for the work of spiritual formation is simply masterful!” notes Richard Foster in the foreword.

Ultimately Webb concludes that all good reading of Scripture leads to contemplation. In a statement that might sound strange to many evangelical ears, Webb declares: “If we allow the ‘living out’ of Scripture to become the final stop in our reading of the Bible, we have largely missed the point; the real goal is ‘living into’ Scripture, dwelling patiently within these pages until we are drawn through them into the life of God himself.”



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Seeking God in Scripture

Throughout history, reading the Bible has fundamentally altered the life trajectories of its readers. St. Francis abandoned his wealth and became a mendicant monk, Martin Luther King Jr. gave his life to the work of reconciliation, and Mother Teresa offered herself to the poorest of the poor in Calcutta.

Were they reading the same Bible we are? If so, why aren't more of us being similarly transformed by Scripture today? Join Chris Webb as he explores how we can truly encounter God in Scripture and be transformed by his presence.

Why is knowing that God loves us essential for truly encountering God as we read Scripture?

What does it mean that the Bible is inspired?

How might we read the Bible less as a theorist and more as a lover?

What are some approaches to reading Scripture that can deepen our experience of God?

In a chaotic world where distractions abound, how can we develop the skill of attentiveness to God?

How can we develop our ability to read the Bible as a book that primarily points us to Christ?

What is the relationship between holiness and love?

What is the role of contemplation in the Christian life?

How can reading Scripture truly lead to the transformation of our lives?