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Made on Earth: how the gospel writers created the Christ

Lorraine Parkinson

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Made on Earth: how the gospel writers created the Christ Lorraine Parkinson
Why have millions of Christians across two millennia been convinced that Jesus of Nazareth is the divinely anointed Christ? The answer is that ‘evidence’ for it is reinforced with every Sunday reading of the gospels. Each canonical gospel claims to tell the story of Jesus the Messiah, or Christ. Even if startling differences between the gospels are acknowledged, this has not destroyed belief that they are divinely inspired. In this book Lorraine Parkinson sets out compelling reasons why the gospels may be found to have been ‘made on earth’. She builds a strong argument that each gospel was written to make a distinct case for Jesus as the Christ. She presents detailed evidence that the Christ of the gospels is the creation of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, plus later editors. The sub-text of this book contends that by including teachings of Jesus alongside claims for him as Christ, gospel writers bequeathed to Christianity two contradictory gospels – the gospel of Jesus and the gospel about Jesus. There is both detailed and courageous biblical scholarship in Made on Earth. Parkinson is not afraid to challenge the tradition in open and honest ways. What any scholar worth their salt should always do, but especially those in theological colleges who should be free to ‘teach’ rather than to ‘store up’! It is no longer good enough to ‘fiddle’ the orthodoxy tune from the pulpit while the minds of thinking people move on, vacating nearly every pew in the country. For that ‘poke’ Parkinson deserves our heartfelt thanks and gratitude. I know I will be referring regularly to Made on Earth. Rev Rex A E Hunt, Founding Director, The Centre for Progressive Religious Thought, Canberra. Immediate Past Chair, Common Dreams Conference of Religious Progressives, Australia/New Zealand At last! A book that helps its readers to see and understand how the Way of Jesus with its emphasis on this world, was wrong-footed into fixation on “the Christ” and the next world. There is no bigger challenge to Christianity today than to rid itself of this fixation and from creedal adherence to the worldview that shaped it. In this book Lorraine Parkinson provides us with the perfect follow-up to her previous work, The World According to Jesus: his blueprint for the best possible world. The Gospel writers clearly decided another blueprint was more important than what Jesus taught and was ready to die for. Michael Morwood, resident theologian, Kirkridge Retreat Center, Bangor, Pennsylvania, USA. Author of In Memory of Jesus Lorraine Parkinson is an ordained minister, teacher and writer, whose doctoral research was conducted at the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem. She leads seminars on progressive biblical thinking around Australia and in New Zealand. Her emphasis in seminars and in writing is on Jesus and his teaching about the kingdom of God on earth: the best possible world. Lorraine and her husband Dr John Bodycomb live in Melbourne, Australia.

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