

PRESS RELEASE

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Why All the Passion About Christ? Leading psychiatrist and author of new book on the Bible from Pitchstone Publishing says questions about Jesus tell us as much about the present as they do about the past

LOS ANGELES, Calif. - Feb. 23, 2004 /Send2Press Newswire/ -- With 2,000 religious denominations and nearly 500,000 churches in the United States, the Bible is both doctrinally and behaviorally confusing. Is homosexuality an abomination? Is abortion a sin? Do belief and feminism mix? These are just some of the questions that have dominated our national conversation about religion in recent years. Now we're asking, "Who killed Jesus?" While many debate the answers, Armando Favazza, author of the new book "PsychoBible: Behavior, Religion & the Holy Book" (ISBN 0972887512), is more interested in the questions themselves.

"Every age refashions the Bible and Jesus, the greatest of all Western cultural heroes, to suit its needs," says Favazza, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Missouri at Columbia. "In turn, the manner in which they are refashioned, and the questions asked, tell us a great deal about the times in which we live."

Favazza sees a direct correlation between today's rise in evangelical movements and search for an "authentic" Jesus, and fears of terrorism and war. "But these are the obvious factors," he says. "There are many other societal forces which contribute to this renewed attention to religion--amber alert child abductions, the allure of television, even the impersonality of computers." Collectively, he maintains, these influences contribute to individual impotence, passivity, and solitude.

Enthusiastic religions, he says, serve as an antidote to this trend by making people feel special, but often at the expense of traditional piety. "In turn, there is a tendency for the 'true' believers, certain of their own righteousness, to force their own views on others, causing social and cultural rifts and pushing their agendas onto the public stage."

The intense interest in Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," maintains Favazza, is further evidence of this reaction against a world of virtual reality and advertising puffery. "People desire an 'authentic' Jesus without preservatives or artificial coloring," says Favazza. "The film offers this. On the cross he was impotent, passive, alone. This strikes a responsive chord among many Christians, because they identify strongly with him."

PsychoBible (ISBN 0972887512) is available wherever books are sold.

For additional information visit: <http://www.pitchstonepublishing.com>

MEDIA CONTACT:
John Smith
Of Pitchstone Publishing
+1-310-666-6853
books@pitchstonepublishing.com

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