



The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of Jesus' Teachings and How They Have Been Corrupted

By Oberry Hendricks

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Who was Jesus? And how was this first-century political revolutionary, whose teachings are meant to lead the way to freedom, turned into a meek and mild servant of the status quo? How is it possible to profess a belief in Jesus, yet ignore the suffering of the poor and the needy? Just how truly faithful to the vision of Jesus are the many politicians who claim to be Christian? These are the kinds of questions Oberry Hendricks, a biblical scholar, activist, and minister, asks in this provocative new book. In this day and age of heated political debate, Hendricks's *The Politics of Jesus* stands out as much for its brilliant re-creation of the life and mind of Jesus of Nazareth as for its scathing critique of modern politicians "of faith."

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Thundering like a biblical prophet against social and economic injustice, racism and political deceit ("Jesus did not establish a bureaucratic institution, weekly social gatherings, or houses of religious entertainment"), Hendricks, professor of biblical interpretation at New York Theological Seminary, proclaims Jesus as a political revolutionary who overturned the unjust social policies of his day. Rather unoriginally, Hendricks suggests that Jesus employed seven political strategies (e.g., "treat people's needs as holy"; "give a voice to the voiceless"; "expose the workings of oppression") in his challenge to the status quo. With cunning insight, however, Hendricks fervently examines the politics of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush—two U.S. presidents who have professed to be following the politics of Jesus—and argues that these leaders fall woefully short of living out Jesus' message of justice, righteousness and steadfast love. Hendricks also indicts church leaders for their complicity with these political figures, condoning unjust wars and corrupt economic practices and not calling judgment on them in Jesus' prophetic voice. Overall, Hendricks echoes the call to Christian social justice that John Howard Yoder proclaimed over 30 years ago in his own book of the same title. (Aug. 29)

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From [Booklist](#)

Evangelical activists claiming Jesus for the Republican Party have finally met a zealous challenger. Combining the skills of a theologian with those of a political analyst, Hendricks sees little evidence that today's Republican leaders are upholding the Gospel ideals Jesus once taught. Indeed, while Hendricks adduces from the New Testament numerous indications that Jesus championed the oppressed and challenged the powerful, he interprets recent political events as proof that President Bush and his Republican allies have done just the opposite. In the president's frequent professions of Christian faith, Hendricks hears only the echoes of the corrupt triumphalism that the Roman emperor Constantine long ago substituted for the true gospel message. Even many Bush voters may concede the justice of this skeptical critique of right-wing Republican claims clothed in religious rhetoric. But many will balk when Hendricks himself drapes the mantle of Christian sanctity around the policies of FDR and LBJ. Despite his excesses, however, Hendricks provides a corrective to the religious partisanship of the Right. *Bryce Christensen*

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Review

"*The Politics of Jesus* joins John Danforth's *Faith and Politics* and Jim Wallis's *God's Politics* as essential reading for Americans trying to move beyond the corrosive standoff between the religious right and the secular left." —*Washington Post*

"In *The Politics of Jesus*, Obery Hendricks articulates a critical prophetic message that interrogates our nation's politics according to the values of Jesus. With stunning clarity he offers *powerful* new insights. This book is a must-read for everyone who seeks to understand and live out the revolutionary implications of following Christ." —Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourners* and author of *God's Politics*

"This book is a grand prophetic work—courageous in its message, meticulous in its scholarship, and relevant in its challenge to our sleepwalking times. Hendricks recasts the prevailing view of the meek and mild Jesus in a powerful and persuasive way." —Cornel West, University Professor of Religion, Princeton University

“*The Politics of Jesus* is an instant classic—a book of stunning erudition, remarkable eloquence, and political courage. But more than that, Hendricks gives us a pioneering account of the revolutionary Jesus that has rarely been as systematically expounded, or as theologically sophisticated, as this monumental work provides. *The Politics of Jesus* immediately thrusts Obery Hendricks, Jr., to the front ranks of American religious thinkers.” —Michael Eric Dyson, author of *Pride: The Seven Deadly Sins*

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