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Fear of the Other: No Fear in Love

William H. Willimon

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In this no non-sense book, reliable spiritual guide, Will Willimon, invites readers to consider the gospel command to love (and not merely tolerate) those considered to be “Other” or outside mainstream Christian culture. Rooted in the faith of Israel and the Christian story and vision, Willimon brings a Wesleyan perspective to bear on what may be the hardest thing for people of faith to do: keeping and loving the "Other" as they are - without any need for them to become like us.

Emphasizing biblical teaching to receive Others for who they are and their differences as gifts and mysteries bearing the grace of God, Willimon also offers a strong critique of the privileged who all too often rush to speak of reconciliation and evade the injustice of huge inequalities faced by foreigners and strangers - as well as the antagonism the stranger experiences. He identifies concrete, everyday ways persons are formed in welcoming others without annihilating their differences.

Rooted in the New Testament understanding of Gentile outsiders grafted into the covenant community, Willimon invites readers to an on-the-ground faith that remembers the God who comes to us again and again through so-called outsiders, strangers, immigrants, and those without status. Beyond welcome, Christians must become “other” to the world, shaking off the dominant culture’s identity and privilege through practices of listening, humility, and understanding.

“I love Will Willimon, and I love this book. Will writes with prophetic sarcasm, a touch of humor, plenty of self-effacement, and a pastor’s heart. And his words will make you laugh, cringe, cry, confess, and repent. This is a very timely book. I urge you, prospective reader, as you read this blurb on the back cover: buy and read it! You’ll be grateful you did.” —Adam Hamilton, senior pastor, The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, KS; author of Half Truths

“This gutsy, biblically rich, theologically searing book by Willimon gigs everybody’s sacred cow. Not only is the one whom Christ loves Other but God is Other. The ground beneath us shakes the walls that divide us. If you are holed-up happy with people who look like you, don’t read this thing. It will screw up your world.” —Tex Sample, Robert B. and Kathleen Rogers Professor Emeritus of Church and Society, Saint Paul School of Theology, Leawood, KS

“Timely and prophetic, Willimon’s call to love the Other will quickly take hold of your soul, changing your preaching and your life. This book is not just a reminder of our Christian calling to welcome the Other but a call to conversion, a new way of seeing the neighbor and a new way of being in the world God desperately

loves.” —Karoline M. Lewis, Marbury E. Anderson Chair of Biblical Preaching, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

“Bishop Willimon’s new book should come with a warning: Do not read unless you are ready to be changed and want to change the world!” —O. Wesley Allen Jr., Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX

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