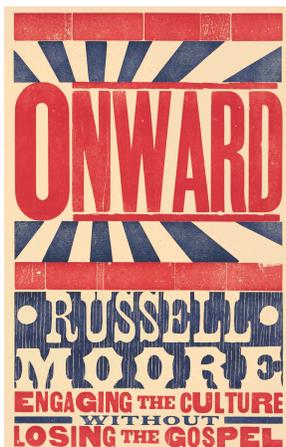


***Onward* Author Russell Moore: Christians Must Be 'Less Mayberry, More Book of Acts'**

Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission president *sees bright future for Christianity in spite of social trends away from church, traditional values*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (Aug. 1, 2015) —With fewer Americans attending Sunday morning worship and more embracing “progressive” positions on sexual orientation and other social issues, many Christians are wondering where Christianity can go from here.



In his new book, *Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel*, released today by B&H Publishing Group, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission President Russell Moore lays out a vision for American Christianity where believers are less like the chaplains of some idyllic and imaginary Mayberry, and more like the apostles in the Bible’s Book of Acts.

“If America ever really was a ‘Christian nation,’ it certainly can’t be considered one today,” says Moore. “Increasingly, one need not be religiously identified at all, much less a regular churchgoer, to be considered ‘normal’ in American culture. Many within the church are panicking over these trends. Some see them as evidence that churches must change or die; others see it as the death knell for Christianity altogether.

“But I think the future of the church is incandescently bright. Strangely enough, the increasing marginalization of Christianity offers an opportunity for the church to reclaim a Gospel vision that has been too often obscured, even within the sectors of the church we think of as conservative. The collapse of the Bible Belt may be bad news for America. But it can be good news for the church.”

Indeed, numerous studies show Americans are increasingly disinterested in religion. In 2014, a Barna Group [study](#) found that 43 percent of Americans are “churchless” — meaning they were once active in church but are no longer, or have never attended a church at all — up from just 30 percent churchless in the 1990s. In another recent [study](#), only 38 percent of Americans said faith is a major part of their identity.

In *Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel*, Moore, a popular Christian author, blogger and speaker who heads the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation’s largest Protestant denomination, writes that the shifting landscape gives Christians an opportunity to refocus. What’s needed now, he argues, is neither a doubling-down on the status quo nor a pullback into isolation. Instead, Christians need to speak to social and political issues with a bigger vision in mind; namely, that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“As Christianity seems increasingly strange, and even subversive, to our culture, we have the opportunity to reclaim the freakishness of the Gospel, which is what gives it its power in the first place,” Moore says. “We will hardly be ‘normal,’ but we should never have tried to be. Jesus promised those who overcome a crown of life. But he never said anything about a ‘God and country’ badge.

“We seek the kingdom of God, before everything else. We connect that kingdom agenda to the culture around us, both by speaking it to the world and by showing it in our churches. As we do so, we remember our mission to oppose demons, not to demonize opponents. As we advocate for human dignity, for religious liberty, for family stability, let's do so as those with a prophetic word that turns everything upside down. The signs of the times tell us we are in for days our parents and grandparents never knew. But that's no call for panic or surrender or outrage. Jesus is alive. Let's act like it. Let's follow him, onward to the future.”

What people are saying about *Onward*:

The Wall Street Journal calls Moore “... [v]igorous, cheerful and fiercely articulate”

The Washington Post's Michelle Boorstein says: “Dr. Moore is scary-prolific.”

Black Christian News declares him: "One of the Martin Luther King Jr.'s of our time"

Get Religion calls him "increasingly the go-to conservative for mainstream media."

About Russell Moore

Russell Moore is president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination. The Wall Street Journal called him "vigorous, cheerful, and fiercely articulate." He is the author of several books, including *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches*. He and his wife Maria are the parents of five sons.



Moore has an extensive background in Christianity and culture:

- Top Christian blogger: RussellMoore.com reaches tens of thousands of Christians a month
- 30+ years of ministry leadership
- Speaks 40+ times a year to church leaders and other groups
- Able to speak about Christians engaging culture, millennials in the church, ethics, morality in the context of the Bible

About *Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel*

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