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Contact: Kelly Hughes, 312-280-8126
kelly@dechanthughes.com

WEARING GOD: Clothing, Laughter, Fire, and Other Overlooked Ways of Meeting God

Bestselling Author and Theologian Lauren Winner Explores Overlooked Biblical Metaphors for God That Can Enliven Faith

The Bible is filled with hundreds of metaphors for God—drunkard, clothing, mother hen, beekeeper, homeless man, tree, fire, comedian, sleeper, water, dog—yet Christians tend to limit themselves to three or four beloved but timeworn images: shepherd, father, judge, king etc. Fixating on a handful of images has landed the church in a rut, says author Lauren Winner, and has “truncated our relationship with the divine.”

In her new book, **WEARING GOD (HarperOne, Hardcover \$24.99, March 31, 2015)**, Winner explores unconventional ways to think about God with the intention of provoking curiosity, inspiring imagination and inviting us all to explore our friendship with God in our daily lives today.

Winner is particularly drawn to biblical images for God that can be found in daily life—clothing but not shepherds, fire but not kings. She shows how a more meaningful relationship with God can be achieved by considering Him more fully within the everyday, among contemporary objects, needs, and environment.

Metaphors are “the Bible’s way of making us aware of God and of the world in which we meet God,” she writes. She looks at what the Bible suggests about these idioms, and surveys what writers and preachers from earlier eras made of them. She considers six metaphors:

- **Clothing:** “When I was baptized, I was clothed in Christ, and the God who is clothing is the God who wants to shape me more and more into the image of Jesus.”
- **Smell:** “The biblical portrait of God as one who smells...is a ritual shorthand for God’s intimate and close connection with us.”
- **Bread & Vine:** “If God is chocolate tea bread, God is not only provision—God is also about delight. It is one of the beauties of this metaphor that bread, like the One who made the hands that made the bread, contains both: enjoyment and necessity, sustenance and pleasure.”
- **Laboring Woman:** “Isaiah is naming as the activity of God something readily available to most of the world’s women....these birthing images compel me because they bespeak God’s intimate, bodily involvement with our redemption.”
- **Laughter:** “Biblical laughter is not only about God’s justice...it is about redemption and restoration....Who will be laughing and who will be weeping in the World to Come?”
- **Flame:** “Could the Bible’s fiery imagery suggest that God’s destruction is regenerative? That God destroys not me but my sin...so that I might be renewed?”

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Winner's goal is not to persuade the reader "to stop thinking about God as your shepherd and start thinking about God as a cardigan sweater," she says. Rather, she aims to provoke your curiosity and inspire your spiritual imagination in ways that will deepen your relationship with God.

About the author

Lauren F. Winner is an Episcopal priest and the author of numerous books, including *Still, Girl Meets God* and *Mudhouse Sabbath*, and teaches at Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina. Her articles have appeared in the *New York Times Book Review*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Books & Culture*, and other periodicals.

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by Lauren F. Winner

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