



# NEWS

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## ***The Naked Gospel* Helps Christians Get Back to Basics: Jesus Plus Nothing**

**Grand Rapids, Mich., August 10, 2009** – The Ten Commandments, tithing and the need to ask forgiveness are just a few of the teachings that Christians can jettison when they embrace the unadorned gospel of Jesus Christ, says author and pastor Andrew Farley in his new book, *The Naked Gospel: The Truth You May Never Hear in Church* (Zondervan, \$14.99, Sept. 2009). This gospel boils down to a simple equation: *Jesus plus nothing*.

*The Naked Gospel* challenges Christians to rethink everything they thought they knew about their faith. Farley proposes a simple, yet life-changing, focus on Jesus. It requires as much unlearning as learning, and a willingness to peel away the layers of religiosity that obscure what Jesus accomplished through his life, death, and resurrection.

As a young man, Farley was consumed with the fear that God was disappointed with his performance as a Christian. An intense desire to excel in the spiritual arena led to full-on addiction to street evangelism and Bible study—it got so bad that Farley couldn't sleep at night unless he had witnessed to someone, so he'd jump out of bed and run to a 24-hour convenience store to evangelize. He ended up losing his friends and hitting rock bottom, exhausted and burnt out. "How would you like to become a Christian and be miserable like me?" could have been his testimony, he says.

Farley's experience is admittedly extreme, but that background helps him understand why many Christians opt, as he did, for hoops to jump through to impress God.

Christianity is more than a behavior-improvement program dressed up in religious clothing. Farley explains the mystical "exchange of nature" in which those who place their faith in Christ undergo a change at the center of their being, becoming a new person in Christ. It's as though new, living DNA is inserted into a Christian's spirit, Farley says. So, Jesus lives in a Christian right now, providing them not just with a ticket to heaven, but with the power to change and live a new life.

This new life in Christ means that Christians do not need the Ten Commandments as a moral guide. In fact, Christians need to get over their fixation with Old Testament law; Farley says. He points to the Book of Hebrews as a lengthy argument for abandonment of the Old and adoption of the New. "Understanding that the law has no place in the life of a Christian keeps us from the error of legalism," Farley says. "Life is radically different on this side of the cross, a truth we must recognize as we study the Old Testament."

If Christians are truly living in Christ, they don't need a moral code to instruct them on how to live righteous lives. Rather, "the motivation for daily living in the New Testament centers around acting like the person you truly are and benefitting from Christ's life in the here and now."

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The new covenant means that for Christians:

- their relationship to the law is now all gone;
- their old selves are all gone;
- their sins are now all gone;
- obstacles preventing closeness to God are now all gone.

Farley has encountered resistance to his message, and he understands that *The Naked Gospel* will be controversial among some Christians, even though it is totally Jesus-centered. "If it's the real thing, it will change lives radically but it will also bring controversy. Wherever the real gospel is taught it results in false accusations of many kinds," he says.

"As we put forgiveness, freedom, identity and a new life side by side, we encounter a gospel that at first glance appears dangerous, but upon further examination we discover how brilliant God is in designing a bulletproof covenant that brings real relationship and change into our lives," Farley writes.

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## About the Author

Andrew Farley is no stranger to challenging traditional beliefs and encouraging Christians to take another look at what they believe. The lead teaching pastor of Ecclesia (EcclesiaOnline.com), a growing church on the high plains of Texas, Farley also co-hosts "Real Life in Christ," a thought-provoking television program that disputes many long-held ideas about Christian living. It airs every week on ABC-TV in West Texas and New Mexico.

Farley earned his bachelor's degree from Furman University, a master's degree from The University of Georgia and a Ph.D. from The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Before moving to Texas, where he is now a tenured professor at Texas Tech University, Farley served as a professor at the University of Notre Dame for five years. He teaches courses in second language acquisition and an Honors seminar course titled "Early Church and Contemporary Christianity in Conflict."

Farley has received teaching excellence awards or recognitions from three different universities. He has authored or co-authored a dozen peer-reviewed journal articles and three textbooks published by McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

He lives in Lubbock, Texas with his wife, Katharine Hayhoe, and their son, Gavin.

For an interview with Andrew Farley, please contact Kelly Hughes,  
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## **Suggested Interview Questions for Andrew Farley, author of *The Naked Gospel***

Your unusual faith journey includes an addiction to street evangelism and Bible study that led to a debilitating depression. Tell us your story.

What is the Naked Gospel Quiz? Give us two questions just to see how we do.

Why do you say that Christians should have no relationship with the Ten Commandments?

If Christians don't need the Ten Commandments, what do you propose as a moral code?

The central theme of your book is "Jesus plus nothing." How has the contemporary church added to Jesus, in your opinion?

In *The Naked Gospel*, you say real Christianity is about an exchange of "spiritual DNA"? What does that mean?

You claim that it's unbiblical and insulting to God if Christians ask for forgiveness when they sin. How can that be? Isn't forgiveness of sins one of the essentials of Christian belief?

You say that any Christian leader who mandates that his church-goers give 10% of their income is teaching Law, and that they are breaking the very same law they teach. Explain that one.

Why do you say that Christians won't be judged for their sins when they die? Isn't there Scripture that clearly indicates a final judgment for all of humanity?

You note that the New Testament contains no instance of the Holy Spirit "convicting" Christians of their sin. How does behavior improve then for the Christian?

Why do you think that your book contains "the truth you may never hear in church"?

What has the response been to your message when you've preached or lectured on *The Naked Gospel*?

Why do you think some Christians may be offended by a message that is so Jesus-centric?

### **Additional Talking Points**

Andrew Farley, author of *The Naked Gospel*, can provide insight and commentary on a host of issues concerning religion in America, including:

- Contemporary church in America
- Early church beliefs in contrast with today's religious views
- Reasons that many Christians today are leaving their churches
- Morality, ethics, and the Christian faith
- The biblical perspectives on Christian freedom and obligation
- Catholicism, Protestantism, and the early church
- The Ten Commandments on public buildings
- Prayer in schools
- Mega-churches and their future
- Catholic priests and marriage

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