



Bulletproof Faith

Candace Chellew-Hodge

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This thoughtful, practical guide shows readers a way through the minefield of condemnation and persecution faced by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Christians and helps foster a faith that is bulletproof--impervious to attacks, yet loving and savvy in its approach. *Bulletproof Faith* is filled with useful insights and proven spiritual practices that deflect attacks and enhance and strengthen faith by turning attacks into opportunities for spiritual growth.

Bulletproof Faith Details

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From Reader Review Bulletproof Faith for online ebook

Sam says

I found this a useful read for framing the dichotomy of needing to converse with people who are 'one the other side' but also to know when your conversation is fruitless and to break it off. As an Episcopalian its something I strive to learn and Chellew-Hodge breaks this down in some helpful ways.

However, there is one notion she presents that makes me reluctant to recommend this book to other Episcopilians, queer and straight alike. On page 105 she says "A theology based on just Scripture, tradition, and reason is a theology empty of the Holy Spirit, who brings the experience of God into our lives." That three-legged stool analogy is one central to the Episcopal tradition, and I don't know of anyone who would say that "reason" is devoid of "experience" which is the 'fourth leg' she adds. For me, reason is the incarnation of experience with the coupling of education and the world outside myself. As a lesbian in a liberal denomination (albeit not one without controversy over this issue) her notion that we are devoid of the Holy Spirit offends me.

Martha says

I thought this was a great book. The concept of a bulletproof faith struck me as strange, initially, but the comparison of putting on the whole armor of God as a 1st century image and the need for something stronger now made sense to me.

Chellew-Hodge writes for LGBT people about developing a strong, loving, non-defensive faith that helps in controversial moments, but her principles are great ones for all people of faith who are under challenge. She includes several spiritual exercises that have broad application.

I also have to say that I read a lot of books about faith written by people in other denominations, and I have to "translate" some of what they say because I'm progressive. I don't have to do that with Candace Chellew-Hodge. We're talking the same talk. I was amazed at how much of a relief it was to read a book by someone so like-minded.

Just A. Bean says

I was a little leery of buying it because it sounded a little militant, if not arrogant, but ironically, it's way less aggressive than I am. It's all about how not to get into fights, and how to treat people who disagree with you with gentleness and compassion, without letting them think you support their prejudices. The faith of the title is a personal self-assurance that one has to have in order to suffer the trials of life gracefully. The author quotes 2 Timothy 2:23-25 and James 3:17 a lot, as well as Buffy and Xena. It's really, really helped me with how I think about interacting with potentially hostile Christians. I would highly recommend this book to queer Christians, queers who regularly deal with Christians, and straight Christians who are allies.

Heidi says

I will be giving this book to my mother and asking her to read it. I will be offering it to my PoD mentor if he's interested. I'll be recommending this one generally.

I think it's the zeal of a convert: because when it first arrived I wasn't entirely certain about it. I felt like I was beyond it. I felt like because my church is mostly-sorta accepting, I wasn't the sort of person that Chellew-Hodge was talking about. But the truth is, I am. And I needed to read this book, and I will need the methods of maintaining mental and spiritual strength. This book, for me, is on the level of Stephanie Dowrick in terms of its importance to me, only this is written for people so much like me. This is written for those of us who "don't exist" - queer Christians. People who have to keep standing up and saying "Here I am" because so many people think we don't or shouldn't exist.

Like Susan Howatch's books, it's going on an annual rotation: I *know* I am going to need to re-read this regularly. This book has been key in my discernment and I think it will be key in my ongoing wellbeing. And God bless Candace Chellew-Hodge for writing it.

Thorn MotherIssues says

I'm not a Christian and I'd hoped from good reviews it might have some cross-cultural relevance, but it didn't for me. I mean, the advice about not taking hostility seriously enough that it impacts your quality of life is good, but I don't need to know that God still loves me because God's not a part of my life.

Brian says

"Bulletproof Faith" works best if one approaches it as a surface self-help book. As a tool for being a Christian who is less tuned in to those who attack you (for whatever reason) it offers helpful advice and some nice activities that you can do in order to be able to better handle the slings and arrows that others throw at you. As a book that will "bulletproof" the faith of gay people who come from a strong evangelical background, it will be found lacking.

Personally I found the book mostly helpful and I enjoyed Ms. Hodge's honesty in exposing her own warts and issues. She has a bad temper, and often feels the need to get in the last word. Knowing this about herself, and being honest about it, enables her to be very blunt and constructive with her readers who share the same faults. That is a very helpful element of this book. She is also very upfront about the fact that this text is not meant to give you scriptural ammunition to fight those who want to condemn homosexuality. It does not provide that, and with a few exceptions many of her scriptural analysis are not all that insightful. But her heart is clearly in the right place, and that goes a long way with me.

I also liked how Hodge occasionally inserts into the text little excerpts that she calls "Spiritual Survival Exercises". These are meditations, prayers, and other helpful tools that she has used in her life to help her become closer to God, and having tried most of them some work for me, some don't. Ms. Hodge is just trying to jump start your prayer/thought life with God.

However, there are also some flaws in the book that leave it and its subject matter vulnerable to criticism. It is there, as much as I wish it wasn't, and this does detract from the work. First off she uses some ridiculous examples to make her points. She quotes, and comes back to often, Xena the Warrior Princess to make one of her more salient points in the book. Besides being a stereotypical choice to use, it also reeks of pop culture. There are numerous Biblical examples that Hodge could have used to make the same point. There are also a few times where her arguments are very weak and not very sound. I know this because I am a

friendly and supportive audience for her views, and even I occasionally rolled my eyes at some of her arguments. If I am doing that, what will her detractors do? I would hate to see the effectiveness of her message lost to such small things, but I am afraid for some people that is exactly what will happen. If you are struggling because you are gay and a Christian or you are just struggling with attacks on your faith, then "Bulletproof Faith" is an easy and supportive read that will probably give you some help and solace. That is a good thing; just don't expect more from it than it can give. The ultimate message of this text is love for all God's people, and I will never have a lot of problems with a book that does that.

Renay says

Very good! Thank you for writing this.

Sandy says

This is a great guide to conflict resolution for GLBT christians. It teaches strategies that help you see the person you're dealing with as a human. It also provides good advice on how not to lose your cool and treat everyone with grace and reverence. And by conflict resolution I don't mean that you have to like and agree with everyone but that you're able to have a civil conversation (or at least know when to walk away).

Brianna Silva says

(Adding this book months after I read it, because the act of adding it earlier would have outed me before I was ready ?)

This book was really really really really helpful while I was preparing to come out as bi. ??? Honestly, it was vital.

Spook Harrison says

I actually really liked this one. While other books focus on textproof and stuff of that nature, Chellew-Hodge spends more time on how to see that attacks come from a place of fear and that they're other people's issues, not ours, which is great advice for any conflict. I like her advice on having a relationship vs being Right--all either side really wants is validation. The pop-culture references were cute, and for once I actually got most of them. The chapter on the Galatians verse was well done. She also makes the point that since love does conquer all, eventually, understanding and enlightenment will win the day, so the things people say and do today, this lifetime, are all heading towards that goal. I think that if I were GLBT I'd have gotten even more out of the book, and all positive stuff.

On another note, though it was a library book I borrowed, someone took it upon themselves to leave propaganda between the pages and to write criticisms in the margins--clearly they read the book, but did not really take it in and understand it. I'm glad I didn't miss the entire message like they did!

Neil Orts says

Candace did a really good job pulling this together from her years of running workshops and Whosoever.org. I can honestly say it altered my prayer life. I'd also say it's for more than GLBT Christians, as the bases are sound for any kind of conflict situation. (I also have a short interview with Candace going up at outsmartmagazine.com on or near the first of November.)

Catherine says

This is a life-affirming book that is true to the Christian faith. God's Will for all human beings is to love God and one another, not using others for our own sexual gratifications but to express our love and learn together to live life abundantly, grow up, pray, do good works to help our neighbors, recognize our tendency to fall short of the mark and seek forgiveness in order to carry on, "go and sin no more."

"The only thing that counts is faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6). I encourage you to visit Rev. Candance Chellew-Hodge's website for this book: www.bulletproofbook.com

Elevate Difference says

In a remarkable voice full of hope and wisdom, Candance Chellew-Hodge offers a spiritual survival guide for the GLBTQ community and its allies. With illustrative candid accounts from her own life, Chellew-Hodge sharply wedges a tool of self-defense in the slamming door of anti-gay sentiments, threats, and violence.

Bulletproof Faith is an easy read, a loving read, actually. It is as much of a protective shield—coating the reader with images of a mysterious and perfect Creator—as it is an empowering how-to guide for healing from miscommunication, hate, and self-doubt. Chellew-Hodge's work exudes confident and practical steps for those silenced and marginalized because of their sexual identity. She tackles how language is used to dehumanize the lives of the GLBTQ population, facing those who hate you, and the art of "surrendering" for true strength and peace. Chellew-Hodge consistently advocates for trust, self-worth, and patience.

With no false hopes of safe havens or imaginary escape routes, Chellew-Hodge takes the readers through the thick and deafening reality of manifested fear and bigotry. She explains the need for the struggling GLBTQ spiritual person to cultivate a faith that is bulletproof, "Developing a bulletproof faith doesn't mean we will never again have question or doubts. Instead, having a bulletproof faith means that those questions and doubts no longer ship-wreck our faith, but are welcomed as opportunities to deepen our understanding of our authentic selves."

With a wealth of resources and a cyclical message to cling to love, Chellew-Hodge fills Bulletproof Faith with helpful strategies on answering cornering questions and divisive vernacular. One example used is how often the word "lifestyle" is used to describe their very being. She elaborates, "It's easier to make the general public believe that homosexuality can be easily changed because it's simply a matter of altering one's 'lifestyle' – not changing one's authentic self." She understands that the answers most people seek are not

“truth” because the truth, as she experiences God, is much more full and life-giving than we can possibly fathom. In the place of answers, Bulletproof Faith simply teaches the reader how to hold steadfast in the face of protestors and extremists. It is careful, direct, and compassionate; it leads with a commitment to work on one’s own unfinished personal problems before delving into conversations that may lead to confusing the issues with unresolved “stuff.”

Religion, particularly Christianity, is not always a central focus for mainstream feminism. I muse that it is the explosive nature of religion and religiosity that often restrains feminists to write on such issues, but religion’s Herculean-sized influence on our personal beliefs directly impact our thoughts and views of gender. Although not aimed directly at feminists, Bulletproof Faith is written as much for the spiritual survival for the GLBTQ community as it is a document for others on how to be an ally.

Review by Lisa Factora-Borchers

Tina says

Loved it. Have read it twice and will read it again.
