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*Review of Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation.* by Kristin Kobes Du Mez

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must-read for academically minded readers pursuing knowledge about our world in a time of increasing awareness of regional interdependence and influence.

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Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. Liveright/Norton (2020), 356 pages, \$28.95 (hardcover).

Kobes Du Mez grew up in a strong Evangelical church and is now a professor of history at Calvin College in Michigan. Clearly she knows her subject from the inside. Like many of us, she is simply astonished to see that the very group of people most vociferous about bringing religious values and Christian piety into politics and the public square have ended up becoming the most consistent supporters and at times leaning toward cult followers of the current President—a thrice-married man, an open adulterer, a man who gained a large portion of his wealth through gambling operations and shady real estate deals, a man who daily displays his narcissism and foul language for all to see. How could this be?

The quick and easy answer, of course, is that Evangelicals (and Republicans in general) have wittingly made a devil's bargain, holding their collective noses and turning their collective eyes away from the excesses and shenanigans of this man in exchange for filling the pipeline with Federalist-Society-vetted conservative judicial appointments, who will rule against abortion, against organized labor, against "creeping secularism," and in favor of traditional family issues and "religious freedom" in areas such as taxation and education. Without question there is this, a strong element of pure transactional rationalizing in Evangelical and Republican justifications for their support of this President, especially in the later days of the 2016 campaign, when leaders who had voiced support for other candidates scrambled post haste to get onboard the Trump-Train. But as Kobes Du Mez recognized, this did not at all account for the depth of Evangelical support for this man. It was not just

support based on political calculation or evaluation. This was deeply emotional admiration, rooted in a sense of awe, a strong sense that 'this is Our Man' that can only be understood as a connection on the spiritual level. For a historian like Kobes Du Mez, this required serious investigation.

As noted, Kobes Du Mez knows the Evangelical world intimately, from the inside, and her connections there were nurtured over decades of immersion in its bosom. Thus, while fully retaining the objective gaze of an academic historian, she has a perspective that very few others can claim. She points to three major undercurrents in Evangelical culture that explain the current situation. The first of these, perhaps the most the most pervasive, and with a history Kobes Du Mez traces throughout the 20th century, is an underlying anxiety about their social legitimacy. Although Evangelicals apparently yearn for the old days when Christian clergy were serious and powerful actors on the social stage, it should be remembered that these Christian leaders were not Evangelicals at all, but rather were mostly associated with the "liberal mainline" denominations in America. The Fundamentalists, as they were known then—contemporary Evangelicals are the heirs of this earlier Fundamentalism—were as often as not ridiculed as uneducated, know-nothing Bible thumpers, crude inhabitants of the backwoods and frontier areas, provincial hicks from the sticks, country bumpkins with ring around the collar. (Side Note: Popular Evangelical media preachers, dressed in fine clothes and sporting Oxford or Ivy League diplomas, will now often refer to themselves jestingly with these exact images, clearly as a way to communicate to their crowds both "Look how far we've come!" and "Remember, I am still one of you!") Kobes Du Mez's reading is that this deeply rooted basic ambiguity, of wanting to be "distinct" from the sinful world, while also desperately wanting social legitimacy, to be accepted and respected by the society at large, goes a long way to explain the many contradictions and skewed inconsistencies in the Evangelical world.

The second major undercurrent Kobes Du Mez finds in Evangelicalism is a robust and durable support for the patriarchal family structure, and particularly the figure of the brave, powerful, wise and stern male head of household (this is essentially the Evangelical image of God in relation to

the human family). The history here is a little more nuanced and difficult to trace simply because there was little need to emphasize this undercurrent theme in Evangelical preaching and literature until it came under fire starting in the 1960s. But under pressure from feminism and gender-alternative forces in American society, vocal support for the patriarchal family structure as the ideal, God-given model for all families quickly came to the fore. This is not to say that feminist and gender-alternative ideas made no inroads into the Evangelical world. Far from it. Even today a very high number of those on the fringes of Evangelicalism, for example, those who self-identify as Evangelical in their religious beliefs but are solidly in the 20% not enamored by the current Occupant, very likely to point to their dissenting views on feminist, sexual and gender-alternative issues as that which distinguishes them from the Evangelical mainstream. Among those who self-designate as ex-Evangelical, the likelihood that such issues played a central role in their disillusionment is even higher still.

Evangelical patriarchy soon rose to fight back the tide of such influence. Probably most Americans have some idea of who the recently deceased Evangelical preacher Billy Graham was. (Side Note: although there is disagreement among researchers as to who is and is not an Evangelical, the pragmatic "I know one when I see one" position hinges largely around the question "do you identify religiously with Billy Graham?") Here is one place that Kobes Du Mez's insider status is put to good use. She knows the territory well and traces a parade of programs and figures, all deeply engaged in the patriarchal backlash that started in the early 1970s, who are absolute rock stars in the Evangelical world but of whom non-Evangelicals have almost no awareness at all. From Bill Gothard's seminars and Marabel Morgan's million-selling books, to the many talk show hosts of the Christian Broadcasting Network, Bill McCartney's so-called Promise Keepers (who filled stadium after stadium with the message to Evangelical men to "take back your manhood and rightful place in the family") and James Dobson's books and radio shows on family and parenting advice, many of those given balanced and nuanced evaluation in this book are simply unknown outside of the Evangelical world. For this aspect of the investigation, you couldn't hope for a better guide than Kobes Du Mez.

The third undercurrent highlighted in this book largely emerged as a further development of the patriarchal backlash, that is, the increasing adoration of the strong and powerful alpha male figure, who naturally takes his place in the world as leader and protector of others. This undercurrent has its deep roots in the "muscular Christianity" of earlier Fundamentalist preachers such as Billy Sunday, who mixed together a potent brew of manliness containing various portions of sports accomplishment, standing one's ground (leaning into bulliness), military discipline, outdoorsmanship, self-confidence, and self-reliance. This kind of preaching presented the "real Jesus" as the embodiment of this Ideal Man (not, we must add, the meek and sissified, turn-the-other-cheek nancyboy of polite American Christianity!). When this earlier stream of "muscular Christianity" joined the stream of renewed focus on patriarchal family structure, the ground finally was prepared for the idealization of a series of strong male figures to emerge from the Evangelical imagination.

Billy Graham was undoubtedly the first such figure, and was perhaps best pictured among Evangelicals as the preacher, no tie, open collar, sleeves rolled up, glistening with fiery perspiration, with his wiry but fine young physique peeking through. But Billy Graham was a real person and made plenty of real mistakes—and was never hesitant to own up to his mistakes. Sustained idealized heroism requires a bit more distance than was found in Billy Graham. The Evangelical world finally looked elsewhere for their male ideal. Although Kobes Du Mez gives treatment to a string of lesser lights, such as Evangelical wrestlers, bodybuilders ("Feats of Christian Strength!"), motorcycle daredevils for Christ, and other such testosterone-soaked semi-entertainers, each of which had their own particular fanbase, she lands on four men in particular who have made the Evangelicals as a whole simply swoon.

Enter here, The Duke. John Wayne, the fast shooting, fast fisted figure of the silver screen was increasingly held up to American young men in general, but in exaggerated form to Evangelical young men in particular, as the Ideal Man, the model for true Christian manhood and leadership. Although it is reported that Wayne himself was initially uneasy about all the ongoing attention and admiration he received coming from these "religious folks," he eventually became used to the

idea that if he played his role well among them, they were not keen to look very closely into his private life. The idealization of John Wayne led directly into that of the second great Ideal Man among the Evangelicals, namely Ronald Reagan. With Reagan, Evangelicals were drawn very directly into the political arena, and the politicization of Evangelical religion came on with the full force of Cold War enthusiasm. Soon explicitly political groups among Evangelicals such as the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition were being formed and led by ministers who only a few years before had cautioned Christians to stay clear of politics and concentrate their energies on getting people saved and ready for the afterlife.

On the heels of Reagan arose a third figure embodying the Evangelical Ideal of Manhood, the Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North. North solidified the image of the warrior into the Evangelical Ideal of Manhood, with all of the muscle and swagger the now-aging John Wayne once embodied, and associating true manhood with themes of super-patriotism and militarism. He also solidified the mental habit among Evangelicals of not looking too deeply into the foibles of their heroes. North's felony convictions on three separate counts, if anything, enhanced his popularity in the Evangelical world, lending him both the aura of willingness to pursue Truth and Justice outside The Law if necessary, and the aura of sacred martyrdom when he was caught and punished for doing so (his felony convictions were later overturned). From there, North's time has been split between his radio program (Evangelicals making up a high percentage of his audience), his work with the National Rifle Association (mixing themes of gun-toting patriotism and religious zeal), and celebrity speaking engagements (mostly in Evangelical venues.)

Throughout the ensuing decades, forces of liberalism and secularism proceeded unabated in America, despite the best efforts of Evangelicals to resist (they settled mainly for symbolic victories here and there). The Obama years were especially tough ones for Evangelicals, as they watched their once-powerful megachurches diminish in size and influence, with many of their own children leading the way out the doors. Furthermore, they had to acknowledge Obama's own high level of popularity among Evangelical young people, not least of which was Obama's

extremely popular embodiment of a type of Ideal Manhood far different from the swaggering tough guy crafted over decades in the Evangelical imagination. Kobes Du Mez suggests that the Evangelicals were by then powerfully yearning for a new Strong Man Leader to take control of the nation. George W. Bush fit that need only in fleeting moments ("Mission Accomplished!") but even then with obviously clay feet.

Donald J. Trump had in the meantime become not just a billionaire leader in the business world (much of that, it turns out, is bluff) but also had become a true media star, playing exactly the role of the tough-but-fair alpha male ("You're Fired!") week after week, for some fifteen seasons, on what became one of America's most watched shows. By the time Kobes Du Mez has carefully built her case and filled in the background step by step, we are no longer so astonished at the fact of Evangelical swoon, as DJT descended the golden staircase, amid cheering fans (we later learned were paid to be there) to announce his "No More Mr. Nice Guy," and "Make America Great Again!" run for President. His numbers among self-identified Evangelicals soon shot up to somewhere in the near 90s and has never dropped below 80% since that time.

Kobes du Mez's book is really a tour de force, an impressive achievement, written with wit, understanding and a veritable encyclopedic knowledge of the Evangelical world. There is one thing that I would have liked her to explore more deeply than she did, and that is the fact that all of the main figures embodying the Evangelical Ideal of Manhood, the Heroes *du jour* on the Pedestal, so to speak, are pretty much 100% media images and not actual people. John Wayne may be The Duke, but underneath that media image is Marion Michael Morrison (thrice married) from small town rural Iowa. Evangelicals (admittedly, along with many other Americans) persist in associating wartime heroism with (twice married) Ronald Reagan, when in fact this pertains only to roles he played on the screen while sitting out the actual war in Hollywood. Oliver North is a Marine Lt. Colonel with a history of battle action, but his belligerently swaggering defense in front of congressional inquiry committees for what was, after all, the job of paper pushing, was so patently staged that any non-swooners watching it couldn't help but be embarrassed on his behalf.

Likewise, anyone who has watched his performances in facing down capitol hill reporters knows that DJT (thrice married) is clearly no genius businessman or even the boardroom alpha male—but he played one on TV! Perhaps it is too much to ask of Kobes Du Mez that she would look deeper into the sources and meaning of such obvious preference among Evangelicals for image over reality. Hopefully that is the subject of a future project. In any case, it is an extremely important topic to wrestle down and would doubtless have profound implications for our understanding of the type of religion Evangelicalism actually is, politically, sociologically and theologically.

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Amee Baird, Sandra Garrido, and Jeanette Tamplin. *Music and Dementia: From Cognition to Therapy*. Oxford University Press (2020), 293 pages, \$54.99 (hardcover).

This review will primarily focus on two subjects covered in this text, defining dementia-focused music therapy and the physiological impact that melody has on older adults. While the book contains fourteen chapters discussing topics ranging from the seven capacities of music to therapeutic intervention techniques for Life Enrichment specialists, I am focusing here on those topics most relevant to social workers. The research provided in this book offers implications for improving the quality of life for older adults across a variety of communities and living environments, including assisted living facilities, retirement communities, memory care support, or an individual's home. As dementia remains the most significant and neurocognitively harmful condition impacting older adults, it is for social workers and other professionals to acquaint themselves with the importance of sound and music as a therapeutic tool for working with this vulnerable group of people.

As a starting point, the authors debunk a number of common misconceptions about music therapy. They stress the difference between recreational and therapeutic experiences. In order to