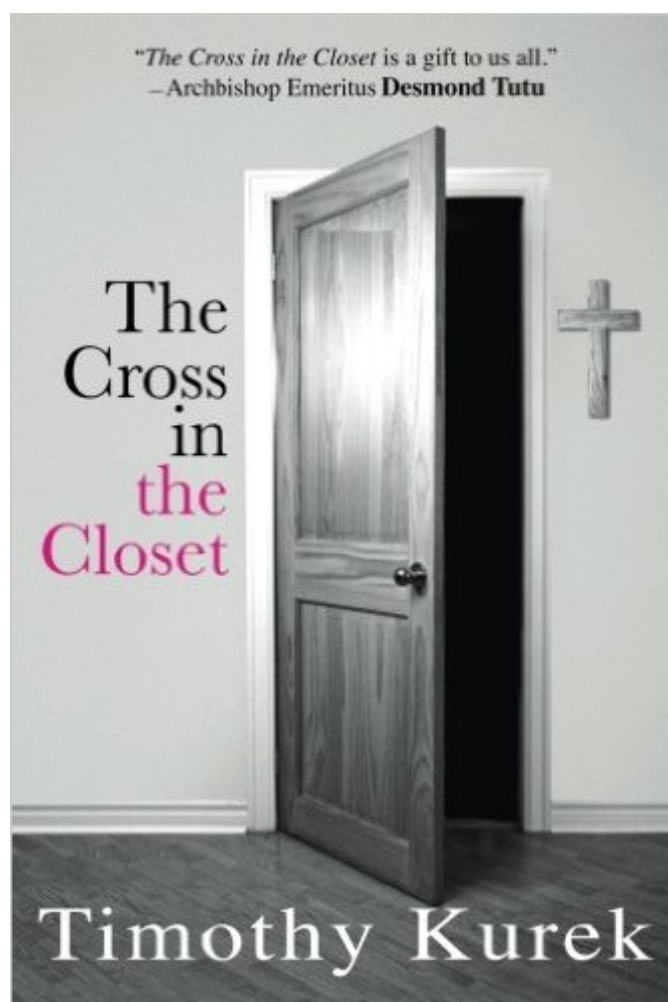


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The Cross In The Closet



Synopsis

Timothy Kurek, raised within the confines of a strict, conservative Christian denomination in the Bible Belt, Nashville, Tennessee, was taught the gospel of separation from a young age. But it wasn't long before Timothy's path and the outside world converged when a friend came out as a lesbian, and revealed she had been excommunicated by her family. Distraught and overcome with questions and doubts about his religious upbringing, Timothy decided the only way to empathize and understand her pain was to walk in the shoes of very people he had been taught to shun. He decided to come out as a gay man to everyone in his life, and to see for himself how the label of gay would impact his life. In the tradition of *Black Like Me*, *The Cross in the Closet* is a story about people, a story about faith, and about one man's "abominable" quest to find Jesus in the margins.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have held the concept of this book at a distance since I first heard about it. Lying about being gay as a social experiment? I wasn't sure I could endure reading a book that retells the tale of lying about sexuality in order to make a point. But then I read the book. And I discovered that Timothy Kurek was not conducting a social experiment, but was on a quest, a deeply personal quest to identify with a community of people he once abhorred and condemned. Perhaps in some ways it was also a quest of penance to redeem himself from his past homophobia. The stories he tells certainly thread together into a tapestry of renewed thinking and changed perspective. Even though I had my qualms about Tim concealing who he really was even to family and friends in his quest of discovering "the other," his storytelling reveals that he was experiencing what many gay citizens

around us already know : that concealing who you are is detrimental to your soul. It was a brilliant reversal of a straight man putting his straightness in the closet and acting gay in order to be associated and accepted among the gay community in Nashville. It is well established that many gay men and women act straight for the same reason. The book is a quick read. Tim is a great storyteller. It's a memoir, not a definitive authority on gay culture or theology which he is quick to point out. Written with candor, grit and stripped of the all-too-familiar sanitized tone of most Christian books, *The Cross in the Closet* is a refreshing book. This book could be especially helpful for those who care to see the human drama under all the debates about whether or not being gay is a sin. Tim brings the reader into his quest as he discovers not just the cross in the closet, but also humanity.

It's not often I find myself interrupting my reading with shouts of "finally a straight guy who gets it!" This is a wonderfully empathic true story about Tim's immersion experiment: living with the label of gay. As a gay man who was raised in the conservative faith I found myself feeling a kinship with Tim as he uncovered the reality of my own frustrations of living, both before and after I came out, as a gay person in the Church and in society. I am certain that this work will be an eye-opening and challenging book to those who are attempting to wrestle with these issues. Thanks, Tim, for being so brave!

I am amazed that Tim was able to stick with his commitment through everything. It seems like it would have been so easy to walk away and quit. It is inspiring to see someone care so much about the "other" in his life that he is willing to work so hard to try and understand just a small part of their life. If only more people would do this with other issues in life that separate them from their neighbor. What an inspiration.

Tim's amazing story---amazing not so much for the people and experiences he encountered, as for his own heart and the transformation he underwent---takes him from Nashville to New York to Portland, but takes his heart on a far longer journey than that. Tim is one of the few Christians I've known (speaking as a lifelong Christian myself, for some 50 years now) who---gasp!---actually aimed to walk the talk of what Jesus said and of how he loves people, and as happens any time that people do that, it changes them from the inside out. In Tim's case, it changed his religious bigotry into genuine love for people. I'm also bisexual, and I've dealt with some of the situations and conflicts that Tim and some of those around him have dealt with, from "both sides" of the religious

aisle, and where Tim ended up is simply where anyone who wants to be honest with themselves and others will end up: accepting and loving people for who they are, not for who we want them to be. I've also been very privileged to have gotten to know Tim personally, and he is every bit as remarkable and genuine a person as you see him in his book. Tim's words put it best, of course: "I wonder what would happen if--instead of preaching from soap-boxes and shouting through megaphones, or spending millions on political campaigns meant to hinder the rights of the gay and lesbian community--what would happen if we ... shut our mouths and simply served the people in our neighborhoods and cities, without an agenda? Would the message of Jesus survive? ... I think so." For the first time in a long time, I feel whole. Not because my eyes have been opened to a 'new way of life,' because there is nothing new about this. Love is the original way."

Let me give it to you in fairly short terms.. I am a straight guy, from Nashville, who went to a small Christian college similar to Mr. Kurek's.. I come from a VERY stable traditional home life. I am a Christian.. Now that we have that out of the way..10 years ago = Me as a homophobic person who hates gay people or anyone not like me!5 years ago = Me realizing I have some friends who are gay. Still homophobic and trying to come to terms.3+ years ago = Me meeting Mr. Kurek through a very random acquaintance (total God thing) a couple months before the end of his "experiment".2 years ago = Learning some of the components from Tim that you will read in this book. As a result, I realized that after 30+ years of claiming to love Jesus, I hadn't "loved my neighbor as myself" all because of the title "Gay".Today = Don't have all the answers but I know this. No longer homophobic but, approach all people with the love of Christ!Thankful Tim wrote this book. I guarantee this book with stretch you no matter where you are in your walk with life on this ball we all share called Earth!

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