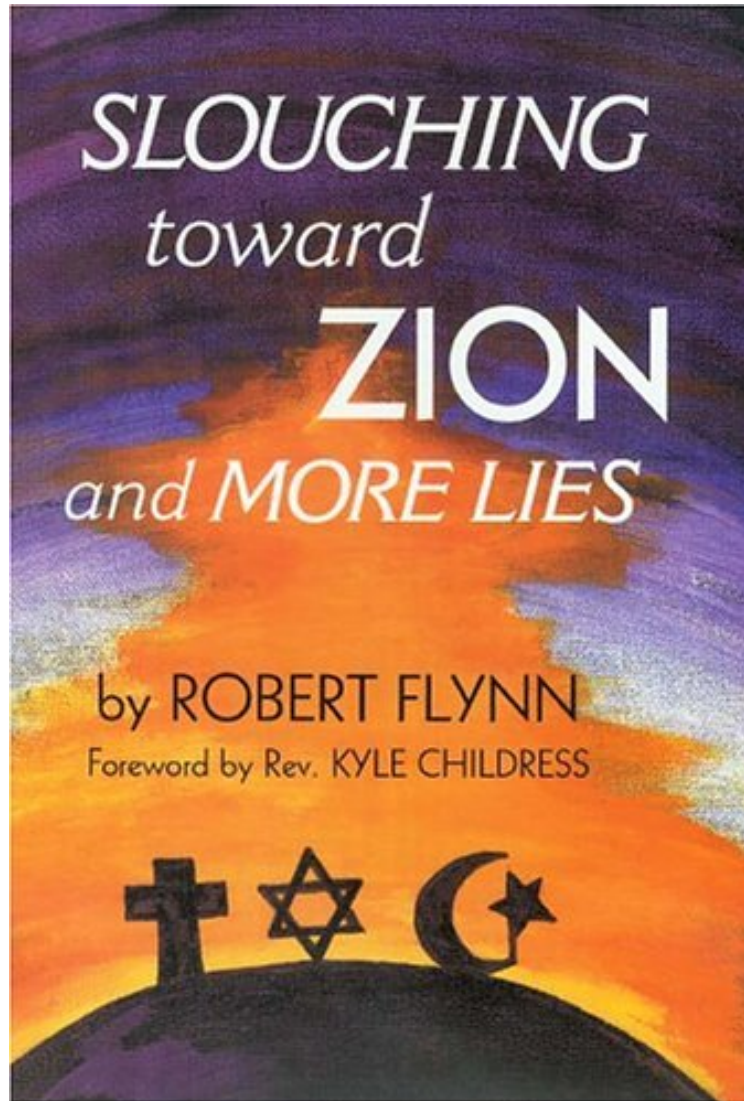


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Slouching toward Zion and More Lies

Robert Flynn

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Robert Flynn : Slouching toward Zion and More Lies before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Slouching toward Zion and More Lies:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great StoriesBy Scandalous SanityI have never laughed so hard in my life! Slouching to Zion is filled with more truth-filled stories than the Bible itself (depending on your beliefs). As Kyle Childress says in the forward, "Humor helps put us all in our place," and Mr. Flynn certainly puts those of us who have ever transferred our letters to a church in our place. For a quick laugh you should certainly check out the scattered stories, Questions Catholics Never Ask, Questions Southern Baptist Never Ask, and even Questions Secular

Humanists Never Ask. All filled with simple questions that any person recovering from fundamentalism has perhaps asked themselves at one point in time. If you have time to get a bit deeper into a story check out, *The Baptist Sex Position*, *Ten Mistakes God has Made*, and *Mission to Mexico*. I know these made me reflect on similar incidences of my time on staff in a church. While these stories are laced with sarcasm and perhaps a bit of bitter storytelling, the truths, both surface level and deep, Flynn scatters throughout the stories will be certain to make you think. He made me ponder the purpose of church, the role of members, deacons, pastors, and even the softball team. While I began by viewing this book as a disgruntled rebuke of the role of the church, I ended up seeing it as a earnest reproach of the questionable ideologies and roles the church has adopted. If you are a person that has been affected in a negative way by the church, pick this up, and I promise you will be rolling on the floor saying, "Holy Crap! That's happened to me." Which is the certain sign of a great story. But if you are someone who has yet to come across any questionable actions performed by a church of any denomination you probably wouldn't like this work.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. It's a Different Kind of Humor By Sheldon R. Waxman Robert Flynn is a gifted observer of human behavior and an imaginative and knowledgeable writer. He pokes jokes at it in a Swiftian satirical way. He is funny and his jokes are, perhaps, more serious than he intends. His humor is not the sidesplitting variety but the smirking kind. He pokes fun of all religions. God knows the sanctimonious religionists need it. Mostly, though, he pokes fun of Baptists. Perhaps they need it the most. His iconoclastic humor, although allegedly tongue in cheek, has more truth than tongue. And it is his meaning that all religions are ridiculous and it is only to God that we all owe individual allegiance. Dump the religions and start social clubs. The short stories in this book are short, but there are twenty-three of them. Perhaps there are too many. Since they all carry the identical themes (poking fun at religions), by the middle of the book, it started to get somewhat tedious. But then we come to a style change when we get to, "Mission in Mexico." It is humor on religion but also great slapstick comedy too. The following paragraphs in this story, I think, tells the true story as Flynn sees it: "The purpose of secular media is to be rich and powerful so they can buy political gossip, photographs of alien beings, news of the world's largest cucumbers, and stories of lurid crimes and violent deaths. With those, they divert the attention of the masses from the rules, machinations, and powers that hold them in sway....Since Christians had not been able to convert all Americans, they must require the government to force everyone to behave like Christians, regardless of whether they believed as Christians." Some other examples of his writing style and humor are as follows: "God didn't hear the prayers of Methodists because they had never been baptized. Sprinkling was no more baptism than quiche was church cuisine. `Besides, Methodists dance and praying knees don't grow on dancing feet,' Billy Mac preached." "But God is always ready to hear the prayer of a born again Bible-believing, full immersion, washed in the blood, slain in the spirit, from grace to grave, confession to coffin, dunking to death, repentance to resurrection, sinner's-prayer to heavenly crown Baptist." "Billy Mac predicted that Baylor would never win a major bowl game until Baylor taught the Christian view of history: that God inspired the American Revolution and sent plagues of diseases to kill the Indians and give Americans free land." I think the best thing I liked about the book was that it was different than anything I had ever read. That alone makes it worth reading.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Beware: If You Can't Laugh at Yourself, Don't Read This By E. Dian Moore Twenty-three short stories round out the contents of *Slouching Toward Zion*, all with a singular goal of making anyone involved in Christianity to take a step back and look at some of the ridiculous things we have succumbed to in our actions, traditions, and beliefs. Funny and outrageous, Flynn pulls no punches as he pokes fun at religion in general and Baptists in particular. A Baptist himself, Flynn has intimate knowledge of himself in that role and uses that knowledge to call himself to order. "Do Have a Rapture Lawyer?", "Questions Mormons Never Ask," and "Mission to Mexico" are guaranteed to have you rolling and coming away with a new outlook. Other chapters explore such mysteries as to what happened after the stories told in the Bible. In a Paul Harvey kind of way, Flynn tells the rest of the story. We all remember the story of Jesus spitting on the ground and making mud to apply to the blind man's eyes. Flynn points out the ungratefulness of the human race in some of their worst moments, by depicting the healed blind man as having this conversation the following day with Jesus: "You have ruined my life. I can't read or write. I don't recognize numbers. I have no skills. And now my neighbors know I'm not blind. How can I beg? Are you going to let me starve?" And Jesus spat on the ground again. (see page 111) All in good fun, Flynn seeks to bring us to the forefront of awareness of our personal misdeeds, aggravating habits, and quickness to judge so we might use these stories to better ourselves and think more kindly of our neighbors. Flynn recognizes how easily we hide behind religion as an excuse to hate. *Slouching Toward Zion* would make a good gift book for those that like humor and can laugh at their selves as they open their minds and hearts to the possibility of forgiveness and letting go of those things that hinder their spiritual growth. It could also be used to liven up some study groups. Flynn is the native of Chillicothe, Texas, and the author of eight other novels.

Robert Flynn has gathered twenty-three stories that have hope, faith, and love as their common denominator. They are funny, political, and more than a bit prophetic as well as being superbly crafted. Included in the collection are "The Rest of the Story," wherein the author retells select Biblical stories and parables supplying heretofore expurgated details with an exquisitely agonizing truth; "Ten Mistakes God Made," which treats with candor religious politics,

elitism, and the unexplained nature of what makes us believe; “The Trouble with Eve” and “Redemption,” which are at heart stories of how one grapples with, avoids, questions, and finally resigns to—love; and “Chicken Soup for the Damned,” a fable cum corporate biography retelling of the Savior’s story.

"Flynn's prose cuts like St. Michael's sword slicing through the smug heart of a believer too comfortable in his faith." -- Jill A. Essbaum, Concordia University, and author, *Heaven* About the Author Robert Flynn, a native of Chillicothe, Texas, is the author of seven novels, among them *North To Yesterday*, (winner of awards from the Texas Institute of Letters and the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and named one of the Best Books of the Year by the New York Times) and *Wanderer Springs* (winner of a Spur Award from Western Writers of America). Most recently, he coauthored with the late Dan Klepper a new novel, *The Devils Tiger*. He is also the author of a nonfiction narrative, *A Personal War in Vietnam*. His two story collections are both recipients of awards: *Seasonal Rain*, co-winner of the Texas Literary Festival Award, and *Living with the Hyenas*, winner of a Western Heritage Award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. He also coauthored *When I Was Just Your Age*, published by the University of North Texas Press. In 1998, Flynn received the “Distinguished Achievement Award” from the Texas Institute of Letters. Retired as writer-in-residence at Trinity University, he lives in San Antonio with his wife, Jean