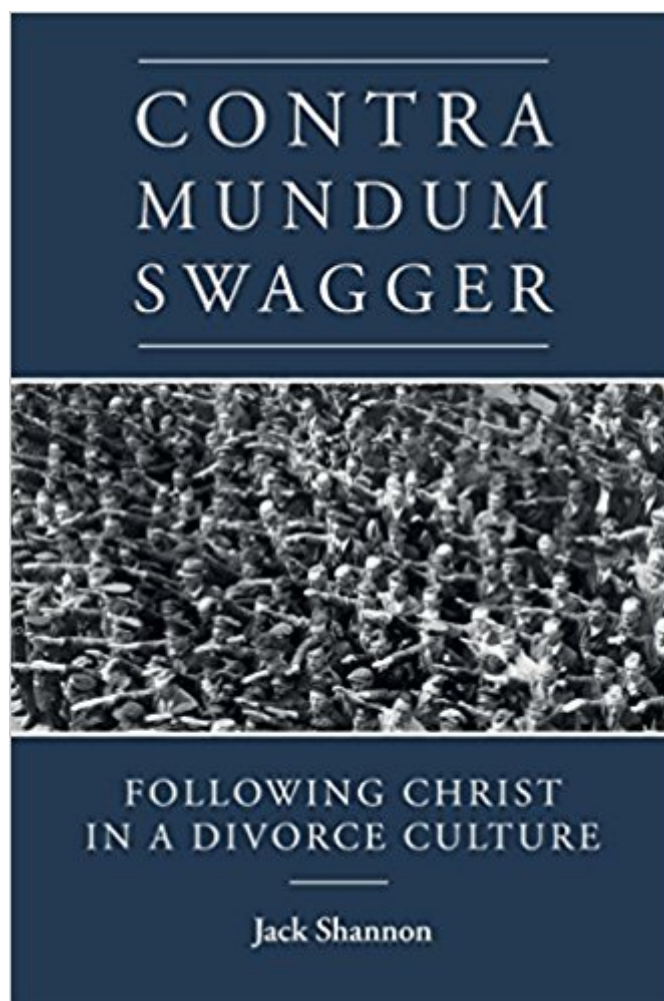


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Contra Mundum Swagger: Following Christ In A Divorce Culture



Synopsis

Western culture is degenerate. Conservative Christians have exerted considerable energy fighting cultural decline, but their efforts amount to minor skirmishes compared to the war that needs to happen with the church and her teaching of divorce and remarriage. The blame for our cultural depravity has generally been directed toward liberalism, feminism, and the homosexual agenda. *Contra Mundum Swagger* debunks that view. Christians shouldn't be directing their efforts in fighting these battles at first. It's a strategic mistake. Rather Christians ought to destroy the idols in the church that have perpetuated them. Jack Shannon admonishes church leadership who, by allowing divorce and remarriage to happen, have caused God's people to sin and lose their cultural dominance. At the same time, these figures have harshly judged the outside unbelieving world, but judgment begins in the house of the Lord. While the criticisms in this book are often difficult, they're imparted with love. Ultimately, *Contra Mundum Swagger* doesn't seek to point blame; it strives to help reform. Only by accepting how the church has erred can we take the necessary steps to call her to genuine repentance and rebuild a Christian society that lives by God's Word.

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Customer Reviews

Jack Shannon is a Christian. He received a BA in political economics from Hillsdale College and an MA in theology and letters from New Saint Andrews College. He completed ministerial training at Greyfriars Hall. Shannon has also loyally served his country as a Ground Intelligence Officer in the United States Marine Corps and as a platoon commander, both in Afghanistan and with the United

States— southern Border Patrol. Contra Mundum Swagger is his first book.

I remember how some voices in my generation deeply impacted the Body of Christ. They spoke and wrote about central issues like abortion, selfish living, giving your kids over to the state. Of course, it led to repentance and a more biblical lifestyle for many. Keith Green preached a convicting message of really living a sold out life for Jesus. People thought he was radical, even too strong. We saw the fruit and know he was right. Mary Pride impacted many women and marriages as she exposed cultural belief systems that were hindering women, families and culture. One friend said about her, "She doesn't write with a pen, but a sword! Looking back, those of us impacted by her words know she was right, though labeled as radical at the time. I mean, home-school your child? Who would every try to do something like that?? I have that feeling about this book by Jack Shannon. It takes the plain words of Jesus and spells out how we've gotten off the path of blessing and have lost serious strength due to tolerating the spirit spoken of in Revelation 2:20 People who pray for situations to change know that before you can ask for a "breakthrough" change, you must search your heart and ask Him to shine the light on anything that is amiss. After all, you don't want to be found to be a hypocrite. You don't want to ask for healing if you are knowingly running your body down. You would be foolish to ask for wisdom while you continue doing stupid things. You can't ask the Ruler of all things for help if your heart is not set in His direction. This book helps us see what God says about marriage and marriage breakdown due to sin/hardheartedness/difficult situations. As we can surmise, from the cover, the church has been taken over by a divorce culture, using their terms in a worldly "pragmatic" humanistic approach. We have greatly suffered for ignoring God's warnings. Just as with any sin that someone is trying to cover up, you will see how the sneaky twisting of words slithered it's way into mainstream Christianity. You will understand that we've asked for all the blessings and neglected some critical responsibilities. Through resonating examples from both testaments, the author shows how obedience is directly linked to blessing. The parallels to current "culture wars" are easily made. If you have been troubled at the external pressure on the church to capitulate to the immoral culture around it and you know the answer is deeper than shallow arguing of bible verses, you will want to spend time with this book. Highly Recommended!

I purchased this book after discussions with Mr. Shannon during the course of his writing and publication process. I had not, however, read the material prior to having it in hand, i.e. I bought it on the assumption that if it were to be found well-written, well-sourced, and well-exegeted, then it would

be worth keeping in my library and using as a tactical ministry tool. I wasn't purchasing it on the assumption I would fully agree with him or he would agree with me. My expectations were met. I will be keeping this book and re-reading it soon. It's neither too long nor too short. It's lively rather than dry, and that's because it's richly argued rather than just hot air. It's not a tome of quotations, but it's well-sourced and directive enough (pointing to opponents of this position as well as supporters) to guide interested parties. Some readers may be put off by Mr. Shannon's intense rhetoric, though it's nothing they haven't been exposed to already on the internet, television, in the workplace - or in the Bible. That all being said, while he isn't crass, he doesn't regret and is not neglectful to use invective like the prophets of old. One important point to note for would-be readers is that this book provides the basics in regard to the argument against remarriage while the spouse remains living, BUT THE PRIMARY AIM OF THE BOOK, as I see it, is to illustrate the connection between covenant unfaithfulness and the localized (in the family and church) and cultural consequences of unrepentance. To that end, the issue of divorce and remarriage is presented as the contemporary church's internal battleground. The argument in simplified form and without the author's references and points, though not necessarily by chapter, is: (1) Blessings and cursings remain part of the new covenant, and faithfulness and unfaithfulness gain their respective responses within the church community. Just as in the days of Gideon or Paul, reformation always starts with a judgment against the idols at home. Judging the culture is easy, judging the heart - not so much. Still, it's necessary. (2) From the days of the early church up to around the first 50 years of the Reformation, the majority consensus reading regarding marriage was Jesus' interpretation of Genesis, which insists permanency (noteworthy here is the logic that hardheartedness is never a biblically valid reason for violating covenants). (3) Remarriage apart from the death of the spouse violates Jesus' commands and teachings, resulting in vulnerability to prescribed covenant curses. To repent in these circumstances is likened to repenting in all other circumstances in the Bible (and evidenced in Ezra, it's separating from that which made you a lawbreaker and/or unclean). (4) The modern era's participation in unlawful associations does - to some degree - correlate with such curses' effects and shines forth (as all Biblical curses do) as a sign to turn from this practice, to triage those experiencing its effects, and to follow Jesus without fear of social ramifications. He makes this point to American church leaders in particular, who are likely to flinch in concern for how "well" their flocks would receive such a message (regardless of its truthfulness). A quotable on this point is: "if presented with the ultimatum 'Renounce Christ or die,' I don't doubt that many Christians would choose death. But when presented with the ultimatum 'Renounce Christ or your social life will die,' many Christians renounce Christ in order to keep their social lives." (5) Just as consequences result

from unfaithfulness, faithfulness brings forth its momentary as well as everlasting fruit. Any good exegesis that deals with curses must also deal with blessings and the author is fair to readers in this regard. He draws deeply on God's promises and causal propositions for faithful living. Mr. Shannon does well to properly exegete his texts - and I've messaged him personally about areas I think could be stronger, were less precise than others, or which I appreciated most. I encourage other readers to interact with him also. He's charitable in his responses. Anyone wanting to read this for excitement or for ammunition against the church has their motives misplaced. We don't read these kinds of books and messages to pursue disunity. We read them because we want to clearly interpret the times in light of the Scriptures and understand the message of God to His church, for apart from such, His people perish. There's more to note, but you should simply purchase the book. It's inexpensive, and as another commenter has noted, it reads in the holy-ferocity of Keith Green and Ravenhill, men whose tombs are now decorated but were not always so welcome with their "fire" when alive.

This is a must read for every follower of Christ. Most unfortunately, divorce and remarriage are topics that aren't properly taught or even taught at all in most churches today. There are many who are unknowingly walking in opposition to God's will and need to hear this very important truth. God bless Jack for being bold and standing on God's word.

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