



Rod Dreher is a journalist and the author of six books, including the *New York Times* bestsellers *The Benedict Option* (2017) and *Live Not by Lies* (2020). He is an Orthodox Christian, and his work covers the intersection of religion, culture, and politics. Dreher has worked as a columnist for the *New York Post*, *Dallas Morning News*, *National Review*, *American Conservative*, and *European Conservative*, and his work has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and *Time*. A native of Louisiana, Dreher lives in Budapest, Hungary, where he is a senior fellow at the Danube Institute.

I am finding unusual merit in this book by a rather odd-duck guy. His insights are exceptional, I think, and he collects viewpoints from a variety of interesting people. I'm just not sure how applicable most of his prescriptions are. But then, whose are anymore, if ever? He is Eastern Orthodox and extolls such traditions given to ritual and the ineffable, which I can resonate with; most, if not all, Protestant denominations are disappointing, with, the more Protestant they are, the more they talk too much. Sadly, I have no confidence that I would find what he upholds in the sad little Catholic church here, or in the (heretical, arch-conservative) Pius X (the "last true Pope" they say, with any "liberal" Pope like Francis being the Devil Himself) Catholic ...

... church in a nearby village, or in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church—the only Orthodox one I know of around here—across the border in Russell (where I get my hair cut by my friend, the inimitable mild rebel (lapsed?) Catholic “the Most Reverend” [my joke] Ubald). As with the Virgin Birth discussed in the Elaine Pagels article, I find the Gospel of Matthew tedious and blatantly full of agenda/cover-up. Mark is much better, raw, and Luke to my surprise is more palatable than Matthew because Luke makes no real attempt to hide that it is a collection of teachings (from different sources) that do not agree with one another, even contradict each other. Just like the two versions of Creation at the beginning of Genesis. The wise simpletons who believe the Bible “literally” have no real idea what they are talking about or doing. TJB