

Press Release

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Pastor Wrestles with God

The Reverend Doctor Leona Stucky will be presenting her recently published memoir, *The Fog of Faith: Surviving My Impotent God*, at the BookFest St. Louis on September 23, 2017. This riveting memoir tells the story of Leona's disappointment with and rejection of her Mennonite God before she became a minister. She graduated from Eden Theological Seminary of Webster Groves Missouri and served several Missouri congregations as interim pastor in the early 1980s, before most liberal churches called female ministers.

Dr. Stucky says she has spent a lifetime integrating the claims of faith with the awareness of God's failure to be the-historically-believed-in-God in our world today – a disappointment that plagues many believers. Jennifer Levin, in an article published in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* on June 9, 2017, described the early times of Dr. Stucky's faith journey this way: "When she was a little girl, Leona Stucky believed that a boogeyman lived in the closet at the top of the stairs and goblins huddled under her bed. As she headed up to sleep each night, the terrified four-year-old would pray out loud. . . . She wanted the monsters to know that she had God on her side. The ritual ended with Stucky taking a flying leap across the floor to her mattress before anything could grab her feet.

"No one knows," Dr. Stucky says, "who will carry experiences of God's interactive love with them into adulthood. Some people see expressions of God's love throughout their lives while others see the reality of suffering and can't imagine what a historically active God is doing."

Dr. Stucky does not focus on the sweet-sounding fixes of spiritual oneness or awakening mystery or of surrender to God, though she recognizes all of these as potentially helpful faith stances. Instead, she makes a case for the fluidity of doubt and faith and the reality of dis-belief as part of ongoing mental complexities. When consciously valuing evidence as the source for knowledge, people may disrupt faith stances and when needing help in times of trouble they may execute a kind of reverence for non-rational components of meaning.

While she can straightforwardly discuss dis-belief as well as faith now, after thirty years of psychotherapy and ministry practice, her memoir is **not** a theological treatise, but a raw faith experience that contended with trauma and tragedy, when avenues for help were impotent, including her God.

Ms. Magazine recommended this story as a great read. After noting Dr. Stucky's reckoning with domestic violence, Ms. Magazine described, "In her chilling and tumultuous memoir, Stucky recounts her attempts to play by the rules of the Mennonite Church that failed to protect her, and her embrace of feminist notions ... that finally led her to a new life."

Anyone who has journeyed spiritually, or wondered about the deadly difference between hope and trust, or contemplated the real-life impact of oppression or poverty will find this memoir a compelling, even thrilling, read.

Dr. Stucky will be sharing a booth with two other Santa Fe, NM, authors who also have strong heartland connections, Mary E. Neighbour and Camilla Kattell. You can learn more about all three authors by visiting their websites:

<https://lighthorsepublishing.com>

<http://speakrighton.com>

<http://thefogoffaith.com>

They invite you to their booth to engage in interactive play, lively discussions, and warm embraces.