



# **Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity (California Studies in Food and Culture)**

*R. Marie Griffith*

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"Fat People Don't Go to Heaven!" screamed a headline in the tabloid *Globe* in November 2000. The story recounted the success of the Weigh Down Workshop, the nation's largest Christian diet corporation and the subject of extensive press coverage from *Larry King Live* to the *New Yorker*. In the United States today, hundreds of thousands of people are making diet a religious duty by enrolling in Christian diet programs and reading Christian diet literature like *What Would Jesus Eat?* and *Fit for God*. Written with style and wit, far ranging in its implications, and rich with the stories of real people, *Born Again Bodies* launches a provocative yet sensitive investigation into Christian fitness and diet culture. Looking closely at both the religious roots of this movement and its present-day incarnations, R. Marie Griffith vividly analyzes Christianity's intricate role in America's obsession with the body, diet, and fitness.

As she traces the underpinning of modern-day beauty and slimness ideals—as well as the bigotry against people who are overweight—Griffith links seemingly disparate groups in American history including seventeenth-century New England Puritans, Progressive Era New Thought adherents, and late-twentieth-century evangelical diet preachers.

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