



# **Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire**

*Rebecca Ann Parker, Rita Nakashima Brock*

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Ann Parker, Rita Nakashima Brock

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During their first millennium, Christians filled their sanctuaries with images of Christ as a living presence-as a shepherd, teacher, healer, or an enthroned god. He is serene and surrounded by lush scenes, depictions of this world as paradise. Yet once he appeared as crucified, dying was virtually all Jesus seemed able to do, and paradise disappeared from the earth. *Saving Paradise* turns a fascinating new lens on Christianity, from its first centuries to the present day, asking how its early vision of beauty evolved into a vision of torture, and what changes in society and theology marked that evolution. It also retrieves, for today, a life-affirming Christianity that the world sorely needs.



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