



People in Glass Houses

By Tanya Levin

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The eighties were my formative years, and while other teenagers were gyrating to rock 'n' roll, we were praying for revival. We were taking communion, not cocaine. We treated virginity like a wedding present, not a cold sore.

And why wouldn't we? We were told we could be, we already were, anything we wanted to be... We were armed and dangerous. Armed with the power of God and dangerous in the eyes of Satan.

Tanya Levin grew up in the church that became Hillsong-the country's most ambitious, entrepreneurial and influential religious corporation.

People in Glass Houses tells how a small Assemblies of God church in a suburban school hall became a multi-million dollar tax-free enterprise and a powerful force in Australia today - and now the world.

Opening up the world of Christian fundamentalism, this is a powerful, personal and at times very funny exploration of an all-singing, all- swaying mega church.

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Editorial Review

Review

The Hills Christian Life Centre was founded in 1983 by an ambitious young pastor, Brian Houston. His father, Frank Houston, had played a key role in the late 1970s establishing a new Christian denomination in Australia - the Assemblies of God, an offshoot of the Pentecostal Church in the US. Tanya Levin delves into this early history. From the beginning, she explains, the AoG was a fundamentalist sect espousing biblical literalism and a strict patriarchal code of sexual morality; its members frequently practised exorcism and spoke in tongues. In the early days there was also an emphasis on spiritual authenticity. A strong influence was the Haight-Ashbury Jesus People Movement in San Francisco, which eschewed the many trappings and hypocrisies of formal religion. Tanya Levin was the sort of teenager that fundamentalist parents longed for. She was well-behaved, earnest and unworldly, immersed in the youth group at Hills Christian Life Centre. But psychologically Levin suffered a great deal and soon after she finished school her life mutated into a Christian horror movie. What Levin means is that the inner-city life she began to lead - as a uni student, social worker and single mother - would have been regarded with horror by many of the sheltered Christians she left behind. Levin admits she did it tough but through hardship she learnt about reality. When years later she came home to the church of her girlhood, she was able to see it for the travesty it had become.

[continues...] --Sydney Morning Herald

About the Author

Authors Bio, not available

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