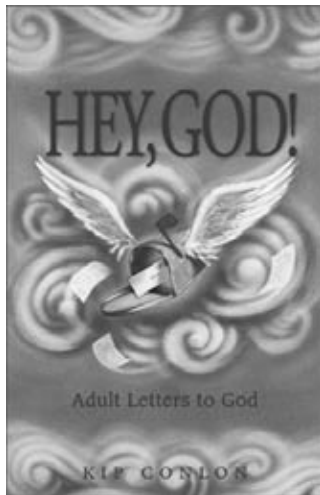
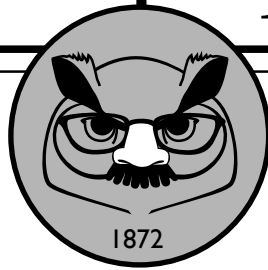


R E V I E W S



HEY, GOD!
SIDE-SPLITTINGLY FUNNY
LETTERS TO GOD
By Kip Conlon
Andrews McMeel, 2002

THE FIRST THING I should tell you about *Hey, God!* is that the soft, swirling pastel clouds on the cover are scandalously misleading. I was so ashamed to be seen reading this book around campus that I had to cover it with a brown paper bag before I could take it out of my room. “Hilarious Satire—NOT a Lame Compilation of Letters to God,” I wrote on the cover. Only then could I proceed to read and review *Hey, God!* without fear of ridicule.

This is a pity, because as it turns out, *Hey, God!* really *is* a work of satire, and a funny one at that. Stand-up comedian Kip Conlon wrote the “letters” contained herein, and anyone who picks up *Hey, God!* looking for a sappy companion volume to *Children’s Letters to God* is in for a nasty shock. The publisher describes Conlon’s letters as “playful” and “tongue-in-cheek,” but the majority are surprisingly dark: “Dear God,” writes a 30-year-old, “So I coveted my neighbor’s wife, had a cup of coffee

with her, then committed adultery. Whoops!” A man in Lansing scribbles, “I did as you commanded... Awaiting instruction on what to do with the corpses.”

The extremely fonty layout of *Hey God!* does tax the eye a bit, but for the most part the presentation is artful and appropriate (aside from the cover), and the letters are consistently amusing. *Hey, God!* is worth the \$9.95 cover price, but be prepared to look for it in the “inspirational” section of the bookstore. Have your paper bag ready.



HALLELUJAH!
SING THE EPISCOCATS AND
FRIENDS
The Episcopalian, Inc., 1988

HEY, GOD! might be a poor gift for your favorite grandparent or cleric, but the *Episcocats* provide religiously-inspired whimsy that the whole family can enjoy! I happened upon this marvelous little volume

in the bookstall at Christ Church in downtown New Haven. The shop carried several books in the *Episcocats* series, but apparently I was the first to ever purchase one. “Where did you find this?!” they marveled, trying to locate a price listing for *Hallelujah!* in their inventory. Eventually they made up a price: “How does ten dollars sound? Is that fair?” Naturally I would have paid that sum many times over, so determined was I to own this book.

The *Episcocats* books compile photos of cats and dogs—apparently denizens of Episcopalian rectories—and pair them with captions suggesting that the animals participate in the hilarious day-to-day work of parish administration. Seated atop a typewriter in the parish office, a Siamese cat muses, “I wonder what Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John would have done with this kind of equipment.” In another droll scenario, a cocker spaniel addresses a kitten: “I’m the rector. You’re the assistant. What I say goes!” To the untrained eye a kitty on a tree branch might appear to be stalking a bird, but if he’s an Episcocat he has higher goals on his little kitty mind: “I thought if I climbed high enough, I might see God.” Out of the mouths of cats, Lord.

I cannot recommend this book enough to pet-lovers, Episcopalians, and anyone who secretly admires either group. When it comes to purchasing a copy, I can only suggest you try the basement shop at Christ Church, if you’re in New Haven, or *alibris.com*, if you’re not. I promise it will be worth your while. For my part, I’m going to start working on my own series of faith-related pet books—the possibilities are endless. *Catholicats...* *Judaicats...* *Agnosticats...* look for them in a church bookstore near you!

—WILSON