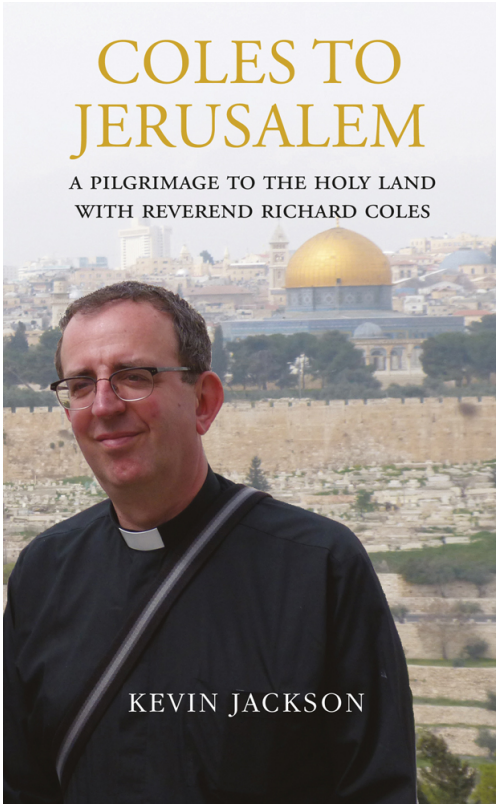
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Coles to Jerusalem

A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Reverend Richard Coles

Kevin Jackson

Richard Coles

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- Atheist Kevin Jackson's diary of his pilgrimage with his friend the Reverend Richard Coles, 'Britain's best-loved vicar', to the historic sites of the Holy Land

On Easter, 2014, Britain's best-loved vicar, the Rev. Richard Coles, led a pilgrimage to all the major historic sites of the Holy Land: from Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee in the North, via Jericho and the Jordan River, to Bethlehem and, finally, Jerusalem. All of the pilgrims in his care were practising Christians, except one: the writer Kevin Jackson, a diffident and sympathetic atheist intrigued by the chance to take part in this modern-day version of an ancient act of piety, and to learn some more about his old friend, the media clergyman.

Coles to Jerusalem is Kevin Jackson's light-hearted diary of that pilgrimage, and a close-up portrait of Richard Coles both as priest and as man. As the journey proceeds, Coles reminisces at length about his past life as a rock star and radical gay agitator, his new life as a spiritual leader and a popular broadcaster on BBC radio and television, and the strange, unpredictable path that led him from self-destructive debauchery to faith and vocation.

With a lively supporting cast of fellow pilgrims, ***Coles to Jerusalem*** ranges among the magnificence of ancient monuments and the banalities of the guided tour, the grim political background of contemporary Israel and the comedy of a group of idiosyncratic English folk abroad, the intensity of worship and the lightness of banter. It will be irresistible to all admirers of Richard Coles, who has contributed a foreword; and a revelation to those who have never encountered his wisdom and warmth.

Kevin Jackson is a visiting professor at University College London. He has produced television and radio programs for the BBC, been the Assistant Arts Editor of the Independent, and has written more than 20 books. These include*A Ruskin Alphabet, The Worlds of John Ruskin*, and *Carnal*.

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