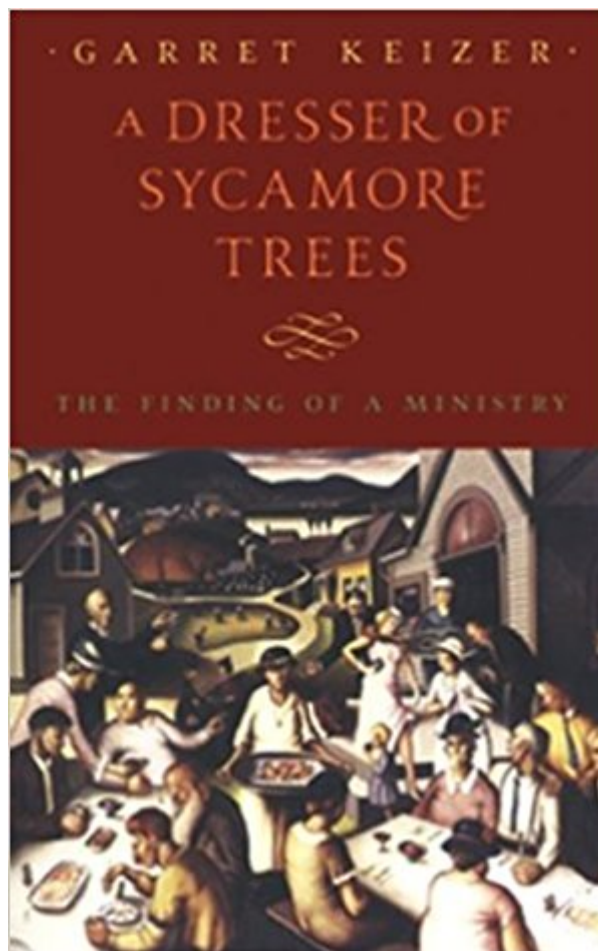




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A Dresser Of Sycamore Trees: The Finding Of A Ministry (Nonpareil Book)



Synopsis

The prophet Amos, a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees, had a parallel, and more challenging, calling as a shepherd of human souls. So too does Garret Keizer, an Episcopalian minister to the community of Island Pond in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. This profoundly contemporary book displays not only Keizer's knowledge of life's small practicalities (winding the church clock, shopping for groceries), but also his insights about faith and the mysterious ways of God. With an eye attuned to both the pleasures and foibles that make life on earth so rich, he presents a refreshing and often hilarious account of the hands-on work needed to maintain a parish and sustain its spirit. He is a man who believes that God's intentions, if seldom apparent, are inevitably compassionate and compelling.

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Customer Reviews

In Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, Keizer, a lay Episcopal minister and author of *No Place But Here*, finds the end of a winding path that took him to the small, rural parish of Island Pond. There he is husband, father and high school teacher, and attends as well to the spiritual lives of communicants, many of them immigrants from other lives, who reside at what initially seems to him "the end of the world." Keizer's anecdotal account pauses frequently to marvel at what he has received from his informal, even unorthodox ministry. He pays tribute to his ordained mentors, particularly one whose "moxie, his jovial evangelism, his blithe testing of every assumption and pretense, his daring of

himself to go an extra mile--and then another" appear to be echoed in Keizer's personal journey. The serendipitous blending of faith and work in one man's life is not without humor, making this an arresting and entertaining journal. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In this follow-up to *No Place But Here* (LJ 9/1/88) Keizer, an Episcopal minister, reflects on a decade of ministry to his parishioners and the townspeople of Island Pond, Vermont. He confronts humanity in all its complexity and seeks to convince the reader that no locale is too remote to benefit from the redemptive work of Christ. Keizer exhibits a refreshing theological acumen and writes with verve and compassion from a viewpoint informed and shaped by the church he serves. His book's title is taken from Amos, an Old Testament prophet who also saw himself as a layperson called by God to minister to human souls. His usually compelling, sometimes humorous, and often moving nonfiction account deserves a wide readership.- Jonathan D. Lauer, *Messiah Coll.*, Grantham, Pa. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a simply written story about a man who moves to a remote area to be a high school teacher and ends up becoming a small church's minister as well. I enjoyed the book because Mr. Keizer is good at describing the various people in his town and congregation. You can see them and hear them when they speak through his words. Plus, he is blatantly honest about his doubts and feelings, his questions and concerns about their town, the church and sometimes even his faith or perspective on the world. Being a minister myself I could relate wholeheartedly to some of his thoughts. In fact, I have been considering writing a book about my ministry with my wife, and this book only confirmed it is worth writing. The only part I didn't care for was his assisting a man who desired to have surgery and change from being a man to a woman. He sees it as an act of service. I see it as aiding and abetting someone who is self-destructing. I see it as the moral equivalent of buying dope for an addict. Our ideas of serving, grace and sin are apparently far different from one another. Overall a good read.

Good book but had a hard time staying with it.

It lived up to my expectations! Ramona Slater

This humorous but deeply spiritual collection of stories in one man's walk of faith is truly inspiring. My book group read it, and we all agree that it is a book to keep handy as the chapters stand as independent essays. Any Christians from liturgical faiths will relate to Keizer's journey. His insights into women and the church are enlightening.

Thanks to the seller. I had read this many years ago, and gave away my copy. Now, I may order more to have on hand as gifts. It is a definite "must read" for all Christians.

This book is a great source of many really good guidelines for life and vocation. Plus, it has some really wonderful stories of people and their way of life.

I am shocked that the publisher would describe this book as "a surprise critical sensation." Its prose alerts us to one Christian's view of the invisible Christ, manifest in people, things, and incidences. It is excellently, thought provokingly written. I cannot with my own words evoke the message of this book, so I will defer to the author, in a quote from his work. . . . "It is about mysticism and orthodoxy, ordinariness and sanctity, unity and diversity and about the intersection of all these things in a design that looks to me like a cross." -pg. 150 Read this book because it is about a common man doing the uncommon and thereby transforming his world, our world, into a place "set apart" for divine possibilities.

Garret Keizer's book, *A Dresser of Sycamore trees* is a thoughtful and carefully written book which describes the "everyday" work of the Holy Spirit in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. Keizer's descriptions of his friends and neighbors in this small town are tremendous. He does an amazing job seeing God's presence in his everyday work and ministry as a vicar of a small church and a high school English teacher. He reminds me of what St. Francis is quoted to have said, "Preach the gospel. If necessary, speak." Garret Keizer preaches with his actions and through his descriptions of the lives of "ordinary" people. This is a must - read.

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