

Ed Dobson, onetime Moral Majority leader, dies at 65

by [Adelle M. Banks](#) in the [February 3, 2016](#) issue

Ed Dobson, a onetime architect of the religious right who later spent a year “living like Jesus,” died December 26 after 15 years with Lou Gehrig’s disease, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. He was 65.

Born in Northern Ireland, Dobson was the retired pastor of Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 2009 he authored *The Year of Living Like Jesus*.

“The way of Jesus is very hard,” Dobson said. “If you take his teaching seriously, it will mess you up.”

Part of that wrestling led him to vote for a Democratic presidential candidate for the first time, even though he disagreed with Barack Obama about abortion.

“I felt that Mr. Obama was closer to the essence of Jesus’ teachings—compassion for the poor and the oppressed, being a peacemaker, loving your enemies, and other issues,” he wrote in an explanation of his decision.

It was quite a turnaround for Dobson, who had served as an aide to Jerry Falwell and was one of the lieutenants of the now-defunct Moral Majority in the late 1970s and early 1980s, helping Ronald Reagan defeat President Jimmy Carter in the 1980 election.

“I believe that people, myself included, were well-intentioned, and our goals were noble, but we got caught up in the illusion that politicians really cared for us, and that political change would bring moral change,” he said in 1999. —Religion News Service

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