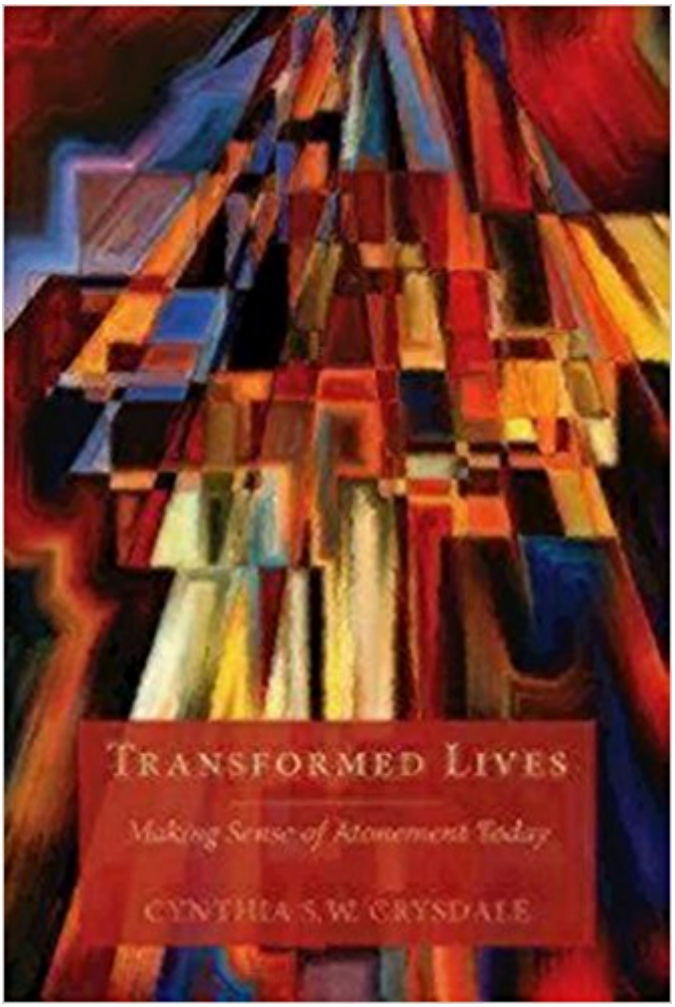
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Transformed Lives: Making Sense Of Atonement Today



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Synopsis

Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â For people whose eyes glaze over when questions of salvation/redemption/atonement come up Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Written by a theologian, but with a lay audience in mind Even theologians have had different ideas about the theology of atonement; how are the rest of supposed to understand it? This book is a good place to start. Crysdale, whose background in both psychology and theology gives her a unique perspective, presents an overview of the history of the theology of atonement, addressing clearly the difficulties around this concept, and bringing us with her to a contemporary understanding. Ã¢â ¬Å“Please join me in welcoming an informative, thoughtful, creative, and persuasive book on the atonement. St. Paul and even AnselmÃ¢â ¬â„¢s contributions to this multi-faceted doctrine are rendered accessible here. I only wish CrysdaleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s volume had been available during my fifty years of teaching Anglican theology. Please donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t miss reading her contemporary, scholarly perspectives. She has much to teach us.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Fredrica Harris Thompsett, author of We Are Theologians Ã¢â ¬Å“No Ã¢â ¬Ëœdoctrine Ã¢â ¬â„¢ has more distorted the living of lives called Christian than substitutionary satisfaction theories of the atonement. So thank God we now have CrysdaleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s constructive account of the atonement that helps us see that we do not need a theory of the atonement because what God has done in the crucifixion is not a violent exchange but rather GodÃ¢â ¬â„¢s way of befriending his people. I hope that thisÃ Â well researched book will be widely read.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Stanley Hauerwas, author of Without Apology

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Customer Reviews

CynthiaÃ Â S. W. Crysdale is Professor of Christian Ethics and Theology at the School of Theology, University of the South, Sewanee. She has a BA in psychology from York University in Toronto, Canada, and an MA and PhD from St. MichaelÃ¢â ¬â„¢s College in the University of Toronto. She taught for 18 years at the Catholic University of America, in Washington, DC, before moving to Sewanee, and is the author of several books and articles exploring the topic of atonement.

This book was required reading for the Education for Ministry class that I'm enrolled in at my Episcopal church. Cynthia Crysdale, while challenging me, also gave me a new perspective on subjects ranging from original sin to the death and resurrection of Christ. As the title states, she did make sense of atonement in this short book which demanded careful reading. As testament to the interest this book engendered, our class had a three hour fascinating discussion on her hypotheses. I recommend this book to anyone searching for answers to fundamental theological questions.

In seminary, a classmate looked at me across the lunchroom table and said, "I hope before we get out of here, someone will explain what it means to me that Jesus died for our sins." In this book, Cynthia Crysdale gives an understandable, comprehensive look at how faithful Christians have struggled with this question since the earliest days of the church. Moving from the first New Testament writings, to the church fathers, to Augustine, Anselm (whom she almost rehabilitates) and up to modern philosophers and scholars like Rene Girard and Walter Wink, she manages to give the curious layperson or clergy person a look at how the idea of Christ's work on the cross has shifted over the centuries. Crysdale's own work on atonement, as published in her 2000 book Embracing Travail: Retrieving the Cross Today, is also discussed. It's worth reading on its own to get Crysdale's well thought-out interpretation on the place of the cross. It's important for believers to know that there are many ways of interpreting what it means that "Jesus died for our sins" and that the standard substitutionary theory (we are so bad we deserved the ultimate punishment, but Jesus took our punishment in our place and God killed him instead of us) is not the only way to understand this work of salvation. I enjoyed that she worked to explain what Anselm (the traditional "father" of the substitutionary atonement theory) actually wrote. I wish she had explained further how Anselm's theory of justification turned into the modern substitutionary theory that is essentially divine child abuse. How did THAT idea work its way into Christian thinking? Overall, this is an excellent, readable, basic explanation that can help Christians approach the concept of Christ's sacrificial death with deeper understanding.

An excellent resource for both study and personal use!It is impossible to deny that medieval theologies of atonement are problematic. They have always been so, but the intellectual and practical challenges of the modern world reveal those flaws all the more starkly. But, while it is all well and good to criticize, it is far more challenging work to reclaim the central miracle of the Christian story.Crysdale has approached this task with humility, expertise, AND (to contradict another reviewer) a deep sensitivity to the scripture, tradition, and reason that have got us this far.The book should appeal both to those who seek intellectual treatment of the subject and to those who prefer the witness of the stories of people's lives.Is this the last word on atonement theology? No. Nor does it claim to be. Transformed Lives is to me an invitation to re-engage deeply and seriously with how we talk about Jesus' life and death at work in our own lives. Furthermore, as theology has always been an evolving, changing endeavor, Crysdale brings to bear some powerful theological voices from the late-twentieth century to today to whom we should pay close attention.

The Episcopal Church stands on a three legged stool, quoting Hooker and farther back reflecting on Aquinas; which requires scripture, reason, AND tradition for the stool to stand. Remove just one and the stool falls. Ms. Crysdale obviously doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t ascribe to that historic theory. Here, she has presented us with a text that concerns itself rather more with psychology and social justice than any of our faithÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s three foundations and seeks to justify GodÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s saving grace within that construct. While I canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t fault everything she offers, I will suggest that most of my marginalia is of a negative, rather than positive nature. Using 21st Century knowledge and rhetoric she tries to explain away and examine atonement in light of science, disregarding ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“mysteryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• that by its very nature must remain unknown. By definition, FAITH ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“is confidence or trust in a person or thing; or the observance of an obligation from loyalty; or fidelity to a person, promise, engagement; or a belief not based on proof.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Far too many pages herein were devoted to proofing her point of viewMy understanding is this book was prepared and chosen as an interlude text for EfM Year ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“DÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• study and I suggest time spent reading it could be much better allocated in another tome. The book seems pedantic, full of words not common to many if not most, and reads very dryly. I consider myself well read, possessing a large vocabulary and admit that had to research several terms and words she used. I forced myself to finish it and donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t feel I received any benefit from doing so. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“SurdÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• is a word she frequently used and as best I can ascertain its

meaning is akin to absurd, which is basically how I saw this book.

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