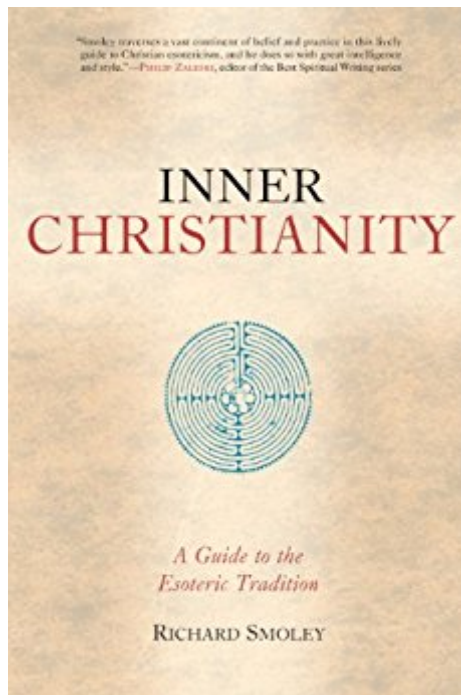


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Inner Christianity: A Guide To The Esoteric Tradition



Synopsis

InnerChristianity is the first introduction to mystical and esoteric Christianity for the general reader. It speaks from a nonsectarian point of view, unearthing insights from the whole of the Christian tradition, orthodox and heretical, famous and obscure. The esoteric tradition has traditionally searched for meanings that would yield a deeper inner knowledge of the divine. While traditional Christianity draws a timeline from Adam's Fall to the Day of Judgment, the esoteric often sees time as folding in on itself, bringing every point to the here and now. While the Church fought bitterly over dogma, the esoteric borrowed freely from other traditions—Kabbalah, astrology, and alchemy—in their search for metaphors of inner truth. Rather than basing his book around exponents of esoteric doctrine, scholar Richard Smoley concentrates on the questions that are of interest to every searching Christian. How can one attain direct spiritual experience? What does "the Fall" really tell us about coming to terms with the world we live in? Can we find salvation in everyday life? How can we ascend, spiritually, through the various levels of existence? What was Christ's true message to humankind? From the Gospel of Thomas to A Course in Miracles, from the Jesus Prayer to alchemy and Tarot, from Origen to Dante to Jung, Richard Smoley sheds the light of an alternative Christianity on these issues and more.

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Customer Reviews

To appreciate my comments it is perhaps necessary to tell you a little bit of where I am coming from. I was raised in an essentially non-practicing Eastern Orthodox family, where the church was more of a cultural and identity institution. Combine this with the innate belief in the supremacy of rationality, and I was at a point where I believed that Christianity was nothing more than a social institution with rituals to just perpetuate itself. Theologically, I felt that the doctrine of original sin was something I could not believe. I also became convinced of the reality of re-incarnation, that Karma is not a "punishment" meted out by a "judge", but a universal principle of justice flowing from the fact that we create our destiny because of what we will into our lives. I thought the "faith only" formula was a socially useful convention, but that it did not answer our needs as intellectually curious human beings. So overall, one can see that by this point, it was hard for me to say I was a Christian according to the orthodox definition. This led me to read a lot of New Age, Buddhist, Hindu, Gnostic and even some channelled literature. If there was a thread combining these, it was that we are spiritual beings, who can realize our true nature through internal contemplation. I found this book, curiously enough, in the metaphysical section at a Borders shop, and not among the other Christian literature. To my mind, the esoteric tradition described in this book starts by acknowledging the gnostic path. That is, inner knowledge of God is possible. It extends this by stating the inner journey is a journey back to our oneness with God and with our true nature.

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