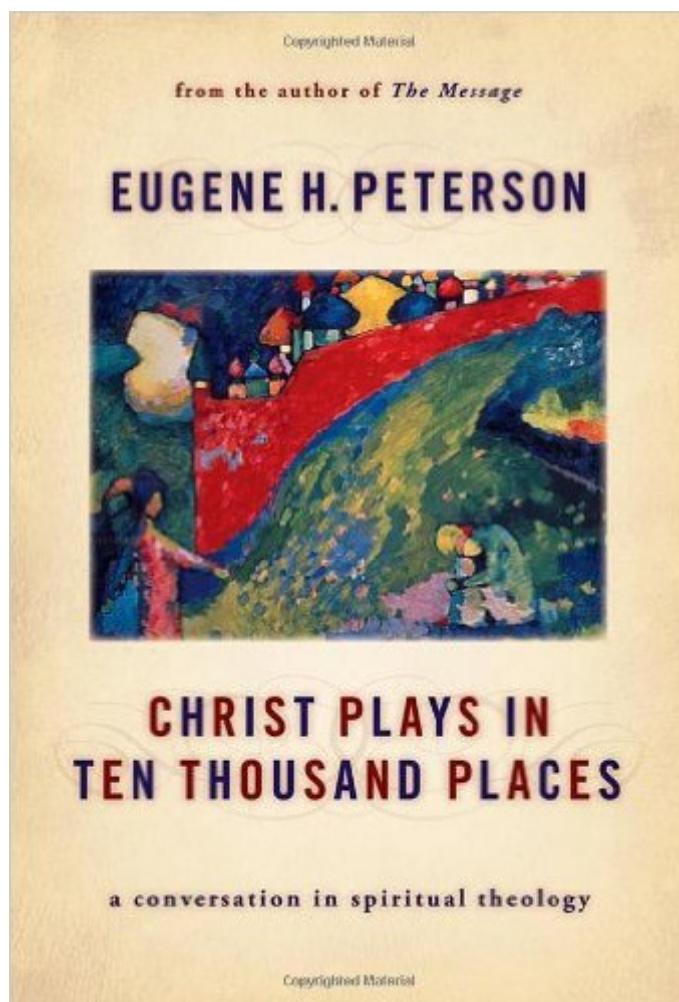


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Christ Plays In Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation In Spiritual Theology



Synopsis

Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places reunites spirituality and theology in a cultural context where these two vital facets of Christian faith have been rent asunder. Lamenting the vacuous, often pagan nature of contemporary American spirituality, Eugene Peterson here firmly grounds spirituality once more in Trinitarian theology and offers a clear, practical statement of what it means to actually live out the Christian life. Writing in the conversational style that he is well known for, Peterson boldly sweeps out the misunderstandings that clutter conversations on spiritual theology and refurnishes the subject only with what is essential. As Peterson shows, spiritual theology, in order to be at once biblical and meaningful, must remain sensitive to ordinary life, present the Christian gospel, follow the narrative of Scripture, and be rooted in the "fear of the Lord" -- in short, spiritual theology must be about God and not about us. The foundational book in a five-volume series on spiritual theology emerging from Peterson's pen, Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places provides the conceptual and directional help we all need to live the Christian gospel well and maturely in the conditions that prevail in the church and world today.

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Customer Reviews

Eugene Peterson impressed me long before his world-wide fame with "The Message." Since one of his earliest books ("Run with the Horses"), I've been drawn to his combination of poetry, prose, power, passion, and personal honesty. In "Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places," Peterson begins his "Opus"--a proposed five-volume set on spiritual theology. Spiritual theology, a common enough

term in Church history, needs defining today. Simply stated, it is a theology of the spiritual life--what the Bible teaches about how we love God and love others (Matthew 22:35-40). As Peterson puts it, "The single most important thing to understand in spiritual theology is that it is not about theology ... it is a cultivated disposition to live theology." As the sub-title suggests, Peterson writes in his normal conversational, soulful, narrative manner, explaining and exploring the nuances of the Spirit. As always, his writing is "earthy"--real, raw, captivating, and convicting. In a day when Christian authors tend to write from extremes (either theology or spirituality), it's refreshing to see Peterson unite (reunite) the two. Not only refreshing--it's essential. An accurate understanding of spirituality must combine community (how we relate in Christ), content (what the Bible says about our relationships), character (who we are from the inside out), and competence (how we mature relationally) all in the context of Church history (listening to the voices of our ancestors in the faith). If you're looking for a "how to" manual, you may find yourself disappointed. That's simply not Peterson's style or intent. However, if you're hoping for a foundation upon which to build your spiritual life, then you can find none better than "Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places." Reviewer: Dr. Robert W. Kellemen is the author of "Spiritual Friends: A Methodology of Soul Care and Spiritual Direction," "Soul Physicians: A Theology of Soul Care and Spiritual Direction," and the forthcoming "Sacred Companions: A History of Soul Care and Spiritual Direction."

I have been searching for 50 years for a cogent explanation of the spiritual life. I have found that in Eugene Peterson's magisterial book, "Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places." I hope if you make the time to read this book, you also will be edified by his remarkable insights into the proper way to live the Christian life. His observations into North American abuses of spirituality are right on target. His explanation of Deuteronomy is breathtaking. Most excitingly, this is merely the first of a planned five-book series. I particularly appreciate his refusal to adopt the American Calvinist mentality that says all effort and all failure is our responsibility. That false understanding has infected the Roman Catholic church since the 17th century. His appreciation of creation and our celebration of creation in worship, his deep understanding of history's failures and our acceptance of those failures in sacrifice are two of the most powerful sections of a book I have been rereading all winter and spring and summer.

There are way too many books on Christian spirituality that do lip service (or no service) to an informed biblical theology. I gratefully report that Peterson's work is a wonderfully composed addition to the conversation on spirituality from a soundly biblical perspective. Peterson lays the

groundwork for this first of a proposed five volume set on spiritual theology, by defining the terms he uses, setting the stage from the grounding texts from which he will work out his theology of the spiritual life, etc... The book's sections are long (only three chapters for a 338 page text), but he takes his primary ideas of Christ in creation, history and community and formats each section against the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus. In each chapter, Peterson then deals with the main threat against each of these facets of spirituality, includes two grounding texts per chapter to elaborate on the spiritual aspect- one from the OT and one from the NT and then develops the implications of life in these realms. Most of the books on spirituality that I have read are merely footnotes on the classics (John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Bernard of Clairveaux, Blaise Pascal, Francois Fenelon, etc...). Peterson's work is original, brilliantly developed, creative, readable, practical and (for you preachers) quotable!! This WILL BE a modern classic!!

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