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The Transforming Moment



Synopsis

In this groundbreaking study of convictional knowing, Dr. James E. Loder (Professor of the Philosophy of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary) builds a framework for understanding human experiences in which ordinary modes of apprehending reality are suspended by the startling intrusion of a convincing insight -- which often arrives with convictional force and transformational power. Interweaving psychology and Christian theology, Loder establishes the five-part pattern of convictional insight in the arts, sciences, the practice of psychotherapy, human development, and spirituality. "Personally powerful, spiritually sophisticated, therapeutically sensitive -- a resource for all who long to find the Face of God in the voids we face." -- James B. Ashbrook

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Customer Reviews

Loder helped me move with integrity towards an integration of experience, action, and Christian Orthodoxy. Being mentored by him helped me come to understand the relationship of my human spirit to the Holy Spirit. My ability to exercise discernment and engage with a living relationship with God has been enriched by reading and re-reading this book. Hearing the still small voice of the "Spirit" has helped me avoid harm and even death in a challenging ministry context in Los Angeles CA. I do not think I would have learned to trust God in the ways that I do without Dr. Loder's influence. The one review that I saw here seems to have missed his understanding of the Holy Spirit all together... which is a communal expression of the Trinity and it is through the grace of God the church comes to being and only by that same "Spirit" can enter into fellowship -- I John 1. His prophetic stance with Kierkegaard may make it seem that he's individualistic. That is far from the

truth... Loder understands that we can not simply be socialized into the faith and call that Christianity. The work of God must cut through the core of our beings and ego defenses. We may have times when we must walk out our own convictions apart from the support of any community. This is not an easy read. Loder is dense and best understood in the context of dialogue, practice, and fellowship. I have a standing offer with my friends that if they read this book ... I will treat them out to dinner or coffee to discuss it. This book helped me tremendously with my understanding of my own epistemology. And it continues to help me look at my life experiences and to see their place in shaping how I see the world. Loder deepened my ability to dialogue with others that see the world differently than I do - while remaining the convicted person that I am. I am deeply grateful for Dr. Loder's influence in my life. This is a good book to get introduced to some of his thinking.

I took a course from Loder at Princeton a few years before his death. I was given an A, but I can't say I understood most of the material. It was over my head, and most of my fellow students, but it was a good experience. He wept every class and we evangelicals (a distinct and embattled minority) knew something spiritual was happening. Reading, and re-reading, this book is a lot like that. It drew me in to an experience that somehow seemed deep and spiritual, but it is hard to articulate why. Now I know there were students who, after many classes, finally 'got it' about Loder. They could offer a much more lucid review. But I think I represent many readers with my reaction. Maybe that's why this is the first review written after 17 years. The opening illustration of Loder's car accident and near death makes me weep every time I read it. I know that sounds melodramatic, but it is true. So how do we sort out his approach? I guess the best explanation I can divine -- Loder is a learned, highly complex marriage of Piaget and Freudian psychological theories with Kierkegaardian existentialist theology. Loder argues for a highly individualistic transformational education, invoked by some sort of experience of crisis. The dark night of the soul brings the possibility of the inbreaking experience of God's grace. Of course, transformation, through experience, is Biblical, and broadly speaking has continuity with good Christian tradition from Edwards to the Puritans to medieval mystics to desert fathers to modern evangelicals. But Loder's individualism and existentialism, not based in community (even if it is EXPRESSED in community), makes it less satisfying than some on that list. Well, this is wildly oversimplified, and I wish one of his learned disciples would climb in. But I read this book like I read most novels, for a moving emotional experience, not for teaching. BTW -- Brent Webb-Mitchell of Duke offers an interesting summary and analysis of Loder in his *Christly Gestures* (2003) book.

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