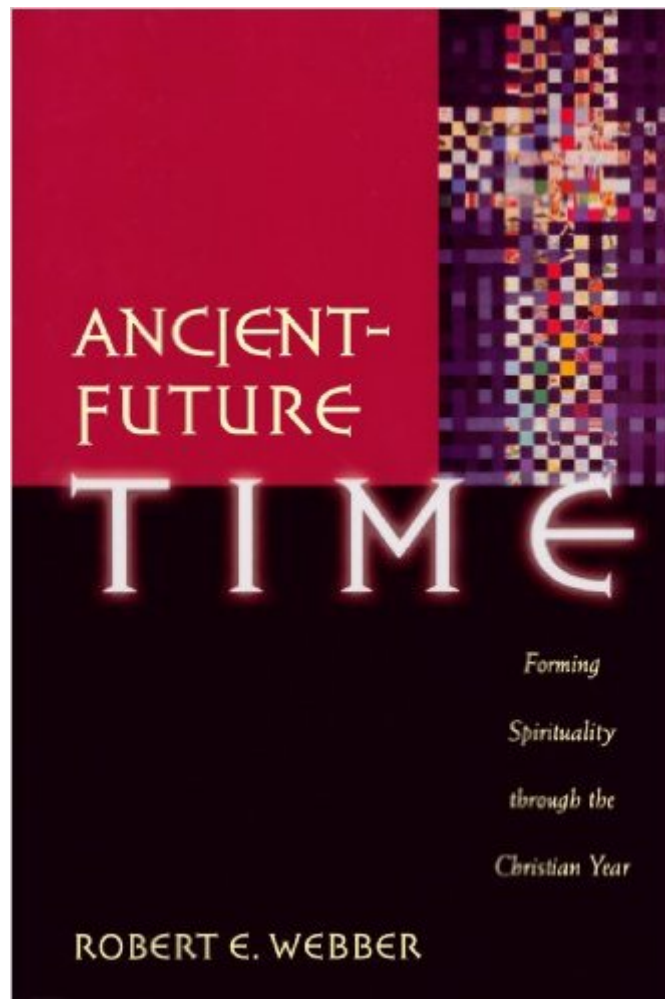


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Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality Through The Christian Year



Synopsis

Millions of Christians worldwide follow the liturgical Christian calendar in their worship services and in their own personal devotions. The seasons of the Christian year connect believers of diverse backgrounds and offer the sense of unity Jesus desired. Robert Webber believes that we can get even more out of the Christian calendar. He contends that through its rich theological meanings the Christian year can become a cycle for evangelism and spiritual formation. He offers pastors, church leaders, and those of the "younger evangelical" mind-set practical steps to help achieve this end, including preaching texts and worship themes for Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Advent, and Christmas.

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Customer Reviews

Robert Webber has written an inspiring guide especially for Christians who are learning to appropriate the practice of observing the Christian Liturgical Calendar. He does a good job in explaining how this ancient-future discipline is a great aid to spiritual formation and lays out the full Calendar of seasons from Advent to Pentecost and the special festive days such as Baptism of the Lord, Transfiguration, Good Shepherd, Christ the King Sundays. By reflecting on the themes of these special days and seasons, he helps us enter more deeply into the celebration. He also suggests the peculiar disciplines such as fasting, baptism, giving and cake-cutting (!) that go with the respective festivals as well as questions for our group/individual study and reflections. To be sure, it can be pretty exhausting trying to read it from cover to cover. It is better to be used as a

reference as we move through the liturgical seasons like trekking the himalayas with a good map and an experienced Sherpa. I have found this approach to be extremely nourishing and formative. Webber is a wise guide in the area of spiritual formation and he writes with clarity and unusual eloquence. I thank God for his invaluable and lasting legacy.P/S: For readers who have reservations about festive observance as a valid Christian discipline in view of texts like Col 2:16-17 and Gal 4:10, they should take heart that these texts have more to do with clinging back to the now, from the Christian POV, obsolete Jewish festivals which were a shadow of Christ, not the reality. Clearly the issue is not with the observance of seasons and times per se (which the early Church evidently practised such as the Lord's Day and plausibly Easter) but the failure to recognize the *Time* of God's inbreaking kingdom in Jesus the Christ.

This is actually my second time reading this marvelous book. I think more than reading this work by Robert Webber, one lives through it. This has been my experience...a life-changing experience.I think one of the greatest gifts to Christian spiritual formation is the Liturgical Calendar or Christian Year. This claim says a lot coming from a Protestant Evangelical. I can say without equivocation that this observation and living into the seasons of the Christ life have done more to grow deeply in my faith than any other discipline I have observed during the course of my spiritual journey to date.I have a number of resources teaching about this particular discipline and practice. I appreciate Dr. Webber's contribution among my favorites for several reasons. Reason One: He speaks from an Evangelical position. I like this not because of a particular disposition or doctrine, but because I am familiar with his language as he is my own. Our "family of origin" is similar. Reason Two: the book is written very clearly, concise, and linear. I did not have an innate sense of what the Christian calendar was all about, having never practiced living through the seasons. This book provided the framework and detail necessary to build out from; other books have been helpful in ways that added texture to the work Dr. Webber has provided here. Reason Three: The tables, charts, and recommended resources (additional reading suggestions), Bibliography, and Notes section have proved themselves invaluable in my continued learning on this great discipline.

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