



Inner River: A Pilgrimage to the Heart of Christian Spirituality

Kyriacos C. Markides

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“With his engaging blend of travelogue, conversations with a wise and charismatic spiritual father, and musings on the big questions of life and death, Professor Markides takes us as companions on his journey of discovery. The insights that he communicates with such enthusiasm are timely ones: here at last is a writer who challenges the seeker after mystical understanding and Eastern spirituality to discover Christianity.” —Dr. Elizabeth Theokritoff, independent scholar and co-editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*

In *Inner River*, Kyriacos Markides—scholar, researcher, author, and pilgrim—takes us on a thrilling quest into the heart of Christian spirituality and mankind’s desire for a transcendent experience of God. From Maine’s rugged shores to a Cypriot monastery to Greece’s remote Mt. Athos and, ultimately, to an Egyptian desert, Markides encounters a diverse cast of characters that allows him to explore the worlds of the natural and the supernatural, of religion and spirit, and of the seen and the unseen.

Inner River will appeal to a wide range of readers, from Christians seeking insights into their religion and its various expressions to scholars interested in learning more about the mystical way of life and wisdom that have been preserved in the heart of Orthodox spirituality. Perhaps most important, however, is the bridge it offers contemporary readers to a Christian life that is balanced between the worldly and the spiritual.

Inner River: A Pilgrimage to the Heart of Christian Spirituality Details

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From Reader Review Inner River: A Pilgrimage to the Heart of Christian Spirituality for online ebook

Jane says

At the risk of offending all who revere this author, I thought his conceit was more annoying than usual. I also felt there was unnecessary detail as to the minutiae of daily life. However, when the author lets the voices of holy people be heard, it is very fine.

Melissa Morrow says

Excellent but I just was so distracted by his use of dialogue tags: He murmured, he muttered, he stammered, he whispered, he said bluntly. "He said" is fine, more than fine, it's succinct and non-distracting.

Giovanni iam says

Daskalos stated that conventional psychotherapy does not get to the root causes of psychological problems. He often views such root causes as the thought-desire forms or patterns that a person has developed and energized over the years. He labels such patterns "elementals." Conventional approaches, through the process of catharsis, often prematurely bring to the surface some deeply hidden elementals with which a person may be unable to contend. Daskalos teaches that the process of psychotherapy however, should instead include helping a person to develop more benign patterns of thought and feeling and to depotentiate destructive and negative patterns. This process may be aided, in Daskalos' view, through the creation of therapeutic elementals as well as by example and persuasion.

This creation of therapeutic elementals as well as by example and persuasion can also become a dangerous practice when the healer has destructive and negative thought patterns using elementals to create harm, and chaos. Since Daskalos' passing on August 26, 1995, some of his esoteric group of inner circle students (researchersoftruth) use the teachings to act out only on their own greed and they emit an energy that serves to destroy harmony within nature.

Daskalos encouraged his students to do daily introspection exercises to clear the mirrors of the mind and emotions for spiritual growth and development. God's first gift to all beings is free will. In fact, the Researchers of Truth group members themselves need to remember to respect the free will of all and never take advantage of the financial, emotional or mental autonomy of others. Some members of this group should learn to follow their own advice otherwise they simply become known as hypocrites. Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.

Rebecca says

There were a lot of things I liked about this book, including the author's conversations with Fr. Maximos and

some of the monks and elders. I think I might recommend this book to some non-Orthodox friends, maybe those who are New Age or have those leanings, but probably not to my Orthodox friends and probably not to Protestants either. Mainly because many of the opinions of the author do not always very accurately represent Orthodoxy very well, and really are either just his opinions or things that he may not necessarily believe himself but that he finds interesting that he likes to share. Overall, I felt I had to read this with a grain of salt and actually I am somewhat surprised that this is sold in so many Orthodox bookstores. But, as the Holy Russian Elder Isidore said "Toss out whatever is bad and retain whatever is good in your heart."

Patrick Williams says

This book by Kyriacos Markides was good but not great. A summary is this: He discusses how Maximos came to the United States for a conference. While there, he taught about the "Fruit of the Spirit" that the Apostle Paul mentions in his letter to the Galatians (5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.." NIV). Fr. Maximos discussed how Paul started at the pinnacle of perfection (love) and worked his way down to the ground floor (so to speak) of Self-Control where all the growth in virtue starts. In order for us to understand how to ascend to love and perfection in the Christian life, we must start at the ground floor and ascend the virtues through the ladder of the virtues Paul described. Thus, in order to becoming loving, we must first master Self-Control which is the ground level of the virtues because, if we cannot control ourselves, then we cannot attain to the next level which is gentleness and if we cannot attain gentleness, then we cannot attain faithfulness and, without faithfulness, we cannot attain goodness and so on. I liked this teaching and it makes sense - to be gentle, for example, you must exercise the self-control to not get angry easily or to lose your temper easily. Once, however, you have mastered control over your own emotions, then you can begin to exercise gentleness towards others which leads to faithfulness towards others which leads to goodness towards others, etc....This teaching, to me, was outstanding. The reason I gave this book 3 stars is because of the meandering way he goes about imparting this information to us and you have to read a lot just to garner this. It is, however, worth the read but I much, much more recommend his "Mountain of Silence" which is a five star read and helps you understand the Way of Ancient Christianity before the split of the Orthodox and Catholic Church in 1054 and the Protestant revolt in 1531 under Martin Luther. This book, is a continuation of the lessons of Fr. Maximos from that book (Mountain of Silence) but is not nearly as engaging.

Heather says

Brilliant!!!!

I recommend the whole series: Riding with the Lion, The Mountain of Silence, Gifts of the Desert, and now Inner River.

Yes, all the books are similar in that they recount dialog with Fr. Maximos. However, this wisdom from Fr. Maximos is so very true and loving and essential! After 4 books, there are still questions to answer about the spiritual life. I hope for a 5th and 6th!

To reread the books and use them as references, it would be helpful to highlight the essential parts (ex. the explanation of the development of the 9 fruits of the Holy Spirit), and be able to easily skip the travelogue parts (ex. Emily and I flew into the airport, hired a cab, went to a restaurant, etc.). However, while reading

through the first time, I like the travelogue. It makes the wisdom more digestible and accessible. It sets the context: Cyprus, Mt. Athos, a Boston brownstone, etc.

The basic practice suggested in these books is the Jesus Prayer. It is a meditation done while repeating (aloud or silently) the phrase: Lord Jesus Christ, son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner. Many variations can be used. "Christ" (breathing in), "Have Mercy" (breathing out). Markides suggests "Lord, dispel the darkness" to a non-Christian reader. This is a very simple yet profound practice, and these books explain it well. Also interesting on this subject are the books, "The Way of the Pilgrim, and The Pilgrim Continues his Way".

Another great contribution by Markides is giving a well articulated academic support to the idea of non-material reality. Materialism is the M.O. of educated people. To have Markides offer such a reasoned counter-argument is great philosophical meat. In *_Inner River_* he references Dr. Raymond Moody's studies of people who had Near Death Experiences (saw the tunnel of light and returned).

Markides' books have depth, complexity, wisdom, and are pleasurable to read. 5 stars.

Steve Walker says

This could have been an excellent book. There are profound things mentioned in the pages, however... this book could have used a good editor. In places the text reads like a very bad rough draft. Having read the author's earlier works, I was disappointed as I went further into this book.

Trace says

I received the book for free through Goodreads First Reads! This gave an interesting, deep view on Christian spirituality. Not an easy read, in fact it challenged me and I had to look up several words in the dictionary. I found it best to read a small number of pages and then give myself time to digest.

Macaria Corbett says

This is not the best book that Markides has written. It starts out with a group coming to hear Fr. Maximos, an Athonite elder who is now bishop of Cypress and who really provides the meat of the book. They discuss the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the discussion is lively and interesting. But before all the Gifts are discussed the discussions end and the author presents some of his own ramblings--discussions with aging friends about the nature of death, for instance. His challenges to an atheist colleague on this subject are interesting and provocative. By and large, his thoughts do not form a coherent whole. They are sometimes influenced by perennialist philosophy, and sometimes just new age. Not really very Orthodox This seems like a lazy way to write a book. Not nearly as enjoyable as *Mountain of Silence*.

Christopher says

Like the author I was raised in the Orthodox Church and have academic training in the social sciences -- anthropology in my case -- AND I have spent a lifetime reading about mysticism, therefore this book spoke directly to me. I found the author's treatment of the subject objective and liked that he presented ideas within the framework of a narrative. I learned a lot about my own tradition and found a lot of food for thought as well.

James says

A learned and enjoyable conversation about her insights with Pitirim Sorokin, Christianity in Byzantium and Fr. Maximos.

Emma says

Markides is one of several current writers who work hard at showing to the Western world that there IS an accessible mystical tradition in Christianity that can definitely help you live your daily life at a much deeper level, in closer connection to Christ.

I always enjoy Markides' style: here as in his other books, mainly through his interview of his spiritual mentor, Father Maximos, Markides manages to convey a deep spiritual message for our time. His style is extremely accessible, that's what makes his books so valuable for today's readers and seekers.

Markides and Maximos do not hesitate addressing major...

To read my full review, please go to:
<http://wordsandpeace.com/2012/06/04/2...>

Joseph says

i thoroughly enjoyed this book, perhaps not as much as the previous two. the wisdom of Fr Maximos is amazing, and i trying to think of a way to compile all his wisdom into a book all its own. Fr Maximos shows that the spiritual wisdom of Mt Athos is still relevant to our western world, and that we need it now more than ever.

Steve James says

Inspirational read for the spiritually awakened student of life.

Jennifer says

Phenomenal. A perfect book for longtime Christians who seek new depths and experiences in the Holy Spirit.
