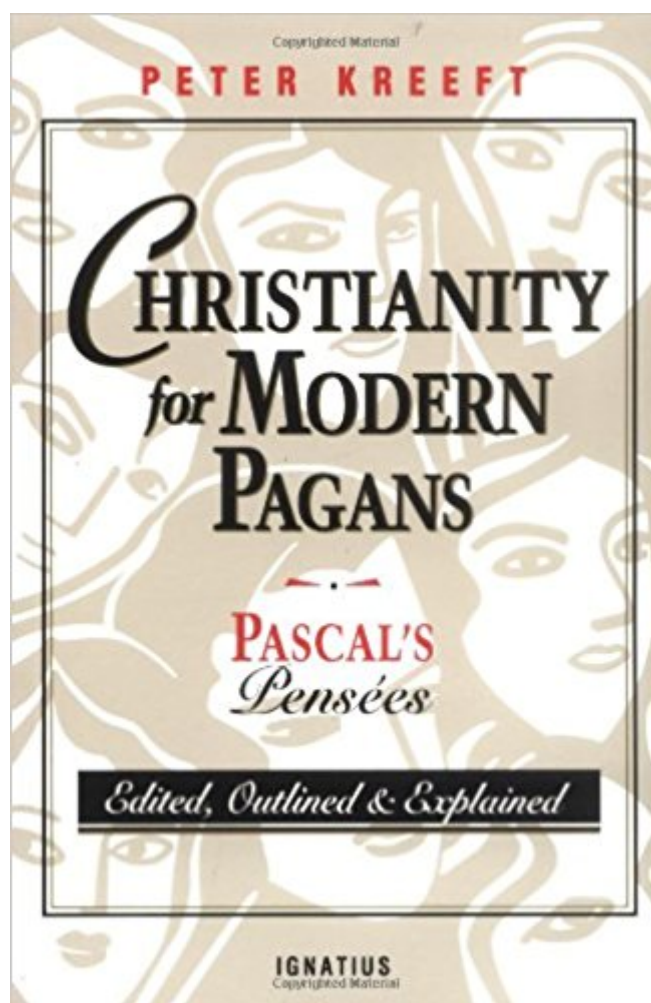


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Christianity For Modern Pagans: PASCAL's Pensees Edited, Outlined, And Explained



Synopsis

Peter Kreeft believes that Blaise Pascal is the first post-medieval apologist. No writer in history, claims Kreeft, is a more effective Christian apologist and evangelist to today's uprooted, confused, secularized pagans (inside and outside the Church) than Pascal. He was a brilliant man--a great scientist who did major work in physics and mathematics, as well as an inventor--whom Kreeft thinks was three centuries ahead of his time. His apologetics found in his *Pensees* are ideal for the modern, sophisticated skeptic.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Peter Kreeft, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy at Boston College, is one of the most widely read Christian authors of our time. His many bestselling books cover a vast array of topics in spirituality, theology, and philosophy. They include *Practical Theology*, *Back to Virtue*, *Because God Is Real*, *You Can Understand the Bible*, *Angels and Demons*, *Heaven: The Heart's Deepest Longing*, and *A Summa of the Summa*.
Mathematicien ou philosophe? Theologien ou physicien? Pascal etait tout cela a la fois, ce qui en fait un des esprits les plus brillants de son temps. Figure intellectuelle majeure du XVIIe siecle, Pascal demeure aujourd'hui une reference en matiere de reflexion sur Dieu, sur l'infini, sur l'inconnu. Ses recherches ont contribue a faire avancer les sciences dures autant que ses fameuses "Pensees" ont amene ses contemporains a s'interroger sur leur rapport au spirituel.

Exactly what Christians should be reading to combat that culture of relativism and to engage those who have a desire to receive an answer to the ache in their hearts.

This is a delightful book, and one that truly does what it says it will: there will be moments of stunned silence when you realize just how truly great Pascal's thought was. The fact that he didn't jump on the Enlightenment bandwagon goes only to his credit. There was a great parting of ways in human thought at that time, with many thinking that science was the answer to human happiness. Quite obviously this is not so. Pascal is virtually ignored today because his message is a moral square peg in the decadent round hole of modern life: you will not be happy until you come to know yourself, and you cannot know yourself until you know Christ.

I am a fan of both Kreeft and Pascal. I think some other reviewers have hit on many of the same reasons I like this book, but here's my own take. First of all, there was a philosophical movement in Europe at the turn of the 18th century called the Enlightenment. No single wave of thought can take as much credit for influencing the modern world as the Enlightenment. That movement was a tidal wave that swept up every major philosopher for the last three hundred years. Pascal was one of the only thinkers not swept up in the powerful riptides of that "revolution." One of my favorite quotes in the book is that Enlightenment tries to do "life itself as a science." Yet Pascal knew that man was not the measure of all things, but a twisted contradiction of greatness and wretchedness. Herein I believe, lies much of his insight; he is not a strict Enlightenment idealist. Rather, Pascal is a philosophical and theological realist who brought his bluntness and passion to the fields not only of philosophy, but science and math. Pascal was fortunate enough to brandish insights in all of these disciplines. My favorite parts of his thought, however, correspond to his philosophy. These insights were the "Pensees," his thoughts. I think every Christian should know "The Wager" argument by heart. It is brilliant. Everything to lose and everything to gain; life often revolves around the choices we make and the corresponding benefits or harms that result. Pascal is almost what you get when you try to blend the strengths of Augustine and Aquinas; a passionate minister (Augustine) mixed with the masterful logic of the Summa (Aquinas) rolled into one neat package. He was not a Cartesian dualist who saw mind and body as separate. Rather, Pascal realized that heart and soul live in the same body, at odds with one another, yet neither ever totally conquering the other. Also, Pascal is what I would have called in my college days as a philosopher a "non-dry" thinker. That is, Pensees goes down a lot easier than Nichomachean Ethics because it is more accessible and heartfelt. Argument is shrouded in vernacular expression, passion is not seen as antithetical to the

cause of strengthening an already sound position. I highly recommend this book, Kreeft has some good commentary that helps simplify the very complex "Thoughts/Pensees" of one of the most brilliant thinkers ever.

Love this book. It's a pick-up-anytime-and get a great read.

Mr. Kreeft does it again in this book about Pascal's 'Penses'. He picks up Pascal's best or most important 'penses' and gives us his view of them. He does not intend to explain or interpret them, since they are to be interpreted individually by each of us, but he expands them, he adds to them what a modern reader -living in a neo-pagan world- would have come to his mind. Mr. Kreeft is a masterful teacher. For those who are afraid of delving into the original authors like Pascal, Thomas Aquinas, etc. we have Mr. Kreeft to introduce us to them. And for the Christian person this book is almost mandatory, it is the fresh air that we need to keep fighting in this ever more pagan world.

I really enjoyed this book and am now starting it again to ponder it deeper. I am amazed that someone from the 1600s could be so current in his thinking. It will take a second (and third) reading to really process all of his ideas. Kreeft's commentary on Pascal is extremely well thought out (and he throws in a few points of humor too!).

You'll be shocked at Blaise Pascal's spiritual wisdom in the 1660's, and at how historians have completely misunderstood and ignored him and his intentions. T.S. Elliot said it best long ago: "I can think of no Christian writer, not Newman even, more to be commended than Pascal to those who doubt, but who have the mind to conceive, and the sensibility to feel, the disorder, the futility, the meaninglessness, the mystery of life and suffering, and who can only find peace through a satisfaction of the whole being." T.S. Elliot

An outstanding version of the Penses...

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