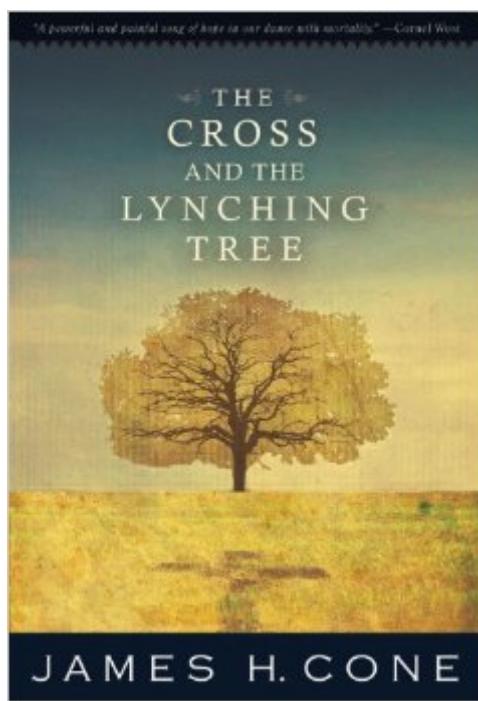


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The Cross And The Lynching Tree



Synopsis

The cross and the lynching tree are the two most emotionally charged symbols in the history of the African American community. In this powerful new work, theologian James H. Cone explores these symbols and their interconnection in the history and souls of black folk

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I came to this book with expectations that I now realize may have been unreasonable. I read/watched Dr. Cone's initial Harvard Divinity School lecture of the same title a few years ago and thought, "Finally, someone is going to take up this profoundly important inherently religious historical phenomenon and give it its course." (That is of course is the cleaned up reflection on a not-so-eloquent impulse.) I waited ever so impatiently for the book, checking the internet regularly. Finally it is here. Cone's work here is a series of essays 1.) critiquing the established white American theologians and ministers for never choosing to see this connection and 2.) offering a basic view of a would-be obvious correlation between the Cross of Christ and the lynching of black Americans. He wades through the spirituals, blues songs, literature and activism of black women and men to demonstrate that they were indeed aware of the profundity of the situation even if there had never been a sustained theological reflection save that of the likes of poet Countee Cullen's The Black Christ. After having read Cone's book I found myself disappointed. All of this was good, but I had hoped for something much more cohesive, something more systematic. In other words, "So what?" I was hoping that Cone would partner with René Girard's theories of mimetic desire and the scapegoating myth. To explore the existential and historical phenomenon of lynching in its

American context could be to discover something distinctive and foundational in the very mythos of the nation. How might the black body be a key to understanding America's identity formation?

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