



Without Roots: Europe, Relativism, Christianity, Islam

Pope Benedict XVI, Marcello Pera, George Weigel (Foreword), Michael F. Moore (Translator)

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Bringing together their unique vantage points as leaders of Church and State, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and Marcello Pera challenge us to imagine what can be the future of a civilization that has abandoned its moral and cultural history. They call on the West to embrace a spiritual rather than political renewal -and to accept the moral values that alone can help us to make sense of changes in technology, economics, and society.

Without Roots: Europe, Relativism, Christianity, Islam Details

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From Reader Review Without Roots: Europe, Relativism, Christianity, Islam for online ebook

Bojan Tunguz says

The most remarkable thing about this little book is not so much the particular issues that are discussed in it. The last few years have seen an increased concern expressed by many Europeans (and others) about the direction in which that continent is headed. What is remarkable is that there is increasingly a convergence of ideas that point to the solution of Europe's long term ills. In this book two extraordinary intellectual giants (one a Pope and another a philosopher and the president of the Italian senate) present their views of those ills from an essentially the same vantage point. There is yet a hope that not everything is lost.

Carlo Calleja says

Without Roots is a thought-provoking dialogue in the form of letters and talks between (then) Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and (then) President of the Italian Senate, Marcello Pera. The book is worth turning to especially at this moment in history when the idea of a united Europe is being cast into doubt even by some contemporary Catholic thinkers. This collection of essays must not be approached with the aim of finding some straightforward solutions to phenomena that Europe is currently facing, such as immigration, secularization and relativism. The authors' views in the book diverge on certain issues and converge on others but the central tenet remains constant throughout: Europe was founded on Christian values and when these are lost, then the very dignity of every human person is at risk. Several hot button issues are explored in the book, of which I will mention just a few. First, the value of solidarity not only with the poor within Europe, including with immigrants, but also solidarity in terms of dialogue and mediation with countries experiencing the terrors of war. Second, what a wholesome secularisation looks like and why it is desirable. Third, the difference between pursuing the Catholic identity simply as a form of elitism versus an authentic embracing of Christian values, which would allow all to flourish in Europe, no irrespective of one's religious convictions. This is a sobering book which helps us rethink current situations in the light of a history and a tradition and which calls for a critical eye in a society where these values are fast being lost.

Andrew says

Generally, anything that includes writing by Pope Benedict XVI automatically warrants five stars. Regardless of your religious position, his intellect, logic, and simple prose has to be admired. This little volume, which takes the form of a dialogue with Marcello Pera, the sometime President of the Italian Senate, is a fascinating example of intelligent and respectful debate. Pera, a prominent philosopher and atheist, and the then Cardinal Ratzinger each contribute a paper and responding letter in a discussion about a deep moral malaise gripping Europe. They both identify Europe's purposeful amnesia bordering on self-hatred as the root of a cultural crisis. There is no spittle-flecked Richard Dawkins diatribe here, but a true dialogue between thinking men, which undoubtedly will reveal many more layers with future re-readings.

I'm on Twitter: @Dr_A_Taubman

Jason says

Fascinating to listen in on European discussions about the West, and in particular, about America in relation to Europe.

Rick Wilson says

"They call on the West to embrace a spiritual rather than a political renewal - and to accept the moral values that alone can help us to make sense of changes in technology, economics, and society." It is also a timely book taking the direction our nation is moving towards.

Kevin Estabrook says

I found this exchange between Italian Senate President Marcello Pera and Cardinal Ratzinger most intriguing.

Ratzinger's insight and clarity of thought are simply unparalleled. Unfortunately, he is a vox clamantis in deserto, his warnings concerning the problem of culture relativism both in Europe and in the United States continue to go unheeded.

As his analysis is primarily concerned with Europe, I would like to see greater application of his insights to the American problem.

Laurie says

Read how relativism has affected Europe and see America's future. Wake up!

Ian Hodge says

The history of Europe is the history of Christianity -- good and bad. In this short book, Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, explores the loss of faith and the abandonment of Christendom. That Europe is no longer Christian is hardly a topic worth debating. But the roots of faith are deep, and there are people within Europe who still work for the ascendancy of Christianity as the predominant cultural force.

The author gets to the heart of the issue very well. Without a common faith, there is no community, no civilization. And it was the common faith of Christianity that created civilization. The idea that all truth is relative eliminates the possibility of genuine dialogue. Multiculturalism cannot truly take place outside of a common force providing the cohesion amongst different cultures.

In other words, the West is now without roots. Relativism "has paralyzed the West, when it is already disoriented and at a standstill, rendered it defenseless when it is already acquiescent, and confused it when it is already reluctant to rise to the challenge" (p. 33). Until the problem of relativism is resolved, there is no Christian Europe and no Christian future.

One hopes and prays that his clarion call will be heeded.

Diane says

This book is a collection of speeches by the former Pope, as well as his correspondence with an Italian politician. Most of the material has been discussed elsewhere, and it seems to focus on Christianity as synonymous with European civilization, rather than discussing actual Christian faith apart from cultural context.

Luis Alexandre Ribeiro Branco says

I like the book and some of the definitions applied to it as well as well based criticism of Protestantism. However, it left more open questions than giving solutions.

Jaime Hernandez says

Magnificent but difficult read. The dialogue between Pope Benedict and the Italian leader was excellent, but I must admit that I had to research quite a few terms in order to understand the context. Nevertheless, this book preempts the substantial mess that Europe currently faces in the midst of terrorism and advanced (might I say harmful?) secularism. I dare the doubter to read and consider their arguments concerning universal truths.

Jack says

This is an important book. The humanist progressive assault on religion in the public square has transformed modern society - and not it a good way. This exchange of letters between the premier Christian intellectual of the age and a clear thinking Italian atheist political figure show that rational thought can still bring people of good will to similar conclusions about modern society.

A short book, not a difficult read.

Santeri Marjokorpi says

Edellinen paavi Benedictus XVI keskustlee vielä kardinaalina olleessaan italialaisen ateistiprofessorin Marcello Peran kanssa Euroopan olemuksesta ja ideasta. Kuulostaa lähtökohtaisesti tylsältä, mutta kirjassa

mentiin syvälle ajankohtaisiin kysymyksiin ja keskustelijat olivat huippuluokkaa.

Suurin kritiikki kirjassa osoitetaan Euroopan vallannutta relativismia kohtaan. molemmat vastustavat relativismia, jossa kaikki uskonnot, aatteet ja ideologiat nähdään saman arvoisina. Peran mukaan tulisi kyetä esimerkiksi sanomaan, että läntinen kulttuuri on parempi kuin islamilainen kulttuuri. Tämän ei kuitenkaan tarvitse johtaa konfliktiin. Benedictuksen mukaan länsi yrittää olla avoimempi ja ymmärtäväisempi muiden arvoja kohtaan, mutta on samaan aikaan menettänyt kyykynsä rakastaa itseään. Hänen mukaansa Euroopan tulisi hyväksyä taas itsensä ja ymmärtää, että se on rakennettu juuri kristinuskon perinnölle, ei mille tahansa aatteelle tai ideologialle.

Frederick Dotolo says

A series of letters between Pera and Cardinal Ratzinger about the decline of Western Civilization (due to Relativism) and what (if anything) can be done to reverse it.

Barnaby B says

Pope Benedict is obviously one of the great minds of our generation. He is very polite and thorough in the arguments he makes... though not very clear. his ideas are engaging but his punchlines and summaries are nonexistent. Pera is a smart and cohesive politician who is probably not someone I would vote for bases on their views. But does raise a good point of we should be proud of who we are and not assume everyone else is just as correct as we are. If everyone is right, then nobody is right. etc.

I enjoyed this book, but not sure I would recommend it.
