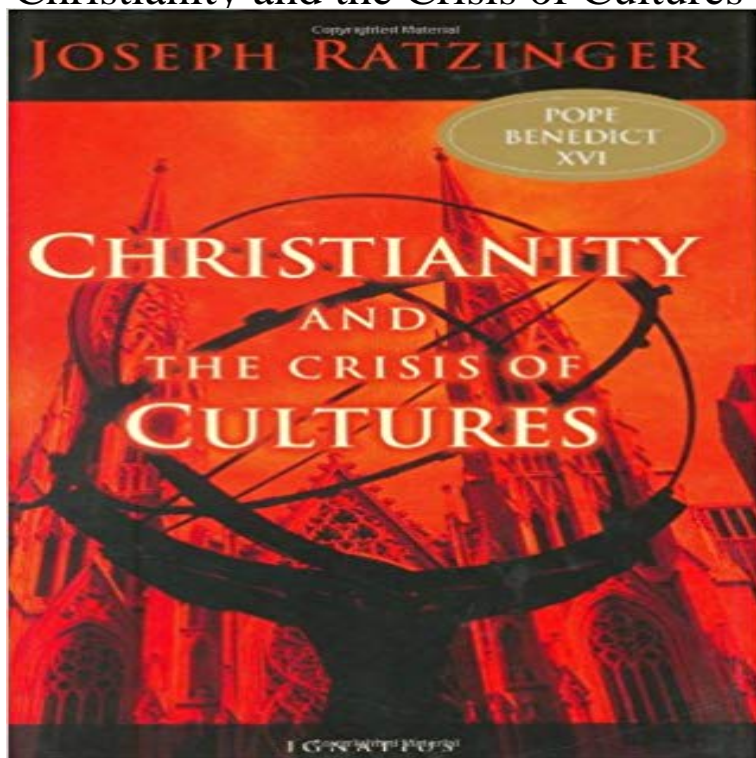


## Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures



Written by Joseph Ratzinger shortly before he became Pope Benedict XVI, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures* looks at the growing conflict of cultures evident in the Western world. The West faces a deadly contradiction of its own making, he contends. Terrorism is on the rise. Technological advances of the West, employed by people who have cut themselves off from the moral wisdom of the past, threaten to abolish man (as C.S. Lewis put it) whether through genetic manipulation or physical annihilation. In short, the West is at war-with itself. Its scientific outlook has brought material progress. The Enlightenment's appeal to reason has achieved a measure of freedom. But contrary to what many people suppose, both of these accomplishments depend on Judeo-Christian foundations, including the moral worldview that created Western culture. More than anything else, argues Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, the important contributions of the West are threatened today by an exaggerated scientific outlook and by moral relativism-what Benedict XVI calls the dictatorship of relativism-in the name of freedom. *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures* is no mere tirade against the moral decline of the West. Ratzinger challenges the West to return to its roots by finding a place for God in modern culture. He argues that both Christian culture and the Enlightenment formed the West, and that both hold the keys to human life and freedom as well as to domination and destruction. Ratzinger challenges non-believer and believer alike. Both parties, he writes, must reflect on their own selves and be ready to accept correction. He challenges secularized, unbelieving people to open themselves to God as the ground of true rationality and freedom. He calls on believers to make God credible in this world by means of the enlightened faith they live. Topics include: Reflections

on the Cultures in Conflict Today The Significance and Limits of Todays Rationalistic Culture The Permanent Significance of the Christian Faith Why We Must Not Give Up the Fight The Law of the Jungle, the Rule of Law We Must Use Our Eyes! Faith and Everyday Life Can Agnosticism Be a Solution? The Natural Knowledge of God Supernatural Faith and Its Origins

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