



The Prenatal Psychology of Frank Lake and the Origins of Sin and Human Dysfunction

Geoffrey Victor Whitfield

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Frank Lake was a psychiatrist for the Church of England, whose understanding of the person led him to develop theories and training couses in Clinical Theology that has had a profound influence upon many people, especially Christian care-givers, between 1962 and his death in 1982, and even to this very day. His early focus was upon the relationship between human distress and the earliest years of life (Object-Relations Theory), but his later work led him to focus upon the earliest experiences of life in the womb. Geoffrey Whitfield was deeply involved in Clinical Theology while Lake was alive and now, 20 years later, offers a penetrating assessment of Lake's work. Whitfield is fully conversant with the ongoing conversation, particularly regarding the Maternal Foetal Distress Syndrome. His conclusion, based largely upon research published since Lake's death, is that while there is now empirical evidence to support Lake's theories regarding the second and third trimesters, that applicable to the first trimester is not proved. While Whitfield is sympathetic to Lake's work, this is not an uncritical acceptance of all his views, rather a scholarly investigation of empirical evidence not available to Lake. The author pays particular attention to the relevance of psychological and theological categories (and their inter-relationship) in reflecting upon the data and is aware of the signficance of the issues in relation to current debates in pastoral and practical theology. This work is clearly written and certainly an original contribution in the fields of theology and psychology.



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