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0521432863 - Bound to Sin: Abuse, Holocaust and the Christian Doctrine of Sin -

Alistair McFadyen

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Bound to Sin

This book tests the explanatory and descriptive power of the doctrine of sin in relation to two concrete situations: sexual abuse of children and the holocaust. Taking seriously the explanatory power of secular discourses for analysing and regulating therapeutic action in relation to such situations, the book asks whether the theological language of sin can offer further illumination by speaking of God and the world together. Through its discussion of abuse and the holocaust, an engagement with Augustine, original sin and feminism, a fresh and sometimes surprising perspective is offered, both on the theology of sin and on the pathologies under consideration. The understanding of sin that emerges is centred on joyful worship of the trinitarian God. This essay is more systematic and more theological than most practical, pastoral or applied theology and more practical and concrete than most systematic or constructive theology. It is a genuinely concrete, systematic theology.

ALISTAIR MCFADYEN is Senior Lecturer in Theology at the University of Leeds. Author of *The Call to Personhood* (Cambridge, 1990) and a number of journal articles, he is a former Samaritan counsellor and member of the Leeds Ritual Abuse Study Group. He is currently a member of the Church of England's Doctrine Commission, and Secretary to the Society for the Study of Theology.

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In joy:

To Catherine, with whom I have found so much;

And to George and Tom, Helen and Catriona, who deserve and
give us so much;

And to Mike, a different Helen, Kim and Steve, who offered so
much;

And to Peter, David and Dan, who helped me weave together so
much;

And to Haddon, who has taught me so much about sin (who
first suggested I write this book, and who might enjoy the ambigu-
ities of having a book on sin dedicated to him).

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Acknowledgments

This book has been almost seven years in preparation, the course of which has run far from smooth and has brought me into closer proximity to some of its general themes than I could ever have anticipated or would ever have wished. I have therefore accumulated, in this time, a deep vein of gratitude to many for much that goes far beyond the normal range of professional or personal courtesies. It is a measure of the spirit in which so much was given me, that I have accumulated gratitude, not debts. Appropriate to the way in which the argument of this book develops, the theme of these acknowledgments is very much, therefore, joyous acknowledgment of gracious generosity in overwhelming abundance.

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Colin Gunton, co-editor of this Series, also read an initial draft. Whilst nobody else has been subjected to the whole, the final text has benefited from comments made on various parts by Adrian Hastings, Peter Scott, Tony Thiselton, Chris Hobbs, Helga Hanks and Jane Wynne; from comments made on presentations given in various seminars at the Center of Theological Inquiry, in the Department, at the Society for the Study of Theology, at Nottingham Theological Society, and for Worcester Diocese; and in discussions at meetings of the Archbishop's Urban Theology Group and the Church of England's Doctrine Commission. In relation to these latter, discursive contexts, and in addition to those I have already thanked above, I am particularly grateful for the comments and support of Peter Selby, Michael Northcott, Peter Sedgwick, Jeremy Begbie, Steven Sykes and Alan Torrance.

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1. *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

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hope, more than anything, that they might feel that this work has not done them a disservice and that they may recognise the profound ways in which their stories have affected me theologically, as well as personally.

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