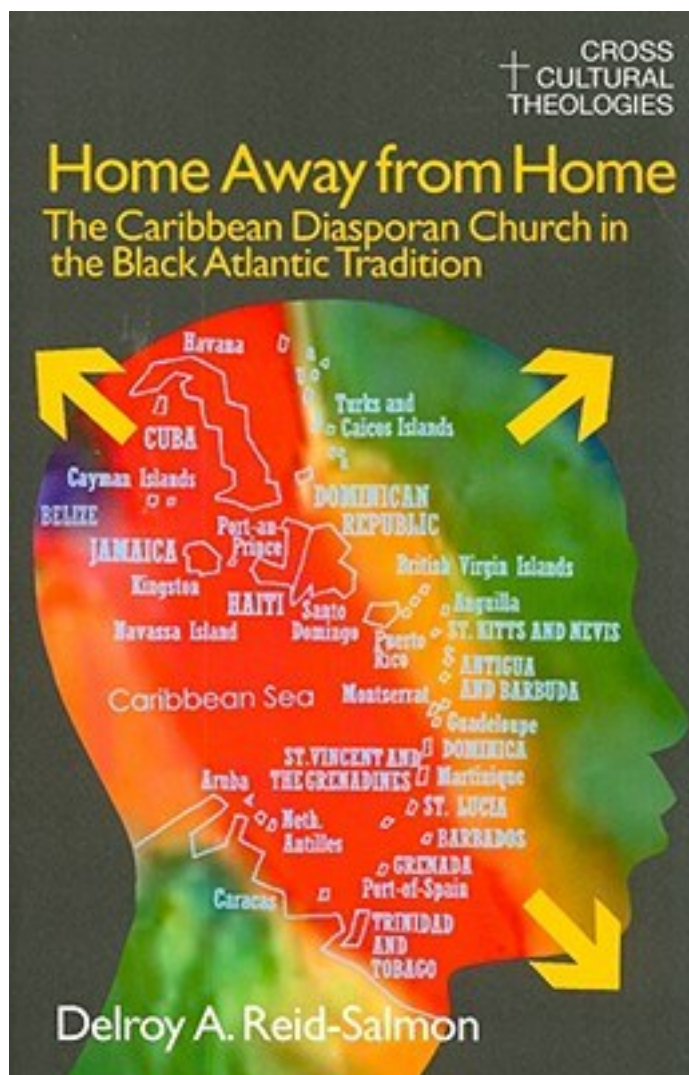


Home Away From Home



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For most people, the word orphanage” conjures up images of poor little Oliver Twist pleading for more gruel. Many are convinced that the history of orphanages is a social welfare record of total devastation to the lives of the children who grew up in them. Indeed, many of the scholars who contributed to Home Away From Home began their research with the conventional negative view of orphanages. But they arrived at far more balanced assessments of the historical record: while the orphanages studied were not perfect, they were often good solutions to dire conditions for children.

The future of America’s most vulnerable citizens is on the line, says Richard B. McKenzie, the editor of this volume. Today’s government-run child welfare system is detrimental to tens of thousands of children. Foster care, intended as a temporary solution, has turned into permanent but inadequate care for many. While adoption is a solution for some children, others are difficult to place or legally unavailable for permanent placement.

In re-examining the surprising success of orphanages in the past, Home Away From Home highlights the great value of providing a truly stable environment for youngsters, and it explains how orphanages might again be a powerfully beneficial social institution.

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目录:

[Home Away From Home_下载链接1](#)

标签

评论

[Home Away From Home_下载链接1](#)

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