In this groundbreaking volume, the critical theory of German philosopher Jurgen Habermas is brought into dialogue with the ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic Church in the years after the Second Vatican Council. Paul Lakeland asserts that the Roman Catholic Church has failed to enact the vision presented in the central documents of the Second Vatican Council because the Church lacks a critical theory of church and society. This critical theory would provide an intellectual context in which social teachings and praxis could give constant direction, and which would in addition invite a reflexive critique of the internal dynamics of church life. Lakeland finds precisely this much-needed critical theory in the work of Habermas, and brings this to bear in his examination of the contemporary church.

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