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Clarion Review ★★★☆☆ SCIENCE FICTION

The Redeemed

R. V. Minkler
Light Messages
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In the post-apocalyptic novel The Redeemed*, human beings who may have lost their access to the future struggle with what they should believe.*

R. V. Minkler's thrilling novel *The Redeemed* is an apocalyptic adventure with a spiritual twist.

After a pandemic decimated human populations and obliterated civilization, Earth's few survivors returned to tribal living. Now, one tribe, the Tierrans, follows Christian worship practices while also defending themselves against other tribes.

Then Nate, who was put into suspended animation before the collapse of civilization, is rescued by the Tierrans after he awakes. He is special in their world: he was not affected by the virus, which left human men sterile. The Tierrans are surprised that Nate can reproduce with another survivor, and hope that his children might inherit antibodies to protect them from infection, too.

Frequent references to Holy Trinity differentiate this book from others of its kind, as do its scriptural references, which are made to relate to its plot developments well, from episodes of cleansing fire to appeals to God's past actions. The book also deals with issues of fertility with care, exploring the implications of a world in which people have lost their ability to reproduce. People's ability to retain some sort of faith in this bleak environment, wherein there may be no future generations, is a major theme, and questions of whether there's still a reason to believe in God recur. Such considerations are layered and involving, making this already exciting world more so.

Among the competing tribes, people vary in their development. Abraham, the patriarch of the Tierran tribe, is particularly intriguing and complex. He is a Black man and a sage who leads a tribe whose members are mostly white. His stoic carriage and spiritual wisdom give his warring compatriots an added sense of depth.

But the book's cast of characters is also vast, and people are added to it with speed. Many people's connections to one another are under contextualized upon their introductions, too. While the book's appendix lists people's names and explains how they individually fit into the wider plot, it comes too late in the text to be of much help. Nor is the extent of the global situation apparent at first; who the rival gangs are must be discerned with care. As the book progresses, its pieces do fall into place, though. Further, Nate's reemergence provides the survivors with a stage for explaining what happened to their world in a natural manner.

In the post-apocalyptic novel *The Redeemed*, human beings who may have lost their access to the future struggle with what they should believe.

MATT BENZING (April 22, 2022)

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