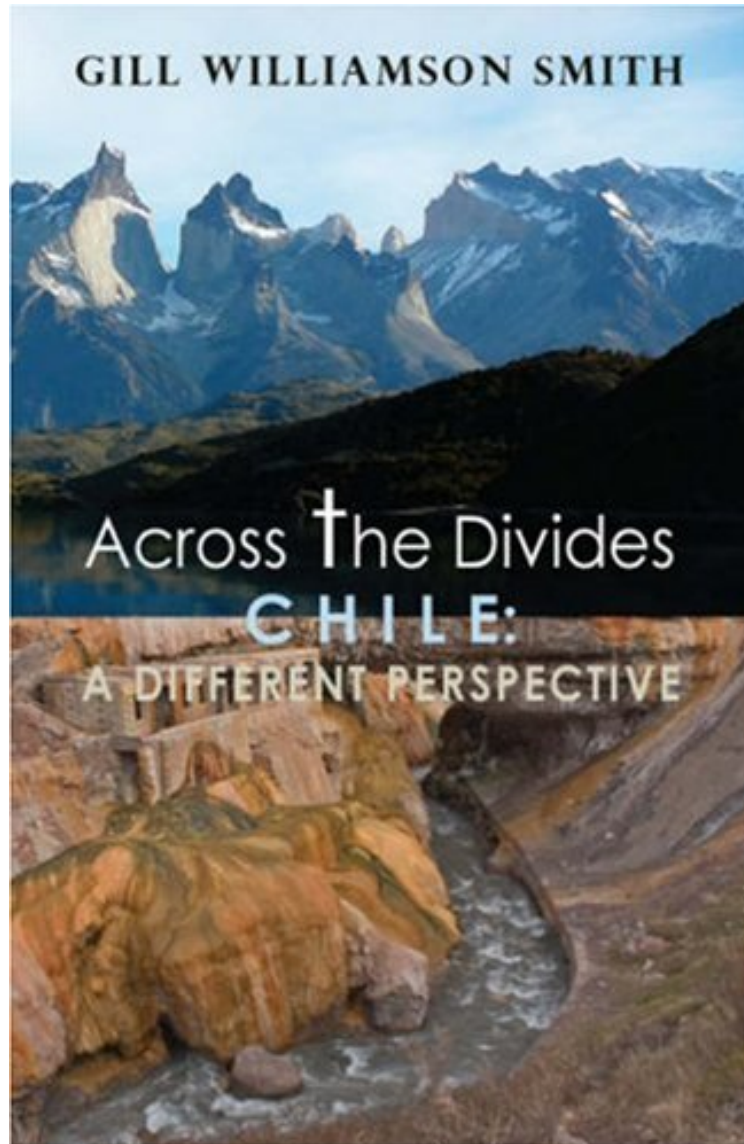


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Across the Divides,Chile: A Different Perspective

Gill Williamson Smith

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#13970219 in Books 2008-03-27Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.45 x 1.14 x 6.42l, #File Name: 190605049X475 pages | File size: 22.Mb

Gill Williamson Smith : Across the Divides,Chile: A Different Perspective before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Across the Divides,Chile: A Different Perspective:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Long-winded but interesting memories of a missionary's life in ChileBy Helen HancoxGill Williamson Smith has written a very hefty book, full of insight into life in Chile from 1971-1980. This period covered time of great change and the chapters describing the political and economic situations, particularly with regard to life on the ground for ordinary people, were excellent. Less successful was the rather long-

winded introduction to the book before the family ever reached Chile and the nebulosity of the description of what work they actually did in the first few years. Once Gill's husband Ray changed to a different role within Chile we learned more of their missionary endeavours. Gill's writing style is good, a mixture of diary entries, reflections, reports from other sources etc, but the book was far longer than it needed to be and I never quite got enough of a handle on their actual work in Chile, learning rather more about their family than really necessary.

In the challenges confronted by a very ordinary family in far from ordinary circumstances, the author writes of the divides encountered and crossed in a country torn apart politically as well as geologically. Gill Williamson Smith arrived in Marxist Chile with her Anglican minister husband and their three children, all under four years, to an earthquake, endless queues for food, political intrigues and assassinations. Within three years fragile democracy was replaced by a harsh military dictatorship. The call of God took them from working among Cockneys in the East End of London to well-heeled, middle-class Chileans and Diplomats, a call tested in the crucible of adversity. Humour and frustration, laughter and tears, hopes and fears give the reader some idea of living out the Christian faith in both Allende's and Pinochet's Chile. Pre-conceived ideas of those on the other side, both in politics and in faith, are re-defined for the author as God is encountered in surprising ways. Tracing the lives of some of those leads the reader to a discovery of far-reaching consequences, both within and beyond Chile today.

This book is a real history of a person who has lived in Chile at the time of conflict and despair; however Gill in her book is able to write lively experiences in very objective and impartial ways. She also excellently describes her life as a Christian English woman and that of her family living in Chile at a very historical time. Gill is a remarkable person and here is her life history in Chile. 'Across the Divides' is a book that has to be read --Pedro A. Gonzalez
About the Author Gill Williamson-Smith, a qualified nurse and midwife, was among the second wave of women to be ordained to the Anglican priesthood. She, together with her husband, has travelled widely, and they have recently moved in retirement from Cambridge to Frinton-on-Sea.