

Suzanne Buckley, The Mercy Center, eds., *Sacred is the Call* (Burlingame, CA: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2005), 230 pp.

Sacred is the Call is a compilation of twenty essays exploring various topics in the ministry of spiritual direction. It is a significant contribution to the literature on spiritual direction, covering a broad base of topics and suggestions for training programs. It includes essays written by teachers from the Mercy Center and also by training personnel from all over the country.

This book is a particularly good resource for practicing spiritual directors and teachers in spiritual direction training programs, although its principles and suggestions could also be employed by pastors and CPE supervisors in chaplaincy training programs.

The three essays submitted by Mary Ann Scofield were particularly notable. Her writing is clear, concrete, and accessible to spiritual directors and pastoral counselors. In her first two essays, "Waiting on God" and "Running from God," she gives concrete examples of discerning God's movements and the various methods directees employ to resist those movements. She asserts that "since the place of resistance signals the place where God is active; this is precisely where the directee's transformation can occur. In her last essay, "Friends of God and Prophets, Transformation for Justice," she challenges us to go further in our training programs than merely helping individuals "feel good about themselves." She urges us to move out of our comfort zones by embracing other cultures and seeking out the marginalized in our ministries.

Janice Farrell introduces us to the practice of group spiritual direction in "Journeying Together." She packs a lot of detail in her short essay, including a description of the threefold practicum, required reading, and questions for evaluation. She provides an excellent source of ideas for designing a group spiritual direction training program.

James Neafsey in his essay "Toward Union with God," gives a comprehensive review of the dark night of spirit. He specifically lists the characteristics of how to discern if a directee is experiencing a true "dark night" and how to be with them in these key transitions. It takes great skill and sensitivity to accompany a person through these dry and often painful times and his essay is very helpful to the practicing spiritual director.

Sandra Lommasson examines dual relationships in her essay, "Spiritual Direction in Community" and reviews the guidelines to determine if a relationship has an inherent imbalance of power. Her work is very helpful for clergy and members of spiritual communities engaging in layers of relationship with each other.

Donald Bisson in his essay "Who Am I, Who Are You" introduces various gender issues encountered in spiritual direction. He teaches a new way of paying attention—discerning between insight driven and feeling driven directees; giving concrete examples of characteristic dialogue in direction sessions. Similarly, Lucy Abbot Tucker encourages us to learn to pay attention to where the directee is leading from—*the heart, head, or gut*; illustrating her teaching with concrete examples and giving suggestions on how to accompany a directee when integrating these three functions.

The various essays are energizing, and will undoubtedly give a fresh shot of enthusiasm to a spiritual direction practice or training program. It should enjoy a prominent place on many bookshelves as a valuable resource in the ministry of spiritual direction.

karla Droste
Spiritual Director
Oakland, CA