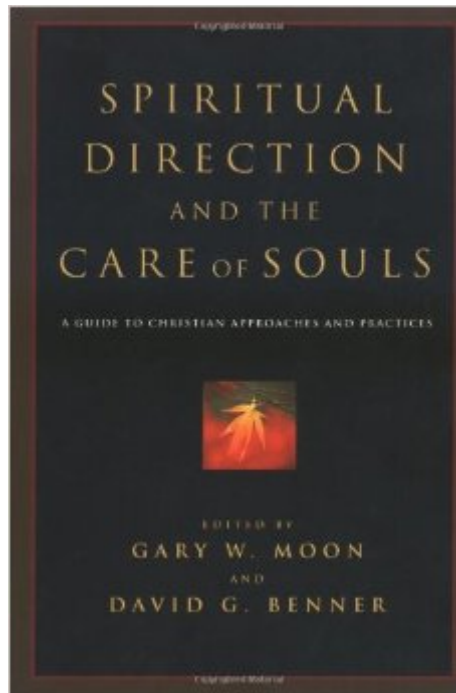


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Spiritual Direction And The Care Of Souls: A Guide To Christian Approaches And Practices



Synopsis

In recent years, many Christian clergy, laity and mental health professionals have rediscovered the ancient practices of spiritual direction. Seen as a refreshing alternative to the techniques and limitations of modern psychology, such practices offer new insights for pastoral care. But many remain unclear on what spiritual direction is and whether its methods are applicable to their own clients and parishioners. Spiritual direction is a practice of Christian soul care that is found most notably in the Catholic, Orthodox and Episcopal traditions but is also present in Wesleyan/Holiness, Pentecostal/charismatic, social justice and Reformed communities. Predating modern counseling and psychotherapy movements but sharing key principles and insights for spiritual formation, spiritual direction offers significant resources for today's pastors, counselors, therapists, chaplains and other caregivers attuned to the work of God in people's lives. In this landmark volume, editors Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner, along with a team of expert contributors, provide a comprehensive survey of spiritual direction in its myriad Christian forms. Specific chapters offer careful historical perspective and contemporary analysis of how Christians from various backgrounds have practiced spiritual direction, with particular attention to each tradition's definition of spiritual direction, the process of authentic transformation, the role of the spiritual director, indicators of mature spirituality and other aspects of the spiritual direction process. Chapters also provide psychological and clinical insight into how spiritual direction is similar to, different from and can be integrated with psychotherapy and pastoral counseling to help others experience spiritual transformation and union with God.

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Customer Reviews

If not for my marked enthusiasm, I would be embarrassed to even admit my ignorance of the role and potential of an effective Spiritual Director (SD) in the ongoing discipleship process. I suppose the particular ministry circles of my youth and into my young adult life did not intersect with such a deliberate and strategic program in the ongoing development of those converted to faith in Christ. I suspect the greater emphasis in the Southern Baptist regions was placed primarily upon conversion and essentially stopped there. The idea of continued growth and accountability were discussed, but simply not a matter of priority - just make more (get the confession) - without equal attention to the discipleship process. For many within evangelical circles authentic transformation is what Dallas Willard referred to as a "gospel of sin management." The well-worn connotation, 'stay away from beer, chew, and dates who do' sums up this group. This base characterization is a far stretch from the transformed lives of those redeemed through Christ's death in the synoptic gospels. Spiritual direction is offered in response to deep careful reflection about a new relationship to God and the implications are of utmost important. Whereas pastoral counseling is often related to a specific chronic need - SD is in response to a lifelong pursuit of understanding myself in relationship to God and my passionate desire to follow His direction. A recent reading of *Glittering Images*, authored by Susan Howatch was somewhat instrumental in offering a greater appreciation for one gifted in the art of spiritual direction in the life of one struggling to make sense of complex human relationships in light of our Christian calling. Godly direction and guidance was offered from an insightful and competent shepherd.

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