

# Spiritual Direction and Formation



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# I Need Directions!

If you're like me and get a bit lost on the way to time with God, read on.

*by Caryn Rivadeneira*

I have a confession about this packet: I put it together for myself. In the blur of deadlines, raising kids, making dinner, heading to meetings, paying some attention to my husband, and trying to stay on top of laundry, God gets lost and I lose out. Each time I'm confronted with the realization of how little time I spend in my own spiritual formation, I realize how much direction I need.

But this packet isn't just for me, because I know I'm not the only who feels this way. Many of my friends and colleagues who are busy with so much else complain of the same things. It seems Christian women leaders often find themselves drifting and unraveling spiritually.

This packet helps. I dove into this collection of articles like a starving person at a feast. The practical applications and wisdom contained in here will transform your spiritual life—they have mine. I've gained focus and clear direction. I pray you will too.

Blessings,

*Caryn Rivadeneira*  
*Managing Editor, GiftedForLeadership.com*  
*Christianity Today International*



THE ISSUE AT HAND

# Spiritual Formation for Dummies

Many people want more than knowledge about God—they want transformation, says Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. But they don't know where to start.

*Interview by Rob Moll*

*For those desiring a more intentional walk with God, practicing a spiritual discipline can be helpful. But choosing which discipline and sticking to it can be overwhelming. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun has compiled a *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (InterVarsity Press) with 62 disciplines, instructions on how to practice them, and a guide for choosing the correct discipline. Calhoun is pastor of spiritual formation at Christ Church in Oak Brook, Illinois, and a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.*

***How did you get involved in spiritual formation and the spiritual disciplines?***

When I was on staff at Park Street Church in Boston a long time ago, I had a crisis in ministry. The basic tool I was using was information. Boston loves information. People would come to see me or hear me teach, and they would say, "This is great information." Then they would come back two weeks, two months, or two years later with a different presenting issue—but underneath it was a sense of not knowing God's love or having things in their head but not in their heart.



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I went to my senior pastor and said, “I don’t really see transformation happening in a lasting way, and I either need to go someplace else or figure out how to do this right.” That sent me on a journey. I ended up taking courses in spiritual direction. These practices lead people where they need to go as the Holy Spirit partners with them.

***Spirituality, or walking closely with God, is often seen as more a matter of being than doing. But the spiritual disciplines are a practice. How does a daily or weekly practice relate to caring for the soul?***

Disciplines are repetitive acts that I do to get something I want. I want to learn to speak Spanish. So I have to partner in the process. With the Spiritual Disciplines Handbook, I tried to get people to enter the disciplines through what they want. Sometimes it is just a longing, but sometimes it is out of desperation. I’m a mess, and I need this.

I have seen that there is more staying power through desire than through an ought or should. “You should get up every morning and have a quiet time” is a should I grew up with. It was a good thing in my life. I would be the last person to say it hasn’t shaped me. But when you get to the point where you are doing something over and over again, and it is not leading you into the worship of God, I want to ask where God is showing up in your life.

As I see spiritual disciplines, they are to respond to our changing, ongoing relationship with God. You can enter the book depending on a season or cycle of your spiritual life. Maybe there used to be a time when corporate worship was the place for me. And now it seems like I’m being drawn into silence and solitude.

I can go with that, or I can keep banging my head against some other discipline. I’m not saying you don’t have to persevere. Anything worth having takes perseverance, like marriage.

***Do you see a greater interest in the spiritual disciplines today than in the last few decades?***

I think the church has always had people who are interested in spiritual practices and disciplines. Our modern culture is highly technocratic, so that need to attend to the inward journey has become

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part of our culture. You read all these books that have soul in the title. They are everywhere. I think part of it is a response to the virtual reality of so much of life. We want to know how to engage our journey with God. It is not enough to say, “Go be spiritual.” How do you go be spiritual?

Another word that I like for discipline is rhythm—spiritual rhythms that add to my life with God. Am I making space for him on a regular rhythmic basis so that I can partner with the Holy Spirit for my growth? I think that is why it is of interest to people now. They want to have something to offset a very secular, cold, externally focused life with some internal journey.

*I have heard some criticism that spiritual disciplines are really just about character building. Spiritual disciplines can be about what I’m doing rather than what God is doing.*

I think that is an artificial separation. A spiritual discipline that isn’t a partnership between you and God isn’t a spiritual discipline. It is like what Jesus said to those who had the ability to do miracles, “I don’t know you.” He was saying, “You’re making the effort, but that hasn’t produced a relationship that I recognize.” There needs to be a bringing together of the two things. If I’m just interested in some personal spiritual renewal that isn’t going to touch my world, I haven’t understood the call of the kingdom on my life. This is not what the gospel is about. It is not some personal feeling of bliss.

*One of the disciplines you write about is creating a rule for life. What does that mean?*

The rule for life—and again, you might want to call it a rhythm—asks, “How do I want to live my life given the circumstances and season of my life right now?” Say I grew up having my quiet time, and now I’m a mom with little kids. To have quiet time with God, I have to get up before six in the morning, and I’m exhausted.

The rule says these are the givens of my life. This is what’s true of my life. This is what is true of my limits. This is what is true of my time. Now how can I arrange my life to give space to God?

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Frankly, we all have rules, like Do your best or Never give up. So what should be my spiritual rule for this time and season of my life? And how can that shape the life I have, so it is not at the whim of what is urgent or what is cool?

*Rob Moll is an editor at CHRISTIANITY TODAY. This article first appeared in the February 2006 issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY.*

### Thought Provokers

- *Calhoun says she likes the term rhythm for discipline, as in “spiritual rhythms that add to my life with God.” Does this change in terms make the practice clearer or more understandable to you? Why or why not?*
- *What rules for your life could help you in your spiritual formation?*

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THE ISSUE AT HAND

# The Making of the Christian

Richard J. Foster and Dallas Willard on the difference between discipleship and spiritual formation.

*Interview by Agnieszka Tennant*

**P**rayer. The Word of God. Spiritual gifts. The sacraments. Social justice. Pursuit of holiness. Christian disciplines. These are the rivers of Christian tradition that flow into the interdenominational sea of small groups called Renovaré. It's impossible to say how many of these spiritual formation groups function worldwide, because the group's leaders say that "it would be a failure" if they counted them. They're not into numbers and organizational growth charts.

But it's likely you've heard of them anyway.

The founder of Renovaré is Richard J. Foster, Quaker author of *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, a classic named by CT as one of the top ten books of the 20th century. Another luminary at Renovaré is Dallas Willard, a Southern Baptist, professor of philosophy at the University of South California in Los Angeles, and author of *The Divine Conspiracy: Recovering Our Hidden Life in God*, which was CT's Book of the Year in 1999.

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The two men recently collaborated on *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco), which they edited with The Message's Eugene Peterson and Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann.

Foster and Willard sat down with CT associate editor Agnieszka Tennant for a rare interview at a Renovaré conference in Denver to explain the difference between spiritual formation and its imitations.

### *What do you mean when you use the phrase spiritual formation?*

**Willard:** Spiritual formation is character formation. Everyone gets a spiritual formation. It's like education. Everyone gets an education; it's just a matter of which one you get.

Spiritual formation in a Christian tradition answers a specific human question: *What kind of person am I going to be?* It is the process of establishing the character of Christ in the person. That's all it is. You are taking on the character of Christ in a process of discipleship to him under the direction of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. It isn't anything new, because Christians have been in this business forever. They haven't always called it *spiritual formation*, but the term itself goes way back.

Is spiritual formation the same as discipleship?

**Willard:** *Discipleship* as a term has lost its content, and this is one reason why it has been moved aside. I've tried to redeem the idea of discipleship, and I think it can be done; you have to get it out of the contemporary mode.

There are really three gospels that are heard in our society. One is forgiveness of sins. Another is being faithful to your church: If you take care of your church, it will take care of you. Sometimes it's called discipleship, but it's really churchmanship. And another gospel is the social one—Jesus is in favor of liberation, and we should be devoted to that. All of those contain important elements of truth. You can't dismiss any of them. But to make them central and say that's what discipleship is just robs discipleship of its connection with transformation of character.

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*What does this misunderstanding of discipleship look like?*

**Willard:** In our country, on the theological right, discipleship came to mean training people to win souls. And on the left, it came to mean social action—protesting, serving soup lines, doing social deeds. Both of them left out character formation.

*Isn't character formation very much a part of many Christian schools and institutions?*

**Willard:** What sometimes goes on in all sorts of Christian institutions is not formation of people in the character of Christ; it's teaching of outward conformity. You don't get in trouble for not having the character of Christ, but you do if you don't obey the laws.

It is so important to understand that character formation is not behavior modification. Lots of people misunderstand it and put it in the category of Alcoholics Anonymous. But in spiritual formation, we're not talking about behavior modification.

**Foster:** I think what Dallas is referring to is that many Christian institutions have a system by which you find out whether you're in or out. Sometimes it's rules; sometimes it's a certain belief system.

You just look sometimes at what they produce in terms of solid families and marriages. Do they really love their enemies? If that's the case, great. If it's about the number of verses you can memorize or the answers you give to a certain set of questions, while you're full of bitterness or pride—that's not spiritual formation.

Pride is one of the socially acceptable sins in some corners of the evangelical culture. It's just straight-out ego gratification—how important I am; whether my name gets on the building or on the TV program or in the magazine article.

*So how do we cultivate humility?*

**Foster:** We can't get humility by trying to get humility. But we can't assume there's nothing to do and just wait for God to pour humility on our heads. No, no! Take disciplines, like service, like Benedict's

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rule. His 12 steps into humility almost all deal with service to God and to others. That produces a perspective in life that works a grace of humility in us.

### *How does Jesus address spiritual formation?*

**Willard:** Jesus teaches it, but often his teaching gets identified with general moralisms, like turning the other cheek and so on. You don't actually find much instruction on how to do that. So we've come to a place where we just assume we're not actually going to do it. Some time ago, I was in Belfast, a place where your enemy may have lived across the street and may have killed your child. I was talking to ministers and church leaders about Jesus' teachings on loving our enemies. A gracious man stood up and said, "When we talk about loving your enemy here, it means something. And we're not sure that you can do that."

I asked, "Are any of your churches teaching people how to love your enemy?" There was a moment of silence. No one was.

That's a question we all should ask ourselves: *Do you know of a church where they actually teach you how to love your enemies, how to bless those who curse you?* This is extremely radical material because it goes to the sources of behavior.

### *At this conference, I heard some panelists criticize megachurches. I wonder what your take is on seeker-oriented congregations.*

**Willard:** **What they do well is establish a public presence that draws** many people under the sound of the gospel. They are led by wonderful people who are under the call of God to do the work they're doing.

In many seeker-sensitive churches, the focus is on getting people to confess Christ as a basis for going to heaven when they die. I don't want to diminish the importance of that, because you're going to be dead a lot longer than you're alive, so you ought to be ready for that.

But it is possible to lose sight of character transformation as a serious element for the people you're bringing in. We need to do both of those things.

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**Foster:** The problem today is that evangelism has reached the point of diminishing returns. I talk with people and they say, “What am I to be converted to? I look at Christians and statistically they aren’t any different.” You want to be able to point to people who are really different.

**Willard:** ... and people who are running a bank or a school, or functioning in government, maybe even in the military. What we need is more examples of people who actually have character that is Christlike. Isaiah brought up this problem of people whose lips are “near me” but their hearts are “hard toward me”; Jesus also talked about it. Spiritual formation is for developing a heart that is one with God—whether you’re in a lush hotel suite or down on the street. The business of the church is to bring that about.

*A heart that is one with God— sounds like a tall order.*

**Willard:** We’re not talking about perfection; we’re talking about doing a lot better. Forget about perfection. We’re just talking about learning to do the things that Jesus is favorable toward and doing it out of a heart that has been changed into his.

You two have been friends for a long time. Tell me how you glimpsed the character of Christ being formed in each other.

**Foster:** In the early ’70s, Dallas and I were members of a small group of men who met every week. We became aware that Dallas, who was driving this old beat-up Volkswagen, needed tires. So we decided to buy a set of tires for him without telling him.

We went up to his home with these four tires. We’re feeling very righteous about this. I’m thinking, *Oh, isn’t this wonderful. He’ll gush over this.* What was I doing? I was thinking of how I’m going to put him into my debt. When we presented these four tires, he said, “Oh, thank you very much. I needed those.” That was it. He hadn’t said anything else. Not any sense of, “Oh, I’ll pay you back.” That reaction set me free from this game of tit-for-tat, “I scratch your back; you scratch my back.”

**Willard:** For his part, Richard has a discipline of simplicity. It comes out of his tradition as a Quaker. It is so deeply rooted and pervasive. It’s one reason things go so well in conferences: He does not put on. The Quaker

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writer George Fox—a mentor for both of us—talked about taking people off of men and putting them onto Christ. That’s what you see in Richard. He doesn’t care to be noticed, and, despite his notoriety, he can actually pay attention to people.

*In what context do Renovaré spiritual formation groups usually function?*

**Foster:** They’re sometimes organized by churches. Sometimes there will be people at our conferences who will find each other and begin to meet together. Sometimes they go to the same church; sometimes they don’t. Some group members don’t go to any church. It doesn’t matter.

*So you don’t stress the importance of being connected to the local church?*

**Foster:** We bless the organized church structures and their meetings. But if there are 10,000 others that meet outside of these ecclesiastical structures, that’s wonderful too. The kingdom of God moves forward in lots and lots of ways.

**Willard:** One of the limitations of the megachurch is that it cannot be mega enough. You cannot take all the people to church.

But if we’re really concerned about reaching the world for Christ, we have to bring the church—which is the people of God—to permeate society. You can’t tie it to a building. That’s where we started. We went to buildings, but it was about community. It was Christ coming upon preexisting community and redeeming it where it was.

*The current interest in spiritual formation is part fad and part timeless. How much staying power do you think it has?*

**Foster:** We don’t know yet whether people are going to take this seriously enough to where it really sinks down into the deep habit structures of life. You can’t hope to accomplish in 40 days what it takes 40 years to do. There has to be a willingness for barren day after barren day after barren day, a willingness for new forms of worship, new forms of living.

*This article first appeared in the October 2005 issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY.*

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### Thought Provokers

- *What do you think of Foster's conclusion to the interview—that you have to be willing to face barren day after barren day? What do you think he means?*
- *Willard says that spiritual formation isn't about being perfect, just "doing a lot better." Is that relieving? Comforting? How so?*

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SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

# Making Space for God

What spiritual direction is, and why evangelicals are increasingly attracted to it. An interview with *Holy Invitations* author Jeannette Bakke.

*by Jennifer H. Disney*

*Evangelicals are listening for God in ways that are different from our usual understanding of discipleship. We are looking at many Christian disciplines, including prayer, silence and solitude, discernment, journaling, and others. ... Spiritual direction is one of these disciplines many evangelical Christians are learning about and exploring."*

*So says Jeannette Bakke, a faculty associate at Bethel Theological Seminary, where she was professor of Christian education from 1978 to 1994. In a recent interview, she discussed some of the themes in her book *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction* (Baker, 2000), the result of more than 15 years of study, receiving and giving spiritual direction, reflection, and teaching. She was interviewed at Bethel Seminary by Jennifer H. Disney, a writer and psychologist who lives and works near Minneapolis-St. Paul.*

***What is spiritual direction?***

It is a discipline in which, with the help of another, you try to listen to your own heart and to God's. It is about intention and attention: I desire



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to hear God, so I am going to make space to give God my attention. Spiritual direction is done either with two people or in groups of three or four.

I like to say that spiritual direction is discernment about discernment, as Christians are always in the process of discernment in some way. When faith is important to us, we often consider such questions as *How is God with me right now? How is God inviting me? What is God saying to me? Is God pleased with me? Where are God and I at war?* We are often muddling along with those things. Spiritual direction gives people a place to talk out loud and confidentially about what they are thinking about already.

Many prefer the terms spiritual friend or spiritual companion to describe this relationship. Why do you like the term spiritual director? It has value because this is the term used in the literature of this spiritual discipline. If you want to learn more about the discipline, you will find more resources using this term. Also, it's a helpful way to quickly distinguish this discipline from pastoral counseling, mentoring, discipling, or even intense friendship. In my experience, more and more Protestants, including evangelicals, are using the term to describe a particular kind of spiritual companionship.

*Why is there is a growing interest among Protestants and evangelicals in spiritual direction?*

Still, to be clear, a spiritual director doesn't "direct" or tell the other what to do; he or she simply asks questions, and suggests readings and practices to help the other discern God's presence.

People are hungry for authentic spiritual companionship. Many are concerned about the crassness of the larger culture, and the fracturedness and pace of life—they desire to slow down and notice more about who they are and how to be connected with God. They are dissatisfied with what feels like a lack of significance and are seeking something more.

*Do you see anything like this contemporary movement in the history of evangelicalism?*

Spiritual direction has always been a part of the church's experience, and different groups of Christians have described God's participation with

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us—the awareness of God’s nearness and leading individually and collectively. The early Methodist class meetings, small groups in which people talked about their spiritual lives together, is perhaps the best-known example of a spiritual formation group.

### *How is it different from typical devotional practices?*

Many Christians set aside a quiet time to be with God and pray. But we often hesitate to talk with someone else about it, partly because of our awareness of intimacy with God and a sense of privacy. But also, everyone I know, including me, thinks that his or her own prayer is inadequate, not very spiritual. There is a reticence to talk, because then others will see I am not so spiritual. Spiritual direction is a place to say, “I am an ordinary person but I have an extraordinary God, and it is okay to be just who I am, to ask God to be a part of the conversation, and to talk to another person about that.”

Why talk with another person about our personal relationship with God? When we intend to be God’s, to love God and serve God, we begin with high hopes and energy and desire to listen to, love, and follow God. But in our life journey we do not know what we might encounter—what side paths will look interesting, what life circumstances will change our point of view. Birth, death, disease, surprises, love, joy—all these have their say in the journey.

*A lot of what you’re describing doesn’t sound very “spiritual.” Spiritual growth seems to include “negative” moments.*

As we continue along with God in and through the midst of life, at times we are drawn to God, and at other times we strike out on our own, either consciously or unintentionally. Being in spiritual direction, sharing our journey with others, helps us pay more attention to our lives, how we are responding to and resisting God as we move along. It assists our noticing grace in ways we might have missed.

There are stages in the spiritual journey—of learning, serving, moving inward, opening all our questions, doubts, boredom, settling for mediocrity, having our pat answers blown wide open, being more aware of and responding to God’s love, moving toward trusting God no matter what,

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running away from God when we are angry, hurt, disappointed, or afraid of God, life, or circumstances.

I think of the parable of the seeds falling on different kinds of ground. At times our ground, our hearts, are open, and at other times we are hard ground. Speaking with someone about our prayer and our life helps us notice what's going on and helps us offer our hearts as they are to God, to ask God for grace, mercy, assistance, or even to speak about our hardness and lack of desire. The divided human heart dwells in us, not just in others. There are many things we cannot see about ourselves—we need each other.

*What keeps spiritual direction from being a subjective interpretation of another's life?*

Eugene Peterson, in talking about spiritual direction, says, “Responding to God is not sheer guesswork. The Christian community has acquired wisdom through the centuries that provides guidance.” Spiritual direction is grounded within the Christian community and the wisdom that God gives. It isn't something totally subjective or mystical. It is grounded firmly in Christian theology, prayer, spirituality, and Scripture.

*What is the typical agenda in a spiritual direction session?*

From listening to believers across a wide range of Christian faith traditions talk about their experiences in spiritual friendship, I am convinced that the charism of spiritual direction is always present in the body of Christ: “Where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them” (Matthew 18:20). Most Christians have had some experience of seeking God with another person, and been aware of the Holy Spirit's participation with them, but not called it spiritual direction.

The agenda of spiritual direction is to have no agenda—except to be open to God. It is to say, “I would like to be available now with the director to see what God will show me.” And of course that is always in the context of an ordinary life.

A session is usually about an hour long. It starts with greetings and then bridges into silence or Scripture reading or prayer together—some way

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to offer ourselves and the time to God, asking the Holy Spirit to be the real director.

Then the director waits for the directee to begin talking. Sometimes the directee may talk at length, or there may be a dialogue. But however it comes about, whether during or after, because it has been given to God, there is fruit from it. One doesn't usually feel spiritual or religious, but I think the fruit of giving the time to God shows up eventually. Sometimes one is aware of when it shows up and sometimes not.

Sometimes in the session there is insight. The directee may say, "Oh, now I see—now when I say it out loud," or the director may ask a question that brings insight. But not always.

### *How is spiritual direction related to Scripture?*

The director really serves in the background. There is God and the directee, and then there is the director, who is a prayerful, listening person. Spiritual directors try to put what they know on the back burner and listen to how God prompts them. You realize that God will do what God will do, and you are not in charge. Both director and directee desire to be willing to trust the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual direction is grounded in Scripture. Often we read and listen to biblical texts as we seek direction and God's voice. And the Bible is full of examples of spiritual direction. In the Old Testament, remember the story of Eli and Samuel, how Eli points Samuel to listen to God's voice. Jesus is the ultimate spiritual director because of his intimacy with God, his Abba. Take for example his encounter with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus is acting as a spiritual director but also he is the risen but concealed Christ. He is listening to their story and responding by using Scripture—pointing them to the prophets' teaching about the coming Christ. But it is when they sit down with him for companionship at a meal that they recognize him as the Christ. What connects us with Jesus more often is companionship—making time to be with Jesus. Spiritual directors invite directees to slow down and ask, *Where is God in this? Where is Jesus? Where is the risen Christ?* And they often use Scripture to help others discern that.

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### *How do people become spiritual directors?*

Usually people don't set out to become spiritual directors. They have been drawn toward deepening their relationship with God. They have been seeking God through making the opportunity to be with God alone in reading Scripture, prayer, which is both listening and speaking, solitude and silence, perhaps writing in a journal. Over time God influences them. Then people start asking them about practices of prayer, discernment, questions, struggles. Seeking to be with God in a deeper way makes a space for others to be there also. Others are not asking for advice as much as they are asking, "Will you walk alongside me and listen to God with me, to help me recognize what I'm hearing and where I might have blind spots?"

### *What do you mean when you say in your book that spiritual direction is about love?*

God created human beings in love and has always reached for us in love from the time of the Garden of Eden, to the Incarnation of Christ's presence, and up to the present. That, I believe, is God's main desire with people, to be in the fullest possible relationship with them. That is about love. God has created and called every human being to be someone unique and special. It is about helping people recognize who they are and who they can become.

### *What is your hope for Holy Invitations?*

Most of all I hope that *Holy Invitations* draws people to savor their unique relationship with God with its numerous variations, and to reflect upon how they are now feeling nudged to nurture their love for God and be more open to listening to God's generous grace in an ongoing way. It is a book about making oneself available to hear and respond to God and to be God's person in the world.

The Christian discipline of spiritual direction is one way to heighten people's awareness of their own journeys, to ask for grace to make gentle adjustments. The questions at the end of each chapter are

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intended to enable prayerful reflection. So, in a sense, the book asks the same kinds of questions that readers would be considering if they were participating in spiritual direction with a director. Reading and responding to these questions is a way to try on spiritual direction—and hopefully readers will then decide to talk to someone about what they are noticing. It can be a way to invite the Holy Spirit to guide their prayer and reflection—their life.

*This article first appeared in the April 23, 2001, issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY.*

### Thought Provokers

- *Bakke says, “Many Christians set aside a quiet time to be with God and pray. But we often hesitate to talk with someone else about it.” Why do you think this is?*
- *According to Bakke, “The agenda of spiritual direction is to have no agenda—except to be open to God.” How does that sit with you? Does that sound appealing or uncomfortable?*

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PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

# Drawing Closer to God

How a spiritual director can help you grow in your faith.

*by Agnieszka Tennant*

**H**er palms open heavenward, Helene sets them on the couch by her thighs and then starts with a prayer. On occasion, she rings a brass bell to separate the clamor from the quiet. Sometimes she lights a candle, as if to remind us that the Holy Spirit is with us, interceding on our behalf with words we don't even know how to find.

For the next two or three hours, Helene listens intently with me for God's voice. I pay her \$30 for this priceless gift. We sit in her sunroom, chatting about my everydayness: the job, the migraines, the mother, the husband, the sex, the prayer life, the joys, the mistakes. Sometimes we read Scripture; in it we find people with the same concerns as mine. In it all, I slowly notice God beckoning.

Helene isn't a mystic or a saint. The title I use for her—spiritual director—isn't helpful, either. As any decent spiritual director is quick to say, the term's a misnomer. Helene doesn't tell me what to do or try to answer questions only God can answer. In her sunroom, we listen for—and sometimes hear—the Holy Ghost.



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Once, as I and my biological clock neared 28, I came to her distraught over my feelings of inadequacy as mother material. “Have you talked to God about it?” Helene asked. “Not yet,” I replied. “Why don’t we ask him now what he thinks,” she proposed. She prayed for guidance, and we sat in silence for about five minutes.

There was nothing I wanted more than to hear God’s words of comfort. But as the minutes flew by, I felt—pardon the expression—spiritually constipated, unable to discern God’s voice. I finally gave up trying. As soon as I did, a thought popped into my head: *You can’t make this happen!* I suddenly realized that just as I couldn’t make God answer my questions immediately, I couldn’t resolve my feelings toward motherhood when I wanted to. Both require waiting—but would be resolved in time. When I conveyed this to Helene, she said, “See, there’s your answer.”

Like a growing number of evangelicals, I’ve turned to spiritual direction because I want to know God better. My life is so hurried and unexamined these days, I need someone older and wiser to accompany me.

David G. Benner, coeditor with Gary Moon of *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices*, sees the current interest in spiritual direction partly as fad and partly as the result of “a breath of God’s Spirit.” While the spike in evangelical curiosity may be temporary, spiritual direction is no novelty. It’s a classic spiritual discipline various Christian traditions have practiced for centuries.

In the last few decades (with the most intense growth occurring in the last five years), a number of evangelical schools have begun to offer degrees in direction. Well-known Christian psychotherapist Larry Crabb decided spiritual direction was superior to psychotherapy because it probes the spiritual causes beneath psychological problems. A couple of years ago, he even opened a school of direction.

“Evangelicals already have experience with discipleship, Bible study, and teaching,” says Jeannette Bakke, author of *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction*. “Spiritual direction is different; it’s an ordinary conversation whose purpose is to recognize God’s presence and invitations even when speaking about the ordinary flow of life.”

In a typical session, a director may start by asking you about your life, and then begin inquiring, “Where’s God in this?” or “How have you prayed about it?” Direction can take place on the phone or by e-mail, and

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sometimes even in small groups of people who function alternatively as directors and directees.

Spiritual direction is not necessarily for everyone; many people have encounters with God without it. But if you're curious about how it might help in your faith journey, here are five points to consider.

**1. Spiritual direction is not psychotherapy.** People usually see a psychotherapist because they want to solve their problems. Once their crisis is remedied, they stop seeing the professional. Spiritual direction isn't designed to "fix" people or solve their troubles.

Thirteen years ago, Ruth Haley Barton, author of *Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence*, stumbled upon spiritual direction when, as a church leader, she went to see a Christian psychologist. The professional helped Ruth realize her questions weren't mainly psychological in nature; they had more to do with faith and God. The psychologist surprised her by suggesting they find out where God was in her struggles.

The psychologist-turned-director led Ruth into the spiritual disciplines of silence and solitude. She remembers the director saying to her, "Ruth, you're like a jar of river water all shaken up. You need to sit still long enough so the sediment can settle and the water can become clear."

"She knew I was all riled up, so full of words, activities, theology, and dogma, that I hadn't had the courage to sit still long enough to hear my questions and find God in the midst of them," says Ruth, who today is a spiritual director and the cofounder of The Transforming Center, a spiritual formation ministry.

"I think we've gotten to the end of what psychology can offer," Ruth adds. "It cannot take us all the way to full spiritual transformation. We need a way to open ourselves to the work only God can do to transform our deepest brokenness.

Like Ruth, good candidates for spiritual direction are people experiencing anxiety, change of identity, challenges to their faith, and a yearning for God. Some find direction helpful in steering them away from the kind of sin that tends to ensnare them.

**2. Pick a spiritual director who's further down the spiritual path.**

Many of us are blessed to have informal spiritual directors: our parents,



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grandparents, teachers, prayer partners, and pastors. In a way, spiritual direction is something mature believers should give each other without setting out to do so.

Yet while it's true any believer can help another listen for God, the person seeking direction needs to look for someone from whom she can learn. Spiritual direction is different from spiritual friendship.

“There are questions we're afraid to ask until we have support to do so,” says Ruth Haley Barton. “You choose someone who's better versed in the ways of the soul than you are, someone who has submitted herself to training.”

Spiritual direction doesn't equal mentoring, either. “People seek mentoring when they desire to develop particular competencies,” writes Jeannette Bakke in *Holy Invitations*. In a mentoring relationship, the mentor coaches the mentee, while the latter seeks to imitate the mentor or to learn skills from him. As such, mentoring often takes place between two professionals. In direction, the directee seeks to imitate Christ with the aid of the director's discernment and experience.

The director has to have “a detached, loving presence,” adds Bakke. “With family and friends, it's nearly impossible to be open and neutral because their decisions sometimes affect us.” For this reason, she advises the director and directee not to become social friends.

**3. Spiritual directors don't have more access to God than you do.** Be suspicious of anyone who claims to receive the guidance God has for you. And ask yourself why you're seeking a director. If you find it hard to speak to God directly, it may be worth considering whether your search for a director is one more way in which you're avoiding God.

Leanne Payne, author of *Listening Prayer: Learning to Hear God's Voice* and *Keep a Prayer Journal*, says that while there are sound spiritual directors out there—ones “deeply immersed in Christian reality and truth”—she worries when “hurting, needy people would much rather bend toward us and learn through us than go to the Lord themselves. And the flip side is just as hazardous: Immature spiritual directors can gain carnal control over the lives they direct.”

I like the way psychotherapist-turned-spiritual director Larry Crabb describes spiritual direction—listening to the Spirit on behalf of another. The director is there merely to accompany you through listening, questions, and prayer, as you notice the movement of God in your life.

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**4. Good spiritual directors should be hard to find.** Author Leanne Payne, who is head of a pastoral care ministry, cautions that fine spiritual directors have been “few and far between” historically. There’s good reason for that. She quotes 16th-century priest Frances De Sales’ writings: “There are fewer men than we realize who are capable of this task. He must be full of charity, knowledge, and prudence, and if any one of these three qualities is lacking, there is danger. I tell you again, ask God for him, and having once found him, bless his Divine Majesty, stand firm, and do not look for another, but go forward with simplicity, humility, and confidence, for you will make a most prosperous journey.”

Credentials from one of about 80 existing schools of spiritual direction aren’t necessarily a good litmus test for a gifted director. Not all training centers are Christ-centered; some draw on New Age philosophy. Consequently, some credentials merely mean its bearers have been educated in “the current psychological syncretism rather than ... the needed historical, theological, philosophical, and classical pastoral knowledge,” Payne says. She especially notes some directors are less trained in the orthodox teaching of Christianity than they are in Jungian psychotherapy (in which there’s no acknowledgement of human sin and Christ’s supremacy, and whose goal is self-realization).

Run from directors who: a) are more interested in your story than in where God is in your story; b) often give you advice; c) make you feel manipulated; d) quote more from Carl Jung than from the Bible.

Use your discretion regarding the gender of your director. I know of many edifying coed spiritual-direction relationships. God’s best choice for some young women disappointed by men may be a grandfatherly priest. But I also know I wouldn’t be able to discuss sex, hormones, or motherhood—all part of my life with God—in the same depth and detail with a man as I can with a woman. Plus, for some of us, the emotional intimacy this relationship fosters may be too close for comfort if it’s with a man.

**5. You don’t have to get spiritual to participate in spiritual direction.** Some people don’t think of themselves as “spiritual.” The good news is, Christ wants us to come to him anyway. You present yourself to God and to your director just as you are—even if it means hassled, depressed, stressed out, tired, or angry (I’d never go if it weren’t the case!). A good director will help you find God’s “holy invitations,”

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to use Jeannette Bakke's words, "whether you are glad or sad, overwhelmed by life or savoring it."

Say that during your last session you decided to spend 40 minutes a day in prayer. It's been a month, and you failed. Instead of giving in to self-recrimination, talk to the director about the reasons why you weren't able to pray. They may hint at lessons God wants to teach you.

Well-known retreat director, author of *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, and recovering alcoholic, Brennan Manning has found spiritual direction, among other things, aids in keeping him away from the lure of booze. In a recent interview, he told me, "Goodwill doesn't do it; lofty intellectual thoughts don't do it. I'm a very vulnerable man. There's no effective middle defense against the first drink. Similarly, in the spiritual life, there's no effective middle defense against the relapse of sin. It's a matter of pleading with God each day for the grace to stay faithful."

On the way home from Helene's sunroom, I'm encouraged to do just that. I sing praise songs in the car and usually even manage to take bad drivers in stride. The daily work of pleading with God for the grace to stay faithful in the midst of unanswered questions is still before me; no one will do it for me. But, thank God, a good, wise Christian is there to cheer me on.

*Agnieszka Tennant is the former associate editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY magazine. This article first appeared September/October 2004 issue of TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN.*

### Thought Provokers

- *What are your impressions of a spiritual director?*
- *How might one help shape your relationship with God or your understanding of his will for your life?*

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PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

# Spiritual Disciplines for the Undisciplined

Seeking God with our own temperamental prayers.

*Interview with Charles Killian*

**F**or some people, practicing spiritual disciplines comes naturally. They get up at 5:30 A.M., read five chapters of Scripture, then pray for an hour before their morning run. They journal daily, fast twice a week, and take an annual retreat to a monastery for a week of silence.

For others, perhaps most, it's not that simple. While they pray frequently, both publicly and privately, most of the time their prayers are "on the run." They struggle to read the Bible through cover to cover in one year, despite the latest systematic reading program they ordered in the mail. They live with persistent feelings of inadequacy over their "devotional life."

Is there hope for such people?

LEADERSHIP contributing editor Bob Moeller found a self-confessed "unstructured personality" in Charles Killian, professor of preaching and drama at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. They discussed Killian's experiences in developing intimacy with God apart from the traditional regimens.

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***When someone has difficulty maintaining daily spiritual disciplines, is that the sign of a spiritual problem or character flaw?***

Perhaps. But for some the explanation may be their basic temperament. Structure comes more naturally to some personality types than others. Some people naturally prefer order and discipline, while others prefer a more spontaneous and unstructured approach to life.

In their book *Prayer and Temperament: Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality Types* (The Open Door, Inc., 1984), Chester Michael and Marie Norrissey suggest a relationship between our basic temperament and the type of spirituality or prayer that works best for us. I've certainly found that true in my own pilgrimage.

Our personality structure is a gift from God, and we ought to celebrate its strengths and potential rather than agonize over its weaknesses and shortcomings. For many years, I didn't see that.

***How did your sense of inadequacy at practicing spiritual disciplines affect you?***

I remember weeping myself to sleep many nights as a boy, apologizing to God for failing to read enough of the Bible, not praying enough, or for just not being the person I thought I should be. I saw God as a referee in a black and white striped shirt, ready to call a technical at any moment or throw me out of the game. At best, I saw him as a taskmaster shouting, "Back to the yoke. You haven't measured up yet."

I wanted so much to earn the smile of God's approval, and as hard as I worked for it, I never sensed God say, "Good boy, Chuck." I felt as if I failed the test of what a spiritual person should be.

***So some of the guilt people may feel over their devotional lives results from a distorted view of God?***

I was raised in a good home where my mother took us to church twice on Sunday and once during the week. Her heart was right, but there was a certain rigidity about our faith. We were scrupulous about our religious activity, and every time an altar call was given, I responded. I went forward so many times to be born again I ended up with stretch marks on my soul.

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I remember one evening as a boy when our small church was holding revival meetings. The evangelist preached that we were the ones who nailed Christ to the Cross. That image stuck in my mind, and that evening I cried myself to sleep, apologizing to God for killing his Son.

Not only could I never measure up, I was guilty of this horrible crime. I didn't understand the unconditional love of God that motivated Christ's sacrifice, that my sin was completely covered by the atonement, and that grace meant God was neither angry with me nor blaming me for the death of his Son.

So for the next 20 to 30 years, I labored under perfectionism; I never measured up. This played into my understanding of the spiritual disciplines. I always seemed to be a brick short of a load. Regardless of how much or how often I prayed, it was never good enough.

### *What was the turning point for you?*

During a "dark night of the soul," I realized what my perfectionism was doing to my work, my family, and myself. I began to explore the meaning of grace. For years I had asked, "God, what can I do to be holy?" I struggled, sweated, manipulated, and worked to please God. But I never escaped feeling like the bad little boy who helped kill God's Son.

What finally brought stability and peace to this unstructured person, who today is still somewhat unstructured and delighted to be so, was the realization that my salvation was Christ's work, not my own. I couldn't save myself, only he could. It was liberating to realize I no longer had to "do" in order to please God, but simply "be" in Christ, which included my devotional life.

I was 40 before that happened, but once I realized what grace was all about, I began to laugh with a holy laughter. My desire to please God through the practice of spiritual disciplines was replaced by a desire to become conformed to the image of Christ. I no longer felt God was holding a whistle ready to charge me with a foul for failing to measure up in my prayer life or Bible study.

My wife, Jane, also helped me see the true meaning of grace. During one particularly difficult time in our lives, I came home and found our oak coat rack standing in the middle of the hallway. It was covered with yellow ribbons.

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A note attached to the tree read, “So what if it’s not a real oak tree. Any old tree will do. I love you.” Her unconditional love and acceptance broke through to me. I saw for the first time that God loved me in the same way my wife did. It was a marvelous realization.

### *What place do prayer and Bible study now have in your life?*

My definition of the spiritual disciplines includes but goes beyond the traditional fasting, Bible study, and prayer. It involves any activity that helps me better understand the nature of life in Christ.

For example, when the Mona Lisa was on tour in Washington, D.C., I found myself sitting transfixed for nearly half an hour, engaged by this moving portrait. I sensed I was in the presence of greatness.

How did that help me in my walk with Christ? Two weeks later when I was working on a sermon about the divine mystery and presence that invades us and draws us to God, my experience in Washington, D.C. came back to me. That experience helped me explain the concept of mystery and presence to my congregation.

I don’t mean to suggest God is present in paintings; that’s pantheism. But I try to be continually sensitive to the surprising places where God can meet me and teach me more about life in Christ.

Engaging in that type of ongoing spiritual observation of life, the “God-hunt” as David Mains calls it, is one form of spiritual discipline.

### *But shouldn’t the unstructured person still attempt to pray, study, and fast on a regular basis?*

Yes, but you shouldn’t be in bondage to any particular method or regimen. It’s far too easy to slip into the performance trap. As soon as maintaining the method becomes more important than knowing Christ himself, it becomes idolatry.

I don’t have the same degree of discipline in prayer that John Wesley did. I don’t get up at 4:30 or 5:00 A.M. as he did. But I do get up early enough to be alone and spend an hour of quiet in the presence of God, away from the telephones, the noise, and the confusion of life. It’s such a peaceful time, I’m reluctant to bring it to an end.



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Prayer shouldn't be restricted to a certain length of time or time of day. It encompasses the totality of life. Jesus said we ought always to pray and never faint. So I'm always praying, whether I'm preaching, teaching, loving my wife, or counseling a student. When I communicate with God even as I go through the routines of life, there's a holiness and sanctity to these moments.

*Is there danger of such a devotional life becoming too experiential and subjective?*

That's where spiritual accountability is important. While unstructured people resist expectations, they need to put goals and structure in place. That's where a soul mate or friend is invaluable. That person needs to understand and appreciate the dynamics of the unstructured personality, but he also needs to love me enough to say, "Hey Chuck, you're copping out. You need to get back to the program."

*If you're by nature resistant to structure and regimens, won't your soul mate just be wasting his time?*

Like most unstructured people, I resist structure until it's forced on me. One of the hallmarks of my personality is that I learn so much after the fact. I don't usually see what God is doing until he's done it.

That was the case when I was asked to take an interim pastorate in a neighboring state, while continuing my teaching load. It lasted four years. During that time, I virtually never used an old sermon; everything I preached was fresh that week. The pressure of that situation created a need for a fresh discipline of Bible study, meditation, and prayer that proved enormously beneficial.

While I still try to avoid what I consider the bondage of the predictable, my devotional life was enriched by the structure forced on me by that assignment

*Is the unstructured personality at a disadvantage in growing spiritually?*

The unstructured and the structured person are both healthy and balanced if their life is in Christ. For me to understand and accept my

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resistance to structure is a measure of balance. I will always be that way to a certain degree, and I need to thank God for the way he made me, even as I struggle for bringing more order to my life. The structured person will always be striving to some degree to break out of a box.

### *What advantage does the unstructured person have in spiritual disciplines?*

The downside to our personal pietistic tradition in the Western church is that devotionally minded people can become lost in themselves. My spiritual development should not be just for my own sake, but for the sake of the church as well. It is the church that calls me into ministry, that confirms my ordination. It is the church that Jesus is coming for someday.

Those of us who like to fly our own kite need to remember that we don't exist for ourselves but for the glory of God and for the good of the church.

That's why growth groups, Bible studies, Christian education, can all have a vital part in building up the spiritual life of the unstructured person.

### *What is the unstructured person's greatest need?*

Our greatest need is to accept and celebrate who we are in Christ.

The story of Suszi of Anitole has helped me. As he lay dying, he called one of his disciples to his bedside and whispered, "I shall soon stand before the Great Tribunal. I will not be asked, 'Why weren't you one of the prophets?' or 'Why weren't you Moses?' No, on that day I will simply be asked, 'Why weren't you Suszi? You would have made a good Suszi if you had just let go.' "

My desire is not to be another Praying Hyde or Martin Luther. I simply want to make a good Chuck Killian. That's all God is asking of me.

*This article first appeared in the Winter 2003 issue of LEADERSHIP JOURNAL.*

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### Thought Provokers

- *Do you lean more toward structured rigidity or unstructured chaos? What is the impact of that on your spiritual disciplines?*
- *Killian says, “I try to be continually sensitive to the surprising places where God can meet me and teach me more about life in Christ.” How might practicing this shape you spiritually?*

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PERSPECTIVE

# Blowing Holes in Spiritual Formation

The *Divine Hours* author Phyllis Tickle sees rising interest in pre-Reformation spirituality. “A movement?” she says, “You better believe it.”

a LEADERSHIP *Interview*

“There is a movement not only back to the disciplines, but a kind of instinctive, if not fully articulated desire to know the whole heritage of Christianity,” says Phyllis Tickle, an expert on religious publishing and author of a best-selling series of books on fixed-hour prayer, *The Divine Hours*. According to Tickle, this movement back to such ancient disciplines signals a radical shift in the direction of postmodern Christianity, a possible new Reformation. *Leadership* recently caught up with Tickle (over a shaky cell phone connection in Tennessee as she was traveling to another of her many lectures) to discuss the growing interest in spiritual formation.

**Leadership:** *It seems that more pastors these days are attempting to incorporate ancient disciplines into the spiritual life of their churches. How widespread has this practice become?*

**Tickle:** I don’t think there are any actual statistics on this, yet. However, as I have traveled across the country to various gatherings and



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conferences, pastors and laity across the country increasingly want me to speak on the ancient disciplines. There's a huge interest. In addition, publishers are increasingly aware that this is happening—and I think that might be the strongest evidence. In the publishing community, we have always said that eventually Christians are going to give up on “ooey-gooey God” and begin to ask “What is our spiritual birthright as Christians?”

There has been a movement, I think, not only back to the ancient disciplines, but also a kind of instinctive and not yet fully articulated attempt to know what the whole heritage is for Christianity. A movement? You better believe it.

*Is there any one or two of these ancient spiritual disciplines that you feel connect well with people today, especially younger people?*

Yes. If you take them into the spiritual disciplines, the first one that I think connects very well is tithing, based on Abraham's giving of a tenth of all he had won in battle to Melchizedek. When I speak about the disciplines, that's where I begin. And I find that it connects with younger people. They want spiritual disciplines that cost them something.

The second is every time you have communion or Eucharist or mass, it is the sacred meal, and that's something that's easy for most Christians to connect with. Melchizedek turns after he blesses Abraham and takes the bread and wine, and that's where the center meal comes from, that's where the Passover comes from. I suspect we are going to find that 25 or 30 years from now, communion will be offered every time Christians worship.

After that, a string of disciplines: there is the sacred city and the notion of pilgrimage to it. It seems to me that in terms of popularity, fixed-hour prayer was the one that came out first, largely due to some of these bad movies where we see monks chanting and so forth, so there was already a mindset toward fixed-hour prayer. There is the observation of the Sabbath, and that one is clearly operative now, not mere church attendance, but actually cessation of work and all activity except prayer. Now we see fasting increasing a little bit, as well.

*Given that reclaiming some ancient spiritual practices is big with people under 40, could some of it be attributed to dissatisfaction with their parents' ways?*

Always, of course, one generation acts against another. But I think it's unfair to these young people to say that's what's happening here. There is

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interest among the age group a little older than them, which makes it fair to say that this is not a generational reaction. When we say that we're post-denominational, and post-enlightenment, and post-Reformation, we are not yet identifying what we are, but we're sure saying what we aren't. What we're acknowledging in that is that the whole ground has shifted, and that we are in an entirely new age, and that a new Christianity is at work to be an expression of that age.

The Reformation as we knew it, is over. I suspect that 9/11 will be recorded two hundred years from now as the end marking of it. Timothy George recently said that Pope John Paul II will probably be remembered as the most powerful Pope since the Reformation, but that Ratzinger (Pope Benedict) will be remembered as the harbinger of a new Reformation.

If you look at it historically, about every 500 years, there's a time when our common understanding is subject to reconfiguration. When Gutenberg made the Nazarene bible, he blew a hole in the consensual illusion of the time. Likewise, when Columbus didn't fall off the face of the Earth, he blew a hole in the consensual illusion of his time. Darwin blew a hole as well. These young people are not reacting; they are creating, creating out of the material that has withstood the test of history.

*So where are we in this cycle now? Are we still blowing holes?*

No, the hole blowing is over. I think that had it not been for 9/11, we might have blown some more holes. Obviously, we've put spirituality back in its place. We spent 40 years of being spiritual and not religious, and you just don't hear that from young people anymore. Those five things that fundamentalists used to argue about—the five things you used to have to believe in to be a Christian—mean absolutely nothing to those kids who are 40 and under, for the most part.

For example, I was talking to a 17 or 18-year-old young man two or three years ago, and he said to me “I don't understand all that controversy about the Virgin birth.” Keep in mind; this is a devout Christian kid. When I asked what he meant, he exclaimed, “Well of course I believe in it; it's so absolutely beautiful, it has to be true whether it happened or not” [laughter]. That's a post-Reformation comment if I've ever heard one.

*This article first appeared in the Fall 2003 issue of LEADERSHIP JOURNAL.*

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### Thought Provokers

- *Tickle suggests “young people” connect most with tithing and Eucharist. Which disciplines do you connect with the most?*
- *She says, “Eventually Christians are going to give up on ‘ooey-gooey God’ and begin to ask ‘What is our spiritual birthright as Christians?’. What do you think she means?”*

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LEADERSHIP TOOLS

# Helping People Find Direction

What one should look for in a spiritual director.

*by Agnieszka Tennant*

**1. Make sure it's your cup of tea.** Start by reading Jeannette Bakke's *Holy Invitations*. Check out *Soul Talk: The Language God Longs for Us to Speak* by Larry Crabb; *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship and Direction* by David Benner; *Holy Listening* by Margaret Guenther; *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls* by Gary Moon and David Benner; and *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* by William Barry and William Connolly.

**2. Search the Web.** For help in finding a director, Bakke recommends contacting Christian Formation and Direction Ministries ([www.cfdm.org](http://www.cfdm.org)); Christos Center for Spiritual Formation ([www.christoscenter.org](http://www.christoscenter.org)); and Larry Crabb's New Life Ministries ([www.larrycrabb.com](http://www.larrycrabb.com)).

More eclectic centers include Spiritual Directors International ([www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org)); Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation ([www.shalem.org](http://www.shalem.org)); and The Pathways Center for Spiritual Leadership ([www.upperroom.org/pathways](http://www.upperroom.org/pathways)).



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**3. Ask for recommendations.** If you know of someone who has a gifted, Christ-centered director, ask for contact information. Even if the director can't take on any more directees, he or she may recommend someone else.

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# Resources

Additional books to help you further

**Spiritual Director: Resources for shepherding, guiding, and providing spiritual care**, from [BuildingChurchLeaders.com](http://BuildingChurchLeaders.com). This downloadable Orientation Guide draws on the collective wisdom of spiritual leaders to equip spiritual directors to shepherd with care and effectiveness.

**Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship & Direction**, by David G. Benner (InterVarsity Press, 2004). In this guide, readers are introduced to the riches of spiritual friendship and direction and shown what they are and how they are practiced.

**Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith**, by Henri Nouwen, Michael Christensen, Rebecca Laird (HarperSanFrancisco). This book gives you the experience of having Henri Nouwen as our personal spiritual director, answering questions about the spiritual life in his wise, comfortable, and engaging style.





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