

‘LOOK AT EVERY PATH CLOSELY AND DELIBERATELY’

What’s on Offer?

By JANET K. RUFFING

IN 1975, I ENTERED THE FIRST CLASS for the new Masters Degree in Applied Theology offered by the University of San Francisco. Twenty years later, it appears that the thirst for spirituality among contemporary people only continues to accelerate. It is a search for meaning, a desire for personal spiritual growth and a longing among Christians and non-Christians alike for a life that makes sense beyond the conventional and the purely pragmatic. It is a search for a path with heart and meaning.

For many, no such paths appeared to exist within the formal structures of religion, sacramental life, and conventional church-going. The children of the sixties turned east in search of spiritual wisdom and spiritual paths. Spiritual teachers, gurus, sheikhs, roshis, and yogis travelled west, offering an amazing array of spiritual disciplines and practices all aimed at the undeveloped spiritual selves of materialistic westerners. Psychedelic drugs initiated a spiritual path for some and ended in addiction for others. Recovery from addiction became a spirituality growth industry as the relationship between addiction and spirituality became clarified. Psychology began to recognize the similarity between the life of the psyche and the life of the soul and to offer therapeutic versions of salvation without the inconvenience of a religious tradition, moral imperatives or face-to-face communities. Inter-religious dialogue began in earnest. Ecumenical conversations tried to emphasize common ground rather than differences. The Catholic charismatic renewal took off. And, for many, spirituality and spiritual practice became distinct from church membership or confessional belief.

Today an amazing array of spiritual paths lie open for exploration. Among these options, how are we to discern the spiritual means, teachings and disciplines which can genuinely support and foster the human transformation required to sustain living in relationship to

Transcendence? Which paths are clearly partial, representing only one stage of the journey? Which offer a full spiritual and human itinerary? Which ultimately frustrate and disappoint by their partialness? What are the consequences for spiritual growth when one changes from path to path, walking none far enough or long enough to travel beyond the beginnings of any particular way? What time-tested authentic wisdom and what unrecognized folly are embedded in the accumulated traditions of every world religion and the spiritual paths which unfold within them? What assurance of reliability or authenticity exists in new paths as yet too short in duration for the long-term fruits of the Spirit to be recognized? These, it seems to me, are the possibilities such choices present.

Don Juan, in his shamanistic instruction to the writer Carlos Castaneda, offered this guidance:

Look at every path closely and deliberately. Try it as many times as you think necessary. Then ask yourself and yourself alone one question. This question is one that only a very old man asks. My benefactor told me about it once when I was young and my blood was too vigorous to understand it. Now I do understand it. I will tell you what it is: Does this path have a heart? If it does, the path is good. If it doesn't, it is of no use.¹

Where in Christian tradition are the paths with heart? How do we gain a deeper appreciation of the transformative possibilities in our own spiritual traditions from interreligious and interdisciplinary dialogue?

Twenty years ago, the rich, spiritual traditions of Christianity lay hidden, for the most part, within the memories, sometimes distorted, of religious communities and within a wide body of literature never translated into the vernacular or into languages other than their original medieval vernaculars. The familiar literature was handed down through the politics and perceptions of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation era. Even specialists in the area of spiritual theology knew but a small portion of the rich patrimony of spiritual texts from multiple religious traditions now available in good English translations. A radically new hermeneutic was needed to understand and to reinterpret this rich legacy, the absence of which threatened the religious life of the churches altogether. Our paths with heart had been relegated to archival storage as many tried to walk a path of conventional practice that did not lead to authentic transformation or contemplative prayer.

Spirituality programmes in academic institutions

Different courses of study in spirituality had different aims and goals. Some courses of study had primarily formative goals. These were created to train formation directors for religious communities and seminaries. They often focused on how to initiate late adolescents and young adults into a life of prayer and into the whole way of life of a specialized religious vocation. Others had broader pastoral interests, focused on theological knowledge that would be practically implemented in religious education or in adult faith formation. A whole new generation of pastoral workers, religious and lay, required pastoral training for ministry. Others had technical, academic goals rather than pastoral ones. Some programmes had interdisciplinary, ecumenical or interreligious elements. For some time now, various renewal or sabbatical programmes have been designed for mid-life and older participants who seek spiritual growth in relationship to their present level of adult development. These tended to be less academically oriented, not leading to a degree.

In the mid-seventies, formal academic programmes in spirituality developed largely in degree-granting institutions, such as universities, seminaries, theologates or catechetical institutes. These anticipated the logical developments in the life of Christians based on the theology of Vatican II. The Council's teaching on the universal call to holiness, the renewal of religious life and clerical formation, and the re-establishment of the permanent diaconate all adumbrated a need for pastoral workers with competence in the area of spirituality and spiritual formation.

At the same time, critical reflection in comparative religious contexts was sorely needed. Once texts became available, how were they to be both understood and interpreted? It required hermeneutical and historical methods to understand these texts within their own cultural and historical contexts. Texts, however, from the spiritual traditions of all the world's religions also personally address the reader. Consequently, these texts need to be understood and interpreted in relationship to contemporary questions and experiences. Reading texts against the background of these new questions discloses new meanings. Finally, mystical texts use skilful linguistic strategies to evoke and describe profound experiences of God. Critical questions, such as these, broadened the academic study of spirituality beyond spiritual theology or historical theology or comparative religion alone. The debate about whether or not spirituality is a legitimate field of academic inquiry has not yet been entirely settled. The way in which advanced studies in

spirituality is conceived in various institutions reflects the perspective of their faculties.

Immediately after the Second Vatican Council, the need for Roman Catholics to become biblically literate generated technical and pastoral programmes in Scripture. The scriptural basis of liturgical experience and the new catechetics required biblical literacy. Liturgical reforms within Catholicism revolutionized catechetics in relationship to sacramental preparation as well as clerical training in seminaries. The liturgical and scriptural basis of Christian prayer began to compete with and sometimes replace a devotional approach to Christian prayer. Bible study, Cursillo, charismatic prayer groups, Marriage Encounter and, eventually, the RCIA became the most common diocesan or parish-based forms of spiritual development which emerged in the post-Vatican II era. Some of these were developed programmatically in response to conciliar documents. Others emerged from grassroots. The Permanent Diaconate Formation Programmes as well as the RCIA were such Council-mandated developments.

Programmes in prayer and spiritual direction

At the beginning of the post-Vatican II period, seminaries and novitiates were full, requiring preparation for a new generation of formators. Within a decade, many who were no longer needed began to apply their training and experience to the formation needs of the broader Christian community. A renewal in prayer had begun. Religious communities opened houses of prayer to aid their own members in balancing the contemplative dimension with their apostolic lives. Religious communities recognized that the formation in prayer and spiritual growth once given almost exclusively to religious could be adapted to others, and converted novitiates into spirituality and retreat centres. Already existing retreat houses began to change their programmes, offering a greater variety beyond the preached retreat. Thus an institutional base alongside the diocesan and parish structure began to emerge. A few of the more progressive dioceses sponsored their own spirituality centres.

The renewal of the Spiritual Exercises took place in this context. Jesuits restored the individually directed Ignatian retreat. They began to mentor one another in retreat direction and to train co-workers, frequently religious women, to give the Exercises to meet the expanding need for retreat directors. Women's congregations, originally founded to do retreat ministry with women, frequently recovered this original charism in the light of the renewal of the Ignatian Exercises.

These developments marked the beginning of training in spiritual direction for many people.

This mentoring primarily took place outside of degree-granting institutions until some Jesuit universities and theologates began to include the eight-day or thirty-day retreat as an integrated component within pastorally oriented programmes. In North America, Guelph Spirituality Centre (Canada) became an important centre for training lay and religious in the Exercises. Many retreat-house programmes emulated this model. Participants first made the Spiritual Exercises, preferably the enclosed thirty-day retreat or minimally the eight-day directed retreat, and then completed learning modules which taught the underlying dynamics of the Exercises. They then directed others under supervision. The programmes in many Jesuit retreat houses follow this pattern, Wernersville PA and Milford, Ohio among them in the US, and St Beuno's long-standing programme in Wales.

Other circumstances also influenced the renewal of the Spiritual Exercises. In the early seventies, a new social consciousness began to emerge. The social teaching of the Church continued to unfold. Jesuits themselves criticized the individualistic piety characteristic of Ignatius' own time and incorporated a societal perspective in the giving and making of the Exercises. How was an option for the poor to result from the experience of the Spiritual Exercises? The women's movement gained increasing strength, leading women to adapt, critique and reject received traditions on the basis of their experience. Women today continue to exert spiritual leadership and to create spiritual programmes which honour women's experience and support their full personhood. Because of the christocentric focus of the Exercises, changes in Christology and in the understanding of the New Testament have all dramatically affected the Exercises.

Finally, psychology also made an enormous impact in the entire field of spirituality as well as on the Exercises. Spiritualities which appear to contradict an understanding of healthy psychology are untenable. At the same time, transpersonal psychology is deeply concerned with the spiritual dimensions of psychology. Hence, studies in the psychology of meditation, archetypal psychology, the relationship of sexuality to spirituality, the psychology of conversion, the positive benefit of meditation or prayer in healing disease and reducing stress and other themes have contributed to new understandings of the disciplines of the spiritual life.² In some instances, both proponents and adherents confuse the psychological dimension with the spiritual. By the mid-1980s, in California, where every form of psychological treatment was readily

available, people turned to spiritual direction or other spiritual disciplines after years in various forms of therapy because their spiritual hunger, far from decreasing, had actually increased.

In the late seventies, The Center for Religious Development, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, initiated a programme which was first a degree programme affiliated with Weston School of Theology and then subsequently became distinct from it. They initiated a model of training for spiritual directors based both on the Exercises and on the clinical pastoral education scheme developed for training pastoral counsellors and hospital chaplains. This highly selective programme accepted a small number of associates who had prior experience in both retreat direction and ongoing spiritual direction. The course is full-time over the nine-month academic year. The marriage between the Exercises and psychology was consummated and continues to influence most training and mentoring of spiritual directors today in North America and in other parts of the English-speaking world where the Center for Religious Development staff or their graduates have worked.³

Spiritual Directors International, an organization founded in 1990, is aware of at least three hundred training programmes in spiritual direction alone, predominantly in North America.⁴ Only a handful of these programmes are located within degree-granting institutions. Some version of these community-based programmes of training has spread to Australia, the British Isles and some parts of Africa. These local programmes, usually sponsored by a retreat house, spirituality centre or, in rare cases, a parish, frequently require only one day a week or one evening a week over a one- to three-year period of time. Some focus immediately on the process of spiritual direction; others advertise themselves as spiritual development programmes which may culminate in spiritual direction or spiritual accompaniment training. Others take place in a format of a month to three months requiring residency. The majority of community-based programmes in the United States follow the weekly model over one or more years. Craighead Spirituality Centre in Glasgow also uses a version of this model and there are at least seventeen such programmes in the UK, sponsored by both Roman Catholics and Anglicans alike. Programmes tend to specialize in ongoing spiritual direction or in retreat direction.

The programme directors discovered that many applicants were more interested in their own spiritual growth than becoming spiritual guides for others. These participants often had some kind of initial formation or had participated in one or more lay-based movements such as Cursillo or charismatic renewal, and sought to develop their

own spirituality as they matured beyond these groups. Others had a more contemplative bent and were looking for a less extroverted or a less 'enthusiastic' group context. Programmes initiated for these have matured and are now beginning to attract lay people who have not had any prior formation in prayer or the spiritual life. A few parishes and diocesan centres have developed lay-spirituality programmes which better meet the needs of those whose life context is one of family and work life than programmes developed originally from a religious life or clerical context.

Relationship between community based and academic programmes

There is a reciprocal relationship between academic programmes and community-based programmes. Some people try to further their spiritual quest, to find a path with heart and meaning, through a formal programme in theology, spirituality, religious education or pastoral studies. They are frequently looking both for knowledge about spirituality and for a way to deepen their spiritual experience. Ironically, the more advanced the degree, the less likely it is that personal development goals will be addressed or the faculty be sympathetic to it as a credible field of study.

Conversely, people who have completed a community-based programme may choose to do an academic theological study because they recognize deficiencies in their knowledge of the history of Christian spirituality, classical treatments in prayer beyond a single family of spirituality, psychological understandings of the human person, biblical sources, topics in systematics or comparative religion. Research-oriented MA and PhD programmes often neglect implications for spirituality in their academic courses. Students can study the entire Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and never hear an application made to the lives of contemporary believers. Likewise, some courses in Systematics may deconstruct a cherished set of uncritically held beliefs, leaving nothing in its place. Some theological programmes may be hazardous both to one's faith and to one's practice of prayer. Others, on the other hand, help their students in developing both a critically held and adult form of faith and prayer.

Within Protestant seminaries, it is not unusual to find members of the incoming class testing a call to ministry as the result of a recent spiritual awakening. They expect further spiritual formation to be part of seminary training. Often, the formative elements of the programme are relegated to adjuncts or to a single faculty member's formal or informal courses, workshops or retreats, and they are not addressed in

an integrated way throughout the programme. Some Episcopal and Anglican seminaries offer training in spiritual direction or at least offer spiritual direction to their seminaries. As retreats and quiet days become a regular part of Anglican and Episcopal parish life, there is a growing need for workshops on leading such experiences. Recently, a Presbyterian seminary, affiliated with the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, initiated an external certificate programme in spiritual direction in the Reformed tradition.

Beginning in 1978, the Shalem Institute, based in Washington DC, pioneered a spiritual formation and accompaniment programme that was fully interdenominational from its inception. Although Roman Catholic participation has been significant, this programme encourages the formation of local colleague groups as ongoing communities of support and challenge for those who offer spiritual guidance to others. Participants in this programme have included a large number of ordinary laity from a wide range of Christian churches as well as Christian clergy seeking to develop skill and confidence in the process of spiritual guidance. The learning process includes periodic retreats, residential workshops, colleague groups, reading assignments and papers.⁵

Another Protestant-based programme which originated at the same time is the two-year Guild for Spiritual Guidance at Wainwright House in Rye, New York. This programme draws on Christian tradition, Jungian psychology and Teilhard de Chardin's cosmology as its theoretical focus. A peer learning group is formed which meets on a number of weekends. These weekends include presentations, faith-sharing, prayer, and reflection on the process of spiritual guidance. A Quaker mode of discernment permeates the processes and influences the way the group members work with one another. The programme focuses as much on the spiritual growth of the participants as on the process of guiding others.

Carmelites, Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans and Cistercians have also been active as centres supporting the spiritual growth of others and in teaching spirituality. Benedictine programmes tend to emphasize the method of *lectio divina*, a flexible organic prayer form which is usually Scripture-based, and liturgy, both the recitation of the hours and eucharist. A notable, long-standing Benedictine programme is the one at Pecos, New Mexico, which has both a charismatic and a Jungian emphasis. The women's community in Erie has been foremost in promoting peace-making and social consciousness in relationship to Benedictine spirituality. Among Episcopalians and Anglicans, the

Benedictine roots of the Christian Church in England make all forms of Benedictine spirituality congenial to members of these churches. Benedictines elsewhere, such as Aelred Graham and Bede Griffiths, experimented with developing Christian Ashrams which have become centres of Christian contemplative practice, drawing on the practices of Buddhism or Hinduism.

The Dominicans tend to emphasize a ministry of the Word and, under the initial influence of Matthew Fox (who recently became an Episcopalian) and others, sponsor some centres focused on ecological spirituality. The Franciscans have also developed strong ecological and peace-making aspects of many of their spirituality offerings. The Carmelites have long promoted contemplative prayer and regularly offer institutes and workshops related to Carmelite spiritual direction and spirituality. Since the Carmelites, Dominicans and Franciscans have long sponsored third-order lay associations, they have introduced many laity to their particular spiritualities. In the last ten years, among other apostolic Roman Catholic religious, particularly women, the initiation of some form of lay associate programme is growing dramatically. These associations are increasingly being co-led by lay members and usually offer some form of spiritual formation related to the community's charism.

Beginning in the 1970s the rapid spread of the meditation method of Transcendental Meditation led Cistercians to make more widely available one of the classical teachings on meditation and contemplative prayer within Christian tradition. The Cistercian houses, especially at Spencer, Massachusetts, and at Snowmass, Colorado, teach the prayer named by Basil Pennington 'centering prayer'. This prayer form is a contemporary redescription of the stage of contemplative prayer taught in the *Cloud of unknowing*. Contemplative Outreach is the organization spawned by this teaching which offers retreats and workshops for those who wish to learn this simple prayer form or to lead a local group. Thomas Keating has written a series of books which present the Christian contemplative tradition and which clarify the practice Cistercians teach as 'centering prayer'.⁶ Cistercians have also been active in promoting Merton studies. Thomas Merton's writings continue to be popular and significant in the promotion of contemplative prayer and the connection between contemplative practice and social consciousness.

In Canada, the Benedictine John Main disseminated from his monastery a meditation technique which consists of the continual interior recitation of a mantra, a polysyllabic sentence or phrase. This meditation process is common in India and John Main discovered its

efficacy within the context of Christian meditation. A John Main meditation teacher individually suggests a particular mantra for a meditator and leads the period of quiet meditation.

A number of members of the Asian Jesuit Provinces, who engaged in interreligious dialogue, have pioneered the incorporation of spiritual teachings and disciplines rooted in Asia into retreat experiences or patterns of spiritual development. Anthony de Mello, William Johnston, Hugo Lassalle and Michael Amaladoss have influenced large numbers of people, expanding the repertoire of the Christian contemplative tradition to include Christian forms of Zen, ashrams, mantra recitation etc. The broad dissemination of these methods of contemplative practice from eastern religions continues to influence Christian prayer in the West.

It is easier to describe the teaching of spirituality which takes place in formal centres, either under the auspices of a church or as the outreach of a religious community. However, there are also a number of lay initiatives that are more difficult to detail, but which are, nonetheless, flourishing.

It is increasingly common for a couple with some means to create a hermitage or *poustinia* space for guests, a home-based centre of hospitality providing for those without means time and space for quiet. Sometimes spiritual direction is offered; at other times, only room and board.

There appears to be a resurgence of urban and rural hermits. These women or men, but more commonly women, live in a simple apartment or cottage, support themselves by outside work, and live a contemplative form of life. These anchorites often support the spiritual growth of those who seek them out for counsel, spiritual direction or prayer.

Lay men and women with advanced theological degrees have been increasingly involved in fostering lay spiritual development through their own theological reflection on their spiritual growth and experience. Many teach in university or college settings. Their service to the community beyond the university may include leading retreats, speaking in adult education programmes in a variety of settings and above all, writing. Emerging from these initiatives is a positive appreciation of relationship, sexuality, family life, parenting, work and ministry as significant and important aspects of lay Christian spirituality.

Despite these developments in the field of spirituality in both academic and community-based programmes, difficulties persist in reaching large numbers of laity. Very few parishes include spirituality as part of their adult programming or staffing. Occasionally, a gifted

RCIA director is also offered a spiritual development group or maintains an ongoing Bible study programme with a strong spirituality component. Very few parishes include a spiritual director among the staff. For the most part, access to spirituality development either in centres or in academic programmes is limited. The difficulty of funding tuition for lay participants, especially those employed in church ministries at extremely low salaries, makes many of the programmes inaccessible to many who wish to participate, especially the poor.

Choosing a path

'Look at every path closely and deliberately.' This remains excellent advice. As I reflect on the array of offerings in spirituality, I am most aware of the partialness and incompleteness of every available version and of the strong cultural influences which condition both the teaching of spirituality and the approaches to the spiritual quest. In western, market-driven economies, spirituality is another commodity on the market. It is easier to market a narrow, clearly defined programme or technique than a more holistic, global life-process. It is easier to target a particular age-group, interest, or life-issue and develop a programme for it than to deal with various age-groups or the whole of a person's life at any one time. Teachers of spirituality are limited to the particular knowledge, experiences and training they have mastered or understood at their own particular levels of spiritual and human development.

It is, I believe, important to recognize the limitations inherent in every organized programme and in the teachers who offer them. Many of the community-based programmes are limited to one school of spirituality and perhaps a few other contemporary interests or needs specialized in by its particular staff. Hence, in one place one might receive a good, Ignatian-based foundation in affective, scripturally based prayer with particular attention to women's issues or the issues of adult children of alcoholics. Another centre may offer a stronger emphasis in prayer which grows out of experiences in nature and which is ecologically sensitive; it may also be strong in discernment in relationship to life choices. Yet another may be better at integrating psychology and spirituality and working with images, symbols and rituals.

When people live lives of faith, prayer and commitment over a lifetime, they experience many seasons. Their human development may not correspond entirely to their spiritual development. In many cases, Christians who function as adults in sophisticated and complex ways, may still conduct their faith lives with their childhood or

adolescent understandings of doctrine and ways of praying. Since westerners are now living much longer than the writers of the classical mystical and spiritual texts, there are perhaps aspects of human and spiritual growth we are learning for the first time. Will it become normative for many people to travel more than one spiritual path in their lifetimes and yet be clearly committed to integrated spiritual growth? It would seem to be the case.

Conclusion

When choosing among the options in spirituality, I think one needs to clarify one's goals. One reason spiritual direction is increasingly popular, both as a practice which supports one's spiritual journey as well as a programme of training, is that it respects differences all along the way. Some people learn a great deal about themselves and their own spiritual development as a by-product of these programmes whether or not they ever accompany others as a guide. Many programmes in spiritual direction, however, are designed for participants who are already mature and who have accumulated considerable knowledge and experience of prayer and spirituality before they arrive. I believe there is a very strong cultural force that leads people to accumulate one more 'certification' or credential that might come in handy some day, rather than clearly to choose a programme or course for the sake of personal growth. For many, the economic factors are simply too daunting not to expect some practical outcome to result from the investment of time and money.

Academic programmes are usually limited by the assumptions and conditions in the institutions which offer them. These programmes are accountable to the academy for their critical and cognitive content. They tend to focus more on knowledge than on experience. Although some courses have an experimental component, a certain amount of content must be covered within a predetermined time-frame. These time-frames do not necessarily correspond to personal growth-cycles, although many people begin a programme in the midst of a period of personal growth. Most programmes are graduate level and carry pre-requisites of prior education in various areas; they remain élitist in the present structure of higher education. Only the most pastorally oriented programmes have as goal the personal spiritual development of the participants.

Where there is breadth, depth is often lacking. Where there is specialization and depth, breadth or a sense of the relationship of one aspect of spirituality to another is often lacking. The majority of

programmes deal best with the beginnings of spiritual life and practice, especially prayer. It is harder to find programmes which teach the full spectrum of mystical experience and prayer so as to include both their apophatic and cataphatic forms. In the United States, the history of spirituality is frequently neglected. In the United Kingdom, history may be over-emphasized to the neglect of psychology or somatic elements. Poetry, music and art are just beginning to receive appropriate attention.

Because of the compartmentalized nature of many programmes, some topics in spirituality rarely appear. For instance, when spirituality is primarily conceived of as prayer and interior experiences, little attention may be given to the genuinely ascetical aspects of the journey or to the organic development of a virtuous and stable character, a developmental prerequisite for mystical transformation. When spirituality is conceived in a primarily privatized way, as is likely in English-speaking countries, the connections between spiritual practice and social responsibility remain nebulous and undeveloped. The structure of social environments shield us middle- or upper-class, educated élites from direct contact with the rest of the population. From this social location it is easy to feel little responsibility for the plight of the poor. Hence our need to be evangelized and conscientized by the poor.

The teaching of discernment is often only partial as well. Ignatian-based programmes tend to emphasize the Ignatian Rules for Discernment of Spirits which primarily apply to retreat experiences and to making concrete choices. However, these rules are not as useful in discerning a directee's stage of prayer, or quality of character as expressed in ordinary life, nor do they point toward the long-term 'fruits of the Spirit' which become evident over time. Ignatian discernment is certainly complex enough and requires a number of discretionary judgements on the part of the director, but it does not cover the entire terrain.

Where then shall we find a path with heart? Most likely we will all need to continue to 'look at every path closely and deliberately'. A path with heart will foster both commitment and fidelity to living in conscious relationship to God. It will foster the cultivation of soul, of interiority, of reflection and of contemplation. It will be wide enough to encompass more than one way of praying and more than one way of living from our depths. A path with heart will foster the organic growth of all the virtues. A path with heart will be as concerned with relationships and the active loving of others as with the more interior aspects of our lives. It will help us integrate our love for God and our

love for neighbour. It will challenge us to embrace even larger numbers and more diverse people as the neighbours we are to care about and love. A path with heart will invite us to appreciate and care for the earth and all its creatures. It will respect our somatic reality, our sexuality and our mortality. A path with heart will break through our comfortable illusions of self-satisfaction, self-obsessions, and irreproachability. A path with heart must include a way through the deserts and shadows of our own hearts. A path with heart must be deep enough and long enough to carry us through suffering and darkness and the real power of the forces of evil and the forces of destruction in our world. A path with heart will both challenge us and comfort us. A path with heart will be both individual and particular, and at the same time include a real face-to-face community. A path with heart will offer authoritative teaching when we are immature and respect our autonomy and agency as we mature.⁷ A path with heart will foster the human flourishing of both women and men. A path with heart will lead to fullness of life in and through the full acceptance and experience of our graced human condition.

NOTES

¹ Cited by Jack Kornfield, *A path with heart: a guide through the perils and promises of spiritual life* (New York: Bantam, 1993), p 12.

² See my 'Psychology as a resource for Christian spirituality' in *Horizons* 17 (1990), pp 47–59, for an overview of this area, or John McDargh, 'Relationship and contribution of psychology to spirituality' in Michael Downey (ed), *The new dictionary of Catholic spirituality* (Collegeville: Glazier/Liturgical Press, 1993), pp 792–800.

³ The story recently appeared in Madeline Birmingham and William J. Connolly, *Witnessing to the fire: spiritual direction and the development of directors* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1994).

⁴ Spiritual Directors International has grown to more than 1,800 members world-wide. It began publishing *Presence: An International Journal of Spiritual Direction* in January 1995. It may be reached by writing to Rev. Jeff Gaines, Executive Director, 1329 Seventh Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122, fax (415) 566–1277.

⁵ See Tilden Edwards, *Spiritual friend: reclaiming the gift of spiritual direction* (New York: Paulist, 1980), for the early history of this programme.

⁶ See Thomas Keating, *Intimacy with God* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), for the best description of 'centering prayer' in relationship to the Christian contemplative tradition.

⁷ See Dick Anthony, Bruce Ecker and Ken Wilber (eds), *Spiritual choices: the problems of recognizing authentic paths to inner transformation* (New York: Paragon House, 1987), especially pieces by Wilber, Vaughan, Welwood and Rosenthal. This volume assesses New Age groups and all spiritual development groups which develop from a single charismatic leader or gurn. It suggests criteria for assessing the way authority functions in these groups as well as the stages of human development particular religious groups are able to accommodate.