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Student information

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Graduate Program: Doctorate of Minister in Leadership and Spiritual Formation

Dissertation information

Title of dissertation: Soul Journey: Rediscovering the Sacred Paths of Body, Heart, and Mind

Advisor: David Robinson

Graduate program: Doctorate of Minister in Leadership and Spiritual Formation

Date of Dissertation Approval by Graduate Program: February 11, 2019

Copy and paste your 300-word Dissertation Abstract below:

The spiritually thirsty are leaving the church in the west. They do not find the church to be a place of spiritual wisdom and nourishment. This dissertation follows various ancient guides within Christianity to recover a life-giving spirituality for the Western Church in the twenty-first century. Chapter 1 draws on the desert monastics as it explores the lack of a transformational spirituality in the modern Church. It defines spirituality in terms of eros, clarifies the aim of spirituality as union, and explores the common reductions that have led the Church astray. Chapter 2 connects the three spiritual paths outlined in Bonaventure's "The Soul's Journey Into God" (outward, inward, and upward) with the three centers of intelligence articulated by Gurdjieff (body, heart, and mind) that form the basis of the Enneagram. Each of these paths and centers of intelligence are explored in successive chapters using a different saint or spiritual tradition as a guide. Chapter 3 follows Celtic Christianity on the outward journey to learn the wisdom and spirituality of the body. Chapter 4 follows John of the Cross on the inward journey to recover the wisdom and spirituality of the heart. Chapter 5 follows Gregory of Nyssa in the upward journey to uncover the spirituality of the mind. Each chapter ends with particular spiritual practices to engage the intelligence centers in the journey of awakening to our union with God. Chapter 6 concludes by reimagining the calling of the Church and pastor as spiritual guide. When the Church learns to navigate the three essential paths of Christian spirituality, it will become enflamed with the life of God, transforming the world.

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