

Frank E. Coleman Jr.
Book Review: Deeply Formed Life by Rich Villodas
CD770 – Professor Dr. Nathaniel B. Perez, ATS

I. Overview

In the analysis of the book *Deeply Formed Life*, author Rich Villodas, shares the importance of getting to know and understand who you are psychologically, physically, emotionally and spiritually. He uses the movie “Titanic” as a metaphor of our lives. He says, “Topside, people can look so content, joyful and successful, but privately beneath they’ll confess suicidal thoughts, drug addictions, marital affairs, debilitating shame, inner rage and so much more...” (19) Therefore we need to focus our attention on the lower decks of our lives, because if not, the entire boat/ our lives will sink. And the remedy is found in allowing Christ to form and fix us. Villodas goes into five values that need forming and fixing. 1-Contemplative rhythms for an exhausted life. 2-Racial Reconciliation for a divided world. 3-Interior examination for a world living on the surface. 4-Sexual wholeness for a culture that splits bodies from souls. 5-Missional presence for a distracted and disengaged people. He uses each of these values to help resolve our personal changes of living life pleasing to God.

This text has truly assisted me in being able to articulate sharing with others that many of our fallacies and prejudices and even hate can be cloaked into our subconscious and need to be confronted so that we can reconcile one with another and make this world a place of harmony rather than its present condition of polarization, discrimination and racist hatred.

I. Revelation of my World view and Spiritual Expectation

I first found that there are areas in my perspective in the context of life that do not come from deep enough thought. Villodas shares that The late Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama

wrote a book titled 'Three-Mile-an-Hour-God'. He attempted to convey that if we want to connect with God, we'd be wise to travel at God's speed. (45) My perspective has always been that life is too fast paced and we need to slow down. But my thoughts were not in the context of God's speed as much as to Just-Slow-Down. I know that slowing down is wise but slowing down to the pace of God is his point. For you can slow down and still be moving too fast or worse slow down too much. If I'm going to have a better relationship and connection with God, I must be mindful of my walk With God according to His speed.

Villodas reminds me that matters of Race and her sins are embedded thorns in our flesh in America. (93) As a child who grew up in the 60's, the events of violence and murder and racist marches that have transpired in this contemporary time causes me to realize that things have not gotten any better. We speak as if it is but in reality, the rise of the media and social media have revealed that racial hate is alive and well. This is not the way of Christ. The way of Christ is to love and support and even align together for the betterment of all God's children. I love the enlightenment of Villodas sharing how Jesus, in the calling of His disciples, put people together who would most certainly not follow each other on Twitter.(103) For example, Matthew worked for the government while Simon hated the government. And yet they became disciples of Christ - Together.

II. Agree and Disagree

I most agreed with Villodas when he shares that "Race is about power-in political terms, dominion. As a political construct, race was created by humans to determine who can exercise power within a governing structure and to guide decisions regarding how to allocate resources." (107) Our Creator created only one race, the human race. We humans decided to discriminate according to color and ethnicity.

Where I also agree with Villodas is when he quoted what Attorney Bryan Stevenson shared as the great evil of American slavery. He said, “ The great evil of American slavery was not involuntary servitude and forced labor. To me, the great evil of slavery was the narrative of racial difference, the ideology of white supremacy that we created to make ourselves feel comfortable with enslaving people who are black. We’ve never addressed that legacy.” (126) It was bad enough that my people were snatched from their homeland and forced into involuntary servitude. But what multiplied the evil is the conclusion that white people believed that these new found slaves were just animals and worthy to be treated as such - even today!

The only thing I disagreed with Villodas was his analysis of Prince and the fact that the love of God and the sexual urges we feel are one and the same somehow. (205) I agree that this is a part of our human fabric because God created all of us. But I don’t agree that it’s one and the same. One is controlled by the Spirit the other primarily by the flesh.

III. Theological Impact

Conclusively, as stated previously, this text has caused me to pause and slow down, find the speed and pace of God, so that my passion for justice and more importantly racial reconciliation can somehow be accomplished. None of this can be accomplished by merely sharing what the problems are. Our focus needs to be the solutions, which Villodas aptly chronicles.