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Introduction to Racial Reconciliation

Dr. Nathaniel Perez

The Deeply Formed Life: Five Transformative Values to Root Us in the Way of Jesus by Rich Villodas

The author Rich Villodas encourages us to journey with him as he examines time-tested principles and practices for attaining wholeness in mind, body, and soul in *A Deeply Formed Life: Five Transformative principles to Root Us in the Way of Jesus (A Deeply Formed Life: Five Transformative Values)*. The author Villodas likes the analogy of the root systems of redwood trees that grow extremely tall by spreading roots out wide and interconnecting rather than by sending one taproot going down deeply in order to avoid looking for one "silver bullet" as the one solution to developing spiritually.

For spiritual formation, this author has identified five fundamental values: contemplative rhythms, racial reconciliation, introspection, sexual wholeness, and missional presence. Villodas starts off by establishing meditative rhythms in opposition to the conventional standards of speed and bustle, the first of the five ideals he explores. He discusses Sabbath observance, leisurely scripture reading, solitary meditation, and the monasticism. He contends that imitating the behavior of early Christian monks serves as a reminder that profound formation is "to regularly come back to a rhythm marked by communion, reflection, and a life-giving pace that enables us to offer our presence to the present moment." Villodas then continues on to talk about racial harmony, recognizing the urgency of the current divide and the need for a church that embodies healing. He discusses the distinction between personal and institutional racism, challenges the fallacious notion that racial harmony is possible

without justice, and provides a list of concrete steps for racial healing. This connects to his later consideration of the importance of missional presence, which explores what it means to put justice and hospitality into reality in concrete ways. Villodas then shifts from self-reflection to the importance of internal analysis, bringing the attention inside and urging the reader to look into their emotional well-being. He invites, drawing inspiration from the Psalms, a "way of life that considers the realities of our inner worlds for the sake of our own flourishing and the call to love well." His insights into the importance of looking at one's families of origin, the effects of trauma, and generational patterns and scripts are particularly insightful.

This book revealed that my spiritual expectations can be a little arrogant at times. Carving out time for spiritual self-reflection and quietly sitting in the presence of God, will urge me to be an active participant in my relationship with Christ rather than just a receiver of benefits. Often times, we mistake the road to relationship with Christ as a one way street. Contrary to belief, emotional consistency with Christ, an open heart to community, and love is what a true relationship with Christ looks like.

I agree with the author's outlook on wholeness as it applies to the mind, body, and soul. It is important for all aspects of our being to line up in one accord. Spiritual journey should be rooted in making sure that we are aligned with Christ in every way, mind, body, and soul.

This book impacted my current ministry by broadening my outlook on what it means to be in relationship with oneself and with Christ. Total alignment with Christ, our community, and ourselves requires work that we should be encouraged to do. My ministry as a social worker will continue to support others in their journey towards self awareness and self care, especially if it benefits their spirituality and bonds with others.