

Editorial

This edition focuses upon a couple of articles that deal with the issues of Spiritual disciplines or spiritual direction as well as another touching upon engaging our society in divided times such as this.

Ken Chase, writing from Wheaton College, in an article entitled *Timely Speech: A Christian's Occasion*, contrasts the communication process of rhetors in the Greek culture with the distinct notion of strategic speech in Paul as revealed in Ephesians 5.18. Unlike classical notion of timeliness, this notion instead involves a sensitivity to the timeliness of the work of the Spirit when the surface features of the occasion may suggest that the good news of Christ is unwelcome. Christian witness however, does much more than build communication of a studied awareness of the shared context of the listeners. This is due to the distinct notion of the time informed by the notion of God's Kingdom. Paul instead understands his speech to be happening within cosmic time, the day of salvation, not just the socio-political canvas. Such speech is indeed contested speech but also the sort of speech that exposes the darkness and the dark powers that threaten to dominate the discourse. This is powerfully illustrated by a more recent example of abolitionist speaker of the 19th Century Angelina Grimké. In a time when violence was used in southern states to silence such speakers, Grimké's letters transcend merely opportune timeliness and instead calls fellow believers to en flesh the light of God's kingdom in the shadows of the passing world.

Rob. Culhane a recently retired pastor and spiritual director, relates the reasons both why evangelicals have been reticent to engage in the facility of Spiritual Direction. Mutual ignorance of each other's viewpoints in Catholicism and Evangelicalism are historical factors that have created this distance. In *Spiritual Direction: Compatibility and Completion*, he identifies historical, as well as theological features of the traditional evangelical doctrinal portrait that in over-emphasis leave its adherents toward an inadequately cognitive, propositional approach to the issues of Scriptural authority, Christology and salvation that do not provide the means to cultivate a present existential richness in spiritual life. Noting the influence of enlightenment rationality, and contemporary pragmatism that blend with the activism of the evangelical heritage is another source of this deficiency. The features of the surrounding cultural moment however demand a more conscious and personal discipleship which the relational discernment of Spiritual direction addresses deliberately and in doing so, results in a more engaged and rounded out evangelicalism, adequate for the task of faithful living in the present moment.

In a fresh example of a Catholic perspective, John Dupuche asks *Can even bodybuilding be a spiritual path?* This scholar takes up the issue of the humanness of the incarnate Christ through 'An exercise in typology'. The author deliberately adopts a spiritual theological analysis of the experience of weightlifting and body building training. This results in a clear delineation of a spiritual path of seven steps. The body is not viewed through the Augustinian notion of total depravity so much as the potential space of the inhabitation of the Spirit where the Spirit is already at work prior to human recognition and despite human failure and sinfulness, as the case of Sampson testifies. The writer

structures his path with suggestive themes that avoid the charge of bodybuilding as narcissism but instead shows the capacity of the craft to be parallel the pneumatic Christology of becoming a body very much connected to this world as opposed to the ascetic disembodied spirituality of St Jerome. Dupuche introduces the figure of Christ in later stages, where the bodybuilder, through disciplined self-awareness is prepared to recognize the Word of God in Christ enfleshed, realising that Christ is the anti-type of [him]self as the type. Acknowledgement of the power of Christ he can acknowledge that this power could have been at work within in him up until the time of identification with Christ. Penultimately, the path of the bodybuilder converges with the way of the cross in the paradoxical experience of simultaneous power and powerlessness. There are resurrection parallels of the desire of the bodybuilder to transcend human bodily limitations as the enervating presence of the Spirit is experienced.to explore here as well.

Again we hope the perspectives shared here will reinforce your faith and service as you live our your faith in witness, work and play with a real sense of Christ's companionship for the way ahead.