

## Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

**Hendrix, K. G., & Hamlet, J. D. (Eds.). (2009). *As the spirit moves us: Embracing spirituality in the postsecondary experience*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pages: 102. Price: 32.00 CAD (paper).**

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*As the spirit moves us: Embracing spirituality in the postsecondary experience*, edited by Katherine Grace Hendrix and Janice D. Hamlet, is a compilation of nine autoethnographic narratives written by professors and administrators of higher education. Autoethnography is a qualitative method of inquiry; autoethnographers write introspective, first-person accounts about their personal experiences within society. They “ask their readers to feel the truth of their stories and to become co-participants, thereby engaging the storyline morally, emotionally, aesthetically, and intellectually” (p. 5). The autoethnographic accounts in this book centre around spirituality in the context of higher education. The text is divided into three sections: spirituality as a way of being in the world, spirituality as self-discovery and insight, and spirituality as strength to endure.

The first section of the text is comprised of autoethnographies related to spirituality as a way of being in the world. The editors begin with a short introductory chapter that defines spirituality, explains autoethnography, and describes the book’s organization. In the second chapter, E. James Baesler discusses his prayer life after his promotion from assistant professor to associate professor. He describes his feelings after tenure and how a spiritual awakening led him to incorporate contemplative prayer into his life. He discusses his triumphs researching topics related to prayer and his struggles implementing courses about prayer. Finally, Baesler reflects on how prayer alleviates the anxiety he feels before teaching a new semester and how prayer has positively influenced his teaching. The chapter provides encouragement and practical advice for the religious educator, but little for the secular educator.

In the third chapter, Patrice M. Buzzanell discusses spiritual mentoring, a relational way of mentoring that “transcends the usual career, psychosocial support, and role-modeling activities to embrace the whole person” (p. 18). She posits that the spiritual values of compassion, humility, and simplicity can enhance the mentor-mentee relationship. According to Buzzanell, spiritual mentoring in higher education occurs when mentors

provide opportunities for students' growth, participate in spontaneous mentoring, and continue their own personal development. The chapter enhances the concept of traditional mentoring, but would have benefited from more concrete examples.

In the fourth chapter, Janice D. Hamlet discusses how her African-American culture and spirituality influence her teaching of an intercultural communication course. Characteristic of the autoethnographic approach, Hamlet's reflections are detailed and personal; however, the chapter leaves the reader wishing for more insight to supplement the comprehensive observations.

The next section of the text is made up of three chapters related to the theme of spirituality as self-discovery and insight. Bradford "J" Hall explores how the concepts of serendipity and stewardship can promote spirituality in the secular classroom. Hall provides examples of unexpected discoveries in the classroom and describes activities that produce serendipity. He stresses that serendipity is not simply a teaching strategy: "it is an attitude of openness that resists static conceptions of knowledge and pedagogy" (p. 39). Hall also defines three perspectives toward the classroom: the rentership approach, which views classroom teaching as a necessary duty to achieve better things such as carrying out research; the ownership approach, which views courses as personal property and learning that is very controlled; and the stewardship approach, which involves trust, responsibility, and accountability. Hall promotes stewardship and argues it can be developed through faith, hope, and charity. He provides an example of each and concludes by stating that serendipity and stewardship go together. By reflecting on this chapter, all educators can learn from the ideas of serendipity and stewardship as conceptualized by Hall.

In the sixth chapter, Richie Neil Hao describes a spiritual awakening while teaching a public speaking course to international students. He describes how his interactions with Asian students helped him embrace his own Asianness. He shares the knowledge he gained by accepting himself, celebrating diversity, and connecting with students. Hao's broader view of spirituality is refreshing. Unlike most of the book, there is no mention of God or the bible, which allows his message to reach a wider audience.

In the seventh and perhaps the most exciting chapter, Robert L. Ballard writes a chilling account of his observations of a dead body while he rode along with police. His ethnographic account includes haunting descriptions and sharp dialogue. Ballard contrasts the movie-like situation with authentic questions. He considers his own personal and professional ethics while reflecting on his feelings, considering his mortality, and revisiting his faith. Ballard discusses what he learned from his research experience and leaves the reader questioning his/her own values.

The final section of the book deals with the theme of spirituality as strength to endure. In chapter eight, Katherine Grace Hendrix writes about her challenges and successes as a black female in academia. She supplements her writing with hymns and journal entries to show how important prayer and spirituality are in her life. In chapter nine, Audrey M. Wilson Allison and Patreece R. Boone Broadus reflect on their friendship from graduate students to college professors. They also mention how their cultural and spiritual identities influence their teaching and communication practices. Finally, Mary Fong discusses how her spiritual approach guides her work as a teacher, colleague, and mentor. Fong stresses the importance of sharing personal narratives to connect with students; furthermore, she believes educators have a social responsibility to help students grow as indi-

viduals and contribute to society. The final section provides fewer insights than the previous two; however, the personal accounts provide encouragement to educators of higher learning.

*As the spirit moves us: Embracing spirituality in the postsecondary experience* is a somewhat misleading title for the text, for most of the authors write from a Christian perspective. The words “spirit” and “spirituality” are broad concepts, and the book would have benefited from some non-Christian writings. Nonetheless, both Christian and non-Christian educators can learn from the ideas presented. Although a different author writes each chapter of the book, the overall style of writing is excellent. The descriptive, reflective, and insightful passages fully engage one’s attention. On a personal note, after reading the diverse ethnographies, I am left in an introspective state of mind. Like the authors, I reflect on my teaching experiences and view higher learning as not only education for the mind, but also for the soul. I am left with an important question: how can the spiritual ideas presented in this book enhance my own research and teaching in post-secondary education?✦