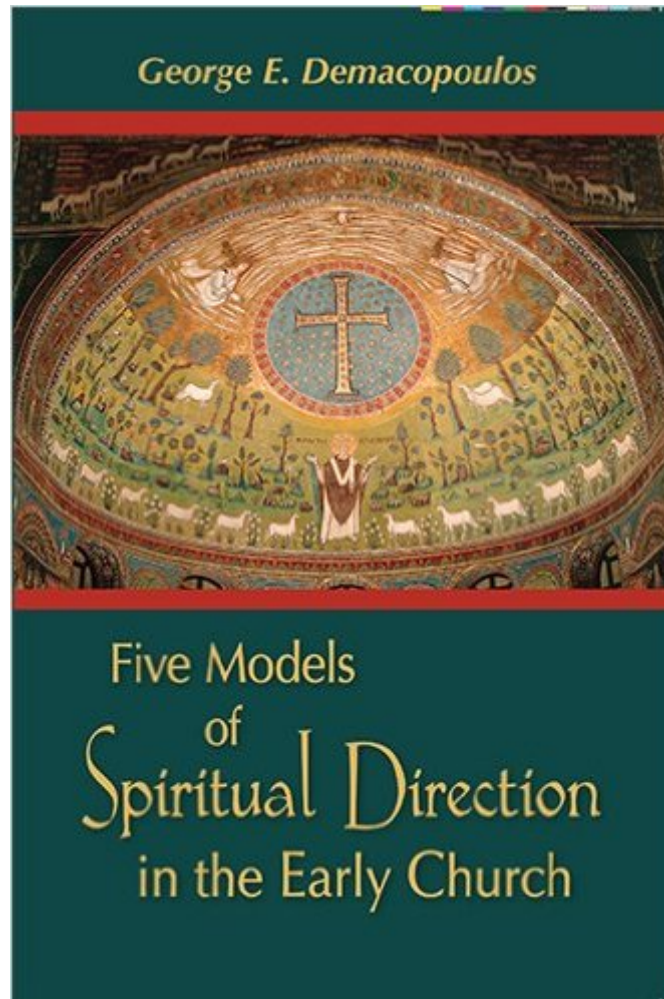


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Five Models Of Spiritual Direction In The Early Church



Synopsis

• This work explores, with detail and insight, the discipline of spiritual direction in the early Church, providing a fascinating study of 'what happened when monks became bishops.' George Demacopoulos offers us thoughtful, and thought-provoking, analyses of the individual figures concerned, the developing roles of the pastor in antiquity, and the practice of pastoral care itself. This book is sure to advance our understanding of all these fields. • "Fr. John Behr, St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary" • George Demacopoulos has given us a learned and eminently readable study of five major patristic theologians. His book considers the subtle differences in style and policy adopted by leading bishops and ascetics as they considered the best way to advocate for a Christian polity that could command general allegiance. St. Gregory Nazianzen called his project the governance of souls, describing it as 'that art of arts and science of sciences.' This book considers early Christian 'spiritual direction' in its most ample and politically relevant form. • "John McGuckin, Nielsen Professor of Early Ecclesiastical History, Union Theological Seminary" "The introduction offers a masterful treatment of the growth of the ascetic movement and the growth of ecclesiastical offices, and the requirements and expectations of leadership in both contexts. It is these expectations of a leader's responsibility for those entrusted to him that show most clearly the demands of pastoral care." • "Claudia Rapp, University of California, Los Angeles" Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church explores the struggles of five clerics (Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Augustine of Hippo, John Cassian, and Pope Gregory I) to reconcile their ascetic idealism with the reality of pastoral responsibility. Through a close reading of Greek and Latin texts, George E. Demacopoulos explores each pastor's criteria for ordination, supervision of subordinate clergy, and methods of spiritual direction. He argues that the evolution in spiritual direction that occurred during this period reflected and informed broader developments in religious practices.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When it comes to spiritual direction that Christians provide and receive among themselves, there is a global challenge to face. That challenge pertains to directing the vocation to manifest a "little Christ" (Christian), lest Christians ignore what they have received in Baptism. Note the use of a singular noun, "vocation," for there is but one vocation in Christ to run through George Demacopoulos's monograph, even though there are five models of spiritual direction entertained. Five models of spiritual formation, as identified in this text, grew in various places, cultures, and languages where the ancient Church had been planted. More to the point, Professor Demacopoulos of the Fordham University theology faculty explores how tensions between institutional and charismatic contexts for spiritual direction shaped ascetic practices for lay (institutional leaders) and monastic (charismatic leaders) communities. As history of the ancient Church reveals, a universal emphasis on asceticism varied by intensity of performance and expectation between these two categories of Christian communities. Moreover, recommendations for asceticism differed according to: (1) identified ancient author, (2) place and exigencies where the author distributed his model, and (3) date. Demacopoulos measures ascetic intensity by characterizing the monastic communities as "ascetic," and the lay communities as "clerical." Therefore, this review will employ a similar convention of speech, and acknowledges the author's cautionary distinctions in what he means by the terms. The author evaluates five authors from the 4th-5th centuries, AD: (1) Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, Egypt (born c.

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