
**Reviewed by:** Father Andy Graydon, Parish Priest, St Joseph’s Dinnington, Sheffield; Hospital Chaplain, Rotherham Doncaster & South Humber NHS Trust, Doncaster, UK.
Andrew.Graydon@rdash.nhs.uk

Roger Hurding not only expresses his inventive skills and knowledge about the paths that lead to wholeness, he also openly speaks deeply from his own personal experience, which at times has proved to have been traumatic and painful for him.

Though Hurding makes it clear from the outset that his book specifically centres on a Christian approach to wholeness, he relies very much on the Hebrew Scriptures for guidance and support. This is particularly noticeable in his references to the Psalms and the Prophets. His first pathway: Biblical Counselling: the Transformed mind, has many examples of how to integrate the richness of the scriptures into the everyday lives of troubled people. Hurding admits that the pathways he suggests are not the only pathways to wholeness and he is wise to acknowledge that biblical references need to be reflected on in the light of everyday living. Or as Karl Barth would have said: “Preach with the bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other.”

Hurding’s second pathway looks at the Healing Ministries: the Forward Gain. Despite the scope of such ministries, Hurding delves succinctly into the sacramental ministries and charismatic healing. He wonderfully brings out the importance of inner healing, which reflects the immense power that is revealed, for example in the sacrament of reconciliation (forgiveness), the healing of guilt, remorse and painful memories. Again this chapter is full of the life stories of ordinary people who have grown to a deeper maturity of what it means to be human.

The third pathway looks at the more focussed area of Pastoral Counselling: the Maturing Person. Whilst this pathway seems on the surface to fall into a narrow field of expertise, Hurding in fact broadens this subject to
include the wider Christian community. In this way he demonstrates that a shared ministry is necessary, which may well consist of ordained and lay, including those who are skilled and trained, as well as others who are simply willing to share their like-to-like experiences in the role of pastoral counselling. Again Hurding backs up what he says, against a backdrop of well researched theological reflections, citing such giants, as Paul Tillich and Carl Rogers, just to name two.

The fourth pathway Hurding calls Spiritual Direction: the Uncomplicated Heart. He is very much aware that spiritual direction comes in a variety of forms, covering both a religious and non-religious encounter. He rightly points out that spiritual direction can regularly emerge in such encounters as psychotherapy and counselling and at times it can prove difficult to distinguish any clear boundaries. I particularly like his section on mystical spirituality, which reflects Thomas Merton's search for the “true self”, which is very much rooted in the great Dominican mystic Meister Eckhart. Hurding also includes additional practical support, such as keeping a journal, having a soul-friend, reflective meditation, retreats, “days-in-the-desert” (a time out experience).

The fifth pathway Hurding calls: Social Change: the Reformed Community. In this section he accentuates at some length how the local wider community can be transformed through commitment, single-mindedness, and in the struggle for justice. Though he cites particular individuals (as prophets) in his examples, there is a call for everyone who dares call themselves Christian to have a prophetic voice that leads to action. Hurding suggests that the best arena for instigating such a social change is within the Christian church communities, though there will always be lone prophets who are the exception. The fruits of such transformation touch ecology, economic growth and sustainability of the earth’s resources, both on a local and global level.

Within the Christian tradition, Hurding certainly packs in a great deal of wisdom in such a short book and leaves the reader with much hope for the future. On the whole this book will be of great value to those who have an extensive interest in the biblical, psychosocial/spiritual development that leads to wholeness.