

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE FAITH

We are searching for a center that will hold – an inner core of conviction and belief that will enable us to keep our balance in the whirling tornado of cultural change and confusion that threatens to engulf us. –James Harnish

Reviewed by Bishop James Lloyd Knox

James Harnish's *Journey to the Center of the Faith* is a clear, well-illustrated, profound presentation of many of the tenants of the Christian Faith. There are frequent bursts of inspired quotations from saints, theologians, pastors, and authors.

Although the book was written before September 11, 2001, it is definitely, and perhaps providentially, a post-9-11 tome. In particular, his chapter on peacemaking presents the mind of Christ as we consider alternatives to violence.

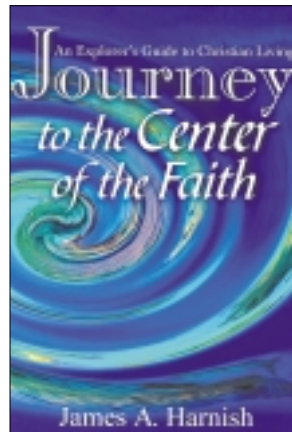
Journey can be a valuable tool for busy pasotrs. It can be given to individuals who are searching for a center. It can be used as a study guide for informal groups. Or a pastor could use the book in preaching a series in an alternative service in which members of the congregation would have previously read a chapter based on the theme. Following the homily, there could be questions and affirmations by the participants.

Each chapter has searching exercises and questions which can help a seeker have a more Christ-centered life and a better understanding of the faith. There is a bibliography after each chapter.

Chapter Ten, "Generous Living: Getting the Title Clear," reminds one that all we are and ever hope to be belongs to God. The author exclaims: "The great King David's last words (found in 1 Chr. 29:10-22) are nothing less than a frontal assault on the most widely accepted and fiercely held assumptions of our culture. They describe a way of living that is a radical alternative to the lifestyle of the mall-addicted, money-adoring, me-oriented society around us" (p.106).

The author tells of attending a pastors' conference led by John Ortberg in which the leader asked all the pastors to give their wallets to a person seated next to them. Thinking of all the important documents, credit cards, pictures, etc. in his wallet, Jim Harnish got increasingly anxious, even

though his neighbor was a pastor. What if someone took an offering? This story illustrates how much we are attached to the things that represent our possessions. The author goes on to tell of the joy of the generous sharing of God's gifts.



Journey to the Center of the Faith: An Explorer's Guide to Christian Living by James A. Harnish. (Abingdon Press, 2001) Order No. 98432 \$12.00

CONTENTS

Christ-Centered: Getting to Know Jesus

Biblically Rooted: Experiencing the Unchained Word

Kingdom-Visioned: Living the Future Today

Spirit-Animated: Letting the Spirit In

Open-Minded: Opening the Doors of Our Minds

Warmhearted: Receiving a New Heart

Grace-Filled: Dealing with Sin

Soul-Strengthened: Facing Up to Suffering

Community-Connected: Making New Connections

Generously Living: Getting the Title Clear

Patiently Peaceful: Planing the Seeds of Peace

Deliriously Hopeful: Rejoicing in God's Reign!