

## Book Review

### Deep Calling: On Being and Growing Disciples

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Published June 2021 in Ministry Magazine

As a pastor, I prayed that someone would ask me about the Sabbath, the state of the dead, or Daniel's twenty-three hundred days. But far more often, the questions were, "Pastor, how can I grow as a Christian?" "What does it mean to grow in Jesus?" "How do I become a disciple of Christ?"

The questions panicked me as a pastor and troubled me as a believer. As a lifelong Seventh-day Adventist, my religious experience was quite cerebral. I was obsessed with sound doctrine while fearing that which was relational; experiential; or, heaven forbid, emotional.

Deep inside, I longed for more. There had to be more to Christian experience than merely "being right"! I began to read anything I could find about discipleship. I didn't want to simply be a "good Adventist"; I wanted to be able to state along with Paul, "But for me to live is Christ."

Most of what I found on the topic was written by Christians who were not members of the Adventist Church, but their biblical knowledge and Christian experience were undeniable. As I continued to read, my heart felt a warmth I had not found in mere doctrine. It was no longer enough to be "right." My reading caused me to begin a spiritual journey that has become my lifelong passion.

Since my own spiritual journey began, I have longed for a quality resource to help church members experience their own growth. Tara J. VinCross has written that book! Her book *Deep Calling* may be the best resource I have found for discipleship. The book is long overdue, but now that it is finally here, it helps fill a gaping hole in Adventist literature.

Few denominations have been more successful than Adventists in attracting new members. Our weakness has been helping these new members to grow beyond an acceptance of Adventist beliefs to maturity in Christ. Dr. VinCross, with pastoral expertise, addresses this glaring need.

*Deep Calling* is theologically sound, relationally rich, and spiritually deep. It is the most practical, grace-filled resource for discipleship I have found. The author writes not just from her own experience and education but, quite obviously, from her passion for the topic.

The book begins with a biblical picture of discipleship and then moves to God's callings on the life of every believer. Each chapter gently guides readers and small group participants into

deeper spirituality, healthier personal relationships, and inspired service. Every chapter is practical; easy to understand; and, at the same time, deeply challenging.

Readers will be inspired and challenged by this book, but more importantly, they will be changed. I highly recommend *Deep Calling* to everyone who longs to be a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. I recommend it to pastors and elders whose passion is leading others to genuine discipleship.