



# When Hearts Become Flame: An Eastern Orthodox Approach to the Dia-Logos of Pastoral Counseling

*Stephen Muse*

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Whatever else he or she does, the pastoral counselor, same as the priest at the Divine Altar, enters into call and response relationship invoking God's presence and seeking to be receptive to God's activity unfolding in the here and now with the intention of offering Christ to the other (and receiving Him) while serving at the altar of the human heart. **When Hearts Become Flame** reflects on the question, "What Makes Counseling Pastoral?" in light of the integration of all three aspects of our human nature in dialogue with others in such a way that as in Emmaus, Christ, the Logos, appears in 'between' bringing healing and transformation. It is not enough to be emotionally warm, theoretically correct and methodologically skillful. Pastoral care and counseling involve an integrated mindful presence existentially engaged in dialogue with the other with the same vulnerability and alertness that one brings to God in prayer. Inner discernment and ascetical struggle along with existential engagement with and for others in working for a just and humane world are equally important in response to God's love given for all.

"Opens the spiritual and psychological depth of the caregivers' vocational world and does not allow the reader to relax or to stay indifferent. The author's experience and ideas make your brain think, your soul pray, your eyes cry, your ears listen to the heart and your heart love God and people." **Tatiana Filipieva, Ph.D, psychologist, St. Sergius Orthodox Theological School, Moscow, Russia.**

Some profound and very useful insights are found within these pages. --**Dr. Albert Rossi, psychologist, St. Vladimir's Seminary**

With painstaking accountability to the great Tradition of the Eastern Church as well as to the discipline of psychology, Dr. Stephen Muse offers through his "altar of the heart" a life-giving synergy of doxology, collaborative wisdom, earthiness and personal encounter while witnessing to the love of the living Lord. This is a joy to read and read again. --**Kyriaki Karidoyanes FitzGerald, M.Div., Ph.D., psychologist, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology**

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