

KIRKUS

REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

LIVING INTO THE MYSTERY

Sorg, Kelli Summers

Westbow Press (134 pp.)

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BOOK REVIEW

An award-winning television producer and pastor collects letters she's sent to spiritual inquirers far and wide.

Sorg's warm, welcoming debut nonfiction work continues a millennia-old tradition of spiritual discussion and instruction in apostolic letters to the faithful. She clearly intends these missives to be more conversational than official—the type of advice, encouragement, and gentle reproof that a pastor might dispense to departing congregants after a Sunday service. Her dispatches cover a broad range of faith-related topics, and they're united by the author's unaffected, straightforward manner, something she sees as missing too often from official church pronouncements: "One of the many symptoms of the institutional church's current illness," she writes, "is that its language is tired, trite, over-used and meaningless." Her approachable language reinforces her message about the importance of clarity in matters of faith, a note she strikes throughout this brief book: "Knowing what we believe and how that gets worked out can make our lives richer, more fulfilling, and a whole lot easier," she writes, adding that such inner certainty is preferable to "flying by the seat of the pants." Her correspondents ask a variety of questions, involving many aspects of living a faithful life in modern times, and her responses are keyed to the humanity of her audience. She reminds them periodically of their intimate connection to the fount of their faith—that Jesus "intimately understands" what it is to be human: "We are connected not only to the One who created us but also to the One who *is* us," she writes, adding that "we can't cop out and say God just doesn't get it." The restorative, encouraging tone is consistent in these letters. Overall, they put a human face on pastoral care by stressing the individuality of religious experience, which can be as dramatic as a revelation or as quiet as a private voice. Obviously intended for a progressive Christian readership, Sorg's book will give them some sound, unobtrusive guidance.

A gentle, understatedly wise collection of reflections on issues of modern Christian faith.