Beyond the Suffering

Embracing the Legacy of African American Soul Care and Spiritual Direction

Dr. Robert W. Kellemen and Karole A. Edwards

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The African American church has always helped hurting and hardened people through the personal and corporate ministries of sustaining, healing, reconciling, and guiding. This four-dimensional model is the traditional and widely recognized pattern for understanding lay spiritual friendship, pastoral care, and professional Christian counseling. Beyond the Suffering uncovers the buried treasure of wisdom about soul care and spiritual direction contained in the history of African American Christianity.

Written with the blended perspectives of a Caucasian man and an African American woman, Beyond the Suffering offers an in-depth exploration of this rich tradition, showing Christians of all races proven ways to help people find hope in the midst of deep pain and sorrow. Pastors, counselors, and lay people, as well as African Americans hungry for the legacy of their ancestors, will appreciate both the history and the practical applications found in this book.
“Beyond the Suffering is remarkable: deep, thoughtful, painful, and hopeful. W. E. B. DuBois said a century ago that African Americans had a great gift to give if it would only be received: the gift of double vision; insight of a people who were simultaneously at home and forced to live as aliens. That gift, baptized in the Spirit, is on display here. It will illumine, trouble, and heal.”—**John Ortberg**, pastor and author

“Drawing on the riches of the African American tradition, this book sheds new light on spiritual formation and Christian nurture. A splendid contribution and a great gift!”—**Timothy George**, dean, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University; executive editor, Christianity Today

“Kellemen and Edwards clearly describe the legacy of African American soul care and spiritual direction that comes to us beyond the suffering and also because of the suffering African Americans have experienced. I highly recommend *Beyond the Suffering* as crucial reading for everyone involved in soul care, spiritual direction, and counseling.”—**Rev. Dr. Siang-Yang Tan, PhD**, professor of psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary; senior pastor, First Evangelical Church Glendale, Southern California

“The abundance of grace exhibited by the authors as they present what has been a very sensitive dialogue provides a compelling read of life’s encounters with a divine God and the reality of the rough places we have trod.”—**Dr. Sabrina D. Black**, president, National Biblical Counselors Association; chairperson, Black African American Christian Counselors; clinical director, Abundant Life Counseling Center; coauthor, *HELP! For Your Leadership and Counseling in African American Communities*

“This book rips the truth about soul care from the hands of the elitist and hands it to those who lived and taught it in the crucible of suffering. The gospel’s ability to transcend race, abuse, and evil of every kind is powerfully presented. It shook me up.”—**Bill Hull**, author, *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith That Embraces Discipleship*

“The authors use the actual testimonies of these individuals to describe how they found courage and comfort in God and in each other. Their ability to develop a healing community, against all odds, is greatly informative to our efforts today. This is a unique must-read on the very core elements of ministry to all people in pain.”—**Michael R. Lyles, MD**

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**Karole A. Edwards** is a former director of the “After 5” ministry, a women’s small group ministry at the 10,000-member strong McLean Bible Church in McLean, Virginia. Ms. Edwards facilitated the spiritual leadership and management of the ministry, which disciples, shepherds, and cares for over 250 women in small group settings throughout the Washington, D.C., area. She lives in Germantown, Maryland.