

THE SPIRITUALITY OF AGING
by Michael Webber & Carol Orsborn

The book is laid out as a long list of 25 questions with each author's individual response. I will admit that at first this seemed awkward to me until I realized that I could not just sit and read the book through; this is a book with which one needs to be engaged. This is probably the most densely rich source on the spirituality of aging that I have encountered. These authors remain in dialogue throughout the book, so that what one says often builds on what came before. The gift is not only how well read these two are, but that they share their process of reflection; this is the Cliff Notes to a treasure chest of source material on the inner life and self understanding. This is a book that needs to be savored slowly.

It also turns out that there is method in their madness, the diverse set of questions needs its predecessor as a base camp for greater exploring. They build on Jane Thibault's metaphor of "pilgrimage" rather than "journey" We are heading somewhere but this is not a passive journey into nothingness but a pilgrimage into becoming and being. It is the art of reflection that allows us to live with the paradoxes and the ambiguities. We struggle through our desire for black and white answers and have moved to the integration of the gray into our acceptance. Each question of our relationship to self, others, suffering, and meaning becomes a thread that becomes woven into a tapestry of the whole picture of life.