**Clarion Review**

Religion

**Prayer Prescribed**
Anne Borik
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Who says health is only about the body? In *Prayer Prescribed*, Anne Borik helps readers to find mental, physical, and spiritual peace. Borik asks readers to reconsider their ideas about prayer. Her Sign Chi Do program combines breathing, movement, and music to develop a new interdisciplinary approach to prayer.

Borik explains how to strengthen one's breathing, build a solid core, and better understand the healing power of music and the importance of action and prayer. Though the ultimate goals are to communicate with God on a higher level and to tap into the power of the Holy Spirit, Borik also explains the health benefits of such practices: better posture, improved wellness, and less stress. This book combines philosophy, religion, and medicine in an interesting manner. The step-by-step instructions for strengthening one's balance, breathing, and posture are described with strong verbs and direct sentences. For example, when describing a neck rotation exercise, Borik writes: "you want to try and turn your head to the right as far as you possibly can, trying to bring your chin over your shoulder. Hold the position for ten to fifteen seconds. Repeat on the left side." Such moments offer tangible instructions that all types of readers can understand.

Though the author's ideas are emotionally moving, the book could use more real-life examples. At times, it can be hard to grasp the Sign Chi Do system's full impact. The reader understands the actions that one must take to perfect breathing and posture to reach a higher level of prayer, but it would help to understand when and where to perform such exercises and how such an effort might affect work and school performance as well as one's family relationships. When Borik does include examples, they are strong enough to bring tears to readers' eyes. A particularly emotionally moving section is Borik's explanation of children's interpretations of love. For example, Borik describes how four-year-old Tommy sees his elderly

neighbor crying and goes to sit in his lap. When his mother asks Tommy what he said to his hurting neighbor, the young boy responds, “Nothing, I just helped him cry.”

The quotations from the Bible, Plato, and Mother Teresa, among other famous thinkers and activists, bring Borik’s ideas to life. In the “Music and Medicine” chapter, a quotation from Plato notes that “music is moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness and life to everything.” Sprinkled throughout the book, these quotations ground Borik’s ideas and serve as healthy reminders of the power of prayer, love, and faith.

*Prayer Prescribed* asks readers to take control of their spiritual health and to link communication with God to action: breathing more deliberately, consciously positioning the body, and understanding the role music has in meditation and healing. Borik combines ideas of the East and West to help people learn how to breathe, think, and love more easily.

*Lisa Bower*