Preface

Spirituality in the modern era seems to have transcended the traditional Christian boundaries and have a commonness that was perhaps predicted by some. However, the contemporary workplace spirituality literature has been developed almost wholly in the West, within a Christian worldview. Empirical research in a non-Western and non-Christian context is almost non-existent and thus, it is not surprising that the spirituality measures and constructs developed in the West are limited to Christian-based religious views. This highlights a lack of cultural and theological pluralism, which hinders the progress of the spiritual leadership discourse.

In order to discover cross-cultural and religious distinctions of the contemporary meaning and enactment of spirituality in organisations, I asked 13 spiritually motivated and influential Sri Lankan business entrepreneurs from Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Muslim religions, to describe the meaning of spirituality, and how they enacted spirituality in their organisations. This book presents the findings concerning the enactment of entrepreneurs’ spiritual leadership.

No distinct faith-specific themes emerged in the conceptualisation of spirituality by the multifaith entrepreneurs. Although each entrepreneur’s outward practice of spiritual leadership conformed to his own religious tradition, these practices had two common aims: a connection with self, others and/or an ultimate reality, and a need to direct and motivate self and/or others to develop an organisational culture founded on a sense of shared community. The enactment of a religion-based spirituality by the majority of the entrepreneurs influenced the way they managed and led their organisations. The impact of this connection on the entrepreneur’s approaches to leadership and consequently, on the followers and organisational culture was significant. This book suggests that, a frame of reference based on a connection with a transcendent and Ultimate reality is likely to be a source of inspiration, guidance and solace to spiritually motivated business leaders.

M.F.