

Pamela R. McCarroll, *The End of Hope—The Beginning: Narratives of Hope in the Face of Death and Trauma* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 140 pp.

This powerful book was written to bring the resources of theology, biblical exegesis, philosophy, and health care science to bear on life's most difficult experiences. It is a rich volume for pastors, spiritual directors, supervisors, and chaplains ministering to people who are suffering or anyone preaching or teaching about life's inevitable struggles.

McCarroll is a certified supervisor in ACPE and an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and she also is on the faculty of Knox College at the University of Toronto in the field of pastoral theology. The author aligns herself with those pastoral theologians who "respectfully challenge the propensity within the discipline to prioritize social sciences over theology." Her theology of the cross proclaims how suffering, failure, vulnerability, and limitations can be contexts in which God's truth, grace, and hope can be uncovered.

The book begins with a history of the concept of hope in Western thought. Her treatment of the subject is thorough, but does not include the rise of postmodern Christian thought that is, indeed, more open to mysticism, the transcendent, and the mystery of faith. Though well documented, the first two chapters that provide the historical and theological framework are not as engaging and helpful as the next five chapters in which individuals fight, survive, lament, and/or surrender to arrive at a hope that is healing. These case studies also document how particular care is given by individuals or communities in order for the Spirit's gift of hope to prevail.

McCarroll's is not a triumphant theology; it is a theology of hope hard-won in the crucible of pain. Readers will find strength for their own lives as well as for their caregiving.

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