

SECTION 4 CONTEXT AND PERSPECTIVE

Editor's Introduction



This final section of volume 36, which is focused on the theme “How do Adults Learn,” offers a series of essays and other contributions from various perspectives and contexts that offer different perspectives on that stated theme or address the theme in particular cultural contexts.

This section begins with a poem by pastoral psychotherapist Carroll Arkema. His poem “Spiritual Teacher” offers readers a spiritual perspective on learning. The spiritual perspective suggests that anyone, including clients and patients, can be our teacher. Important lessons or valuable insights can be gained from an array of unlikely people and contexts if we have the eyes to see. This is because the real teacher is ultimately the Transcendent One, who moves in and through all living beings to spark growth, love, and justice.

David Alexander, who is a supervisory chaplain in the U.S. Navy stationed in Japan, explores supervision in the context of trauma. What are the unique challenges of providing pastoral supervision in a context of trauma? He draws on the thinking of Renos Papadopoulos, who is a professor and director of the Centre for Trauma, Asylum and Refugees at the University of Essex, England. Alexander argues for the importance of resisting the tendency of many, under the stress of trauma, to reduce its complexity to simple answers, theological or otherwise. His focus is on the trauma associated with war and international humanitarian relief work, but his insights could be equally applicable to any traumatic context, personal, social, or national, particularly as nations grapple with the various urgent refugee crises.

Vhumani Magezi, Senior Lecturer in Pastoral Care and Counseling at North West University in South Africa, has penned an essay that provides an overview of the issues faced by those who endeavor to teach and train clergy in an African context. His essay begins with an historical and con-

temporary overview of the thinking of those engaged in pastoral care and pastoral ministry in Africa. He argues that unlike in the West, there is no organizing center of pastoral theology in Africa. How African scholars think about pastoral ministry is more rich and complex than perhaps might be supposed. Nevertheless, Magezi goes on to list seven distinct ways that pastoral ministry is practiced in Africa. *Reflective Practice* is pleased to have this report from the frontlines of pastoral care in Africa, and we look forward to additional contributions from Magezi in the future that flesh out the implications of his reflections for education and supervision in Africa today.

Finally, Terry Culbertson and colleagues at the Upstate Medical University Hospital in Syracuse, New York, have provided a case study that will surely spark the interest of all those who train professional chaplains. They tell us the story of Sandy, a first-year CPE student, who lives with a traumatic brain injury. It tells of the challenges the authors faced in adapting their training program to Sandy's unique needs and limitations. The essay discusses the issues, legal and clinical, involved in providing training services for disabled persons and concludes with a brief theological reflection that draws on Nancy Eiesland's *Disabled God*. This is an important and increasingly common challenge for all who train, supervise, and mentor professional religious leaders. I commend the authors of this case study for offering us a glimpse into the practical and human sides of the issue.

Scott Sullender
Editor