

**Felicity B. Kelcourse and K. Brynolf Lyon, eds., *Transforming Wisdom: Pastoral Psychotherapy in Theological Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 254 pp.**

*Transforming Wisdom* is a collection of essays on the theory and practice of pastoral psychotherapy by a who's who of member of the Society for Pastoral Theology. Chapters include essays by Pamela Cooper-White, Joretta Marshall, Ryan LaMothe, Carrie Doehring, Insook Lee, and Ann Belford Ulanov, to name just a few of the more recognizable names. The volume includes both theoretical and practical essays. I believe it is a good summary of the wisdom of pastoral psychotherapy, as it is currently being practice and embraced in the early years of the twenty-first century.

Kelcourse and Lyon launch the volume by placing pastoral psychotherapy in its cultural and theological context. They note that pastoral psychotherapy is not pastoral counseling, which is defined as short-term, congregation-based counseling. It is not Christian counseling because “no straightforward application of religious beliefs is sufficient to the complexity of human life” (p. 3). It is not secular psychotherapy, and it is not even spiritually integrated psychotherapy. Kelcourse goes on to define pastoral psychotherapy as long-term, in-depth therapeutic work provided by therapists who are both clinically trained and theologically educated. In the framework of this volume, the “pastoral” in pastoral psychotherapy refers not to the religious identity of the therapist or to their client population but to the commitment to integrate theology and psychotherapy, especially progressive, critical theological reflection with in-depth dynamic psychotherapy.

I found this collection of essays to be rich, complex, and interesting reading. It is a serious volume and at times heavy with words and analysis. It is a good summary statement of the collective wisdom of pastoral psychotherapy. It would be good reading for both present pastoral psychotherapists and seminarians or religious leaders who might want to train for this kind of specialized ministry. Many of the chapters were summary statements of the common body of knowledge, but a few broke new ground, at least for me, in theory or practice. In this latter category I would list Matthias Baier's “Assessing Faith: Beneficent vs. Toxic Spirituality” as particularly interesting. Although many subjects are covered in the volume, there is little attention given to the training and formation of pastoral psychotherapists, except in passing remarks, and in particular to the subject of supervision, (which is one of the foci of this journal). I was left wondering if there was a distinctive way that pastoral psychotherapists do or receive supervision, apart from the obvious bent toward a psychoanalytic method.

Kelcourse and Lyon, both associated with Christian Theological Seminary in Indiana, introduce the volume, and each contributes one essay to the collection. Unfortunately, they do not wrap up the volume with a concluding essay that explores the future of pastoral psychotherapy. The organizational

home of pastoral psychotherapy has been the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. As that organization wanes, one wonders how pastoral psychotherapy will evolve or even survive in the years ahead. How will this movement recruit the next generation of clinicians and theorists in light of the gradual decline of progressive Protestant seminaries that birthed the current generation of leadership? The next few years will be telling. As we envision the future, this volume helps us honor and appreciate the wisdom of this unique form of specialized ministry. In so doing, it invites readers to commit to its future.

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