

Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen Brown Montagno, eds.,
Injustice and the Care of Souls (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009),
361 pp.

In this volume that was published in 2009, Kujawa-Holbrook and Montagno take up the challenge to relate pastoral care concerns to the wider societal context where injustice impinges on the well-being of individuals. Kujawa-Holbrook is currently Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty and Professor of Practical Theology and Religious Education at Claremont School of Theology in Southern California. Karen B. Montagno is an Episcopal priest in Massachusetts and former Dean of Community Spiritual Formation at Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Both have a deep commitment to the themes addressed in this volume. Together, these two scholars and activists take on an underrepresented issue in the literature and practice of pastoral care and theology, that of the relationship between justice and care. In this volume, they gather twenty-two contributors to address this connection from diverse religious, racial, ethnic, gender, age, and professional perspectives. They offer a broad representation of views to this significant conversation on justice and care.

The book is divided into two sections. Part one's focus is on the context of pastoral care today. The essays in this section address the need to attend to the reality of diversity that surrounds pastoral care and theology, pointing specifically to racial and interfaith expressions. Part two begins to identify the various oppressions that directly impact diverse communities in different ways. The longer of the two sections, this second part offers a strikingly vivid mosaic of what is happening in vulnerable communities today. Race, poverty, addiction, ableism, transgender people, seniors, hospice, and ritual and liturgical responses are representative issues included in this section.

The editors of *Injustice and the Care of Souls* propose that pastoral care is at its core bound up with justice and compassion. They provide strong evidence that this is indeed the case. They further advocate for theorists and activists to become more sensitive to developing non-oppressive forms of pastoral care. Again, their examples offer valuable means by which to begin and continue this process. As a further way for pastoral theologians and practitioners to continue to take the material and challenges presented in this volume seriously, hopefully we will more thoroughly analyze and scrutinize the embedded and often unexamined assumptions in our theories and practices that can aid and abet oppressive postures and structures. For example, for those who represent the dominant culture, it will be critical to pursue a relentless questioning of what is considered normative and of how their privilege communicates and perpetuates unequal power arrangements.

Teachers will find this volume helpful as an introductory text for the

discipline. It will challenge existing paradigms of pastoral care and theology and help broaden and deepen an appreciation for what is at stake for people living within oppressive structures that harm and inhibit the wellbeing of all. Practitioners will find valuable insights for situations they encounter, perhaps alerting them to cultural and societal factors that deserve equal attention and encouraging them to attend to the way these factors become manifest in the lives of people they serve. All readers will be enriched by the wisdom and challenges presented. Hopefully, this volume will inspire more works that will continue to explore the diverse contextual nature of practices of care and theology today.

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