

## BOOK REVIEWS



**R. Scott Sullender, *Trauma and Grief: Resources and Strategies for Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 161 pp.**

**T***rauma and Grief: Resources and Strategies for Ministry* is authored by Scott Sullender, long-time leader in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and editor of *Reflective Practice*. It covers the very difficult topics of trauma and grief in an accessible and straightforward way. His book invites the reader in to learn about the nature of trauma and its effects. In their ministry, chaplains and pastors may find themselves faced with the enormous task of walking with those who have known utter devastation. This book acts as a practical, research-based manual for those in ministry as they guide congregants and communities of worship through death, loss, and other forms of trauma. Sullender's book goes deeper, though, not only helping the reader navigate the wilderness of trauma but also providing the reader with the tools necessary for hope and healing. It is structured in five readable chapters. Each chapter ends with questions for personal reflection, and, at the end of the book, the author offers suggestions for instructors or certified educators who might be using this book as a textbook.

For over ten years, I have worked in the field of trauma and trauma recovery as a pastoral counselor. Much of my work has been with refugees and asylum seekers who are primary and secondary survivors of torture. My clients have expressed that their spirituality and relationship with the divine has provided them a great deal of support throughout their journey. At times, clients have stated that they feel that their traumatic experience was a result of 'God's will.' A sense that God is 'punishing' or 'testing' them is an obstacle to healing and the counseling process. Sullender's book pro-

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vides a guideline for clergy and pastoral counselors and caregivers on how to address this critical issue in trauma recovery. I have felt stuck when these issues arise in counseling; I know that I will now implement his suggestions of focusing on forgiveness and gratitude to assist a person who is feeling that God has willed his or her suffering. I believe that these suggestions will offer opportunities for breakthroughs for my clients and for me as well.

I would highly recommend this book to any of my colleagues in mental health, chaplaincy, and ministry.

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