

Pastoral work and mental illness

Ministry with Persons with Mental Illness and Their Families. Robert H. Albers, William H. Meller, and Steven D. Thurber, ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers. \$29, paper. 256 pages, 2012. www.fortress.com.

DALE HULME

M*inistry with Persons with Mental Illness and Their Families* is a much-needed resource for parish pastors and other people who come in contact regularly through religious vocation with persons with mental illness. People in non-religious vocations who approach their vocation from a religious perspective will also find this a valuable resource.

Edited by University of Minnesota Psychiatry Professor William H. Meller, MD; Woodland Center Child Psychologist Steven Thurber, PhD; and United Seminary

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Professor of Pastoral Theology Robert Albers, *Ministry with Persons with Mental Illness and Their Families* seeks to develop an integrated and interrelated approach to mental illness that honors the work of specialists in the areas of psychiatry, psychology, and theology.

Starting from the biblical metaphor of leprosy, Albers makes a convincing case for the methodology and usefulness of this book in the introduction. From there, Meller and Albers tackle depression.

There are numerous contributing writers, each with

expertise in the fields covered in each chapter: Depression, Anxiety Disorders, Psychotic Disorders, Personality Disorders, Substance-Use Disorders, Eating Disorders, Autism, Acquired Brain Injury, and Dementia.

This list of chapter titles demonstrates the breathtaking scope of this book and its compelling usefulness to parish pastors and others who consider religion to be a necessary aspect of their work with people. Though obviously written from a Christian perspective, it is a Christian perspective that is non-threatening, and

indeed, quite compatible with other religions.

Parish pastors and other Christians who utilize this book will have to apply the practical applications of cross-centered living and other aspects of Christian faith to the readings, but that is to be expected to make room for an interfaith approach, one that is often necessary in the pluralistic society in which we live.

Dale Hulme is the pastor of St. Olaf Lutheran Church (ELCA), and author of Way Down, A Look at Teenage Depression, (Augsburg Publishing, 2001).