

*The End of Hope—The Beginning: Narratives of Hope in the Face of Death and Trauma.* By Pamela R. McCarroll. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2014. viii + 150 pp. \$29.00 (paper).

In spite of its constant use in sermons and pastoral care, the Christian concept of hope is not easily defined, much less practiced in the midst of human misery and death. In *The End of Hope—The Beginning: Narratives of Hope in the Face of Death and Trauma*, Pamela McCarroll skillfully draws on a wide range of theologians, health care workers, and poets who dare to think about hope in situations that seem hopeless.

Throughout the book, McCarroll draws on her extensive experience in hospitals and clinics where one cannot be removed from the real suffering of human existence. *The End of Hope—The Beginning* will appeal to theologians who are tracing the changing definition of hope in a postmodern world, as well as clergy who are tracing the sign of the cross on the foreheads of the dying. Clinical Pastoral Education students will find much to wrestle with in this book, as will laypersons facing trauma and death in their own lives.

*The End of Hope—The Beginning* is packed with emotionally engaging stories and solid historical scholarship that refuses to promote a simplistic definition of hope. Hope, for McCarroll, is always rooted in real life situations, especially when life seems hopeless. While she ably conceals the identities of her examples, it is clear she has cared for each of them during their time of crisis. For example, McCarroll describes a Canadian pastor in his thirties,

This book engagingly leads readers through both the British and global history of the *Book of Common Prayer*. According to Jacobs, the *Book of Common Prayer* was initially written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer to unite Britain through common prayer, and to strengthen people's biblical knowledge by implementing standardized liturgies weaving scriptural sentences with traditional English liturgical prayers and phrases. However, as history progresses, the idea of what constitutes "common" prayer of necessity evolved.

*The Book of Common Prayer* is well known for the beauty of its English language. Nevertheless, as Anglicanism spread to other countries, rites were eventually translated into different languages. Jacobs shows that the beauty and integrity of the *Book of Common Prayer* does not depend on the language alone, but also on its life-enriching pastoral perspective. From Cranmer's earliest edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, Anglican prayer book rites have offered a lifelong language of faith and prayer accompanying the faithful from birth to marriage (for those called to life in marriage), through sickness to the end of life, when even in the midst of death the burial rite brings hope and comfort to those who mourn.

Jacobs gives a thorough history on the controversies of the changes back and forth between traditionalist movements and reform movements. He asserts that during the time of the evangelicals' and the Latitudinarians' rejection of the book, the Anglo-Catholic movements of the church aided in both the preservation and the further development of Anglican spirituality and prayer.

This description of resistance to change resonates even in our own day in current tensions between using the traditional form of the *Book of Common Prayer* and more contemporary forms of liturgies. Jacobs demonstrates that there is always struggle involved in adapting the liturgy to the current context. Liturgy has never been stagnant; it changes with time, though there is always the original historical "root" to uphold it.

In addition to providing an enriching history of the *Book of Common Prayer* for Anglicans who love the prayer book, this book is beneficial to other churches and people who are not familiar with the *Book of Common Prayer* or other Anglican liturgies. Jacobs teaches those unfamiliar with Anglican tradition how the prayer book came to be and why Anglicans worship as they do, following a certain liturgical pattern as the root but adapting rites to particular cultural and historical contexts. This book does not use erudite theological terms, but accessibly leads readers to understand the theological, social, and political background that influence changes in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Jacobs argues that the *Book of Common Prayer* may not be that "common" anymore, though its root—its foundation—has offered many branches. The founding country may not govern its use any longer, but the *Book of Common Prayer* does continue to be an important spiritual resource in a variety of contexts.

diagnosed with ALS, commonly called Lou Gehrig's disease. A diagnosis of ALS guarantees death in five years. The patient's muscles slowly break down so that the patient usually dies of asphyxiation. Any definition of hope, for McCarroll, must be useful in a situation like this.

Thankfully, she masterfully describes how hope functions even when death is near at hand. She does this by teasing out five different facets of hope, with a chapter devoted to each. For example, "Hope as Fight" explores how humans grow through struggle, while "Hope as Meaning" and "Hope as Lament" present the limits and possibilities of the existential approach to human tragedy that can produce hope. In "Hope as Survival" she explores how victims of sexual assault and combat trauma find hope in their understanding of "being alive." Her treatment of "Hope as Surrender" is the boldest chapter of the book, taking on what hope looks like in the face of inevitable death.

In each of these chapters McCarroll shows the limits of each facet and how each facet of hope functions at the very edge of human pain and suffering. Furthermore, as the book title suggests, hope can only be found after one has given up hope. This differentiates her definition of hope from mere wishful thinking, enabling hope to function in the "face of death and trauma."

*The End of Hope—The Beginning* is a rather slim volume, but this brevity does not diminish its impact to the reader. Rather, it pushes the reader to think about hope with immediacy, and without extensive theological argument.

For most of my ordained life I served as a chaplain with the army in Iraq and in hospitals with the wounded. Looking back, I wish I had been able to read this book the first day I laced up my combat boots. When I began ministry in my mid-twenties, I soon discovered the position of "chaplain" is often justified by institutions as being there to "inspire hope." During my time in the military and in hospitals my capability to inspire hope in dire circumstances was constantly challenged. I confess my narrow definition of hope often bordered on a less than adequate "hope as success," and this narrow definition just does not work on the battlefield or the emergency room. McCarroll's approach to hope as lament shows how the practice of lament, both communal and individual, "opens up horizons of possibility" (p. 114). In my work with combat veterans we always practice lament. This book was timely for me to see how lament opens the horizon to hope, even for young men and women who have lost limbs and innocence in war. *The End of Hope—The Beginning* will save many a young (or not-so-young) chaplain, priest, and pastor from limited definitions of hope.

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