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## Finding Jesus in the Storm: The Spiritual Lives of Christians with Mental Health Challenges

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## REVIEWS

***Finding Jesus in the Storm: The Spiritual Lives of Christians with Mental Health Challenges*** By John Swinton. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020. 215 pp.

John Swinton is Chair of Divinity and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. He has extensively published in the fields of practical theology, mental health studies, and disability theology. *Becoming Friends of Time* (2017) won Christianity Today's book award of merit for theology and ethics, and *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* (2012) won the 2016 Michael Ramsey prize for theological writing. He also serves on the editorial board of various pastoral journals, including *The Journal of Religion, Disability and Health*; *Contact*; *The Scottish Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*; and *The Journal of Healthcare Chaplaincy*.

*Finding Jesus in the Storm* explores the spiritual lives of Christians with mental health challenges. The book aims to provide readers with detailed descriptions of what it is like to live with depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder and still live faithfully as a Christian. The book uses a hermeneutical phenomenological method to develop these detailed descriptions by conversing between four horizons: the author's horizon; the horizons of the Christians living with mental health challenges; the horizon of the field of mental health care; and the horizon of Scripture, Christian tradition, and reflection in the life of the church community (p. 46). These horizons shape the theological reflections and the narratives in the book.

The book is divided into five sections. Section one lays the groundwork for the study, providing an introduction and presenting the research methodology. Section two speaks about the ambiguities surrounding clinical diagnosis. Swinton claims that clinical diagnostic descriptions are too thin to capture people's experiences of mental illness and that they have the power to negatively impact people's lives by shaping assumptions and attitudes about mental health. Swinton argues that the diagnostic process should not be confined to the medical field but should also be immersed in social, spiritual, and theological projections.

Section three is on the topic of depression. Swinton begins by observing that biological, linguistic, and spiritual descriptions of depression tend to be "thin." When he uses the term "thin," he uses it to describe what happens when language

is used so frequently that it loses its meaning and becomes unhelpful by failing to convey the extent of the experience (p. 75). Swinton then begins to draw on rich, thick descriptions of depression and elaborates upon emergent themes to redescribe depression more fully.

Section four is about hearing voices and schizophrenia. He begins with a conversation about schizophrenia and describes it as a medical construct designed to make sense of a person's experiences that have become troublesome to the individual or those around them (p. 120). Framing schizophrenia in this way allows him to place it into the broader spectrum of the human experience of voice-hearing. This begins a historical and cultural epistemic conversation. The conversation concludes that hearing voices is not unique, nor is it necessarily always a negative experience or something that the individual's society and community disdains. Swinton shows that cultural and societal interpretations of the experience will dramatically affect whether the hearer's voice-hearing experience has a positive or a negative outcome.

Section five speaks about bipolar disorder. Again, Swinton explains how descriptions tend to be thin and do not fully describe the experience. He then sets about portraying a detailed description of bipolar disorder. One point Swinton makes is that the sins of others manifest in the experiences of those living with severe mental health challenges (p. 199). His discussion at this point is part of a larger conversation on the topic of societal sins and systemic evils and their impact on mental health.

Section five's last chapter delivers the book's conclusion and provides a detailed description of health and healing. Swinton discusses healing from cultural, theological, biblical, liturgical, relational, and testimonial perspectives. The overarching point is that being in good health does not only constitute the absence of a physical or psychological diagnosis. Being in good health also involves living faithfully in a relationship with Jesus even when experiencing deep distress (p. 206).

John Swinton's vast experience in ministry and healthcare is evident in this work. The book demonstrates his expertise in theology, mental health, and spirituality. The breadth of his scholarship and the way he approached his topic will be refreshing to readers whose understanding of mental and physical health might be dominated by Western biomedical understandings and interpretations. Swinton's hermeneutic phenomenological methodology provides thick descriptions of mental health. The methodology will supply the reader with a robust interpretative framework to understand and process the mental health conditions and may lead to more positive outcomes. Swinton's expanded definition of health and healing is illuminative and speaks toward the tendency to view health and healing as the absence of physical or psychological infirmity. With this being said, listening to the testimonies of everyday believers, which Swinton

does here, and reflecting on what they tell us theologically, will enrich the reader's views on theology and counseling.

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***Theology for Psychology and Counseling: An Invitation to Holistic Christian Practice*** By Kutter Callaway and William Whitney. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022. 224 pp.

Kutter Callaway earned two PhDs, one in theology and one in psychology, both from Fuller Theological Seminary. William Whitney earned a PhD in theology and a master's in marriage and family therapy, both from Fuller, with a second PhD underway at the time of this book's writing. Callaway now teaches theology and culture at Fuller; Whitney teaches psychology at Azusa Pacific University and is a practicing therapist. These two authors are thus extremely qualified to speak to the integration of theology and counseling. The integration literature, per se, had not yet seen a volume written by professional theologians (p. 5), and Callaway and Whitney have addressed this gap.

Primary questions for these integrationists are: What is God up to in the world, and how can we join him? Exploring these leads to further questions: Can we join him specifically through counseling, and if so, how? What is counseling, what role does science play, how do theology and science interrelate, and how is God at work through all of these processes? These questions are addressed with depth, yet at an introductory level accessible to undergraduate students.

As a starting point, the authors offer a definition of theology. "Theology is something you do; it involves seeing the world with wisdom and discernment" (p. 21). To do this, one will need resources, and they identify five: Bible, church, tradition, experience, and culture (p. 21). These resources serve as lenses, like the eye doctor's phoropter, to help bring clarity and focus for the one doing theology.

Callaway and Whitney note that, with their five resources, they have slightly modified a theological framework, dubbed relatively recently the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, which has been used for a couple of centuries by evangelicals (p. 37). The quadrilateral is so-named due to its four resources: scripture (this is seen as primary, with the other three aiding its understanding); tradition (i.e., church fathers, the creeds [Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian], and saints through the ages); reason; and experience (i.e., the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, in Wesley's original). In their modification, Callaway and Whitney have added one and slightly changed the original four: reason is not mentioned, possibly elided into experience; tradition is split between church (described as one's local congregation) and