

Book Recommendations

1. A Firm Place to Stand

Marja Bergen

<http://marjabergen.com/afirmplacetostand>

Marja Bergen describes how she found meaning in a life with bipolar disorder. In her sincere and candid style, she reflects on her forty-two years with the illness and shows how God can turn weakness into strength. This book is a must-read for Christians who struggle with mental health challenges and the faith communities who minister to them.

2. The Church Leaders Counseling Resource Book

Cynthia Franklin and
Rowena Fong

<http://churchdvresources.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/flyer-franklinfong-churchleaders1.pdf>

This all-in-one guide is designed to better equip clergy and the church leaders to meet their congregations' needs in a spiritually grounded and scientifically sound manner. Succinct, easy-to-read chapters summarize all a pastor needs to know about a given problem area, including its signs or symptoms, questions to ask, effective helping skills, and, most importantly, when to refer to a mental health professional. Synthesizing what research says about treatment approaches for mental health issues, this user-friendly reference is filled with guidelines, case scenarios, key points to remember, resources for further help, advice on integrating scripture and theology with the best available research, and tips on partnering with others to provide the best possible care for each church member. Each chapter is designed for quick lookup by problem area, empowering church leaders to understand and help meet the challenges facing the children, adults, families, and communities that they serve.

3. I'm Not Supposed to Feel Like This: A Christian Self-Help Approach to Depression and Anxiety

Chris Williams, Paul Richards & Ingrid Whitton

<http://www.feelinglikethis.com/site/>

Summary: Depression is so common that it has been described as 'the common cold of psychiatry'. It is particularly difficult for Christians - there is often a feeling that Christians 'shouldn't' get depressed, and that it and anxiety are the result of a poor or damaged relationship with God. I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO FEEL LIKE THIS is an empowering and practical response to such common feelings. In the style of a workbook, with constant reference to the Bible, and the example of Jesus, it helps the reader to understand why they feel the way they do, and to draw on God's love and grace to find a path through depression and anxiety. The authors are all Christians, and experienced counsellors and psychiatrists.

4. In His Way and His Time. Breaking Free from Mental Illness Margaret-Ann Kubala

<http://www.mcnallyrobinson.com/9781926747514/margaret-ann-kubala/his-way-his-time#.UX3s5sqq73A>

5. Living Outside Mental Illness

(no website)

Larry Davidson

Schizophrenia is widely considered the most severe and disabling of the mental illnesses. Yet recent research has demonstrated that many people afflicted with the disorder are able to recover to a significant degree. *Living Outside Mental Illness* demonstrates the importance of listening to what people diagnosed with schizophrenia themselves have to say about their struggle, and shows the dramatic effect this approach can have on clinical practice and social policy. It presents an in-depth investigation, based on a phenomenological perspective, of experiences of illness and recovery as illuminated by compelling first-person descriptions. This volume forcefully makes the case for the utility of qualitative methods in improving our understanding of the reasons for the success or failure of mental health services. The research has important clinical and policy implications, and will be of key interest to those in psychology and the helping professions as well as to people in recovery and their families.

6. Souls in the Hands of a Tender God

<http://www.tendergod.com/>

Craig Rennebohm

Souls in the Hands of a Tender God explores the realm of faith through the extraordinary prism of brain disorders. The stories in this book come from an unusual place: the experience of mental illness — and, in particular, mental illness on the streets. Each story becomes a parable, helping us understand what it means to be human and vulnerable: souls on a pilgrimage toward meaning and wholeness, supported by God's healing Spirit. The book profiles people living on the street who suffer from the devastating effects of mental illness and follows them on the journey from the margins of society through healing and back into the welcome and support of the community. The authors describe some basic steps any of us can take to help a relative, friend, or stranger struggling with mental illness and in need of care and support. From his experience, Craig shares models of care that bring congregations and community health services together in support of outreach, recovery, and well-being. And the authors invite readers to help create compassionate neighborhoods as building blocks for a world in which care takes precedence over neglect and peaceable community replaces conflict and injustice.

7. Unmasking Male Depression

Archibald D. Hart

<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2002/11/unmasking-male-depression.html>

The myth in evangelical Christendom is that depression is a sure sign of failure in trusting God, weak faith, or sin lurking in your inmost being. Yet more than 20 million American men will become depressed in their lifetime, with the effects impacting their families, their work and their relationships with God. From his own struggles with depression and his decades of clinical research and practice, Dr. Hart has good news: Men have many options and hope!

8. Darkness is my Only Companion

(no website)

Kathryn Greene-McCreight

Where is God in the suffering of a mentally ill person? What happens to the soul when the mind is ill? How are Christians to respond in the face of mental illness? In *Darkness Is My Only Companion*, Kathryn Greene-McCreight confronts these difficult questions raised by her own mental illness—bipolar disorder. She tackles often avoided topics such as suicide, mental hospitals, and shock therapy. Greene-McCreight offers readers a glimpse into the mind of a mentally ill person and practical advice for their friends, family, and clergy. With brutal honesty, she tackles often avoided topics such as suicide, mental hospitals, and shock therapy. Greene-McCreight offers the reader everything from poignant and raw glimpses into the mind of a mentally ill person to practical and forthright advice for their friends, family, and clergy. Her voice is a comfort to those who suffer from mental illness and an invaluable resource for those who love and support them.

9. Connecting

Larry Crabb

<http://www.newwayministries.org/readinglist.php>

Dr. Crabb envisions a day when communities of God's people - ordinary Christians whose lives connect as husband to wife, brother to sister, friend to friend - will accomplish most of the healing that we now depend on mental health professionals to provide. God has deposited within us the power to heal soul-disease and that power is released to do its work as we relate to each other in revolutionary new ways. In challenging, practical language, Dr. Crabb shows us how. This revised and updated edition now includes a full workbook for those who want to better learn how to connect with the hearts and souls of those around them.

10. Psychosis and Spirituality

Isabel Clarke

http://www.isabelclarke.org/psychosis_spirituality/

Spirituality and psychosis both inhabit the region where ordinary reason ceases to function and barriers break down. The connection between them is evident - what is remarkable is how conventional thinking obscures the connection. This book challenges conventional understandings with a radical new perspective. The interface between psychosis and spirituality is explored, drawing on key research and latest developments from a wide spread of disciplines. This new perspective will be important for those professionally interested in both psychosis and spirituality (therapists, priests, etc.) people seeking a well grounded framework for their own direct experience in this area and everyone interested in the latest thinking and research on this topic.

11. No Time to Say Goodbye

Carla Fine

<http://www.carlafine.com/>

Suicide would appear to be the last taboo. This is just one of the many painful and paralyzing truths author Carla Fine discovered when her husband, a successful young physician, took his own life in December 1989. And being unable to speak openly and honestly about the cause of her pain made it all the more difficult for her to survive.

With **No Time to Say Goodbye**, she brings suicide survival from the darkness into light, speaking frankly about the overwhelming feelings of confusion, guilt, shame, anger, and loneliness that are shared by all survivors. Fine draws on her own experience and on conversations with many other survivors--as well as on the knowledge of counselors and mental health professionals. She offers a strong helping hand and invaluable guidance to the vast numbers of family and friends who are left behind by the more than thirty thousand people who commit suicide each year, struggling to make sense of an act that seems to them senseless, and to pick up the pieces of their own shattered lives. And, perhaps most important, for the first time in any book, she allows survivors to see that they are not alone in their feelings of grief and despair.

12. Grieving a Suicide
(no website)

Albert Y. Hsu

Albert Y. Hsu wrestles with emotional and spiritual questions surrounding suicide and ultimately points suicide survivors to the God who offers comfort in our grief and hope for the future. Speaking from the experience of losing his father, Albert Hsu presents three different levels of support, depending on your stage of grief. Covering subjects from your immediate grief to answering your tough questions, this book allows you to find help for your hurt when you're ready.

13. I am Not Sick, I Don't Need

Help

Xavier

Amador

http://bpdresources.net/peer_book_reviews/xavier_amador.htm

About 50% of all people with schizophrenia and manic-depression do not understand that they are ill and refuse treatment. Whether you are a family member or a therapist, in this book you will find hope in what the new research is revealing about the problem of poor insight into illness. Prepare to be surprised and to have new hope. There is much you can do to conquer denial.

14. Troubled Minds: Mental Illness and the Church Mission

Amy Simpson

In *Troubled Minds* Amy Simpson, whose family knows the trauma and bewilderment of mental illness, reminds us that people with mental illness are our neighbors and our brothers and sisters in Christ, and she shows us the path to loving them well and becoming a church that

loves God with whole hearts and whole souls, with the strength we have and with minds that are whole as well as minds that are troubled.

15. Making Room: Recovering hospitality as a Christian Tradition

Christina Pohl

Although hospitality was central to Christian identity and practice in earlier centuries, our generation knows little about its life-giving character. *Making Room* revisits the Christian foundations of welcoming strangers and explores the necessity, difficulty, and blessing of hospitality today.

Combining rich biblical and historical research with extensive exposure to contemporary Christian communities - the Catholic Worker, L'Abri, L'Arche, and others - this book shows how understanding the key features of hospitality can better equip us to faithfully carry out the practical call of the gospel.

16. Resurrecting the Person

John Swinton

In Resurrecting the Person, John Swinton argues that while mental illnesses are often biological and genetic in origin, the real handicap experienced by individuals is imposed by the types of reactions, values, and attitudes which are typical of contemporary western society. In other words, how a mental illness is experienced has much to do with how it is socially constructed. How will the church react to this suggestion? Swinton suggests that the key to the effective pastoral care of individuals with severe mental illness lies not only within the realms of psychiatry, therapy, and pharmacological intervention, but in the rehumanization which is borne within the relationship of friendship.

17. Ministry with Persons with Mental Illness and Their Families

**Robert H. Albers,
William H. Meller,
and Steven D. Thurber**

Those who are afflicted as well as those who are adversely affected by mental illness often live lives of "quiet desperation" without recourse to appropriate assistance. Most caregivers confronted with these illnesses in the work of ministry have had no training or accurate information about mental illnesses, so frequently they do nothing, resulting in further harm and damage. Others may operate out of a theological system that does not adequately account for the nature, severity, or treatment of these illnesses.

In *Ministry with Persons with Mental Illness and Their Families*, psychiatrists and pastoral theologians come together in an interdisciplinary, collaborative effort to ensure accuracy of information concerning the medical dimensions of mental illness, interpret these illnesses from a faith perspective, and make suggestions relative to effective ministry. Readers will learn how

science and a faith tradition can not only co-exist but work in tandem to alleviate the pain of the afflicted and affected.

18. The Inner Voice of Love

Henri J.M. Nouwen

This is Henri Nouwen's "secret journal." It was written during the most difficult period of his life, when he suddenly lost his self-esteem, his energy to live and work, his sense of being loved, even his hope in God. Although he experienced excruciating anguish and despair, he was still able to keep a journal in which he wrote a spiritual imperative to himself each day that emerged from his conversations with friends and supporters.

19. Boundaries

Henry Cloud, John Townsend

Having clear boundaries is essential to a healthy, balanced lifestyle. A boundary is a personal property line that marks those things for which we are responsible. In other words, boundaries define who we are and who we are not. Boundaries impact all areas of our lives: Physical boundaries help us determine who may touch us and under what circumstances -- Mental boundaries give us the freedom to have our own thoughts and opinions -- Emotional boundaries help us to deal with our own emotions and disengage from the harmful, manipulative emotions of others -- Spiritual boundaries help us to distinguish God's will from our own and give us renewed awe for our Creator -- Often, Christians focus so much on being loving and unselfish that they forget their own limits and limitations. When confronted with their lack of boundaries, they ask:

- Can I set limits and still be a loving person?
- What are legitimate boundaries?
- What if someone is upset or hurt by my boundaries?
- How do I answer someone who wants my time, love, energy, or money?
- Aren't boundaries selfish?
- Why do I feel guilty or afraid when I consider setting boundaries?

Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend offer biblically-based answers to these and other tough questions, showing us how to set healthy boundaries with our parents, spouses, children, friends, co-workers, and even ourselves.

20. Your Church is Too Small

John H. Armstrong

“I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.” Too often, these words of Jesus from John 17:20-21 seem like an unreachable ideal. But in *Your Church Is Too Small*, John Armstrong shows that Jesus’ vision of Christian unity is for all God’s people across social, cultural, racial, and denominational lines. “With attention to his own pilgrimage and growth in ecclesial awareness, John Armstrong explores here the evangelical heart and ecumenical breadth of churchly Christianity. I am encouraged by his explorations and commend this study to all believers who pray and labor for the unity for which our Savior prayed.” – Timothy George, senior editor, *Christianity Today*. “Dr. Armstrong’s irenic approach should make it easy for Christians—whether Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant—to engage the challenging thesis of the book, while recognizing that there remain points of doctrine between them which will require further clarification. Anyone concerned about either evangelism or Christian unity should read this book, and take seriously its call for both mission and ecumenism.” – Fr. Thomas A. Baima, Provost, University of Saint Mary of the Lake John Armstrong is one of those Evangelical theologians—may their tribe increase and the valley abound with their tents—who know that full obedience to Christ embraces the historical transmission through which we know him. This book refuses to scale down the bearer of that tradition—the historical church, that is—or reduce the authority of its voice. – Fr. Patrick Henry Reardon, senior editor, *Touchstone* “It’s a must for anyone who has grown weary with Christian divisiveness and schism and longs to discover ways of strengthening the bonds that unite us in the Spirit of Christ.” – Chuck Colson

21. Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth

Walter Brueggemann

<http://fortresspress.com/product/awed-heaven-rooted-earth-prayers-walter-brueggemann>

This thoughtful collection of prayers emerged from Brueggemann's thirty-five years of teaching in seminaries. Full of reflection, faith, and dialogue, they reveal another side of this gifted author from what his many readers are accustomed to. These deeply felt and sparkingly articulated prayers reflect a wide range of life experiences. As readers, we are taken from the depths of pain and loss to the heights of joy and praise. The author takes on life in its fullest as he utters his praise and lament, petition and thanksgiving. Brueggemann's prayers lead us to deeper commitment, deeper faith, and deeper reflection.

The volume also includes an index of biblical allusions that will be useful for preachers as well as the general reader looking for the biblical roots of these fears, hopes, struggles, and aspirations

22. How Do I Help a Hurting Friend?

Rod J.K. Wilson

Helping begins with understanding. Each of us knows someone who is hurting. We want to help but often don't know how. So we try to solve his or her problem by evaluating the situation and

giving advice. But what hurting people need first and foremost is to be understood.

Rod Wilson offers you practical insights into helping hurting people. These insights are born out of more than twenty-five years of church and counseling experience. In this accessible book, he provides:

- an easy-to-understand description of common sources of hurting
- biblical ways of thinking about them
- descriptions of how it feels to experience the problems
- practical suggestions for coming alongside to help

Whether you're a church leader or a caring friend, this book will give you needed tools to minister more effectively to those around you who are hurting.