

The Roots of Sorrow: Reflections on Depression and Hope
by Richard Winter; Crossway Books, Westchester, Illinois; paperback, 309 pages.

Is depression sinful, showing lack of faith and trust in God? Some evangelicals and charismatics put the depressed on a guilt trip. Why are you so emotionally devastated? Why have the blues when you have Jesus in your heart? Can't you be more content with your lot? But some outstanding Christians such as Isaac Newton and Charles Spurgeon suffered from severe bouts of depression at some time in their lives. Why do people get depressed? How do they get out of it? There are no simple solutions. "There are few easy answers when facing the complexity of our life in this world," says Winter.

To admit depression is no sin. Therapy is available. But Winter warns that no therapy is without a value system. Throughout the centuries there have always been many schools of thought and as many different therapies. No therapist or counsellor can be purely objective. Everyone has a belief about human nature, reality and a theory about the cause of psychological problems. Each counsellor and therapist works with a religious perspective.

Richard Winter was a doctor in psychiatry at Bristol General Hospital, before going to the L'Abri Fellowship in England as a staff member. He has contributed frequently to medical journals and to Christian publications. His writing shows his great indebtedness to the teachings of the late Dr. Francis Schaeffer. The latter helped Winter to develop a framework in which he could consider the academic discipline and the therapeutic practice of psychiatry from a Christian perspective. Winter maintains that only within a Christian framework can we separate what is true from what is false. Winter's book is not just theoretical. He gives practical advice as well.

This fine book is written primarily for those who are slipping down into a depression or for those who are climbing out the other side. Pastors and Christian counsellors will find this is an excellent tool for their ministry.

Johan D. Tangelder