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Inclusive Church Book Review

The Church Times reviewed **Disability and Mental Health**



These two small, useful books are written to help parishioners to

make their church more inclusive. The stories (in the books) are useful to ground the theology in the real world and they make interesting - although at times rather alarming - reading, demonstrating the poor treatment that too many people experience at their local church. I was surprised that each story is by an identified individual, sometimes even giving where they are working now.

The theology section in the mental-health book is clear and easy to understand, punctuated by further stories - and the challenge to all of us to listen to people with mental-health problems, not just leave it to the specialists, such as psychiatrists.

I very much liked the idea that the church's function is not so much about curing as instead about focusing on healing - and that is "something different; something deeper, more soulful . . . to do with finding wholeness, inner beauty, unity and peace".

The resources sections start with "further reflection with your church", clearly demonstrating that each book is not just for reading, but needs acting upon.

The theology section in the Disability book is written by John M. Hull, and he relates his blindness to the ways in which Christians use the idea of blindness sometimes to mean "sinful", e.g. in: "I once was lost but now am found, Was blind, but now I see."

The challenges in both books are for us to turn our churches into places where everyone is accepted, and that everyone can gain access to; and that we use language sensitively

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