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in Scripture is consistent with Reformed theology. This question is vital to a Reformed understanding of the nature of faith, Scripture, and the knowledge of God.

—Ryan M. McGraw

Church and Mission

Toughest People to Love: How to Understand, Lead, and Love the Difficult People in Your Life—Including Yourself by Chuck DeGroat. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. Pp. 177. \$14.00 softcover.

Toughest People to Love is a combination of pastoral care, church leadership, and psychological insight. Pastor and counselor Chuck DeGroat invites Christian leaders to see God “in the broken lives of people” (3) and to lead out of love rather than out of power and ulterior motives. He writes, “We lead from a posture of self-sacrificial love—the deep secret of God’s kingdom—instead of from a posture of competition, control, and manipulation” (3). DeGroat warns against giving in to the temptation in ministry settings to try to fix the people around us. As hinted by the title of the book, DeGroat emphasizes that dealing with tough people is not only about others but also about ourselves. He discards popular notions of the flawless leader in favor of Henri Nouwen’s characterization of the wounded healer as leader: “Little did I know that my own brokenness would be the conduit of much more healing in the long run” (5).

The book is divided into three parts with a total of eight chapters. The first two chapters form part 1: “Understanding People.” Using a personal story, DeGroat demonstrates the key role of self-awareness in pastoral leadership and how it shapes one’s vision and informs one’s understanding of those who are being led. In part 2: “Leading and Loving Difficult People,” DeGroat discusses (1) four common personality disorders found in ministry: the narcissist, the borderline personality, the obsessive-compulsive, and the histrionic; (2) different aspects of addiction about which church leaders should be aware and how we may understand and help the addict; and (3) foolish people (those who simply do not act wisely in a variety of ways) and their struggles.

Part 3: “Dealing with Ourselves: The Best Help We Can Give Another,” focuses on self-care and leadership. DeGroat introduces the concept of the “Dark Night of the Soul” of St. John of the Cross and approaches it from a Reformed perspective. He states, “One lesson we learn from the ancient mystics is that dark nights are not only problems but also opportunities. Grasping this reality moves us beyond the question, ‘How do I fix this?’ to the question, ‘What is God saying to me in this?’” (113). Thus, by embracing

the notion of the “Dark Night of the Soul,” DeGroat encourages leaders to subvert any notion of Christian leadership that understands “failures and weaknesses as obstacles to success” rather than as opportunities to acquire wisdom (113).

Toughest People to Love is a thought-provoking book that aims to analyze Christian leadership in light of self-sacrificial love and God’s story. DeGroat’s contribution is more than welcome as a useful tool for those in pastoral ministry. *Toughest People to Love* calls leaders into action to understand and love people as they are from an inclusive and relational perspective as God works actively in their lives. In the end, the role of Christian leaders is about inviting others to “stay connected to the core center in God’s identity” (36).

—Isaias D’Oleo Ochoa

The Church and Religious Persecution by Kevin R. Den Dulk and Robert J. Joustra. Calvin Shorts. Grand Rapids: Calvin College Press, 2015. Pp. viii + 58. \$6.99 softcover.

This timely booklet (one of three in the series of “Calvin Shorts”), in four brief but helpful and well-written chapters, explains why the church is absent from serious address of the global problem of religious persecution and argues for its presence. The first chapter defines what Den Dulk and Joustra mean by religion, religious freedom, religious pluralism, and religious persecution. Chapter 2 reviews the Pew Research Center’s analysis of the state of religious persecution in terms of governmental restrictions and social hostilities. Other material from Pew shows that although persecution leaves few religions untouched, assault on Christians has increased, especially in the Middle East and Muslim-majority countries. The third chapter explores the reasons for churches’ absence in an antipersecution campaign: the lack of resources, priorities, and agendas. As an example of the latter, the authors discuss Pew’s distinctions between evangelical churches that tend to focus more on personal conversion, and mainline Protestants who place greater emphasis on social engagement. In addition, it is important to consider factors beyond the churches’ control: “the dizzying array of political environments” in which churches find themselves. In chapter 4, the authors argue that North American churches must be “moral protagonist[s] in the fight against religious persecution.” This requires nothing less than the creation of a “social movement” that will reorient the church, promote a vision for change, and mobilize resources.

Given the pluralism that characterizes Western society, Den Dulk and Joustra understandably want the reader to understand religious persecution as inclusive of all religions. This is clear from their definitions and their suggestions that, in certain circumstances, Christians recognize allies among