

***Mantle of Mercy: Islamic Chaplaincy in North America.* Edited by Muhammad A. Ali, Omer Bajwa, Sondos Kholaki, and Jaye Starr. Templeton Press, 2022 vii+263pp. ISBN 978-1-59947-593-6. \$24.95, paper.**

In recent years, publications on chaplaincy have included comprehensive anthologies from Jewish, Buddhist, and Hindu points of view. *Mantle of Mercy: Islamic Chaplaincy in North America* is an important addition to this genre. This collection of personal stories, theological reflections and case studies conveys the joys and challenges Muslim chaplains face in the various settings in which they serve. Of the thirty-four authors, five focus primarily on community chaplaincy, twelve share aspects of hospice and hospital chaplaincy, three examine experiences in military chaplaincy, four look at prison chaplaincy, and nine explore what it is like in the field of university and campus chaplaincy. An excellent reference for many interested in pastoral care and related fields, this volume will be especially useful to those who are considering chaplaincy as a career, graduate students of chaplaincy about to begin Field Education, or Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) students and supervisors. This is also an excellent resource for the Muslim community generally, as many are unaware of this rapidly evolving profession, to understand the many ways in which Muslim chaplains are able to serve. For example, chaplaincy is one of the ways Muslim women can emerge as leaders in their community. Of the thirty-four authors in this volume, fourteen are women.

In this book, chaplains share real life encounters. Each chapter focuses on a particular journey. Many authors relate how they came to be in the field in which they find themselves and share experiences of their graduate training, and what aspects they found particularly challenging. Several authors describe the transformative aspect of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Many emphasize the importance of personal reflection as the main pathways for their growth as chaplains. They stress the importance of creating a ministry of presence, “walking alongside” those they serve with empathy and without judgement. Themes of justice and compassion are prevalent. The authors convey not only what they love about their work, but also the struggles that they encounter as chaplains—from dealing with racism on a university campus to confronting one’s own biases. True to the profession, the chaplains featured here are both genuine and vulnerable in their accounts. Whether it is working to combat discrimination against Shia minorities in a prison setting, finding one’s voice at the bedside of a dying patient, or providing spiritual companionship and a non-judgmental presence to Queer Muslims in the community; a chaplain can make all the difference in assisting those they serve to build spiritual resilience and connection. The need to care for oneself by setting boundaries and knowing one’s “empathic limits” is also addressed—as the many potentially traumatic roles in which they serve can be overwhelming.

The editors of *Mantle of Mercy* acknowledge that several important aspects of chaplaincy that have not been addressed in this book. Missing are chapters on care of refugees, converts, and victims of domestic violence, and victims of substance abuse. These topics could become the basis for a follow-up volume. In any case, *Mantle of Mercy* is a welcome addition to chaplaincy-education literature. It offers the reader a helpful view of multiple aspects of pastoral care within the Islamic framework. The idea that a chaplain meets the “care-seeker” where they are, on their “meaning-making journey,” while all the while maintaining a strong faith of their own, is well

illustrated in many of the scenarios shared here. These stories of engagement can be valuable to anyone interested in pastoral care, whether they are Muslim or not.

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