FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Martha, Martha: How Christians Worry
Elaine Leong Eng
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This handbook is for anyone who regularly works with people and wants to better serve them by understanding various mental conditions. Although aimed primarily at clergy, the substance and clarity of the material lends itself to anyone who is in a position to help others.

Each of the eight chapters covers a particular mental condition ranging from obsessions and compulsions to PMS. Sections begin with a case description that includes specific symptoms that help lead to a diagnosis. The author doesn't encourage the reader to form a diagnosis; rather she urges the reader to consider these symptoms in order to discover an appropriate path for helping the person. Specific reference sources are then provided for each of the conditions, followed by a section called "How Caring Christians Can Help." The help section is especially useful to individuals who want to aid someone without interfering or taking on unnecessary burdens.

Eng utilizes a pattern of describing symptoms and then explaining the symptoms in simplified clinical terms. This usually works well, but on occasion becomes oversimplified or repetitive. For example, in the chapter on panic disorders Eng describes someone having the thought: "Something terrible is going to happen to me." She then writes: "These are called thoughts of impending doom." These annoyances, however, are few and don't significantly distract from the book's merit.

Scattered throughout the book are biblical references that serve to amplify either the author's point or help illustrate a symptom. There is a successful effort here to integrate some aspects of psychology with theology, resulting in an empathetic and functional rationalization for victims trying to reconcile their religious views with what is happening to their psyche.

At various points there are apt descriptions of the steps one goes through when

seeking psychological and medical treatment. In all cases, the author describes what questions might be asked and what medicine might be prescribed. There is also a good discussion of what constitutes normal human behavior and that it can include tendencies that are inherent in some mental illnesses without necessitating the conclusion that the person is abnormal. Eng does warn that this is a delicate balance.

This is not only a useful reference for finding help for specific mental and medical problems, but also a good introduction to integrating psychology and theology.

Joe Mielke