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Beach and Sanchez's "Love Letters from the Edge: Meditations for Those Struggling with Brokenness, Trauma, and the Pain of Life" (Book Review)

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reciprocal relationship between theology and practice, it becomes imperative that theologians, whether armchair or professional, cultivate faithfulness” (p. 46).

A professor at Covenant College, Kopic advocates for faithfulness in practical theological reflection: “Attempting to separate life and theology is to lose the beauty and truthfulness of both” (p. 42).

He offers reasons to study theology as well as characteristics of faithful theology such as a love of Scripture, respect for tradition, and dependence on repentance. Kopic also points out the need to recognize the limitations in our theological reflections: sinful natures, cultural influences, and presuppositions. He concludes with a working definition of Christian theology that is a nice starting point for further discussion.

The book is similar in manner to Helmut Thielicke’s noted *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*, and is, indeed, a helpful cognitive and spiritual exercise. It is personally edifying but would be a particularly useful addition for supporting the curriculum in introductory spiritual formation classes.

**Love Letters from the Edge: Meditations for Those Struggling
with Brokenness, Trauma, and the Pain of Life,**

by Shelly Beach and Wanda Sanchez. Grand Rapids, MI:

Kregel Publications, 2014. 296 pp. \$15.99. ISBN 9780825443473

*Reviewed by Deborah L. Denison, Medical Librarian,
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This twelve-week book of devotionals for women, written by two women who are survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and a dysfunctional juvenile system, is “different from many others” (p. 18). Each meditation/devotional is written from two perspectives: the “brokenhearted” (p. 18) and Father God. A “Hope on the Edge” section at the end of each section raises questions designed to help the reader express her frustration to God. Each meditation ends with a fervent “Heart Cry” prayer. *Love Letters from the Edge* also includes tools that give an overview of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These tools include “websites, assessment tests, treatment centers, Scripture affirmations, and suggestions for friends, spouses, and the church” (p. 19). Activities suggested to help the reader move toward healing and deepen her relationship with God include journaling, writing letters, and art projects.

Scripturally sound, encouraging, gentle, hopeful and loving, this book is not only for those women who have been “officially” diagnosed with PTSD, but for any woman who has been traumatized (physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually).

Written in an easy-to-read format, this is a resource that would not only be useful for a personal devotional, but could also be used in a small-group Bible study or as a ministry tool.

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*Reviewed by Pamela Gore, Acquisitions Librarian,
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA*

Love Letters from the Edge is a book of Christian meditations designed to help sufferers of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) heal from the trauma of physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse through developing a closer relationship with God. The authors are speakers and bloggers who have written and spoken extensively on PTSD as both professionals and survivors of abuse. Together they founded PTSD Perspectives, an organization offering educational seminars for use in health care and other professions. They state clearly that they are not therapists and properly urge readers to seek counseling if necessary.

The meditations cover 12 weeks, with one meditation per day for the first five days of the week. These meditations are about three pages long, beginning with Scripture verses and a letter to God. Their response is then followed by questions for deeper thought. A brief prayer closes each entry. Each week ends with a Weekend Features section that includes a meditation plus journaling starter questions, art projects, and other activities. The focus topic changes weekly. Weeks are grouped into four sections: Heart Cries, Grieving and Growing, Hope and a Future, and Love and Assurance.

Seven appendices covering 40 pages define and discuss PTSD, list assessment tests and resources, and provide other tools and aids. Since many people associate PTSD solely with trauma experienced during military service, the appendices put PTSD in perspective.

The meditations do not shy away from describing heart-wrenching situations and expressing raw emotions, yet the tone is compassionate, nurturing, and understanding.