

Robert F. Molsberry, *Blindsided by Grace* (Augsburg Fortress, 2004), 175 pages, \$15.

A glance at the quality of references in the bibliography suggested that *Blindsided by Grace* was going to be a book of substance worth reading. I was not disappointed. Robert Molsberry writes of his life after being blindsided by a truck while riding a bicycle. He writes in a personal manner without any call for pity or admiration. In his words, "This book is an exploration of my attempt to regenerate the pieces of my life, to find meaning in the new me who emerges, and discover insights along the way. I offer it hoping that it will be useful to others facing catastrophic change. If it's valuable at all the value should transfer to anyone who is adjusting to new imposed limitations, including those who grieve losses in their lives and those who are aging...."

The reader will come to appreciate doing for oneself what can be done, recognizing and gratefully accepting the value and necessity of community. We also glimpse the relationship of disability to cultures within which we live, and cultural perceptions of disability. Further, we

are acquainted with the impact of a person's disability on others in the family, community, and place of employment. Molsberry is pastor of a congregation in Iowa. He is also husband and father, gourmet coffee drinker, and triathlon athlete. He is a normal human being who happens to have a disability.

The author deals with a very wide range of disability considerations—individual, social, and theological, such as healing, diversity (disability being but one of a variety of ways of being human), accepting and getting on with life and laying aside the question of “Why?” He helps us understand the disability community as a minority population rather than as ill persons needing to be cured—one can hope to recover from an illness, while in many instances disability, as the author's auto sticker says, is “permanent, non-expiring.” He also gives a brief glimpse of disability and the Bible, noting examples of restoration to community, of God's radically inclusive banquet, and of “grace sufficient.”

The book is realistic, matter-of-fact, informative, insightful and challenging. It would indeed be helpful for those facing loss and change and for understanding those in such situations. It is worth reading for help with taking a good look at life and living, period. *Blindsided by Grace* is an easy read, yet it is filled with facts and details Molsberry weaves into his story of coming to terms with physical disability. Other types of disability are mentioned and similar principles apply; however, the categories of mental illness or impairment might not so easily fit what the author advises for individuals living with disability in general. He emphasizes realistically facing up to “the new me,” while rejecting unattainable cultural illusions (like those reflected in advertising) of what is normal or ideal. It is a realism without resignation as reflected in lines from the last chapter, “I'm not waiting for doctors to come up with a cure... I'm also not content to sit at home waiting for the world to accommodate me. I have some fantastic gifts to offer still, and the world had better figure out ways to include me—even on wheels—or it will be that much poorer for its oversight.”

JAMES A. SWANSON