

**Against Physician Assisted Suicide
A Palliative Care Perspective**

David Jeffrey

- Radcliffe Publishing Ltd 2008
- £14.99 Pb 120pp ■ ISBN 978 1 84619 186 2

This book presents the case against physician assisted suicide (PAS) from the point of view of an experienced palliative care physician. Dr Jeffrey writes clearly, making the book accessible to both healthcare professionals and members of the public. Although the structure of some chapters is a little weak, all the major arguments are presented. Ethical and philosophical concepts are acknowledged and explained, but the book emphasises practical and patient-centred viewpoints.

The dangers of legalising PAS are described and the case made that better palliative care is the way to address the needs of the dying. Chapters on experience in

Oregon and the Netherlands, and on PAS in clinical practice, are particularly compelling. A great strength of the book is that most arguments are supported by substantial reference to published research and literature, making it a valuable resource for those wishing to study in more detail.

The debate around the legalisation of PAS will not go away. All healthcare professionals who deal with dying patients owe it to themselves and their patients to understand the arguments against PAS and the evidence that substantiates them. This book would be a good place to start.

Kathy Myers is a palliative care consultant in Hertfordshire



**Care of the cancer patient
A quick reference guide**

Wesley Finegan and Angela McGurk

- Radcliffe Publishing 2007
- £19.95 Pb 328pp ■ ISBN 1 84619 128 9

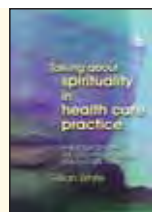
This book is a palliative care textbook by Finegan, a recently deceased CMF member and palliative care physician, and McGurk, a nurse. It covers a wide range of issues pertinent to those looking after patients with cancer. There is a large section on communication skills, an A-Z overview of how to manage common symptoms, and a section on ethical and spiritual issues. It concludes with a series of quick practical guides on subjects as diverse as dictating letters, appraising a research paper, and how to relax!

Written with warmth and humanity, this is a helpful book. It is laid out clearly with a consistent structure that will

help systematic assessment and management. The advice given is simple and straightforward, although perhaps a little brief at times. Clear examples and a personal touch come from the extensive use of anecdotes in certain sections. These are very helpful but make the text cumbersome at times, hindering quick reference.

This is a good generalist cancer palliative care text. However, it is not a specialist palliative care text, so readers who desire greater detail may decide to read it in conjunction with one of the resource texts listed at the beginning of the book.

Kerry Waterfield is a palliative care doctor in Gateshead



Talking about Spirituality in Health Care Practice

Gillian White

- Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2006
- £18.99 Pb 175pp ■ ISBN 978 1 84310 305 9

The author is a dietician with long experience of teamwork in hospital and palliative care. Although mentioning her Anglican background, she writes for a secular readership a secular book pleading strongly for integration of spiritual care in all aspects of healthcare. She differentiates this dimension of reality from faith or religious belief, seeking to alert carers to this general characteristic and need of all people.

Founded on academic research, the book describes her experience of leading numerous small professional teams through their own tentative spiritual explorations, in order to enrich their personal understanding, and thus benefit

their clients. She is passionate about the potential benefit for all concerned, detailing the process of these explorations and quoting enthusiastic feedback from colleagues. Repetition might have been replaced by reviewing more current evidence, acknowledging that spiritual care is inherent in primary care and lately in many medical schools, and discussing the restrictions of operating within a 'tick box' NHS.

The book does not seek to tackle any specific Christian concerns, but encourages those daring to start exploring spirituality with their own secular teams.

John Caroe is a semi-retired GP, and a co-founder of PRIME



Spirituality, Ethics and Care

Simon Robinson

- Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2007
- £16.99 Pb 208pp ■ ISBN 978 1 84310 498 8

How does spirituality relate to ethics? Robinson's book explores this relationship using case studies. He carefully considers how spirituality and ethics can be integrated in the practice of health and social care. There are many illuminating passages, eg on the meaning of *agape* love and its inclusive commitment to others. The case study on the family whose elderly father has Alzheimer's disease demonstrates clearly how each family member is attempting to make sense of the situation by trying to apply ethics 'previously worked out', and being tested by that. The author notes that addressing patients' spiritual needs is now a recognised part of

the therapeutic response, but that there are no guidelines on achieving this. He endeavours to provide a practical framework so those in the caring professions can engage with the spirituality of their patient. He also challenges the reader's spirituality and how it affects ethical decision-making.

This book requires careful reading in order to engage with the author's approach. It is a book to return to, perhaps guided by the helpful index. I found this a refreshing exploration of a difficult subject and would recommend it to healthcare professionals who make ethical decisions with their patients and clients.

Clare Cooper is Associate Director of PRIME



The Growth of Love Understanding five essential elements of child development

Keith J White

- The Bible Reading Fellowship 2008
- £8.99 Pb 240pp ■ ISBN 978 1 84101 461 6

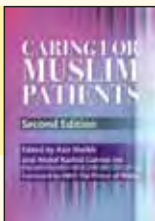
At a time when solutions to manage troubled children and teenagers vacillate between liberal and punitive extremes, this book challenges contemporary views of childcare to provide a secure framework for enabling children to develop their full potential as people made in God's image.

Dr White draws on a lifetime's experience of working alongside children and young people who have known separation and loss. He applies expertise in theology and psychosocial theory, underpinned by biblical understanding and living faith, to develop five essential elements of development.

These are: security in the

knowledge they are loved; clear boundaries for behaviour that leave them free to explore; assurance of their worth and significance; inclusion in nurturing communities that enable them to flourish; and an environment with opportunities for creative play, worship and recreation. The children's stories make this enjoyable as well as informative. Despite being erudite and far-reaching, this book is very readable. All involved in parenting, teaching or pastoral care of children within and outside the Christian community will gain new insights from it.

Kirsty Saunders is a community paediatrician in Hertfordshire



Caring for Muslim Patients (2nd edition)

Aziz Sheikh and Abdul Rahid Gatrad (Eds)

- Radcliffe Publishing 2007
- £24.95 Pb 156pp ■ ISBN 1 85775 812 9

The book explores 'what it means to belong to a sacred tradition, explore the intricate connection between faith and health for Muslims and consider some of the implications of this relationship for those striving to deliver culturally competent and sensitive health care'. The life of the Prophet Muhammad and the devotion he inspires, Islamic thought on healthcare and bioethics, and attitudes to death and family life are described. There is a useful chapter on managing the fasting patient.

The book is academic and draws on classic Islamic sources. This does not help us understand the many British Muslims from non-Arab cultures who

combine Islam with pre-Islamic occult beliefs. Vignettes to introduce the reader to 'real' Muslims are generally too short to cover in depth issues raised.

There are several omissions. The chapter on family life does not mention polygamy or arranged marriages. Discussion of the different male and female worlds in Muslim society is limited. Tips on negotiating a consultation with a woman in a *hijab* would have been helpful.

Cross-cultural work is always demanding and difficult. Unfortunately, the book gives no hint of the rewards, joy and fun of working in a Muslim community.

Robin Fisher is a GP in Derbyshire



Living Through Bereavement With the help of Christian thought and prayer

David Owen

- SPCK 2007
- £9.99 Pb 160pp ■ ISBN 978 0 28105 934 8

Owen is a retired minister whose wife died after they had been together for 45 years. He has shared the journey of bereavement with others, and travelled the road himself. The first two chapters brilliantly take us through the biblical view of death and the afterlife, before moving on to the concept of the soul. Later chapters explore early death, and death in disaster and war. Owen faces the issues of fear and faith, solace in grief, and reminds us that heaven awaits.

Each chapter has a short and thoughtful introduction followed

by reflections and prayers from various sources. Owen rightly says that bereaved people are helped by reflecting on what others have written. However, the content and style left me unsure about whom the book is aimed at and when it would best be read. Perhaps some will want to dip in to the places they feel drawn to when the time feels right. I warmed to the author. Perhaps it is a compliment to him that I wanted his thoughts, reflections and prayers.

Jean Maxwell is a retired consultant in palliative medicine and co-ordinator of hospice23



Teaching Medicine - A Christian Approach

Huw Morgan

- PRIME 2008
- £5.00 A4 Pb 76pp ■ ISBN 978 0 95595 270 8

What can Christians contribute that is different from any other conscientious teacher? Morgan proposes that scientific medicine has dehumanised us because behaviour is seen as mere product of biochemical reactions. He reminds us that Christians believe human beings are made in God's image and have infinite value. We must, therefore, counteract secular humanism and restore human value to medical education and practice. This includes teaching the importance of spirituality.

Suggestions are given on how to raise Christian values, particularly by highlighting ethical issues in everyday practice. A patient-centred approach to consultation and a learner-centred approach to education are recommended. Using the Hippocratic Oath to

stimulate discussion and allow overt expression of Christian values is interesting, as is the use of Jesus' methods as a teaching template. Teaching should include narrative.

These suggestions are thought-provoking. However, patient-centredness, learner-centredness and narrative are established concepts in medical education. Even spirituality is recognised as an important part of clinical care. This book encourages and challenges me to bring my Christian faith into my teaching, but leaves me dissatisfied because it does not fully explore the challenges of applying Christian insights to a largely secular environment.

Sam Leinster is Dean of the Medical School at the University of East Anglia and President of CMF