

BOOK REVIEWS

The editors would like to express their thanks to the staff of Strathcarron Hospice, Denny for their considerable contribution to this issue's Book Review section.

The Sacred Art of Listening
Forty reflections for cultivating a spiritual practice

Lindahl K

ISBN 1-901557-65-0

Wild Goose Publications

I was eager to pick up this attractive book and to begin the daily discipline of reading and reflection on individual parts of the listening process. I found the book helpful in gaining new insights into listening and understanding the 'between the lines' communication that we are often so aware of but unsure of how to respond to.

Each reflection built upon the previous one but sometimes the daily portion was too short for me and I often wanted to carry on and read the next day's as well. The illustrations are designed to help the reader focus onto his or her own heart while thinking about each reading. I found them beautiful on their own but strangely distracting to focus on, as they were so intricate and busy, and did not help me personally to be still and reflect.

This book is identified as being in the category of 'Spirituality and Self help'. This is spirituality in the general sense and not specifically Christian. This was difficult for me in certain parts of the book where being open to the spirit was being encouraged as a way of listening to people; this being the universal spirit, not the Holy Spirit. Chapter 9 on 'Common values/Listening for Connectedness' seems to have an underlying assumption that because of our common humanity we can assume a common core of spirituality and unity. Identification of, and respect for our differences is an equally important part of listening.

This is a book that helps us to slowly reflect on our own skills and understanding of the place and value of listening. It also challenges some of the personal values that we somehow find ourselves holding and not quite knowing how we got them in the first place. It would be of help to anyone who was at-

tempting to grow in knowledge of themselves or others.

Dora Bennett, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Palliative Care (community), West Lothian H/C NHS Trust.

Primary Palliative Care – dying, death and bereavement in the community

Rodger Charlton (ed)

ISBN 1- 85775573 -1

Radcliffe Medical Press

This book comprehensively illustrates the complex issues involved in delivering palliative care to patients with malignant and non-malignant illnesses in the community by the Primary Health Care Team (PHCT). The authors explore the primary-specialist interface and clarify the roles of primary care and specialist practitioners. Chapters 1-16 are stand-alone, clearly written and well referenced. The reader is directed to useful further reading and web-sites.

Excellent chapters are offered on core topics in palliative care including pain and symptom control, ethics at the end of life and spiritual care. The challenges of providing out of hours palliative care and managing emergencies are explored well.

Carer strain is highlighted with useful information that the professional can use to facilitate effective coping.

The chapter on bereavement outlines grief responses and refers briefly to grief theory. Assessment and support of the bereaved person is succinct, however it fails to provide the professional with in-depth guidelines on how to conduct the bereavement assessment.

The book acknowledges the importance of continuing professional development and offers practical advice on developing significant event audit and professional development plans in order to improve and change practice. The importance of effective

teamwork is acknowledged. I would like to have seen discussion on the difficulties experienced at the primary care – specialist care interface and ways of addressing these.

The final chapter provides the reader with insight into one lady's lived experience of having cancer and the care she received. Her account is moving and emphasises aspects of care which could be improved.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in palliative care. It will be of particular interest to healthcare professionals and allied healthcare professionals practising in primary care, hospices, community hospitals and nursing homes.

Elaine McManus, Lecturer in Palliative Care at Strathcarron Hospice, Denny

**Speaking of Healing
Gower C.**

ISBN 0-281-05539-4

SPCK

This book reflects on the challenge to preachers who seek to make links between the Gospel narratives of healing and contemporary experiences of illness. It addresses the miraculous as it is manifested in the encounters between Jesus and sick people, and offers guidance as to how this material may be addressed from the pulpit today.

Christopher Gower is well qualified to address this theme; he is rector of Marylebone Parish Church, which for years has sought to incarnate the partnership between religion and medicine. His professional interest in preaching has found its outworking in his completing pioneering MTh in preaching (the basis, we are told, of the current book).

Gower reviews themes relating to healing and wholeness, addressing them from his own pastoral experience. His references are almost entirely from very recent literature – although “demythologising” is mentioned, Rudolph Bultmann is not.

He then reviews four apparently disparate methodologies whereby preachers might address the Gospel material, which he entitles as follows: literal, liberal, metaphorical/spiritual, social/community. He gives examples of mindsets whereby the miracles might

be expounded with reference to the four, apparently mutually exclusive, methodologies. In an exciting, engaging and attractive conclusion, he suggests that a lot of the apparent antipathy between the four methodologies might actually be false, and that a truly holistic sense concern should take each of the four equally seriously. Probably belatedly, we are introduced to the eschatological dimension, where we are rightly told that “we do not start to fully live until we have also faced up to death”(p.107). Might this perspective have been better woven into one of the four categories to which we have been earlier introduced (Possibly metaphorical/spiritual)? Might it not be helpful to regard the miracles of Jesus as a foreshadowing of God's kingdom in its ultimate fullness – in the hereafter?

I warm to this book which contends that clergy should be more ideologically flexible in the way we think and preach. The Church's ministry to sick and disabled people has been diminished by an over-segmented approach to healing. The Gospel accounts surely demand that we regain the holistic approach which is the hallmark of the ministry of Jesus. How better to achieve this than to take seriously the perspectives of different theological approaches – and indeed of the caring disciplines – in order that we may faithfully represent God's purpose for the making of his whole creation, as Gower rightly pleads.

Stuart Coates, Chaplain, Strathcarron Hospice, Denny.

Problem Drinking: A Person-Centred Dialogue.

Richard Bryant-Jefferies

ISBN 1-85775-929-X

Radcliffe Medical Press

I liked this book and the way it addresses three different themes. The person centred approach, problematic alcohol use and supervision. Bryant-Jefferies approaches the subject in an unusual way with the case study of a fictitious client. He uses dialogue to explore in some detail 12 counselling and 4 supervision sessions. As the book is read the process of the counselling unfolds with the reader readily becoming involved in the story, as with a novel, wondering what may have developed by the next week's session. The dialogue is supported with discussion and the theory relating to the issues raised. For the novice counsellor particularly this

detailed exploration of the counselling process is enlightening. At the end of each chapter questions and discussion topics are posed that are of relevance to both the novice and the experienced practitioner.

Throughout the book Bryant-Jeffries skilfully demonstrates the breath and depth of the person centred approach while at the same time the issues of alcohol use are explored. The person centred approach is not usually associated with problematic alcohol use. This book clearly demonstrates the possibilities.

As the work with this client progresses the place of supervision is introduced giving valuable insights into the significance of personal factors, boundaries and support. I found it liberating the way supervision is integrated into the counselling process.

This book will be of value to a variety of people; person centred counsellors, those working with alcohol issues in a whole variety of settings and even the clients themselves. The book is easy to read and at the same time provides a wealth of information and the exploration of complex subjects.

Val Smith, Lecturer in Palliative Care/ Person Centred Counsellor Strathcarron Hospice, Denny.

Caring for the Dying at Home: Companions on the Journey

Thomas Keri

ISBN 1-85775-946-X

Radcliffe Medical Press

This book is based on the Gold Standards Framework developed by Keri Thomas who is a Macmillan GP Facilitator in Warwick, England. Dr Thomas also juggles working as a GP with five children and being a clergy wife! The framework consists of 'seven C's': 'communication, coordination of care, control of symptoms, continuity – out of hours, continued leaning, carer support and care in the dying phase'. The framework arose out of Dr Thomas' desire to improve community palliative care by working with a multi-disciplinary group of both generalists and specialists. The tenet of the framework encourages better communication amongst team members in order to improve the care of patients and their families.

The book is a resource book which is best used as a dip in text rather than reading from start to finish. It is aimed at, and is best used, by practitioners working in the community. Furthermore, it is an essential text for those wishing to implement the Gold

Standards Framework into their practice. However, other professionals, including chaplains, may find the book useful as a resource text regarding community palliative care.

The book is divided into three parts. Parts one and two are a resource for anyone with a general interest in, and a desire to, improve palliative care in the community, particularly those working in primary health care teams. The first chapter emphasises the importance of improving community palliative care and offers a framework for doing so. The second chapter proposes a sociological perspective, by exploring a modern way of dying, and putting community palliative care in context. The third chapter investigates living with dying at home by exploring the current state of primary palliative care. The next two chapters explore the concepts, and issues of, needs based and evidenced based care, Chapter 6, on the other hand, explores the political and contextual changes affecting community palliative care. The next two chapters are clinically focused and are written by a consultant in palliative care. They explore the key features of palliative care for patients with common cancers and common symptoms and problems in palliative care. There follows a short chapter on bereavement. Part two is creatively and usefully concluded with a few pages entitled 'sources of help and wisdom' with resources and 3 short poems to sum up from the viewpoint of the person who is dying.

Part three is a handbook for those involved in the Macmillan Gold Standards Framework programme.

I enjoyed reading this book and recommend it to readers of this journal. It contains some interesting and thoughtful nuggets of information. However, it is primarily a community resource and some will find issues such as bereavement and psychological, social and indeed spiritual issues dealt with too succinctly in the resource section. They are however, included in the gold standards framework in part three.

Dr Bridget Johnston, Lecturer in Palliative Care, Strathcarron Hospice

Using Research in Primary Care: a workbook for health professionals

Alan Gillies

ISBN 1-85775-936-2

Radcliffe Medical Press

This is primarily a workbook designed for health professionals. It covers 20 topics at the heart of the research agenda in the NHS. Each topic is assigned a chapter.

Each chapter contains an introduction, a small section of key information, practical activities and online resources available for the topic, and finally key points written as learning outcomes. Icons throughout the book guide you towards relevant online resources, including documents, useful links and downloadable templates. The book, therefore, requires the reader to do some work. Indeed, it is not possible to complete learning of the various topics without carrying out the various online and practical activities and background reading. Although, the workbook is not designed to be assessed, and does not contain answers as such, the reader will in my view still probably learn more about, and gain a greater benefit, of research, than simply by reading an 'ordinary' text book.

Its is an excellent source for those chaplains who wish to improve their knowledge of research as well as improving their IT and other study skills.

Dr Bridget Johnston, Lecturer in Palliative Care, Strathcarron Hospice

Consent in Clinical Practice.

Margaret Mayberry with John Mayberry

ISBN 1-85775-804-8

Radcliffe Medical Press, 2003

With 'Our Nations' increasing Americanisation in the ever growing blame and sue culture and the advent of tighter legislation, such as the Data Protection Act 1998, clinical practitioners should be aware of ways to minimise their own personal risk and that of their employers to litigation. The Mayberry's book aims to give clinical staff a "concise, practical guide" to one area where risk could be minimised, that of informed patient consent.

The main areas the book deals with are that of the ethical concepts underlying consent, who is competent to give consent, the need for information, and

the government and relevant professional organisations viewpoints.

The book quotes from a vast quantity of legal cases and research, with the legislative perspective of the book being solely from English and Welsh law. There is very little real and practical advice given to the practitioner who may be reading this book in an effort to further develop their knowledge and understanding of this complex area, and who wishes to put this into practice.

For me the promises of the back cover are not fulfilled in the content.

Alison Cowie, Regional Information Analyst, Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Growing Up With God

Cooks N

ISBN 1-901557-74-X

Wild Goose Publications

This little book is a gem for the chaplain who spends time with children or does occasional pulpit supply and needs a source for children's addresses.

The book is in three substantial parts. Part one explores the understanding of the story telling model, examines the themes of the Christian faith, moves on to listening to children, praying in response to stories and concludes with ways in which the material can be used. The focus is on helping children begin a *spiritual life* rather than a more restrictive focus on *faith*. It looks at the complexities of story telling with a wide ranging age group, the questions that arise from different age groups hearing the same story and offers sound advice e.g. let the younger children ask their questions first lest the older questions overwhelm them. One wonderful example is of the six year old child who asks "when did God die?" He'd heard that people go to heaven when they die and that God lives in heaven. Simple logic?

Part two is the story selection and each story comes with a detailed faith theme, life situation and the feelings to be explored. The story is read, there are some notes to guide the story teller to reflect and talk about the story, and a guide to praying after the story. Fergie the Frog comes to life when you realise he likes fly loaf and you produce a fruit slice from ASDA (a fly cemetery) and invite the children

to taste Fergie's favourite cake. The first story tackles bullying, fear, courage, and having a friend in Jesus.

Part three includes a detailed and very useful selection of indexes to the stories including faith themes, life themes, feelings, and biblical references. The indexes are followed by a comprehensive resources index pointing to other books. Not only do you get the book list, you get an introductory paragraph to explain its content and use.

The story section alone makes this book a worthwhile buy, however the introduction gives a great insight into what is a specialised area that comes naturally to some but which the rest of us would do well to learn.

*David Mitchell, chaplain, Marie Curie Centre,
Hunters Hill, Glasgow*