The second part of the book examines critically the topics of embryo experimentation, surrogacy, contraception, informed consent, resource allocation, etc and the concluding chapter lists a number of 'Morals' which may be used as guidance in the future. Lee repeats the point that we cannot avoid analysing factual assumptions and moral values in order to see wherein lie the differences in approach on moral issues, and he suggests that democratic decision-making should assist with these processes to a greater extent than is currently done.

The book is short, refreshingly so. The arguments are clearly and thoughtfully presented, refreshingly so. It give the student and the general reader a far better starting point than many others of the genre. Congratulations to the author.

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Suffering Presence: Theological Reflections on Medicine, the Mentally Handicapped, and the Church

Stanley Hauerwas, 221 pages, Notre Dame, Indiana, £17.95 hardback, Notre Dame Press, 1986

This book is really a collection of essays written by Stanley Hauerwas between the years 1978 and 1985. Hauerwas, in making this particular selection, seeks to present a point of view he believes is largely absent from medicine and from medical ethics. He believes that medical

ethics, about which he is suspicious, has grown more from the moral confusion in society and medicine than from technological developments in the practice of medicine. To counter such confusion, he intends to recall theology into medical ethics. Theological presuppositions can illuminate the care we offer to one another through medicine (page 6). Moral reflection requires significant examples in order that it may assist the art of medicine.

Hauerwas then proceeds to reflect on the mentally handicapped or retarded in order to develop this point of view. The mentally handicapped are the test of any society's commitment to deal justly and the sign of its understanding of suffering. Hauerwas believes that the intention to prevent all suffering is misguided. His thesis is that human beings are mutually dependent, that need arises from such dependence, and that suffering is a logical facet of such need. Suffering should therefore not be regarded as an unwanted accident in life but as an essential part of it. To this end, he speaks of our 'moral project' in life, and of our incorporation of suffering into that moral project. Our identity as persons depends upon our interpretation and incorporation of suffering. He argues that differentiation between needful and needless suffering is therefore important, but this also has its problems.

Hauerwas challenges the assumption that the mentally handicapped suffer as we do. 'The retarded do not feel or understand their retardation as we do, or imagine we would, but rather as they do' (page 174). Lacking in imagination, we attribute suffering to them, and attempting to avoid the limits of our own sympathy, we avoid their presence. The mentally handicapped thus make us unsure of our own identity. Hauerwas argues that we need to learn to be with the retarded. Indeed, we can learn that they can be a means of grace for us. 'Quite simply, the challenge of learning to know, to be with, and care

for the retarded is nothing less than learning to know, be with, and love God' (page 178).

Hauerwas is probably right to question the relevance of medical ethics and its grounding in theology. Whether he has rectified this is another question. The importance of suffering as a theological affirmation can hardly be overstated, particularly when medicine often steps back from dealing with the acceptance of suffering. But Hauerwas does not differentiate clearly enough between the suffering which is needful and that which is needless. From this point of view, the book remains suggestive rather than definitive.

The failure to pursue this thesis rigorously enough means that in the end we are simply left with the affirmation that we must learn to be with those who suffer. We could argue quite effectively that this is so obvious that it does not require such tortured argument.

It is good to see someone dealing with the mentally handicapped from a theological point of view. Clearly, much more work requires to be done in this area. Yet one is struck by the fact that in this collection of essays the mentally handicapped are regarded as the 'test' of our commitment or the 'sign' of our failure, or as the 'means' of our grace. One might wish that they would be seen as *people*, although this is surely what Hauerwas really wants to say. One is referred always to the society, or community, or world, and these displace the central problem. Had Hauerwas dealt more squarely with mental handicap, he might have done the kind of careful analysis which leads to a better appreciation of suffering. As it is, the 'cases' presented are more anecdotal than clinical. Thus he does not succeed in presenting the 'significant examples' which can help moral reflection.

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