

of anguish of 'why me' and the anger at the illness. These negative emotions of patient and professional can be difficult to accept. Twycross argues that for a Christian the anger and frustration can be vented on God. This may allow an emotional catharsis as one can see that God is able to absorb the anger.

In the care of patients it is essential that life can be seen to have a meaning, even in death. By providing the security of care and control of symptoms, patients may be helped to consider the fundamental questions about life, God and the hereafter. Although some may not fully agree with Twycross's Christian standpoint, most will be encouraged by his aim to help society have a healthier view of death – accepting the existence of death, not neglecting the dying, and accepting our humanity. For the Christian he extends this to meditation on Jesus, allowing a new transforming perspective on both life and death.

Finally, after showing how caring for the whole patient in a hospice can enrich and help the dying, Twycross considers euthanasia. He sees this 'legal killing' as incompatible with Christian belief and argues strongly that a law allowing euthanasia would not solve problems. It would decrease the incentive for improvement in the care of patients.

The presentation of only two options – agony or killing – by those supporting euthanasia merely increases the negative attitude to cancer and death. Positive changes are necessary through the education of doctors and the carers, to allow them to realise what can be done to alleviate distress.

This booklet presents clearly some of the emotional and professional difficulties in caring for dying patients. It will be of value to all involved in their care.

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Cancer Care: Proceedings of a Study Day for Hospital Chaplains

Editor, W A F McAdam, Chairman,
Communications in Cancer Care
Group, Yorkshire Regional Cancer
Organisation, 51 pages, £2.50, 1983

This slim volume is the report of a

conference organised for hospital chaplains by experts in the treatment and care of patients suffering from the various forms of malignant disease. As such, it is a useful introduction to the subject for those with no medical background. There is a useful paper by Dr M R Baker setting out the occurrence, causation and prevention of cancer and Professor Joslin, Leeds, explains the main methods of treatment describing the advantages and side-effects of radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

After this essential groundwork there are papers on subjects which are perhaps closer to the role of the chaplain. Dr I R Card, a psychiatrist with special interests in psychological aspects of cancer care examines the possible reactions of patients on learning their diagnosis, and the human needs of patients and staff. While welcoming the more open communication which now exists between medical staff and patients, and recognising the consequent anxieties provoked in many patients, she notes that '... patients with cancer are seldom referred to a psychiatrist'. The reviewer concurs in this observation. This is a helpful chapter because the author clearly recognises that the patient is part of a network of relationships, involving family, friends and staff, each with their own anxieties and that the patient must be supported within this wider context.

A paper by J J Allen, a clinical psychologist, asks 'How can the chaplain help?' and rightly sees the pastoral task as helping cancer patients make sense of the strange new experience of suffering from a life-threatening illness.

'The chaplain, by using his specialist knowledge of theology, philosophy and the inner life can facilitate talk about the subject at the appropriate level for the patient.'

This is all very true and Mr Allen says many things which will be helpful to chaplains when he explores blocks to communication both within patients and within chaplains themselves. This reviewer however, is left with some fundamental questions (questions which are in a sense provoked by the excellence of all the papers, particularly Mr Allen's). With regard to this particular conference, why was there no contribution from a chaplain skilled in the pastoral care of cancer patients? All the papers are undoubtedly helpful to chaplains but can the chaplain's role be

totally encompassed by presentations from representatives of other professions? This is not a plea for an exposition of the place of the pastoral/sacramental ministry in isolation from the clinical data, but rather for an approach to ministry which is both theologically rooted and which takes seriously psychological (and medical and social) reality.

A hospice perspective is provided by Miss O'Donnell, Matron, Sue Ryder Home, Leeds and the papers and proceedings are helpfully summarised by Sir Ronald Turnbridge, chairman of the conference.

Of particular value are the annotated bibliographies at the end of each paper and the comprehensive reading list in death, dying and bereavement at the end of the booklet.

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Everybody's Ethics: What Future for Handicapped Babies?

Ann Shearer, 35 pages, London, £2.20 plus 30p, p&p, The Campaign for Mentally Handicapped People, 1984

This booklet addresses the difficult and complex problems of deciding care for infants born with multiple disabilities. While these problems are not new they have been thrown into sharp focus in recent years by our improving technical ability to keep an infant alive after birth and by changes in the law which permit the abortion of an abnormal (or even a normal) fetus before birth. Traditionally doctors, or doctors and parents together, have made these decisions and most people have accepted them on trust as being in the best interests of the infant and family. The recent activities of pro-life organisations and some well publicised court cases have eroded much of this trust and there is increasing pressure for the introduction of some form of legislation to 'protect' infants from their parents and doctors making decisions that accept death as a preferable alternative to treatment. In the United States this pressure has resulted in the recent Baby Doe legislation which even in its modified form will create immense difficulties for doctors and families and in some circumstances will actually increase the suffering of the infants themselves.

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