

Book Reviews

Life Choices: A Hastings Center Introduction to Bioethics, 2nd Edition

Joseph H. Howell and William F. Sale, eds.
Georgetown University Press, Baltimore, 2000,
616 pp., \$35 (paperback)

THIS SECOND EDITION OF THE POPULAR collection from The Hastings Center in Garrison, NY, represents what the editors believe are some of the best articles published in the *Hastings Center Report* over the past 28 years.

Although most of the articles collected here are from just the past 15 years, some are older and are now considered classics. The text seeks to address the most important bioethical issues confronting contemporary society. New articles have been added to this edition,

but the text's basic focus remains the same. Its purposes are, first, to provide a challenging text for classrooms and study groups, and, second, to serve as witness to the achievements of the Hastings Center in its study of bioethics.

The book opens with a general introduction that asks, among other things, whether ethics can provide answers to complex bioethical topics. Following the introduction are eight sections, each of which addresses a pressing topic in health care: goals and allocation in medicine, rights and responsibilities in biomedicine, reproductive freedom and responsibility, termination of treatment, new reproductive technologies, organ and tissue transplantation, genetic engineering and the human future, and human cloning. Each section contains several articles by authors noted in that particular field. Following each article is a series of questions for students and

study-group participants to discuss.

The book's contents are very good. I would have liked to see a few other relevant articles included in this volume, but the articles that come to mind were not, unfortunately, originally published in the *Hastings Center Report*. In any case, nearly all the articles here are of very high quality, and they represent some of the most important positions taken on the topics under consideration. The book also includes a significant report by the Hastings Center staff, entitled "The Goals of Medicine: Setting New Priorities." For the most part, the essays reprinted in this volume are quite readable, as even a beginner in the field of bioethics will find.

I give high marks to this introductory text for both its structure and its contents. Although a growing number of bioethics anthologies are now appearing in the market, this book should, I think, be given serious consideration by professors and

BOOK BRIEFS

Medical Care of the Soul: A Practical and Healing Guide to End-of-Life Issues for Families, Patients and Healthcare Providers

Bruce G. Bartlow, Johnson Books, CO,
304 pp., \$32.50 (hardback), \$18.00
(paperback)

This book, filled with personal experiences and practical advice, offers a guide to making end-of-life decisions and preparing for a good death. The author discusses how, in our hope for a cure, we go through the stages of denial, anger, and bargaining, followed by depression and hopelessness. It is at the point of hopelessness that the work of the soul begins and we can hear the call of our souls through illness and death. Patients and caregivers are led to envision their own deaths, not with fear, but as the "last, loudest call to discover what we came here to

do." This book would be useful to health care providers, patients, and family members who must address end-of-life concerns.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Healthcare Ministry: Refounding the Mission in Tumultuous Times, Gerald A. Arbuckle, Liturgical Press, Collegetown, MN, 2000

New Century Healthcare: Strategies for Providers, Purchasers, and Plans, Russell C. Coile Jr., Health Administration Press, Chicago, 2000

Managing Quality of Care in a Cost-Focused Environment, Norbert Goldfield and David B. Nash, eds., Hillsboro Printing Company, Tampa, FL, 1999

American Health Care: Government, Market Processes, and the Public Interest, Robert D. Feldman, ed., Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ, 2000

Lessons from Mergers: Voices of Experience, Nancy Linenkugel, Health Administration Press, Chicago, 2000

Life & Death Responsibilities in Jewish Biomedical Ethics, Aaron L. Macker, ed., JTS Press, New York, 2000

A Primer for Health Care Ethics: Essays for a Pluralistic Society, Second Edition, Kevin O'Rourke, ed., Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 2000

Managing Health Services Organizations and Systems, Beaufort B. Longest, Jr., Jonathon S. Rakich, and Kurt Darr, Health Professions Press, Baltimore, 2000

The contemplative way brings gifts of immediate awareness of the present moment.

study-group leaders. Because the book is long, it might seem impractical for use by study groups; but its high quality may well, in the end, make using it worth the effort.

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Spirituality & Health Care: Reaching toward a Holistic Future

John Shea

*The Park Ridge Center, Chicago, 2000, 140
pp., \$12.95 (paperback)*

IN THIS FASCINATING EXPLORATION OF the contemporary conversation between health care and spirituality, Jack Shea blends insightful research and poetic intuition with his own singularly masterful style as storyteller. On one hand, he accurately summarizes the practical concerns that health care professionals today bring to this dialogue; on the other hand, he clearly respects the diverse intellectual approaches taken over the centuries in the professional study of the multifaceted mystery of spirituality.

I recommend this book to all who work in health care. It is single best overview I have read to date about where and how spirituality fits into our workplace culture, our patient/resident care, and our community partnerships. Any book by Jack is stimulating and inspirational. In this one, as he addresses the convergence of some very complex issues in health care delivery today, he is also comprehensive and incisive. In the words of my colleague, Sr. Diane Traffas, OP, "he is certainly up to date and hits the nail on the head about an exploding spirituality culture."

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tle gifts of immediate awareness of the present moment; these gifts awaken in us a sense of our oneness. These moments are present in our work as well: the silence spontaneously emerging from a dialogue-filled meeting can bring us back to the present moment; a pause before entering an examination room to see the 35th patient of the day can transform the visit from a rushed and fatigued experience into an uplifting and renewing one.

How can we create a process for inviting people to become more contemplative in their approach to work and life, especially when their work life may be full of challenge, conflict, and stress? The first step is recognizing how defended we are against living in the present. Because the state of being defenseless is perceived with fear and resistance, leaders must be willing to acknowledge and support the development of contemplative practices and a contemplative philosophy for their organizations. When leadership supports and sponsors these practices, workers begin to drop their defenses and fully live in the present.

A contemplative act can be any act habitually engaged in for the purpose of becoming more present to life. A contemplative act awakens and sustains the appreciation of the preciousness and holiness of each moment lived. Thus, it can be meditation, prayer, or reading scripture. It could also be walking or jogging, writing in a journal, painting, knitting, or playing a musical instrument. Thomas Merton told a story about greeting a Zen Buddhist monk returning to the monastery after a year apart. When Merton asked the man what he'd been doing for the past year, the monk said, "I've been learning how to open and close doors."³

For a busy manager, a contemplative

practice may be waiting for the phone to ring three times before answering, praying or meditating before beginning the morning, or even driving to work in silence—without the radio or a cellular phone as distraction.

A contemplative workplace creates a safe space for individuals to share the experience of connectedness, interrelatedness, and oneness. A leader or chairperson of a department can begin a meeting with a moment of silence, sponsor a monthly gathering for employees to share contemplative practices, and fully support mission integration programs based on group rituals and prayer.

How do we teach each other about the contemplative approach to life? We are surrounded by teaching material, and the contemplative approach invites us to start exactly where we are. A colleague in your surgical group is verbally abusive to receptionists. A vice president must struggle with downsizing her division. A pro-choice physician becomes hostile over the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*. Each of these situations offers an important lesson for you to learn, which may appear in stillness when you stop and reflect—without being defensive. The opportunities for growing into a contemplative approach to work are as numerous as the moments in each day. The ordinariness of each moment contains the key to appreciating the divine. □

NOTES

1. James Finley, *The Contemplative Heart*, Sorin Books, Notre Dame, IN, 2000, p. 19.
2. Thomas Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion*, Harper & Row, New York City, 1941, p. 31.
3. Thomas Merton, cited in Jack Kornfield, *A Path With Heart*, Bantam-Doubleday, 1993.

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