

It will be evident that the substance of Riches' argument is quite subtle. His writing style is appropriately serious, but lucid too. The main focus throughout is direct study of the gospels themselves. The progression from chapter to chapter is logical and well explained, and there are plenty of indications of how each part of the book contributes to the whole. A well-motivated reader who has enjoyed teaching of this quality at university could make steady and rewarding headway.

A book of this kind can sharpen our senses, so that when we read the gospels we are more likely to evaluate for ourselves the angles and emphases discussed here. We may think too about our own identity as Christians today, about the stories we live by, the ways that we do theology, and the blend of grace and obedience that characterises true Christian vocation.

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Derek Murray, *Faith in Hospices: Spiritual Care and the End of Life*, London: SPCK, 2002, pp148, , £10.99, ISBN 0-281-05228-x

This book combines the reflections of the author gleaned from over 23 years experience as Chaplain to St. Columba's Hospice in Edinburgh and forms a multi-faceted introduction to the spiritual care of the dying and bereaved.

Whilst the work is the considered reflection of an experienced palliative care professional it also includes the personal reflections of the author gained at times when he and his loved ones have been 'users' of the service rather than providers of it. The opening chapter details powerfully his experience of his wife's terminal illness and care within the hospice. His vivid account leaves one in no doubt that this is someone who understands hospice from 'both sides of the sheets'.

Moving beyond the personal the author also provides in this chapter a map of the development of the hospice movement from its earliest

Christian origins to the present day. In Chapter 2 he provides a parallel mapping of society's changing perceptions of death and dying and the rightful place of religion in the complexity of modern palliative care delivery. The echoing dilemma of the founders of the hospice movement is given voice in the words of Dame Cicely Saunders: 'which is more important, medical competence or spiritual care?' (p.9)

Chapters 2-7 analogue aspects of hospice care. Whilst this is an interesting approach there are times when the analogies feel so stretched as to be less than convincing. This is heightened by the fact that some of the same issues are covered in a number of chapters (e.g. liturgy is covered in both chapters 3 and 6) and indeed within chapter 3 there are two separate sections on pastoral care. Furthermore some chapters have section headings which are not descriptive of the subject matter which follows (e.g. the section in chapter 3 *What is a hospice chaplain?* would be better described *Who appoints a hospice chaplain?*)

One assumes that the attempt not to approach the subject matter either theologically (i.e. doctrinally) or in terms of exploring pragmatic issues via an explicit theological analysis is a deliberate one, but whether this is an effective moulding of the material is less clear. The overwhelming impression is of the breadth of the author's experience but the depth of his experience is only implicitly hinted at. Whilst recognising that this is not intended to be a 'how to' book, developing practitioners would perhaps have found a different organisation of the material (with more evidence and less assertion) helpful.

Despite this, Murray has managed to convincingly affirm the special place of the chaplain in the care of the dying and his exploration of a 'bruised reed' theology (chapter 6), as a palliative theology is an interesting one. Furthermore chapter 5 details the development of an extensive and impressive hospice chaplaincy education service. The analysis of Hospice as Problem and the challenge that the forces of 'routinisation, 'secularisation' and 'medicalisation' present to delivering holistic care are important spurs to further thought and action. At several points Murray reflects on the impact of continuously working with death and dying on direct care staff and again had these

been explored in more depth the book would have been an invaluable resource for practitioners across all disciplines.

His final chapter compares societal changes that prioritise the individual over against community and the continued supported development of the hospice movement. Thus he argues that hospice has much to offer clergy as a resource for training and perhaps even of society in general in being a sign of hope, so becoming one way forward for churches in seeking to facilitate those spiritual longings which can only be met in Christ.

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Ian Bradley, *God Save the Queen: The Spiritual Dimension of Monarchy*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2002, pp.218, £14.95, ISBN: 0232524149

‘To affirm the value of monarchy and especially of its spiritual and sacramental dimension, as this book does, is to affirm the importance of tradition, ritual and history and also of the transcendent and the metaphysical imagination.’

That sentence, from Ian Bradley’s Introduction, is printed on the jacket of his book, and lets us know, before we open it, that the purpose and atmosphere of his writing reflect a serious, even crusading, cause. He believes that the monarchy is a very good thing indeed, and not only good, but Godly. He quotes Charles Robertson with enthusiastic agreement: ‘For if there is anything sacramental in kingship - and, after all, monarchs are anointed and consecrated to holy office, as well as crowned - earthly monarchy can be seen as an outward and visible sign of the royalty and majesty of God.’ ‘Monarchy, and the honour we pay to it, can be seen as instruments to keep alive the reverence and the homage we owe to God.’