

## Book Reviews by:

Ed Payne, M.D.

### **A Family Guide to Death and Dying**

by Jim Towns

published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1987, \$5.95.

### **New Age Medicine: A Christian Perspective on Holistic Health**

by Paul C. Reisser, Teri K. Reisser and John Weldon

published by Intervarsity Press 1987, \$6.95.

Rev. David W. Hall

### **THE CHILD ABUSE INDUSTRY**

by Mary Pride

published by Crossway Books, 1986, \$8.95.

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### **A Family Guide to Death and Dying**

by Jim Towns

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*Jim Towns, Ph.D., teaches classes and lectures on the subject of death and dying. He has written a useful book. It is not, however, a Christian book.*

Its usefulness comes from the wealth of facts concerning terminal illnesses, dying and death. (I prefer this order, rather than death and dying, because dying does come before death!) For example, he gives lists by state of the location of pain control clinics and hospices. He reviews patients' "Bill of Rights" that can explain to families, as well as patients, what they should and

should not expect from hospitals and health professionals. He reviews the status of living wills and has practical advice for those who care for severely and chronically ill patients. He covers various aspects of funerals. For this knowledge the book is highly recommended. Where some ethicists are long on rules and short on practical instructions, this book provides the latter.

Although the author may be a Christian, he never makes his position clear. In at least two places an accurate,

although brief presentation of the Gospel is present. The danger, however, is his unqualified recommendation of others' works that are inconsistent with Biblical positions. These include Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' stages of dying, Raymond Moody's "life after life," and Robert Schuller's attitudinal adjustments.

This book along with two others to correct its neither explicit, nor comprehensive teaching would make an almost complete text on these subjects. The other two are: Shepherding God's Flock by Jay E. Adams (Presbyterian and Reformed) and An Enemy Disguised by Robert Gram (Thomas Nelson Publishers).

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## New Age Medicine: A Christian Perspective on Holistic Health

by Paul C. Reisser, Teri K. Reisser and John Weldon

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This book is an expanded update of the authors' first book, The Holistic Healers. The authors review acupuncture, acupressure, therapeutic touch, meditation, homeopathy, psychic healing, biofeedback, Kirlian photography and many other "therapies." They connect these with the occult and Eastern religions (one form of expression of the occult). They provide a sound analysis and warning of the dangers of these approaches. Specific criteria are given by which to make judgments.

While their analysis is good, their development of the reality of wholistic health from a full biblical perspective is not adequate. In less than 6 pages they make a weak attempt to cover a Christian approach with a misguided

use of self-esteem, a superficial treatment of sin and the Fall, and a few words of biblical instruction. They see the wholistic approach of Granger Westberg as a model to be emulated, yet his principles are clearly not evangelical.

The book is worthwhile to serve a warning for the many Christians who have become involved in Eastern and unorthodox healing practices without proper discernment. There is a clear connection with the occult that must be avoided. Their alternative, however, needs a more nearly complete and biblical development than they have provided. It is the work of this journal and others to do so.

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Book Review By:

Rev. David W. Hall

## THE CHILD ABUSE INDUSTRY

by Mary Pride

published by Crossway Books, 1986, \$8.95.

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Books which began with sensationalism would normally turn off the readership of this journal. So I began to read this latest offering by Mary Pride with some

skepticism. She seems to shout most of her points, rather than develop them according to scholarly, scientific canons. Yet, perhaps, in this case, her voice

needs to be heard, shouting from the rooftops.

The main portion of this book, which seeks to deflate the child-advocacy hysteria, is contained in parts I, II and III, each of which is subtitled, "Outrageous Facts I, II and III." In each of these, Pride attempts to debunk the outrageous exaggerations of those who peddle child abuse statistics. She does what a good course of college-level statistics would do to assist the reader in not falling for the inflated claims of those who would use the few child abuse instances to legitimate wholesale familial changes. The feared end-result of believing such hyperbolic stars would be an attack on the traditional family by government intervention into many areas of home control. She warns that mere non-conformity to secular lifestyles could possibly be defined as child abuse. Christians would be in trouble by most definitions.

Although Pride's book is largely anecdotal (she subscribes to a newspaper clipping service, and it shows), and often these individual situations are generalized, perhaps with unproven trend-lines of her own, still Pride vindicates the traditional family and sounds a necessary warning. Relying heavily on newspaper sources, she tends at times toward hyperbole. Yet, if what she has spotted is in process of being unchecked, she will have served the Christian (and American) community with this trumpet blast. She is also helpful in identifying one of the roots of this malady as the pursuit of secular definitions of "Health" instead of heeding biblical order in the home.

Her final section, containing solutions, is as good as the sum of the first three parts. She advocates effective techniques, and would send out a well-armed corps, if they were briefed with this material. At times, her credibility is strained, e.g., when she titles the final chapter ("The Second North American Revolution") based on a misunderstanding of J. Whitehead's seminal and earlier work.

The four appendices at the end, make up 40% of the book. The longest, a state-by-state summary of Child Abuse laws is interesting. The other three are short and helpful, too. Toward the end of the book, her scriptural admonitions become more and more clear. She calls for

a return to the pattern of scripture as the remedy for these and other problems. All in all, this is a quick-read. It is a helpful book, that by its conclusion convinced me, at least, of the need to be on guard against this problem. It might be summed up as: The price of the family is eternal vigilance over it. The health care professional or pastor could benefit from a quick glance of this.