

interviewing omits all mention of the assessment of family functioning.

This is also a very American book, and British beginners would get a false impression of current treatment methods, particularly with respect to the use of medication, on the other side of the Atlantic. In conclusion, I would not recommend this book to British beginners in child psychiatry, although I suspect it may prove popular in its country of origin.

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Old Loyalties, New Ties: Therapeutic Strategies with Stepfamilies. By EMILY VISHER and JOHN KILNER. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 1988. 272 pp. \$27.50.

This book updates and expands earlier work by the same authors. It gives a detailed account of the different phases of life in stepfamilies as these are likely to be brought to the attention of clinicians. It offers a variety of useful ways of looking at the structure of stepfamilies, the complexity of stepfamily relationships, and the emotional issues that underlie presenting problems. A number of useful diagrams are included for mapping the way in which stepfamilies and biological families connect in relation to different aspects of children's lives.

The book contains a good reference list and would be of value as a guide to stepfamily life for anyone who works with a general range of families. It is overlong, and contains many case studies which in an English setting would be unlikely to receive professional attention. It lacks case studies of any severe pathology, such as sexual abuse or persistent violence, focusing instead on the broad issues affecting stepfamilies as a whole.

As children in stepfamilies are over-represented in the population presenting to mental health settings in Britain, it is important that the organisation of stepfamily life and the features that distinguish stepfamilies from biological families become a familiar part of professional thinking. This book makes an important contribution to the development of this knowledge.

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Stress – The Challenge to Christian Caring. By GAIUS DAVIES. London: Kingsway Publications. 1988. 286 pp. £6.95.

The general aim of this book would appear to be to introduce the Christian to the real, and theologically acceptable, benefits of medical help, and especially of psychiatric treatment. It is addressed to those who might feel that putting their faith in the psychiatrist and medication in the face of emotional stress and turmoil

amounts to a denial of their faith in God. At the same time, the author tries carefully to respect and give full acknowledgement to the place of Christian faith in the face of the stress which is part of our human lot. The book illustrates some of the difficulties in trying to be fair to both sides, and thus leaves itself open to criticism on both sides.

Some Christians may not feel that the work is sufficiently theological in the way in which it relies heavily on the quotation of a number of selected texts. On the other hand, some psychotherapists would feel that the unconscious has not really been given its due and that psychotherapy or counselling has been dealt with in a somewhat superficial manner. Thus, in the first instance, while extolling the need for preaching as a preventive of stress it omits the fact that while there is only one sermon being preached, there are really as many sermons heard as there are people in the Church. In the second instance, what is said about therapy would appear to be linked more with behavioural therapy and learning theory than with dynamic analytical psychotherapy.

In spite of these failings, this easily readable work is a real and positive apologia which may enable many fundamental Christians to seek appropriate help in times of pathological stress.

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MCQs and Short Notes in Psychiatry. By ALISTAIR S. BURNS, ANTHONY S. DAVID and MICHAEL FARRELL. London: Wright. 1988. 142 pp. £6.95.

MCQs for Psychiatric Studies. By CHRIS FREEMAN. London: Churchill Livingstone. 1988. 162 pp. £6.95.

There is seemingly an inexhaustible demand for multiple choice question (MCQ) books among psychiatric trainees preparing for Parts I and II of the Membership examination. These are two new additions to the fold to feed the anxiety of potential candidates.

MCQs and Short Notes in Psychiatry contains 180 MCQs with explanatory notes, together with 20 examples of the new-style short questions plus model answers. The latter seem useful and well constructed for revision purposes, but I found the MCQs to be at times rather too obscure or pedantic for the trainee. Many appeared to relate to the small print found in some of our more weighty tomes, and I could not help wondering if this was a result of all three authors having worked at the Institute of Psychiatry or the Maudsley Hospital.

MCQs for Psychiatric Studies begins with an excellent section offering advice on examination technique, which will be appreciated by many readers. However, the vast majority of the ensuing example questions and explanatory notes are for use in close conjunction with *Companion to Psychiatric Studies*, and this means that many bear little resemblance in style to typical