

## Book Review



### **Positive Spirituality in Health Care: Nine practical approaches to pursuing wholeness for Clinicians, Patients and Health Care Organizations**

**By Frederic C Craigie**

Minneapolis: Mill City Press 2010

US\$26 hard copy, US\$9 e-book.

Further details, sample chapters and eBook purchases at <http://www.positivespirituality.net/>

**Revd Dr Alison Gray**

Sometimes you agree to review a book, it arrives and your heart sinks. Too small print and poor writing combine to make it a real chore. At other times books are dense but interesting to read. Only rarely do you get a book that really engages, inspires and enthuses you. This is such a book; I read it through at one sitting.

The author is an American clinical psychologist with 25 years' experience of working and teaching in the US.

The book is easily accessible and inclusive of all those with an interest in spirituality; of any religion or none. The opening reminded me of the marriage guidance tactic of getting couples to speak about what first attracted them to each other; it made me think of why I am still a psychiatrist and what keeps me going. The tone is light, warm and friendly. It is well written and easy to read, with interesting personal and clinical examples and useful summaries at the end of each chapter.

The book is divided into two parts. Firstly setting the context, defining spirituality, why it is important to people and why it is important clinically.

The dimensions of spirituality are presented through Craigie's CAMPS framework, which stands for **C**ommunity, **A**ctivities, **M**eaning and purpose, **P**assions and **S**pirit (the awareness of a transcendent dimension to life).

The author's preferred definition of spirituality is that of Charles Everett Koop's '*Spirituality is the vital centre of a person; that which is held sacred*'. This definition includes everyone, since all have something that is the vital centre of their life, and draws a clear distinction between spirituality and religion.

This leads to a definition of spiritual care as:

*Helping people to connect with the things that really matter to them.*

All members of the healthcare team can contribute to spiritual care, and that will be enough for most patients. A smaller number will need help from spiritual care specialists e.g. hospital chaplains. We can help people connect with the things that matter by asking questions such as:

*What are the things that are really important to you?*

*What helps you to keep going?*

*When do you feel most alive?*

The second part of the book draws out the 'nine practical approaches'. There are three approaches for clinicians around their own personal spiritual wellbeing, three ways to support patients in accessing their own spiritual resources and three paths to the cultivation of a healthy positive spirit in the organization. Each of these approaches is defined and clarified with useful examples. Throughout the book, Dr Craigie's enthusiasm and wisdom, born of clinical practice, research and wide reading, shines through.

I would recommend this book wholeheartedly to any healthcare professional or therapist who needs to rekindle their original enthusiasm for their chosen way of caring for people, to give them skills for self-care, to help their patients and help make their organizations good places to work.