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birth and aspects of babyhood; attitudes to illness; early physical complaints; children's habits and parental approaches to child management. These broad areas are further divided into 63 specific issues covering topics such as breast feeding and bottle feeding; attitudes to circumcision; when to call the doctor; preparing for a visit to hospital; the games children play and many other things. In all of this, his main emphasis is on babies and pre-school children with less emphasis on older children.

As Dr Jolly discusses the various issues of his book, he looks at the pros and cons of each situation; offers information about the issue; gives direct advice on how to handle certain situations and generally offers a psycho, emotional slant to the topics. For example, on the subject of wind and colic, Dr Jolly feels that our concern with wind may be a fetish. He comments that this preoccupation with wind is not universal and quotes examples from other cultures. He then presents an alternative way of handling the baby following a feed. Instead of winding the child he suggests that the mother cuddle and play with her baby and then lay it down when it is dozy and ready to sleep. If wind is present it will come up naturally. He also comments that what seems like a "wind reaction" may more likely be the baby's reaction to increased family activity.

Thumb Sucking

Thumb sucking is another issue examined by the author. He feels that thumb sucking is a natural phase of development, lasting approximately one year, through which most children pass. Babies he says vary in the amount that they suck their thumbs and this is related to their needs and the amount they are satisfied. Thumb sucking allows the child to explore his mouth and learn more about his body. So, Dr Jolly comments, to stop the sucking will only frustrate the child. Beyond the usual period for this phase, the child who sucks his thumb, uses this action as a comforter when frightened or bored. Dr Jolly feels the way to handle this is to deal with the child's insecurity and boredom, rather than "directly attacking the thumb".

His relaxed commonsense approach communicates a feeling of calmness and reliability that I feel will help to allay anxiety and guilt that parents often feel. His is not a mechanical approach to child rearing but rather a dynamic comment that perhaps comes from personally fulfilling experience.

Lack Depth

As he has covered a wide range of topics and his book only contains 170 pages, Dr Jolly's discussions, of necessity, lack some depth. Also with some of the issues he faces, for example toilet training, he has not paid sufficient attention to the various emotional dynamics involved.

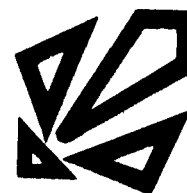
Average Successful

Dr Jolly has written this book for the "average successful" parent, who is secure and comfortable enough in his/her parent role to use what the author is offering. With this group of parents, I feel the book will be successful.

However for parents who are vulnerable and failing in their family roles I wonder firstly whether they would feel secure enough to cope with the implied expectation for parental behaviour and response to the child's needs.

Nevertheless so simple and practical is this book that it will also be of use as a resource document for workers who daily deal with parents of families.

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**"POWER FOR THE POOR" The
Family Centre Project: an ex-
periment in self-help.**

Michael Liffman, for the
Brotherhood of St. Laurence, 160
pages.

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George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1978.

When we are having to focus on the prospect that 'the good life' may be threatened for some people, it is even more necessary that we are awakened to the fact the 'the good life' has not existed for others. This present book, whilst concerned with poverty and its effects, is not just another polemic work analysing causes and setting prescriptions. It is an account of a bold and innovative programme which tackled the effects poverty was having on a few families. Besides this it also explores ways of developing radical strategies to help people to break out of the vicious spiralling effects of poverty. Poverty is not just the absence of money — it is even more than what the author calls "a social experience" — it is a **way of life** for some people. Irrespective of its causes poverty's effect can be as totally devastating and socially disabling as any physical illness.

The book describes a venture of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence in Melbourne entitled "The Family Centre Project". The project attempted to help people to help themselves out of their impoverished and often enforced life

cycle in order for them to regain independence in the community and escape from the poverty trap. Whilst this aim may not seem radical in itself, since this is the basic principle of many of the welfare provisions, the innovation arose from the project's basic philosophy and strategies. The approach rested in part on the development of a universal income supplement scheme for a small number of families (60). This was coupled with the Brotherhood's attempt to break down the traditional thinking and management surrounding the delivery of social services. The purpose of the service delivery was changed from the traditional 'professional-client problem solving approach' to one of 'resources directed through self-help towards specific task achievements'. This was coupled with helping to build

knowledge about welfare rights and was operationalised through a broad social action programme. An implicit aim which emerged was the transfer of power to the families themselves by replacing the professional workers.

In order to mount the project the Brotherhood committed itself to a substantial financial outlay and coupled this with a radically altered approach to service delivery and policies. This entailed termination of both its broad 'something for everybody' service, as well as its specialist ones, and melding them into the one project under the leadership of a new programme head. For an agency to withdraw a previously well established service in the light of continuing need is



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probably unheard of, except for financial shortages. It required, amongst other things, courage, commitment, faith and that special ingredient, luck. It stood a probable chance of resounding failure, with the attendant social condemnation by professionals and possibly the families who had relied on the Brotherhood's services. In contrast, to succeed even in part, could offer new insights, techniques, knowledge and most of all hope in dealing with poverty.

The author deals with the project principally from a chronological standpoint after initially exploring the theoretical context of poverty. Considering that the book is directed at "... students, teachers and practitioners in the welfare field", then I think their initial impressions will be that this theoretical framework is thin. Even allowing for the author's apology for dealing with the "... mundane level of description rather than the greater sophistication of theoretical analysis ..." it may distract the student from what follows and what is, I think, the most important part of the book, the dynamics of ideas in action in a truly welfare sense. Overall, there need be no apology from the author for his approach. Practitioners in the welfare field need more of this type of reported work which is an invaluable aid to developing practice theories.

From Chapter 2 onwards the story of the project unfolds from the emergence of the ideas through innovation and experiment to consolidation and reassessment of the aims and of the whole project. Included in this are the implications

for future programmes and policies. Although only 159 pages in length there is a wealth of material in this book which is nicely presented through a clear and interesting style. Despite the fact that this was obviously a complex project to report, with its many facets and minor themes, the author manages to hold the project together giving it coherence and purpose. We rarely hear the author, as researcher, speaking for the project. Rather it is the staff and family members telling their own story through their reports and decisions. By his frankness in highlighting the dilemmas and failures, as well as the successes, this makes for a good case study at many levels. The book should particularly appeal to students in the social services field because it gives a good example of social work in action.

Importantly, it stresses the fact that people are still central to any situation, whether it be staff or families. Human interaction is the keystone to any helping process. It is people who have to contend with problems, not problems to be dealt with in isolation away from people.

The dilemma of many social workers who are trying to break out of what is seen as the straight-jacket of casework is highlighted in this book. But in an attempt to escape from the moral judgement associated with casework and its focus on the individual as the cause of his own problems, the workers seem to try to jettison everything associated with casework. The workers initially rejected many of the very sensitive and tested methods of helping which were developed by caseworkers. Methods

which are fundamental to helping people to learn new skills, **whatever the cause of the problem.** Helping disadvantaged people to learn about power and power management is the central theme of this book. Since the families' poverty emanates from a lack of many forms of power in our society this project was therefore a vital exercise. By combining the new strategies with the helping skills of casework developed by the project, we may have taken the first steps in learning how we may go about transferring power to the poor. That is, teaching through relationships built up between people based upon a trust and a mutual regard for each other.

In terms of 'effects' this project produced many, both in the professional workers and in the families. How 'effective' the project was in dealing with poverty remains to be seen. This may only be adequately gauged sometime in the future, perhaps in the adult lifetime of the children of the families. The issue of 'causes' of poverty still remains and is perhaps outside the scope of projects of this size and nature, but it may give us all, families and workers, more power through knowledge in turning with more readiness towards dealing with structural inequalities.

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