

Exploring Values, Meaning and Spirituality



Limestone cliffs like those at Dover, scene of the poem “Dover Beach”

Different Gods

Traditional Christians continue treating the bible as a uniform whole, so that they can lift any verse out of it and treat it as a source of final truth. This flies in the face of everything that biblical scholarship has concluded over the last 200 years. The bible is a library of many different books, that came into being over a long period of time. Hence it is not surprising that the view of God and many other things, varies between these books. Tom Hall has provided the following poem that cleverly points out this variety.

Surely the Yahweh who ambled in the garden
With our first parents, then drove them out for fear
A second breach might render them his peers
Was not the Elohim who with a word
Called into being heaven and earth and life
Of every kind, and saw that it was good.

Nor was the God who ordered Joshua
To wage a genocidal war on Canaan
That Israel might live secure and free
Cut from the same cloth as Micah's muse,
Whose sole injunction was to lead a life
Of justice, kindness, and humility.

Whatever the creed that drove the heartless Ezra

To cancel priestly marriages and condemn
Mothers and children to shame and desperation,
Its author's deity was not the God
Who inspired the contradicting tale of Ruth,
The alien whose love was holiness.

Could Jonah's mild taskmaster, who exhorted
That prideful prophet to display concern
For all the folk of hated Nineveh
Have led a vengeful post- exilic psalmist
To wish that all the babes of Babylon
Might have their brains bashed out against the rocks?

For Jesus Jews we meet in Didache
And Galilean archivists of Q,
Their Lord was a new David or a sage;
In Mary's Gospel and in that of Thomas
He seems a Spirit with a human form;
Thus early on his nature was in doubt.

And what are we to understand when John's
Report that Jesus (aka "the Word")
Was co-creator of the universe
Beggars belief, only to learn that he
And his father Joseph hail from Nazareth,
A place of generally low repute?

Why is it John has Jesus early on
Declare that to be saved we must ingest
His body and his blood, then near the end,
At that climactic final meal together,
Replaces the salvific loaf and cup
With after-dinner footbaths for The Twelve?

We'll never know why Matthew changed "the poor"
To read "the poor in spirit" and erased
The curses Luke found in their common source,
Nor make good sense of Luke's chronology
That places Jesus in Jerusalem
For six weeks after his ascent to heaven.

When Luke's Paul scolded fellow Jews who failed
To see his Jesus as God's new Messiah,

He prophesied a Gentile supersession:
“They will listen!” But what sort of God
Would on such grounds desert his chosen people
And pave the way that led to Holocaust?

To what broad vision of the great scheme of things
Will you entrust the guidance of the one
And only life you get the chance to live?
From what commitment then derive the strength
To choose and sanctify in word and deed
A way of life that gladdens and fulfills?

Conservatives and Liberals, Unite!

In 2002, Lloyd Geering was invited to Niagara Falls as a speaker at the first SnowStar conference entitled, “Where is Fundamentalism Leading Us?” To this day, I regard that conference as one of the best conferences I’ve ever attended.

David Galston

I do not remember the title of Lloyd’s address, but I do remember his reference to *The Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow* by Kirsopp Lake (1925)¹. In that book, Lake predicted the Christian Church would slowly become dominated by the fundamentalists. Lake’s thinking was that while Christian “experimentalists” wanted the church to address justice issues in society, Christian “institutionalists” were most interested in protecting the church and its traditions. The concern of the institutionalist was to accommodate the disruptive fundamentalists and their dogmatic agendas. The institutionalist approach, in other words, was peace at all costs, but this appeasement would alienate the experimentalists, forcing them to leave the church.^[1]

With the experimentalist element of the church taking leave, Lake pictured fundamentalism slowly but progressively dominating the church. Then, eventually, even the institutionalists would leave the church and the dominant face of Christianity would be fundamentalism.

To a large extent, Lake was right. There are still “institutional” churches that

¹ [1] Kirsopp Lake, *Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925), pp. 66–69

persist in protecting the building and the tradition, but most people today are not looking for a building when they consider questions of human spirituality. Meanwhile, the face of Christianity has indeed largely become fundamentalism. Young people who are not attracted to fundamentalism rarely set foot in the church anymore. The very word *Christian*, for many young people, is associated with extremism, creationism, and other assorted fictional beliefs.

Yet, despite appearances to the contrary, Christian fundamentalism is in decline, and it is in decline because it is unbelievable. In a *New York Times* opinion piece, July of 2021, Michelle Goldberg reported on the decline of fundamentalism, but she did so with a warning: the decline is accompanied with anger among fundamentalists, and their anger is taking the rest of us along for a dangerous ride into culture wars, misinformation, violence, and xenophobic behaviours.

Lake's insight from 1925 identifies a pattern of fundamentalist takeovers that evolve into Goldberg's concerns. Movements, once established, tend to hold the priority of self-preservation. Inevitably survival is more important than mission. Great leaders are people who understand this dynamic, but do not as a consequence let the priority of the mission die. When the mission loses its nerve, the extremists take over and anger, as Goldberg noted, displaces, and then defines, the mission.

I have often considered the Republican Party as a perfect example of anger displacing mission. In the 1956 campaign, the Republican Party was certainly fiscally conservative, but it did have a "social" mission. Its platform held the principles of improving unemployment benefits, strengthening labour laws, providing asylum for refugees, and ensuring equal pay for equal work. Its mission was not to make America White again but "Peace and Prosperity" for all.

Nevertheless, in the Republican Party, just like in the church, for the sake of peace, the quiet moderates allowed the noisy libertarians to take over. The moderates consequently left the party, and today the face of the Republican Party is Christian fundamentalism mixed with neoliberal economic ideology. The new Republican Party is inching toward fascism, and that terrifying journey is what the rest of us, Goldberg fears, may have to endure. Meanwhile, to find

old Republican moderates, you have to go outside the party just as to find old Christian moderates, you have to leave the church.

Years ago, when we held the SnowStar conference “Where is Fundamentalism Leading Us?” I never imagined that the answer to that question was “to fascism.” I thought, at the time, that the answer was “to the end of Christianity” (something I happened to think was good news). Now I think fundamentalism is leading us to democratic, economic, and environmental destruction. Armageddon is where fundamentalism is going, but are the rest of us helpless to stop this journey of madness?

Over the course of my career as a writer, teacher, thinker, and administrator, I have invested a lot of energy and time in supplying people with what I judge to be academically sound information. My hope has always been that people are capable of thinking for themselves provided the tools of thought are made available. However, I must admit, now more than ever, that “thinking for ourselves” cannot exclude “thinking with other people.” It is clear that we can only survive on this planet, both economically and spiritually, by ensuring one and other’s integrity exists together without leaving anyone behind (contrary to the fundamentalist vision of people being left behind).

The word that describes thinking “for yourself” while simultaneously thinking “with others” is compassion. Compassion is not just feeling for someone else. It is standing with someone else, and that is a mutual act because we are always stronger personally when we are with another socially. It might be time for people of progressive minds to put down the old conservative and liberal labels. Of course, on the progressive side, some will be fiscally conservative and others fiscally liberal, but maybe we need to forget about this division, at least for the time being. We need a new body of people who genuinely care first and foremost about democracy, about the earth, and about the citizens of this world.

This planet is our home; we have no other place to be. Traditional liberals and conservatives can stand together here, on earth, against the threat of its destruction. This might mean that liberals or conservatives will have to hold their noses and vote for someone they never imagined they could vote for, but countering the alternative of fascism and destruction is surely worth acts of bridge building.

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Editor's Note: David Galston is a co-founder and past President of the Snowstar Institute and fellow of the Jesus Seminar. In 2015, he spoke in Auckland at St Luke's Remuera on "Has Religion a Future."

I had initial difficulty getting hold of Kirsopp Lake's book. It wasn't in any of the Auckland Libraries and Amazon didn't list it. But when I searched the Internet, there it was, available online for free in the Internet archive (archive.org). It is well worth a look and enjoyable to read, if only to check whether the David Galston is reading his own views into Lake's.

Lake is an old liberal (the book was published in 1925) so he pre-dates the neo-orthodox revolution associated with Karl Barth and others. He sees contemporary religion as a struggle between the fundamentalists, the institutionalists and the experimentalists. It's noteworthy that in his view the fundamentalists are correct to think they stand in the tradition of classical Christianity (most liberals paint it as a 20th Century innovation in reaction to the historical-critical method). The idea that the fundamentalists will ultimately win this struggle is a simplification of Lake's view. He does say at one point that they will win the battle in the short term, but he also says that science will win out over traditional religion. He also hopes that the fundamentalists won't drive the experimentalists out of the church and that the church's future is best served if all three are there together and work for religion's future. That will serve its progress best.

How my thinking has changed – by Sir Lloyd Geering

My religious thinking began when I was sent to Sunday School from the age of five. As a child I never went to church, for in those days the Sunday School was separate from the church services and met at 2 pm on the Sabbath. And when I returned to New Zealand from Australia at the age of twelve, I had no further connection with any Christian organization during my adolescence, since my parents had long ceased to attend church.

It was during my second year at university that a series of events occurred in such swift succession that they resulted a major change in my life. At the invitation of a student friend from school days, I began to attend the Presbyterian Church he went to, and I soon followed him even more enthusiastically into the activities of the Student Christian Movement.

In that year of 1937 my whole style of life changed completely. Within a matter of only three or four weeks I found myself going every Sunday to senior Bible

class at 10 am, attending the 11 am morning service where I sang in the choir, teaching Sunday School in the afternoon, and later attending the evening service at 6:30 pm. My thinking was developing so rapidly that after attending a Mission to the University conducted by the SCM, I gradually came to feel, and by the end of that year convinced, that I was being called by God to enter the ministry. When I confided this to an older brother he said, "Don't waste your life that way! – the churches will all be closed in thirty years' time!" He made this comment despite the fact that most churches were then still full – the Church I joined had over 1000 members. These many decades later I realise his judgment was by no means wholly misleading, yet I have never felt I wasted my life. Indeed, my decision led me to a very rich one.

During my three years of theological training at Knox Theological College, I regarded myself as such a novice in the life of the church that I accepted rather uncritically all that I was taught. Fortunately, my teachers had all embraced the liberal theology and the modern understanding of the Bible that developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By using the new tools of historical and literary criticism, they showed us how to study the Bible as a collection of humanly composed historical documents. It was to this liberal approach that fundamentalism arose in reaction from about 1920 onwards.

I became a very enthusiastic student of the Bible, particularly of the Old Testament. I also developed a strong interest in Church History, having had the good fortune to be taught by a young refugee from Nazi Germany, Helmut Rehbein. He showed us how Christian thinking has been an ever-evolving process, rather than a set of unchangeable doctrines.

On the other hand I found Systematic Theology quite dull and unexciting. Yet from our elderly Aberdonian professor, John Dickie, I learned one useful thing about the role of theology. He taught us that the task of theology is not to expound the unchangeable dogmas revealed by God, as it had been regarded before the time of Schleiermacher in the early nineteenth century. Dickie followed Schleiermacher, regarding theology as the intellectual exercise by which Christians 'think through their religious experience and relate it to all other knowledge'. That is what I have tried to do ever since. I was among the last of John Dickie's students, and thoroughly imbibed his liberal approach. Strangely enough, the theology taught at Knox College for the following twenty years reverted to the more traditional form of dogmatic theology. It was called Neo-orthodoxy and was initiated by the Swiss theologian, Karl Barth. But John Dickie warned us against him.

So that is how I came to be shaped by the liberal theology that was current in the early twentieth century. As a parish minister I never once preached that Christ's death on the cross had achieved our salvation, for I regarded that sort of orthodoxy as quite outmoded. Rather, my sermons expounded Christianity as a way of life based on the moral teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

It was not until I became a theological teacher in 1955 that my thinking began to develop further. As I read the books of such German theologians as Paul Tillich and Rudolf Bultmann, I was led on from the liberal theology of my student days to the more radical approach found in Bishop John Robinson's 1963 best-seller, *Honest to God*.

Bultmann showed me how the story of Jesus in the New Testament is clothed in the mythical thinking that was current in the ancient world, but which is no longer relevant today. To discover the truth of the New Testament Christian message for today's non-mythical world, Bultmann said it must be 'demythologised', lifted out of its mythical setting and re-interpreted in a manner that enables it to speak to today's secular world.

And that is why in 1966 I wrote an article that tried to explain to modern readers how to understand the resurrection of Jesus, for in today's world the mythical stories of his resurrection and ascension into heaven can no longer be taken at face value. And most of you know what an uproar that caused!

When I subsequently moved to the Chair of Religious Studies at Victoria University in 1971, I had to read even more widely, and eventually I became involved in the activities of the Jesus Seminar in California.

It is only natural, then, that in the course of this long and variegated spiritual pilgrimage my thinking changed quite significantly from what it was when I first embraced the Christian faith as a young and immature adult. My subsequent books illustrate this in much more detail than it is possible for me to sketch here. Moreover, I discovered that the writing of books can change one's mind just as much as reading the books of others.

Take for example, one of my recent books, *From the Big Bang to God*. Here I tried to make it clear that, far from an unseen God having made the universe, it was the process of evolution that eventually brought forth the human beings and human language. This in turn resulted in the creation of such concepts as God.

In writing this book I came to realize something that had not occurred to me before, even though it is immediately obvious when one thinks about it. The story of the evolution of the universe is a story we humans constructed, and one that could not be told until we had created a language in which to tell it. We seldom recognize how much our human life depends on language. This is why the ancients unthinkingly assumed that language had existed from the beginning of time. The Bible tells us that God created the world by the use of language: "God said, 'Let there be light!' and there was light!" Similarly, the Fourth Gospel begins, "In the beginning was the Word". It is not too much to say that it is language that enables us to make sense of the world we find ourselves living in.

My discovery about the priority of language made me realize that we humans do live in two worlds. But they are not the material world and the spiritual worlds in which our forefathers assumed they lived; rather they are the physical world and the world of human thought.

We enter the physical world when we are born, but we do not enter the human thought world until, from about the age of about two, we learn to speak. The human thought-world we enter from two onwards becomes the lens through which we see and understand the physical world. This is why we cannot remember anything from before the age of three. This is why people of different cultures live in different thought-worlds and see the same physical world rather differently. And also this is why the religious quest for meaning and personal fulfillment has taken different forms in different cultures. As a consequence, no cultural tradition, such as Christianity, can claim to be the only true spiritual path and judge all others to be false.

This is a brief account of how my thinking has changed and continues to do so. Let me illustrate it, using three basic examples.

The first has to do with God. Even from the time I embraced the Christian faith, I had no clear idea of what the word God meant. For me, God referred to the mystery of life that could not be grasped by the human mind. But more recently I have come to realize that God does not name a reality in the cosmos at all. Rather it is a humanly created idea. It belongs to the human thought-world. It is a word by which we have tried to make sense of the physical world we live in.

This idea of God has a long history, which the remarkable scholar and former nun Karen Armstrong has written up as *The History of God*. God is an idea that

has played an extremely important role in our evolving culture. It supplied an ultimate point of reference. It was the idea of God as creator and unifier of the universe that led to the rise of modern science, when mediaeval theologians tried to discover what they called 'the ways of God' by conducting experiments. It was they who laid the foundations of today's empirical science.

But we also associated with this idea of God the values of love, compassion, honesty, and truth, because we find these make such moral demands upon us that they clearly transcend us. And though the idea of God had its beginning in our mythological past, it remains a useful word to refer to our highest values. As the New Testament asserts, "God is love".

The second area of change is how I understand Jesus of Nazareth. For me Jesus is not someone to be worshipped as the divine Son of God, for that sort of language belongs to the world of ancient mythology. What the work of the Jesus Seminar has shown me is that Jesus was not even a prophet after the Old Testament model. Rather he was a wise man, a sage, walking in the footsteps of Ecclesiastes before him. The Jesus seminar scholars have attempted to uncover what they call "the voice-prints and foot-prints" of this Jesus from before the creative imagination of his first-century followers transformed him into the divine Christ-figure. The chief of these was Paul, who had never met Jesus in the flesh. The original Jesus did not talk much about himself, and not even much about God. Rather he talked about the Kingdom of God, describing it in such parables as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Leaven. He used this term to describe his vision of how people should live with each other in loving relationships of reciprocal goodwill.

The third area of change in my thinking has been in the acceptance of our mortality. We humans are finite, earthly beings, like all other planetary creatures. We are given one life to live and can expect no future existence beyond the grave in some heavenly spiritual realm. This is why the average funeral service has changed so markedly during the twentieth century. In 1900 it was the ritual by which we celebrated the departure of the deceased from this world to a better life in the next world, but by 2000 the ritual had increasingly become the celebration of a life that has come to end. It has become a gathering of family and friends to recall with gratitude what the deceased person had achieved and meant to them.

Yes, my thinking has changed markedly since I first embraced the Christian faith as an immature youth. But at no time have I ever thought it necessary or

even desirable to reject Christianity, as some atheists delight in doing. On the contrary I remain very grateful to the Christian tradition. From the prophets and apostles of old, and particularly from that remarkable but elusive figure of Jesus of Nazareth, I have learned how to live life to the full. I also believe that today's secular and humanistic world owes its origin to the Christendom out of which it emerged. Further, I believe that if humankind is to flourish in the future, it must acknowledge its spiritual roots and continually learn from them. And that is what we are doing whenever we meet together as the church!

Lloyd Geering, 21st May 2017.

On Being Mortal Part 2: Medical Approaches

Given that most of us in SOFiA are in our 70s or 80s, it seems strange that death and mortality play such a small role in our writings. In what follows, your Editor attempts to fill this void and to come to grips with the fact that we are not immortal and that life will come to an end for us all. Many thinkers regard exploring death as like staring at the sun; something that's impossible to do. However, the aim in this review is to build up a picture of what it means to be mortal, a biological creature with a limited lifespan, an individual that faces its own death, by surveying what literature, medicine, psychotherapy and theology have to say about it.

Doctors are in the special position of accompanying many people at the end of life. This can give them great wisdom in relation to the issues that arise.

Being Mortal: Illness, Medicine, and What Matters in the End by Atul Gawande 2014

Atul Gawande is an American surgeon of Indian ethnicity. This book consists largely of stories.

For example, there is the long story of Felix, a geriatrician in his 90s, who found meaning in his life through caring for Bella, his wife who was blind and suffering memory loss. When she died, he found solace in the fact that she had spent the last few weeks of her life, not in a nursing home or hospital as a lost and disoriented patient, but at home surrounded by the warmth of their long love.

Then there was Alice, who moved into a retirement village of her choice, but was not happy, probably because it just wasn't home and because she was

subject to ever-increasing control by the staff. After she broke her hip, she was confined to a wheelchair and completely subject to the rigidity of hospital life.

Atul also tells the story of how modern nursing homes and assisted living facilities emerged, replacing the awful poorhouses of the 19th Century. Interestingly, the aim behind nursing homes wasn't to provide higher quality of life for the elderly, but to clear out hospital beds from long-stay patients. Because our society is largely in denial about death, we end up with institutions for the care of the elderly that serve any number of goals other than that of making life worth living for those too frail to fend for themselves. By contrast, assisted living facilities (the first was Park Place in Portland in 1983) aimed to give the frail elderly a maximum of control over their own affairs.

Then there is the hilarious story of how dogs, cats and 100 birds were brought into Chase Memorial Nursing Home. Initially, there was chaos, but gradually, the residents came alive again because the presence of these animals effectively countered the three plagues of nursing home existence. In place of boredom, they brought spontaneity, in place of loneliness, companionship, in place of helplessness, a chance to take care of another being. Surprisingly, it turns out that those who end up in palliative care do better than those who opt for normal medical interventions: they suffer less, are physically more capable and better able to interact with others.

Her conclusion is that we have forgotten what scholars call the "dying role." People want to share memories, pass on wisdoms and keepsakes, settle relationships, establish their legacies, make peace with God, and ensure that those who are left behind will be okay. We have put the care of elderly in the hands of the medical establishment, even though medical professionals concentrate on the repair of health rather than the sustenance of the soul. Doctors have a tendency to inflict deep gauges at the end of people's lives, interfering with their ability to carry out the dying role. We think there will come a time when our doctor says that there is nothing more medical science can do, and then we will move on to the other concerns around dying. Trouble is, there is rarely nothing more that doctors can do; far more likely is that there are any number of possible interactions that bring little benefit and likely quite a bit of suffering and a masking of the ability to handle the other tasks of the "dying role."

A final story deals with Atul's own father. Many and complicated were the decisions that needed to be made regarding his health, often with incomplete knowledge about the risks and possible benefits. When he finally died, Atul had the task of spreading his father's ashes in three different places; Greece, the States and the Ganges river, where tradition promised that this would liberate him from endless reincarnations and allow him to achieve nirvana. Atul did not share this belief but appreciated that it enabled him and his father to be part of a greater whole.

The Lost Art of Dying: Reviving Forgotten Wisdom by Lydia Dugdale 2020.

Lydia Dugdale is associate professor of medicine at Columbia University and this book looks back at the ancient art of dying and attempts to recast its insights for today. The book begins with the story of Mr. Turner, who was frail, elderly, and in poor health. His relatives insisted that he be given everything that medicine could provide to enable him to live as long as possible. The result was tragic. Doctors, obliged to follow the relatives' instructions rather than their own clinical judgement resuscitated him twice in one day, bringing his heart back to life after it had stopped. Unfortunately, this didn't last long. His heart failed a third time that night and he could not be resuscitated. Mr. Turner's fate is a classic example of how someone was unable to die well.

Doctors tend to fail to guide patients to die wisely. Health care systems are like car assembly lines or freezing works in reverse (putting people together rather than taking dead animals apart). They are the opposite of slow medicine and a dialogue with patients that prepares them to die wisely. Ms. Capella is another example; she insisted that her doctor keep her alive at all costs, even though she was 95 and smoking had irreversibly damaged her heart and lungs. Resuscitation would likely result in painful rib fractures and she probably would be unable to live independently of mechanical ventilation. We can't effectively prepare for death if we are clinging to an indefinite extension of life. Often patients aren't aware of the likely downsides of treatment and haven't had them adequately explained to them.

In response to the horror of the bubonic plague or Black Death, a genre of literature emerged: the *Ars moriendi*, the art of dying. This was not focused on the pious or the rich; it aimed at everyone. Particularly popular was an illustrated version, which consisted mainly of woodcuts illustrating the various

temptations faced by the dying. This made the book accessible even for those who could not read. The book aimed to counter the five temptations that the dying are susceptible to and to counter them with images of their resolution: disbelief and encouragement in faith, despair and comfort through hope, impatience and patience, pride and humility, avarice and letting go of the earthly. The temptation of pride gives an idea of what was involved:



An Ars moriendi woodcut showing a dying man with the temptation of pride. He has demons on one side and saints on the other, in a struggle for his soul.

It is important to have friends and family around us when we are dying. While each of us ultimately dies alone, having others around us, providing perspective and support, is encouraging. We are relational creatures. In the *Ars moriendi*, the dying are encouraged to confess their sins and to receive forgiveness from those around them. Until recently, most people died at home surrounded by friends and family, all of whom have a role to play.

Doctors may be tempted to regard patients purely physically, as a bundle of organs, but they are persons and deserve to be addressed as such. That means that spirit and not just body must play a role. Dugdale surveys non-

judgmentally the various attitudes and beliefs that patients may have. Many people become interested in existential questions as they confront death. They wonder about the meaning of life: Why am I here? What is this life for? There are three main non-orthodox beliefs about life after death:

1. Complete annihilation. The dead are broken machines that turn to dust.
2. Reincarnation. We often hear at funerals, "I know she is here with us."
"I am in the sun and in the wind. I did not die, I am with you all."
3. Spiritualism. Ouija boards continue to be popular, enabling the would-be receipt of messages from the dead.

Many people are "spiritual but not religious." They reject a purely materialistic view of life and focus on inner experience. Others find that this is not enough and argue for an explicit commitment to a particular religious tradition. Many doctors avoid getting involved in such questions, but Dugdale is willing to "go there" with her patients. In so doing, she again becomes a physician, a healer aiming to see them flourish.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross: On Death and Dying 1969

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross was a Swiss-born psychiatrist who was appalled at the treatment of dying patients. She was an early pioneer in communicating with the dying and in understanding what they are going through. At the University of Chicago, she conducted weekly seminars consisting of interviews with terminally ill patients. This brought opposition from other medical staff. Many thought that patients were not aware that they were dying as they had not been officially told, but she discovered that most had guessed this, perhaps from changes in the way others related to them. She became a central figure in the hospice movement, arguing for "death with dignity." While doctors tended to avoid discussions of death, Kubler-Ross advocated being quite open about it.

Her book is based on interviews with the dying and is famous for the model she propounded. The dying follow a multi-stage process. First they are in denial about the diagnosis, then they become angry; "Why did this happen to me?" Then they engage in bargaining, fall into depression and finally find acceptance of their fate. Others regard this model as helpful but deny that everyone follows the same path.