

information has already percolated through to the next generation. Traditionally, medicine used to run in families, but no longer. While fresh blood is welcome, there seem to be relatively few in medicine who have a child following suit. The pay, the lengthy education, the hours and the loss of autonomy do not fit. Is this a shrewd eye to the main chance or a transfer of idealism to something worthier? Applications to medical schools in North America have become underwhelming compared to law and business schools. Salaries, or variants, are on their way in and enterprising youth wants no truck with it. 'Alternative' medicine hoots with laughter and says that lifestyle is more important than doctors anyway. A recent survey over a six month period found that one in five Canadians use some form of 'alternative therapy', only slightly less than the one in four who

visited a regular health professional. This included visits to chiropractors, herbalists, naturopaths, acupuncturists, homeopaths and health food stores. Three per cent had even visited a faith healer. Bearing in mind the state of the lady doctors, as described by Solzhenitsyn, in the *Cancer Ward* we need to attend to our rewards and political strengths. Either as would be opera stars, political activists, clinicians or traditional academics we need to decide which of the answers to one of life's great multiple choice questions is correct: Is it "Let all the learned say what they can, 'Tis ready money makes the man"¹ or "The love of money is the root of all evil"² or "A good reputation is more valuable than money"³.

¹Somerville William (1727) *Ready Money*.

²The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy 6: 10.

³Publius Syrus (1st c. BC) Maxim 108.

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Family Courts Consortium*

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This Consortium has a distinguished political-legal history. Its predecessor, the Family Court Campaign, was launched in 1985 by Lady Faithfull, then chairman of the all party parliamentary committee for children. Its aims were those of the Finer Committee (1974).

Key features include: a unified court system; trained and experienced judges and lay people; accessibility by families and their representatives; a proper forum for dealing with the very sensitive area of care proceedings and child abuse; and providing a focus for the development of specialist welfare services and conciliation.

This campaign, concomitant with the pressure for a comprehensive revision of a tangled mass of law relating to children and adolescents, obtained the support of virtually every health, legal and social work body, academic and professional, and of a wide range of voluntary associations.

It has been a matter for regret that the Children Act, good in itself, although under-resourced and under-financed, does no more than set the theoretical, potential ground work for a family court system.

Within the terms of the Children Act 1989, jurisdiction in all proceedings is concurrent and cases may be transferred, and rules made, by the Lord Chancellor.

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lor, between tiers of court or between courts in the same tier. The aim is to create a flexible system where cases may be heard according to their complexity and length and to enable all proceedings affecting the same child, or children in the same family, to be heard in the same court and at the same time and to make sure that magistrates and judges who do this work have made a special study, and are experienced, in family law. However, draft court rules have been circulated separately by the Home Office for the magistrates' court and by the Lord Chancellor's Department for the County and High Court. The tangle of support services for a family jurisdiction is unchanged. Guardians-ad-litem and reporting officers work in an unclear framework and are unrelated, structurally and as regards training, to the heterogeneous divorce court welfare and conciliation services. The precariously established framework for the transfer of cases between tiers of courts is as yet untested.

In 1990 the Family Courts Campaign, briefly thought unnecessary with the establishment of the Children Act, reformed itself as a Consortium with charitable status. It now has an office within the National Institute of Social Work, London, and a coordinator, Lady Butterworth. It is chaired as before by Lady Faithfull and the vice-chairman is Lord McGregor, deputy chairman of the original Finer Committee. As before, the Consortium offers, and

indeed has achieved, membership from a wide range of professional bodies; individuals also may join. A Bulletin will be published approximately every two months and the group will maintain all-party links with both chambers of Parliament.

The annual general meeting was enlivened by talks from Lord McGregor and Jane Hern, vice-chairman. The task was to educate politicians and lawyers about anomalies in the current Criminal Justice Bill. The Children Act, when replacing the relevant sections of the Children and Young Persons Act, England and Wales (1969), for the first time in 20 years separated welfare and justice issues with regard to young offenders.

Many regard this as a forward step, given that children in need of protection and substitute family care may have been "criminalised", in their own eyes and those of others, by the close association of justice and welfare issues in legal proceedings and because on occasion "welfare" responses to juvenile offending have been seen as intrusive. Statements such as "the child's right to justice" have become current.

However, the Criminal Justice Bill, concentrating as it does on legal/punitive responses to juvenile offending, has, in the view of the Consortium, failed to establish an effective pathway between the justice and welfare court systems in respect of young people. The need is for a power, and indeed duty, of the juvenile justice court to ask for appropriate social enquiry reports and referral to the appropriate family proceedings court, where it considers that a young person offending reflects concerns relevant to

the civil court. The Consortium wishes also for more considered critical evaluation of similarities and differences between the English, the Scottish, and European systems of juvenile justice.

In summary, the current aims of the Consortium are to support the principle behind the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount. To achieve this requires critical, persistent evaluation of legislation, monitoring of the court system, the facilitation of communication between the Department of the Lord Chancellor and the Home Office and the establishment of a coherent support service of guardians, reporting officers, divorce court welfare and conciliation services linked with child protection and family placement teams operating within departments of social services. It must be linked also with the jurisdiction concerning domestic violence and family maintenance, the whole of which, in the view of the Consortium, must be retained within the court system rather than, as currently is proposed, partially separated off into an agency managed by the Department of Social Services.

The aims of the Family Courts Campaign were supported by The Royal College of Psychiatrists, the British Medical Association and a wide range of health professionals. The new Consortium deserves comparable support. A timely, accessible, adequately financed civil justice system is requisite to the physical and mental health of many of the most vulnerable children in our community and effective liaison with a family jurisdiction will be a legally required and appropriate duty for health professionals concerned with children and adolescents.

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People and places

Community psychiatry developments in Hong Kong

The logo of the Hong Kong New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association is a budding leaf which signifies a new leaf of life. This particular organisation has certainly flourished, and last year, celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. The association began in the 1950s as a mutual aid club run by a group of former psychiatric patients. In the early years, three small units – a male halfway house, a farm and an industrial sheltered workshop – were founded. With financial assistance from Social Welfare, the Community Chest of Hong Kong and also help from volunteer professionals, the association expanded and since its reorganisation to form New Life in 1965, has become a well established

welfare body. It has built many new halfway houses, hostels and workshops and recently pioneered a long-stay care home too.

Nine years ago, following a violent incident involving a psychiatric patient living in the community, New Life faced widespread opposition to its plans. It has, however, attempted to overcome public 'phobia and prejudice' through a programme of educational activities which aimed to increase the acceptability of community psychiatric rehabilitation. Looking into the future, the association hopes to extend its work beyond Hong Kong and will also be addressing more preventative aspects of mental health care.