

BOOK REVIEWS/COMPTEs RENDUS

List of Reviewers:

ANTONIO M. BERNARDELLI
Montreal Catholic School Commission

CAROL GANAM and DENNIS BROWN
City of Edmonton Health Department

DARLE FORREST
University of Alberta

HELEN MADIL
University of Alberta

DIANA DONOHUE WILCOX
University of Alberta

Mixed Families: Adopting Across Racial Boundaries, Joyce Ladner, New York: Anchor Press, 1977, 290 pp.

Reviewed by:

Antonio M. Bernardelli
Montreal Catholic School Commission
Montreal, Quebec

This book reads like a review of the literature of interracial adoptions supplemented by interviews with agency personnel, families who have adopted across racial boundaries, and people who were adopted. As one reads this book, numerous ideas come to mind as to what should be done in dealing with transracial adoptions. We are confronted with the issues and difficulties from which we can formulate plans of action for our professional encounters as we come to recognize and understand the problems and possible solutions. Emphasis in dealing with the major issues is placed on the dynamics involved; e.g., the individuals, the family (nuclear and extended), and the environment. Whatever practical applications there are must be inferred from the interviews and the studies referred to by the author.

Mixed Families also discusses inadequacies and shortcomings of the adoption agencies themselves, which seem to be the crux of the problem. They apparently have contributed to their own inefficiency by the standards they set, their rigid bureaucracy, their screening processes, and their personnel policies. Their alleged insensitivity to the concerns and needs of potential adoptive parents has greatly contributed to negative public relations. They have been accused of exaggerated conservatism and resistance to change. Their attitude has often led to the "screening out" of desirable potential adoptive parents, especially

black applicants. Some agencies have been guilty of blatant discrimination. Here again we grasp what services agencies are neglecting to provide: accessibility, support services, postadoptive counselling (individual and group), and follow-up. The role of an agency does not terminate once the placement is effected but rather it just begins if we are to be considerate of the welfare of both the child and the family.

A variety of problems are discussed from which the professional involved in either private practice and agency work can extract ideas for personal movement and solutions.

The Family Crucible, Augustus Y. Napier (with Carl A. Whitaker). New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

Reviewed by:

Carol Ganam & Dennis Brown
Mental Health Division
City of Edmonton Health Department
Edmonton, Alberta

We approached this book wearing our "I must be serious, work hard, and really concentrate so I can learn something" attitude but we found ourselves relaxing and feeling as though we had opened a novel that we could read with ease and pleasure. The bonus was that we could also learn something about family therapy. Napier's personable style of self-report and his description of family interactions, not just during the interview sessions but in those crucial two minutes of assembling done in an allegorical style set the stage for an easily digested and information-packed book.

Napier, in giving a narrative account of his and