BOOK REVIEW

A rewarding introduction to global bioethics

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Professor Dr. Henk ten Have is currently the Director, Center for Healthcare Ethics at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, USA. Formerly, he was Director, Division of Ethics of Science and Technology, UNESCO. He has more than 25 years teaching experience in bioethics. He has published several articles, written several books and encyclopedias in the various branches of bioethics. His favorite area is global bioethics.

Global boundaries are fast disappearing. Healthcare professionals travel from India to the Middle East and practice over the weekend. People from developed nations come to developing nations for cheaper alternatives to their healthcare. India has the world’s largest surrogate turnover. Europe has the largest migrant population in its recorded history, and Europeans are grappling with the rapidly changing social structure. Global bioethics is now more pertinent than ever before. This book is written as an introduction to the concept of global bioethics. The style and layout of the book are simple, making its reading a very pleasant experience. The chapters are so arranged that one flows into the other maintaining continuity, and yet one can read any chapter in isolation and still get maximum mileage. Refreshingly, this is one book on bioethics that does not have complex sentences and complicated concepts as many publications on bioethics tend to have. The language is simple, even a person having no background or formal training in bioethics would grasp the essence of the concepts laid out. Moreover, with extensive use of real-life case scenarios, drawn from his vast and extensive experience, Dr ten Have further strengthens the bond between reader, book and author. The book is peppered with interesting, thought-provoking anecdotes and cases that make the reading even more rewarding.

The author drives home his point that the changing-world kaleidoscope requires periodic restructuring of bioethics education. Dr ten Have conveys that bioethics education should be dynamic and constantly adapting to evolving socio-technologic advancements. Medical tourism, surrogacy, humanitarian relief, trafficking across international borders and disasters involving many nations and cultures have all forced bioethics to stretch and expand its horizons and in this context such a book is a very useful addition to the armamentarium used by bioethics learners and educators worldwide. The book very effectively communicates the fact that the way forward in bioethics education is not simply continuing to push Western concepts in an inept imperialistic way, but that universal ethical principles need to be wedded to local customs and values.