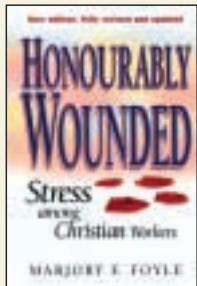


BOOKS

Honourably wounded - stress among Christian Workers



*Marjory F Foyle
Monarch, London and
Grand Rapids 2001
£7.99 Pb 288pp
ISBN 1 85424 543 0*

Marjory Foyle was a general medical missionary in South Asia

and experienced her own fair share of stressor exposure before training in psychiatry and returning to India. When she reached 60 years of age she embarked on a global travelling ministry conducting counselling and carefully noted psychiatric assessments. Her ground-breaking research, first presented in 1984, caused initial discomfort to some in missionary agencies but they were largely won over after the publication of the first edition of this book in 1987. The title was significant, restoring self-esteem to those who were genuine casualties but had been misunderstood, and I am very glad that the original title has been retained.

The first edition was a classic, and required reading for anyone involved in overseas mission. This edition casts its net more widely, including those who travel across international boundaries but continue to live in their home country, and those working with immigrants. Fourteen chapters encompass the changing face of missions, understanding stress, dealing with depression and discouragement, adjustment and culture shock, occupational stress, interpersonal relationships, parental and home country stress, stress and singleness, missionary marriages, stress and children, special forms of stress, re-entry, caring for missionaries and God's model of missionary care.

Every chapter is important and well written, in touch with the current realities of overseas service, brim full with realism, wisdom, insight, and hope informed by a love for Christ, but the author does not gloss over the ways in which mission partners may manufacture their own problems. All the chapters can be described as outstanding.

Is this still a book for this first decade of the 21st Century? Definitely yes. Her references are up to date and demonstrate an impressive breadth of research. Have I any criticisms?

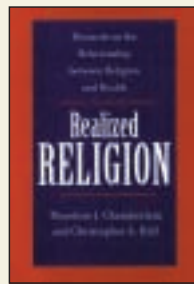
Yes, but only two very minor ones.

Occasionally the style is more like a scientific paper and this is unnecessary for her target readership. The referencing style should be changed at the next reprinting to a numbered Vancouver style and the author could introduce some informality by using the first and last names of authors in the text.

Who should read this book? All missionaries, all Christians working overseas or making visits as part of their Christian calling, all candidates, all returned, bruised or wounded mission partners, all missionary/Christian aid agency home staff, all those in local churches responsible for overseas personnel, and all church members with an interest in overseas mission. That should include every church member. It should be on every church bookstall, in every missionary training college and given to every candidate and serving mission partner by their agency. It is a superb book that I commend unreservedly.

Michael Jones

Realized Religion Research on the Relationship between Religion and Health



*Theodore J Chamberlain &
Christopher A Hall
Templeton Foundation
Press 2000
US\$29.95 Hb 256pp
ISBN 1 890151 45 9
US\$15.95 Pb 248pp
ISBN 1 890151 53 X*

It has been said that if there is just a five per cent advantage in clinical benefit from a certain treatment, then the advantages and disadvantages of this should be discussed with patients. There is now growing evidence that having a religious faith brings considerable advantages. Have we come to the position when it could be considered negligent not to advise our patients to find a faith that stands to help them?

'Realised Religion' is a scholarly book that comprehensively reviews the large volume of literature on the relationship between faith and well-being, whether it be physical or psychological. The effect of both pro and anti religious biases in the

writers of these papers is discussed.

The first chapter on the 'Role of Prayer and Healing' reviews several academic studies. Most found a real advantage in the group prayed for, only a few found no difference.

Articles on 'Faith Healing' are reviewed honestly. Though little evidence is given to suggest patients are being objectively healed of organic pathology today, there is evidence presented that patients can have a feeling of well-being from such experiences. One major study found that the problems helped were usually psychological, physical or religious as opposed to behavioural, social and moral concerns. A major analysis of Catholic Pentecostal healings determined that the healings actually fell well short of 'cures'. However religious faith is correlated with lower blood pressure levels!

The chapter on 'Mental Health' shows clearly that committed, actively religious persons have better overall psychological adjustment, feeling of well-being and high self esteem. They conclude, 'Mental Health workers need to be aware of the positive potential of religious involvement'. Overall 'fully eighty per cent of psychiatric research on religion and health conclude that a faith is advantageous'.

Many studies in 'Life Satisfaction' all show that there is a direct relationship between spiritual commitment and contentment. A number of studies conclude that 'materialistic people generally have been found to be unhappy'. This sense of well-being is accredited to the effect of individual beliefs as well as from active involvement in religious communities and activities.

Further chapters review the evidence on the effect of faith on suicide and alcohol and drug abuse and find clear evidence that faith is advantageous.

The writers conclude, 'The scientific evidence convincingly demonstrates that the natural by-product of religion realised is longer life, less illness, better physical and mental health, more marital stability, less divorce, less suicide and less abuse of alcohol and other substances'.

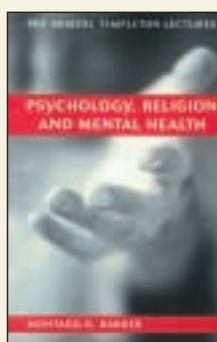
The final chapter is an investigation of the Bible's teaching and reminds us that the pursuit of religious truth and commitment should not be because of health benefits because then religion has become a means to an end since 'Jesus never promoted or advocated such a reversal'. This book is really



a summary of large numbers of trials and surveys. The evidence is strong that doctors should be helping their patients find a vibrant meaningful faith.

Bernard Palmer is a Consultant General Surgeon in Stevenage

Psychology, Religion and Mental Health



*Montagu Barker
Rutherford House 2000
£5 Pb 102pp
ISBN 0 946068 83 6*

Is religion good for your health? This is one of the questions Montagu Barker addresses in this book based on his four

Templeton lectures. The aim of these lectures is to integrate science with modern issues in medicine, psychiatry and religious experience. Dr Barker states that his 'aim has been to challenge the sceptic to be more reflective in analysing spiritual experience, and to challenge religious enthusiasts to be more rigorous in evaluating their own religious experience'.

In the chapter 'Religious Observance, Health and Safety', Dr. Barker cites modern scientific research to show that regular Judaeo-Christian worshippers live longer because of a reduction in the incidence of heart attacks and strokes. Significant benefit to mental health was found with participation in religious services, social support, prayer and perceived relationship with God. Interestingly, *small* amounts of religion can actually be detrimental to mental health, ie the less active the commitment, the higher the levels of worry, anxiety and guilt!

The chapter entitled 'Religious experiences and psychological explanations' gives a fascinating overview of the way religious experience has been perceived by six members of the psychiatric and scientific professions over two centuries. Dr Barker shows how the anti-religious effect of the nineteenth century materialist psychiatrist Sir Henry Maudsley influenced many British psychiatrists to see any unusual religious experience as madness.

Dr Barker's chapter on 'Conversion, Cults and Brainwashing' gives a robust endorsement of the need for the Christian convert to 'please bring your mind with you'. He contrasts the 'call to examine the life, teaching and credentials of Jesus Christ and to make up one's mind as to the validity of the Christian faith' with those who join certain Christian groups which 'can be just as coercive in their persuasive techniques and as pressured in their expectations of specific experiences as the new religious movements'.

The chapter on 'Spiritual Healing and Alternative Therapies' probably tries to cover too much material to do justice to either the two main themes of the heading or indeed the third theme which he introduces, namely the psychotherapist as healer.

I thoroughly recommend Dr Barker's book, since it provides such an excellent understanding to those who are interested in the relationship between the Christian faith and many important mental health issues.

Dominic Beer is Senior Lecturer, Division of Psychological Medicine (Guy's, King's & St Thomas' Institute of Psychiatry) and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist in Challenging Behaviour and Intensive Care Psychiatry (Oxleas NHS Trust)

Alternative Medicine The Christian Handbook



*Donal O'Mathuna &
Walt Larimore
Zondervan 2001
US\$19.99 pb 477pp
ISBN 0 310 23584 7*

This impressive book, endorsed by the Christian Medical Association

of USA, is an honest attempt to evaluate alternative medicine, bringing together both faith and science. It is packed with valuable information and is particularly useful as a handbook for Christian carers who do not have opportunity to research these areas for themselves.

Although evidence based medicine is widely acclaimed, alternative therapies, so often lacking in firm supportive evidence, are increasingly fashionable and steadily encroaching into conventional medicine. In these days when 'informed choice' is an

ethical watchword, this book contains much sorely needed information to help with our decisions.

Using a clear format of four sections, it gives a fascinating overview of the origins and development of both conventional and alternative medicine, the first often deficient in knowledge and the second including therapies based on Eastern religious concepts or pagan rituals and beliefs. It emphasises that many popular alternative therapies, with their ancient origins, are now associated with New Age spirituality and healing techniques.

Included in the second section is a helpful, biblically based and, at times inspirational, discussion concerning the difficult and age-old issues of pain, illness and suffering, followed by some salutary advice on a healthy lifestyle.

Part three examines the principles underlying alternative therapies. These are generally based on the concept of 'universal life force' or energy, eg ch'i (acupuncture), vital energy (homeopathy), prana (ayurvedic medicine) and the chakras or energy centres of yoga. Christians are clearly warned of the potential dangers of becoming involved in therapies dependent upon a non-Christian belief system.

The fourth and largest section makes an important distinction between alternative therapies which are dealt with somewhat concisely and herbs, vitamins and dietary supplements which are dealt with in more meticulous detail. Although these latter remedies may be 'natural', they are not necessarily safe. They are, however, unlikely to lead to harmful spiritual effects, (except possibly via the therapist!) and some may well prove valuable after further evaluation.

Finally, there is a 'quick reference' table matching common symptoms and illnesses with a wide mixture of possible alternative remedies. This is sometimes at variance with information and advice given in previous chapters. I found it disappointing that this therapeutic table does little to dispel the persistent confusion surrounding some areas of alternative medicine. Despite some inconsistencies, however, this book is a useful resource if viewed as a whole and with discernment!

George Smith is a Dermatologist in Reading

BOOKS

Healing



Frances McNutt
Hodder & Stoughton
2001
£7.99 Pb 333 pp
ISBN 0 340 66140 2

This is the ecumenical version of the seminal work on healing, which in its original form stimulated so many of us in our thinking about the healing ministry.

Paradoxically, it is perhaps a shame to have lost the original foreword, which describes the influences which brought Francis to his conviction that the healing ministry is present reality.

The book has a direct approach. The challenge the Sanhedrin faced in Jesus 20 centuries ago is applied to us. Look at the evidence for his healing ministry: is it true? Should we be doing something about it? The Sanhedrin suppressed it; the common people loved it. 'You have hidden the Kingdom from the wise and learned, and revealed it unto little children.' The first chapter is a powerful, yet gentle, defence of the healing ministry, and challenge to engage, not ignore. McNutt clarifies that the need is not for *either* good social/medical structures and facilities *or* Christ's healing at an individual level: it is *both* these things. He touches on the power of counselling, prayer and medicine being used together, and later develops the theme further.

He then looks at all the common resistances to the healing ministry and shakes each one for truth, concluding that the good news is that God still intervenes in our lives to heal, and that he is not constrained by the lack of extraordinary saints through whom to work. He uses believers. He traces the change in perspective about healing, and concludes that God actually does want us whole.

McNutt peppers his book with apt quotations; 'the glory of God is man fully alive', 'even God cannot play on a broken violin', 'every time you meet Jesus in the Gospels, he is either healing someone, or has just come from healing someone, or is on his way to heal someone'. He is

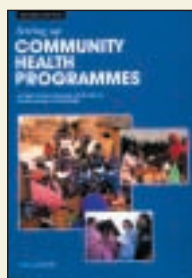
unambiguous in his declarations, but not unbalanced. Hence he accepts that death comes to us all and there is a time not to pray for healing. He accepts that there is a truth in the receptiveness of suffering, quoting Paul's affliction with blindness which opened his spiritual eyes, but he clarifies his conviction that this is the exception rather than the rule.

McNutt also covers deliverance and exorcism in a helpful and encouraging way.

It is quite long, and perhaps a little repetitive at times, but always interesting, always informative and well written, and as topical now as it ever has been. It seems to me to be a foundational text. All it needs is chapter summaries to focus the message more effectively... but writing one's own is good discipline!

Michael Harper is the Medical Director of Burrswood Hospital, Kent

Setting up Community Health Programmes A Practical Manual for use in Developing Countries Second Edition



Ted Lankester
Macmillan Education
Ltd 2000
£12.50 Pb 333pp
ISBN 0 333 67933 4

Dr Lankester packs this manual for community health

workers with practical advice on how to help a community tackle causes of ill health, and treat disease cheaply and effectively using home-grown community health workers.

He starts by explaining the philosophies of Community Based Health Care, and the practicalities of working as partners with the community, and raising awareness about health. Motivation to change comes from understanding the importance of an action, and also from the action becoming 'the fashion'.

In the section of the manual covering management, evaluation and sustainability, his detailed advice is worth heeding. 'Setting up a project is difficult and

expensive. It takes many years. It is better not to start at all than to start, then run out of funds and have to stop. The developing world is full of projects that have been abandoned, and people whose hopes have been disappointed.'

If you are thinking of setting up a programme training community health workers or a community health clinic this manual will be a joy to you. The middle section of the book deals with this in detail following the latest WHO guidelines for interventions. Pointers for further reading are helpfully included. There is also a chapter on AIDS by Ian Campbell and Alison Rader of the Salvation Army, which I found interestingly different from the WHO guidelines.

What I looked for and didn't find, was the sections on expanding our health programmes to include agriculture and animal husbandry for better nutrition, land and tree conservation for greater productivity, and improved housing. Dr Lankester tells us that these should be included in our programmes as soon as we are able.

This book is full of easy-to-read headings, catchy ideas in boxes such as 'cured patients make good teachers', and cartoons which speak a thousand words. If you were wondering how your team could afford to attend the next CBHC conference in your area, maybe you could buy them all a copy of this manual instead, and go through it together.

Janet Lefroy is a General Practitioner in Staffordshire

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The CMF website is now available on CD-ROM: over 30 back issues of *Nucleus* and 10 issues of *Triple Helix* together with ten years of CMF government submissions on ethics, the full set of *CMF Files*, a year's supply of daily devotions, the *Confident Christianity* evangelism training course, *Cyberdoc* web reviews, a quarterly newsround of issues in medical ethics and much more. Most queries can be answered within two or three mouse-clicks from the homepage. To order see the insert.