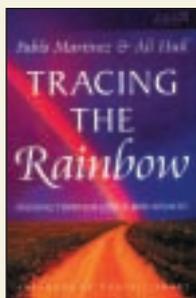


# BOOKS

## Tracing the rainbow *Walking through loss and bereavement*



*Pablo Martinez and Ali Hull*  
*Hull*  
*Spring Harvest, Milton Keynes 2004*  
£7.99 Pb 171pp  
ISBN 1 85078 487 6

A Christian psychiatrist and journalist here

explore the nature of grief after death or divorce, offering telling personal histories to illustrate their points together with practical wisdom and spiritual consolation.

The authors remind us how grief is the other side of love. Its duration matters less than its direction, which is normally towards resolution. The different feelings occur in waves, switching between denial, intense longing and depression before there can be a coming to terms with the loss. Sustained grief often follows the loss of a child or partner (this especially after divorce). Medication should not be used routinely, even when the supporters of those who mourn wish that they would move on more quickly. Intending helpers should start where people are, not where we think they should be. The diagnosis of chronic grief should *only* be made by a specialist.

Helpful consideration is given to the roots and recognition of abnormal grief as well as the ways in which intending comforters can help or hinder recovery. Bereavement in childhood is given special mention. Whatever the age, most people numbed by grief appreciate a sensitive supporter who stands firm as reality strikes and emotions flare. Reinvestment of emotional energy takes time, but practical help along the way means much to those feeling so drained. A prayerful, loving and supportive church can be a great help throughout, but 'we are called to listen, not to preach'.

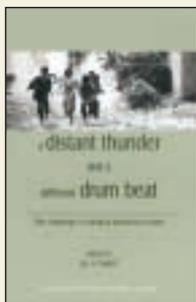
A whole chapter is given to discussion of the painful bereavement entailed in divorce, including the feelings of the affected children. Recovery is messy and complicated, bringing confusion, loneliness and isolation before probable readjustment. Understandable anger will slowly resolve as forgiveness takes over. Family, friends and church members should avoid judgmentalism and exercise grace.

Research indicates that faith significantly helps the progress of grief. The last chapter

is devoted to the specific comfort offered by the Christian faith, and its crucial role in readjustment. Despite some unanswerable questions, Christ's defeat of death offers hope -the rainbow of the title. This is an invaluable little book for sufferers and their supporters alike.

*Janet Goodall is Emeritus Consultant Paediatrician in Stoke-on-Trent*

## A distant thunder and a different drum beat



*Edited by V Philip*  
*EMFI 2002 50pp*  
*Available free of charge*  
*from [www.healthserve.org](http://www.healthserve.org)*  
*or contact [emfi@vsnl.com](mailto:emfi@vsnl.com)*  
*for a copy*

Throughout the world the ways through which

Christian faith influences healthcare services have changed radically and continue to change. This booklet is an analysis of a workshop run by the Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India and the Emmanuel Hospital Association on the changes in India over the past 50 years, and how Christian sponsored healthcare may be most beneficial to Indian communities in the future.

In the past Christian hospitals in India were the major providers of quality healthcare in rural areas. Many have closed as government policies have changed and support from overseas has diminished. Private and corporate healthcare providers have increased. The ability to maintain the old-style mission hospital with its wide community influence has become tenuous.

The challenge in this booklet is how to keep a Christian influence in a society which is looking away from traditional Christian services. Increasing non-Christian influence in healthcare is the distant thunder. To counter such a threat of storm requires an assessment of which drum beat today's Christian soldiers should march to.

The booklet presents an objective critique of the positive and negative sides of healthcare which apply in any country. Statistical evidence is given of the relevance of poverty in ill health. The 'drum beat' response to this is holistic primary healthcare. Nothing new you might say. But do we truly promote and

practise primary and preventive care?

The 'drum beat' is not just about such facts. We are challenged to consider why curative services dominate the preventive when clearly the latter can benefit many more and at far less cost. The answer lies in the application of moral principles to questions of healthcare. How and when is technology relevant? Is healthcare primarily a business? Why should treating diseases of affluence be more profitable than preventing them? Do we know for certain what we are aiming for? 'Where there is no vision, people perish and institutions follow'. While this concise booklet aims to define the challenges and pitfalls of medical mission in India, it similarly confronts all who seek to apply the mind and will of our Creator to the many aspects of healthcare. Medical mission involves all those who seek first the kingdom of God, whether in state, private or mission context.

*Keith Sanders is a former General Secretary of CMF and medical missionary in India*

## Medical ethics today *The BMA's handbook of ethics and law (CD-ROM)*



*British Medical Association*  
*Ethics Department*  
*BMJ Books 2003*  
ISBN 0 72791 829 X

The 1974 edition of the British Medical Association's (BMA) ethics handbook provided guidance on important matters such as whether a consultant or a GP should enter the room first when both visited a patient. Times have changed significantly, and medical ethics with them, and the new edition of the handbook, *Medical Ethics Today* weighs in at over 800 pages. All the book's content is available on this CD-ROM as a PDF eBook.

The BMA receives thousands of ethical enquiries each year and the content of these forms the main focus of *Medical Ethics Today*, which has been put together under the direction of the association's Medical Ethics Committee. It consists of 21 chapters assessing everything from consent and confidentiality, to emergency treatment and research ethics. I was interested to read the sections on 'classic' bioethics topics like care at the end of life, but also found the chapter on education useful.

The text includes a lot of background



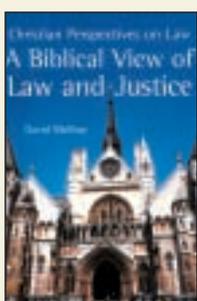
information relevant to each issue and the boxed summaries of key legal cases are particularly helpful. However, the CD-ROM is difficult to navigate as it contains the index of the original book, and the page numbers listed here bear little resemblance to those of the electronic text. There is a search function, but this is painfully slow.

*Medical Ethics Today* has a dual purpose: to equip readers with both skills in ethical reasoning and an understanding of the law and professional guidance. It perhaps succeeds with the latter, but it's difficult to see how it enables readers to formulate their own conclusions particularly when, like many ethics texts, it seeks to satisfy everybody by only appealing to mid-level principles such as autonomy. The authors mainly outline the BMA's position, at the expense of other viewpoints, and there is a worrying tendency to sweeping statements about the views of 'society as a whole'.

The book doesn't provide any easy answers, and a lot of it sits uncomfortably with a biblical bioethic. However it does represent a useful reference work about the state of medical ethics and law in the UK today.

*Helen Barratt is a final year medical student at Imperial College, London*

## A Biblical View of Law and Justice



*David McLroy*  
*Paternoster 2004*  
*£17.99 Pb 238 pp*  
*ISBN 1 84227 267 5*

Christian doctors often rage at the laws which set the ethical pace of their profession. This book is an important inquiry into the legitimacy of that rage, and a lexicon of the words in which the rage can properly be articulated.

The Bible is full of laws. They sometimes seem to be at war with grace. McLroy helps to broker a peace. God seems to like order: his first recorded act was to subdue chaos. Although the Fall twisted things so that the originally ordained model of societal harmony has never been visible, he continued to want humans to live in a regulated way with one another and with himself. Laws for an Israelite theocracy are one thing; laws for a Kingdom which is not of this world are another. There is

an apparent dissonance between what the Old and the New Testament say about the demands of the law in a civilized society. All this is the stuff of McLroy's book. It is immaculately researched and highly readable. It is important reading not only for jaded lawyers, but also for anyone who takes the obligations of citizenship seriously.

I have some quibbles. Most of them boil down to saying that the book is too short. That necessarily means that mere assertion triumphs over argument. Sometimes, though, the unargued assertions become central pillars of later arguments, and those later arguments are unstable as a result. It is frustrating, too, that McLroy does not grapple head on with some of the urgent contemporary questions which his thesis raises. Yes, we should, within limits, submit to rulers, but who, in a Britain whose policies are dictated to a significant extent by the US and the EU, is my ruler? The dissolution of the boundaries of nation states makes dubious the application of theologies designed for nation states. It would have been exciting, too, to see an able intellectual matador like McLroy take firmly by the horns some of the dangerous historical bulls which stampede through any Christian philosophy of law. Theocracies have historically been vile: secular states have generally done a good deal better. I think I know what McLroy would say about this, but I would have liked to hear him say it.

But this is unfair. It is criticising a book for not being the book that it does not purport to be. McLroy has produced a fine work of biblical scholarship. It is a compliment to him that I want him to develop and apply his thesis further.

*Charles Foster is a Barrister in London*

## Informing Choice

*New approaches and ethics for sex and relationships education in Scotland*



*Philip Boydell and Calum MacKellar*  
*Scottish Council on Human Bioethics 2004*  
*£15.00 88 pp*  
*ISBN 0 95468 300 5*  
*www.schb.org.uk for full contents*

This is a highly useful resource for anyone interested in sex education, whether or not

they are working in Scotland. Within its mere 88 pages of densely packed text, it covers a wide range of topics.

Consisting of two parts, the first summarises the sexual health scene in Scotland and then looks at the biological, psychological and social factors influencing the initiation of teenage sexual activity. The social factors examined include family systems, peer pressure, the media and socio-economics. There then follows a fascinating comparison and contrast of sex education in the Netherlands, USA and Uganda, applying lessons from successes in these countries to future policy in Scotland.

The second half of the book considers the often neglected area of the ethics of sex education, firstly using the well-known ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and best interests and then looking at the effect of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. 19 recommendations to the Scottish Executive (the Scottish parliament) conclude the book. I have no doubt that if even half of these were adopted, sexual health in Scotland would be transformed for the better. The recommendations include giving information on the effectiveness of condoms in preventing STIs; giving information on sex within the context of love and relationships; promotion of programmes that encourage young people to have educational goals; promotion of communication between parents and children regarding sex and relationships; promotion of delay and abstinence until a young person is older and more able to make informed decisions.

There are a few little irritations which betray the 'in-house' nature of this publication. Testosterone is given a capital 'T' in mid-sentence and there are some printing failures in the bar charts. The high price probably reflects the production costs (the shiny paper feels expensive) and limited expected circulation. It is a great pity that this well-researched and helpful book which must have taken months of work to put together, has had so little marketing. Though published in February 2004, I had not heard of it until my review copy arrived in December 2004! It is a real goldmine of useful information however with nine pages of references and is well worth ordering even in 2005. I hope the Scottish Executive have all had copies.

*Trevor Stammers is a General Practitioner in West London*