



Faith, Spirituality, and Medicine

Toward the making of the healing practitioner
Dana E King

- Roundhouse Publishing 2000
- £10.57 Pb 126pp
- ISBN 0 78901 1158

Imagine working in a country where 77% of people want their physician to address their spiritual concerns, 61% say that faith is the most important influence in their lives and almost 50% want their physician to pray with them. That country is the United States of America.

Faith, Spirituality, and Medicine examines the degree to which we can and ought to involve spiritual matters in our work. It challenges us to re-connect spirituality and medicine. Although written by a Christian doctor, the author is restrained in promoting Christianity, and I did not find anything that

would offend a believer in a non-Christian faith.

We may feel the silencing shadow of the GMC over us when discussing faith with patients. One chapter examined this issue but left many unanswered questions. Every chapter is brief, summarised, fully referenced and includes discussion questions.

I am grateful for the chance to read this book. We do need to talk more, research more, and publish more in the academic press in order to make headway in this area.

John Holden is a GP in St Helens, Lancashire



Heresies

Against progress and other illusions
John Gray

- Granta 2004
- £8.99 Pb 224pp
- ISBN 1 86207 7185

Heresies comprises 24 essays, originally written for the *New Statesman*. The heresies discussed are intellectual and cultural ones and Gray himself does not profess any religion.

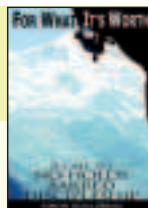
The essays fall into three groups: progress, terrorism, and political commentary. Gray adopts a worldviews approach in many of these essays, acknowledging similarities between belief systems of secular humanism and religion. He recognises the assumptions that lie behind secular humanism and exposes them as pale imitations of Christian doctrines.

Gray acknowledges that religion appears to be 'hard-wired in the human animal' and states

that secularism is merely a substitute of one religion for another. Consequently, the militant evangelism of secular humanists is a mark of the unspoken contradictions and fragility of their beliefs.

The book does have its problems. By its nature, it is a little repetitive. One of the essays infuriated me in its advocacy of torture in combating terrorism. Nevertheless, this book will provide much food for thought, insight into the worldview that dominates our culture, and a significant analysis of the problems within secular humanism.

Chris Knight works for UCCF in Leicestershire



For What It's Worth

A Call to 'No Holds Barred' Discipleship
Simon Guillebaud

- Monarch Books 2006
- £7.99 Pb 192pp
- ISBN 1 85424 7603

This book is an honest account from the heart of a man given over to God's service. Simon is not a doctor. He went to Burundi in 1998 as an inexperienced missionary and has since worked humbly with the local church. He has learned many lessons on cost, commitment and discipleship as he ministers in this small high tension African country. He has known the suffering and violent death of Christian colleagues as well as personal death threats.

Simon draws widely from the Bible to show the level of service God demands of us. He is honest about his own spiritual highs and lows, and

about the realities of African life. There is a great mix of anecdotes about saints, both great and small - Tozer, Walt Disney's widow, Michael Green, C S Lewis and Desmond Tutu, to name but a few.

This book has changed my life. I read it when, after ten years in Malawi, I was spiritually weary and needed encouragement and challenge. I immediately went and bought ten copies to give away.

Chris Lavy worked in Malawi and is now Visiting Professor of Orthopaedics in Oxford



Integrating Spirituality in Health and Social Care

Perspectives and practical approaches
Peter Speck and Wendy Greenstreet (ed)

- Radcliffe Publishing 2006
- £21.95 Pb 177pp
- ISBN 1 85775 6460

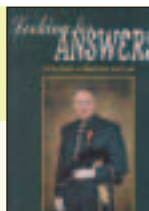
This book, comprising four sections, gives an excellent overview of what is understood by 'spirituality' and 'spiritual care' in the UK NHS.

The first section explores published literature to help us understand what is meant by 'spirituality' in the context of health care provision. I felt comfortable with the authors' interpretation of spiritual care as a part of multi-dimensional care. The second section is practice focused: Greenstreet suggests that spiritual care is largely delivered throughout a covenantal doctor-patient relationship. The third section attempts to make existentialist philosophy accessible to practising professionals. Care that

is sensitive to religious and cultural diversity is acknowledged as important. Diet, physical examination and specific cultural and religious terminal care requirements are discussed. The final section illustrates innovative ways of supporting spiritual care, such as biographical techniques and art therapy.

This book prompts you to consider how you could identify spiritual needs and provide better spiritual support to your patients, which may of course give you opportunities to tell of your own faith and why you care as you do.

Scott Murray is Senior Lecturer in Palliative Care in Edinburgh



Looking for Answers

A Christian in Medicine and Law
Tony Cole

- Memoir Club 2004
- £17.50 Hb 224pp
- ISBN 1 84104 0657

Looking for Answers is an intriguing autobiography of a Catholic paediatrician – awarded a papal knighthood for his work – who is also a magistrate, political activist and founder member of several charities.

The early chapters review his childhood, training and paediatric work. Cole has lived through major changes in healthcare and gives perceptive comments.

The later chapters describe Cole's work with the Guild of Catholic Doctors and the setting up of the Lejeune clinic for Down's syndrome children. The discussion about his work as a magistrate is most interesting

for anyone wanting to learn about the legal system.

There is a brief section on English Catholic Church history. Some serious subjects are addressed but there are plenty of anecdotes to lighten the tone.

As some of Cole's work has been in ethical issues, this book would be a good introduction to those unfamiliar with medico-ethical history from 1984. It is valuable for its account of how one Christian has tried to bring faith and hard questions together. It also reminds us how much useful service can be crammed into one life.

Greg Gardner is a GP in Birmingham



Pure

Sex and relationships God's way
Linda Marshall

- Inter-Varsity Press 2005
- £6.99 Hb 144pp
- ISBN 1 84474 0900

How often and how well does the church teach young people about sex and relationships? It is refreshing to see a book that uses a sensitive biblical approach.

This short and readable book is split into six chapters with excellent biblical referencing: Pure Perfection (Genesis 1 and 2), Pure Rebellion (Genesis 3), Pure Planets (Colossians 3), Pure Sex (1 Thessalonians 4), Pure Gifts (1 Corinthians 7) and Pure Forgiveness (Isaiah 53). The final chapter is vital for any book on this topic as, thankfully, God provides hope for all of us when we fail to live life his way.

The book was originally developed from a course offered

to students in the Christian Union at Nottingham University. What sets it apart is that it has a website from which materials can be downloaded for running a *Pure* course.

These include PowerPoint presentations, handouts and more. I hope and pray that many of our churches use *Pure* as a resource for their members. This should result in authentic Christian witness that no longer blends in with our prevailing culture but stands out from it.

Richard Barr is Director of Love for Life and a GP in Lurgan, Co Armagh



Religions, Culture & Healthcare

A Practical Handbook for Use in Healthcare Environments
Susan Hollins

- Radcliffe 2006
- £19.95 Pb 116pp
- ISBN 1 85775 7556

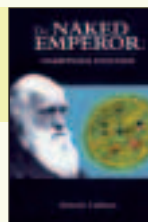
This book aims to present an overview of religious groups to help deliver sensitive care to patients. The first three chapters provide a more theoretical justification as to why this should be necessary in contemporary Britain. The rest of the volume is a well-organised list of stereotypical attitudes and behaviour.

Each faith group is examined according to 17 reference points, for example background and beliefs, religious obligations, food and dress. The book thus aims to prevent insensitivity in dealing with individuals from particular backgrounds. This aim is laudable but the

inevitable breadth of commitment within each religious group runs the risk of treating all adherents as if they were zealous. I am puzzled why Jehovah's Witnesses and Rastafarians are included within the 'other groups' section of the chapter concerning Christians, having been described as 'distinct from mainstream Christianity'.

Although I will not rush into buying a copy for my practice library, it could be helpful on a hospital ward.

Paul Dakin is a GP in London



The Naked Emperor

Darwinism exposed
Anthony Latham

- Janus 2005
- £9.95 Pb 275pp
- ISBN 1 85756 635 1

This book chronicles the author's personal journey with Darwinism and is a fascinating summary of the main problems of standard Darwinian evolution. Latham is a GP in the Outer Hebrides and a CMF member. Accepting Darwinism at school and university, he 'enjoyed disputing with Christians about evolution...to me it was simply a knock-down argument against belief'. He became a Christian in 1982 and, from that point, began engaging seriously with Darwinism.

The origin of life, Cambrian explosion, fossil record gaps and irreducible complexity are discussed, as are the paucity of evidence for beneficial mutation

and the impotence of natural selection to produce new body plans and structures. He distinguishes between observable micro-evolution and macro-evolution for which evidence is painfully absent. One chapter is given over to a detailed critique of Dawkins' classic, *The Blind Watchmaker*. Latham states: 'It reminded me of the story of the emperor's clothes...'

Although an interested amateur, Latham has read prodigiously on both sides of the debate and has skilfully and dispassionately pulled together the amassed learning of many eminent biologists.

Mark Pickering is CMF Head of Student Ministries and a London GP