



**The new atheism**

*10 arguments that don't hold water*  
Michael Poole

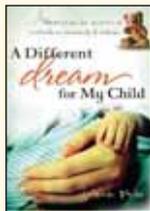
- Lion Hudson 2009
- £3.99 Pb 96pp
- ISBN 978 0 74595 393 9

**T**his excellent little book tackles ten assertions made by Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and others in recent polemics against God. Each chapter considers a different topic, convincingly demonstrating the limitations of atheist arguments about faith, memes, evidence, types of explanations and the nature of science.

Sometimes, the illustrating stories are not so relevant or useful. The first chapter seems addressed to a 'Straw Man' as Dawkins and others argue that religion is evil because it is the cause of evil actions by believers, not simply because believers do evil things. More frustratingly, arguments are examined too

briefly. In a book this length, it's perhaps to be expected. But sometimes unwarranted assumptions are made of the reader's knowledge of the concepts involved, especially concerning the anthropic principle and infinite regress. One is often left itching for more explanation to flesh out important ideas raised so tantalisingly. This would be good if it pushed us to read further, but although the book is thoroughly referenced, there is no recommended 'next level' reading list. Overall, though, I strongly recommend this as introduction or quick revision. It's reliable, easy to read and understand - great value.

*Giles Cattermole is CMF Head of Student Ministries*



**A Different Dream for My Child**

*Meditations for parents of critically or chronically ill children*  
Jolene Philo

- Discovery House USA 2009
- £10.99 Pb 267pp
- ISBN 978 1 57293 307 1

**T**his book was written from the author's experience of having a critically ill newborn and the years of isolation, hospital admissions and operations that followed.

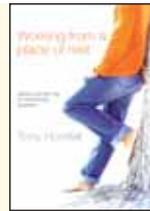
The spiritual wilderness and lack of spiritual support Philo experienced spurred her to write these simple meditations on caring for a critically or chronically ill child. It is frank, humorous at times, and does not avoid tough issues like preparing for and dealing with the death of a child.

Each meditation is preceded by a verse of scripture, and ends with a brief prayer and reflection. Meditations are grouped thematically around headings like 'Hospital Life' and 'Juggling Two

Worlds', so are ideal for readers to dip into at different times. There is also a companion website with further resources and from which the book can be ordered ([www.differentdream.com](http://www.differentdream.com)).

Philo does not focus on her story alone but relates the stories of other parents with seriously ill children, of relatives, and of the nurses and doctors who cared for her child. This gives a rich range of perspectives and insights and can enable both families and health professionals better to understand the spiritual needs and questions raised by these circumstances.

*Steve Fouch is CMF Head of Allied Professions Ministries*



**Working from a place of rest**

*Jesus and the key to sustaining ministry*  
Tony Horsfall

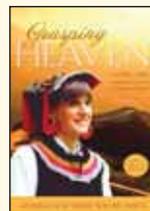
- BRF 2010
- £6.99 Pb 135pp
- ISBN 978 1 84101 544 6

**T**he paradox in the title draws the reader into this book. Horsfall draws on his extensive experience of training to provide guidance for sustainable Christian life. He uses the example of Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 as Jesus 'working from a place of rest'. Here we find the Lord at rest, refreshing his bodily needs. His journey had been long but even as he rested, he found the energy to share something of his Lordship with a sinful woman.

Horsfall likens life to a journey and recognises that in the task of

Christian ministry, we can operate on human effort rather than allowing ourselves sustenance through the Spirit. To avoid exhaustion, we must learn to rest in Jesus and prayerfully depend on him. As we receive his Spirit, our rest becomes the launch pad for a life of active service in his name. The wisdom in this book is invaluable for anybody involved in Christian ministry; it should be read in its entirety again and again to remind us of the tremendous partnership we have with Christ Jesus.

*Elizabeth Croton is a GP in Birmingham*



**Grasping Heaven**

*A Young Doctor's Journey to China and Beyond*  
Annelies & Einar Wilder-Smith

- Armour Publishing 2010
- £8.33 Pb 320pp
- ISBN 978 9 81427 019 9

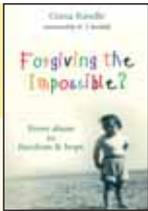
**G**rasping Heaven recounts two great adventures in the life of Tami Fisk, a brilliant young Christian doctor from the USA. Despite her gifts for medical research, Tami chose to serve and love the marginalised poor in a mountainous area of southwest China where both medical facilities and living conditions were basic.

The other adventure was not her choice. Back in the USA doing a medical fellowship, she discovered a melanoma behind her ear. While she had successfully battled to adapt to the customs and lifestyles of the Chinese and her international colleagues, battling against cancer was far harder. The story shows that whatever life brought, Tami had a special

shield in her faith in God. Whether from her Bible or received in her prayer times, she knew how to draw from a very deep spiritual well. Such was her example, that when both adventures came to an end, those around her were richer for having known her.

The authors were two medical colleagues with whom Tami worked, lived, and grew in faith. This story will inform and probably amuse those working in a cross-cultural context, and medics will be interested in her fascinating medical career. Above all, Tami's story will warm and challenge all readers.

*Joy Lankester is a careers consultant working with universities in the south east*



**Forgiving the Impossible?**  
*From abuse to freedom and hope*  
Greta Randle

- IVP 2010
- £7.99 Pb 144pp
- ISBN 978 1 84474 433 6

This is a sobering story for those who think that sexual abuse of children takes place only outside the church, or mainly in one sector of the church, if the church is involved at all. It happens in evangelical churches too.

It's a courageous book on many levels. The author writes under her real name and for her to tell her life story in this kind of detail makes her very vulnerable. She also heads a national Christian counselling organisation. This book is moreover a tribute to her family, friends and church members, many of whom would

have had to agree for this tale to be told with such openness.

Most of all, the book is a tribute to the redeeming love of God for whom no pit of darkness is too deep that he cannot rescue us from it. This is a book to bring hope to adults abused as children, and their families. CMF members who have been abused themselves, as well as those who are GPs or psychiatrists, will find it of particular value.

*Trevor Stammers is the Programme Director in Medical Ethics, St Mary's University College, London*



**Sexual Issues**  
*Understanding and advising in a Christian context*  
Joanne Marie Greer and Brendan Geary (Eds)

- Kevin Mayhew Ltd 2010
- £34.99 Pb 464pp

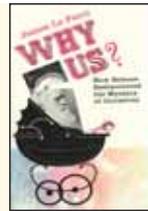
This is an engagingly written, substantial book from 13 international specialists. Its strapline should attract Christian health professionals and pastoral ministers, but will it meet their expectations?

Certainly, it addresses contemporary issues only, and references recent quality research. The discussion of sexual development and practice is largely in the context of the deChristianised moral climate of westernised countries, current ecumenical church postures, and the impact of the internet. Key issues including gender identity, sexual preferences, abuse and perversions are given detailed and compassionate treatment. The implications of cohabitation are explored sympathetically, as are the many intrusions that threaten

to destabilise marriage.

So, the book provides a good basis for understanding how people might see their sexual issues and the so-called 'enlightened' sexual agendas of our society. However, those who believe the Bible is God's Word will be disappointed that the theological reflections view Scripture through the lens of experience, rather than applying Scripture to our confused sexual mores. Surprisingly, the authors have limited themselves to Jesus' response in the Gospels and they conclude that Jesus had nothing directly to say. The rest of the Bible is excluded. Thus, this book may help understanding but its advice lacks biblical clarity.

*Paul Adams is a pharmaceutical physician and pastor in Surrey*



**Why Us?**  
*How Science Rediscovered the Mystery of Life - and Ourselves*  
James Le Fanu

- Harper Press 2009
- £18.99 Hb 303pp
- ISBN 978 0 00712 027 7

We have a problem. Look at most scientific papers. While the paper starts with a question and proposes an answer, it ends by recommending further work. Although it has increased our bounty of known knowns, it also identifies some new known unknowns, and gives us a sense of other unknown unknowns out there. As Karl Popper pointed out, knowledge is finite, ignorance infinite.

Does this matter? Le Fanu believes so. For him, the problem is that all these unknowns reduce the value of the knowns. For example, we know a huge amount about the human genome, but the pace of transferring this into useful 'things' is slow, because we are

increasingly aware of how much we don't understand. Take the brain as another example. We can examine, dissect, scan, and record its electrical activity. But ask about consciousness, happiness, or our appreciation of love, and we have little genuine revelation.

Le Fanu does a great job of showing how our thirst for knowledge has led to remarkable discoveries, but concludes the most fundamental discovery of all is that we are extraordinarily mysterious beings in a vast and mysterious universe. Science has revealed mystery. I doubt anyone would agree with all his claims, but well worth a read.

*Pete Moore is a science communicator based in Bristol*



**Growing up ... growing wise**  
Lovewise 2009

- £20 Resource pack (available from the Lovewise office)
- info@lovewise.org.uk 0191 281 3636 www.lovewise.org.uk
- ISBN - N/A

Many parents are uncomfortable with relationships teaching delivered from an overtly secular standpoint that promotes a strongly liberal morality.

This is a four-part interactive lesson resource for school years 5 and 6. Focusing on a couple who are engaging and relaxed as they discuss their marriage in a positive but realistic manner, it covers friendship, puberty, love, marriage and the facts of life from a Christian perspective. Though some teachers might be wary of references to God, these are not heavy because the resource is aimed at state schools. Developed by an experienced team, it contains everything needed for a

lesson, including PowerPoint slides, video clips, lesson plans and worksheets. The video clips begin by exploring children's aspirations for adult relationships and are an excellent resource you might use outside school. While many children don't come from a stable home, there is no implied criticism of other backgrounds.

Clearly placing sex within the context of a positive view of marriage, this resource is high quality and of great value. We'll definitely be recommending it to our children's school!

*Tim and Naomi Hinks have four children and work in respiratory medicine and general practice in Southampton*