

**A Thorn in My Mind**  
*Mental Illness, Stigma and The Church*  
Cathy Wild

- Instant Apostle, 2012
- £8.00 Pb 200pp
- ISBN 9780955913525

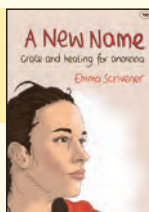
A good book to buy for yourself, or for someone whose family member or friend is struggling with mental illness. But don't be too quick to buy it for a depressed family member or friend. As the author says, there are many books on that subject; this is not one of them.

The first half is autobiographical. Cathy Wilde introduces herself, writes of the emergence and effects of severe mental illness on her and her family, varied reactions from those in the church, her experience of various treatments and how her illness impacted on her faith. It is written from a position of recovery with insightful observations of her own thoughts and the behaviour of those around her.

The second half shifts to mental illness itself – a brief history, occurrences in Scripture, its symptoms, classification and treatment, and mental health services. All this is with knowledge that comes from working as a psychiatrist, but written for those unfamiliar with medicine or psychiatry. It is accurate but not complex and succeeds, I think.

The subtitle 'Mental Illness, Stigma and The Church' is, in my opinion, an important and relevant subject. It certainly doesn't limit the target population of potential. An informative book for just about everyone.

**Richard Day** is a Clinical Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist based in Dundee



**A New Name**  
*Grace and healing for anorexia*  
Emma Scrivener

- IVP, 2012
- £7.99 Pb 176pp
- ISBN 9781844745869

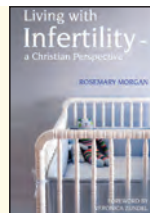
A beautifully written autobiographical account, this book lifts the lid on the inner turmoil of anorexia in a manner which is highly illuminating and frankly terrifying. With great honesty Emma tells of her pressing desire to 'fit in' and the overwhelming quest for control which takes hold of her. An insidious start becomes an unstoppable juggernaut.

Anorexia becomes a religion promising freedom: fat is the unforgiveable sin, salvation comes through a relentless pursuit of diet and exercise. It is a gospel of works which leads to slavery and self destruction. Will recovery come through re-feeding and trying to be 'a good girl'? Where

does God fit in? There are no trite answers. An easy but uncomfortable read, this book deals with the physical, emotional and spiritual issues with which Emma wrestled, and the breakthrough which came with the discovery that God was so much bigger.

Not every point will be transferable to each individual with anorexia, but many will. She deals with the inevitable trauma which the whole family face when one member has an eating disorder. Obsessive behaviour, to which anorexia is often linked, is also mentioned. I highly recommend this book.

**Maggy Spence** is a part-time GP in Chelmsford



**Living with Infertility**  
*A Christian Perspective*  
Rosemary Morgan

- Bible Reading Fellowship, 2013
- £7.99 Pb 144pp
- ISBN 9780857460837

The key to this book is, unsurprisingly, in its title. Having read several books on infertility that focused on treatments and options available, and the rights and wrongs of each, I was half expecting the same of this. I could not have been more wrong.

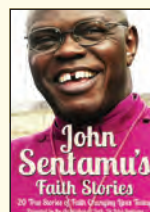
The focus is purely on how to cope with living with infertility as a Christian. It is not full of answers on how to overcome infertility. Instead it aims to help readers deal with the emotional experiences infertility brings: the unanswered 'why', pain, anger, blame, jealousy, confusion and letting go (some of the chapter headings).

This book is born out of a journey that the author, a lay

preacher, has made herself. It is a very personal account of the struggles she has, written within the context of her faith and deep trust in God, who cares and has answered, although not always in the ways she expected or wanted. Each chapter is built around specific emotions and considers the biblical perspective on those feelings, ending with a short prayer.

The author writes with a specific readership in mind – Christians facing or living with infertility – but undoubtedly this will be insightful reading for anyone wanting to understand and support couples, especially women, in such situations.

**Philippa Taylor** is CMF Head of Public Policy



**John Sentamu's Faith Stories**  
*20 true stories of faith changing lives today*  
John Sentamu

- Darton, Longman and Todd, 2013
- £8.99 Pb 160pp
- ISBN 9780232529784

20 brief life stories in 135 pages – almost all from the North East of England – all from an Anglican background of varied churchmanship – nine of them ordained – five of them young – three doctors – surprisingly all white British (except the archbishop).

John Sentamu has written a brief introduction to each story. Although written in the first person they are ghost written by a single female author, which gives a certain predictability to an otherwise wide range of experiences.

As a snapshot of contemporary Anglican life in the North East and of God at work

through ordinary people, it makes a good read. However the brevity of each profile inevitably leads to a rather superficial take on these dedicated lives.

As a book to give to others seeking meaning or direction it would be useful. It would fit well in a surgery waiting room or hospital chapel library.

**Peter Pattison** is a retired GP based in Brockenhurst