

BOOKS

Doing Member Care Well - Perspectives and Practices from around the World

Ed. Kelly O'Donnell

William Carey Library Publishing 2002

\$19.99Pb 566 pp

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What is member care? The editor defines it as 'the ongoing investment of resources by mission agencies, churches and other organizations for the nurture and development of

missionary personnel. It focuses on everyone in missions (missionaries, support staff, children and families) and does so ... from recruitment through to retirement'. Its aim is 'to further equip sending organizations as they support their mission/aid personnel'. This should lead to a strengthening of mission and enable missionaries to grow as people, hopefully preventing premature return from the field.

The book contains some 50 chapters written by a wide range of authors from a variety of backgrounds and from both old and new sending countries. They include pastors, medics, personnel directors, psychologists, church leaders and missionaries themselves. Some will be well known to CMF members, such as Mike Jones of EIHC (Elphinstone International Health Centre), Debbie Lovell Hawker, Annie Hargreaves of Interhealth and Rhiannon Lloyd.

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 explains something of the nature of member care and puts it in a biblical and historical context. Part 2 brings insights from the five major regions of the world. Part 3 looks at the various aspects of the provision of member care. It includes best practice guidelines on member care provision, health and safety abroad, training and development, team building, the care of families and missionary children, finance, crisis/contingency planning and debriefing. Most chapters end with some items for 'reflection and discussion'.

Paula O'Keefe's chapter on 'Surviving war as a care giver' is challenging. Kelly's chapter on 'Giants, foxes, wolves and flies' caught my eye and set me thinking. Rhiannon Lloyd's

input on bringing the cross to bear in the aftermath of the Rwandan holocaust is almost unbelievable. Debbie Lovell Hawker's chapter on critical incident debriefing is excellent. These people are 'pure gold' and have much to teach us.

The breadth of experience and the depth of wisdom shared by the contributors to this book are impressive. Those working overseas need our prayers and support so we need to develop the expertise to provide it. For all of us involved in caring for people who are or have recently been working overseas, it is a mine of information and help. We would do well to learn and put into practice the ideals that it sets before us.

Peter Armon is CMF Overseas Support Secretary and formerly a Consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Genius, Grief and Grace

Gaius Davies

Christian Focus Publications 2001

£8.99 Pb 383pp

ISBN 1 85792 630 7



The notion that personal pain can be productive is generally unpopular, but here Dr Gaius Davies shares his professional perceptions about eleven afflicted yet famous people. With names well known to a

Christian readership their genius has not often been attributed to a common background of suffering.

Dr Davies traces the possible connections between famous accomplishment and bipolar mood swings (as for Lord Shaftsbury) or obsessive-compulsive traits (in John Bunyan) as well as other personality problems affecting great people. He tells us about three single women who came to fame: Christina Rossetti, Frances Ridley Havergal and Amy Carmichael and, at least in part, attributes their ultimate success to sublimation of otherwise unfilled sexuality, a rarely discussed possibility nowadays. The last chapter in the book is devoted to the life of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Perhaps the writer's personal relationship with his subject

has made it harder for him to give quite the same orderly appraisal here as for the other ten, although for each and all he has sought to portray them 'warts and all.'

Running as a gold cord through the sometimes-dark passages of these eleven lives is their desire to love and serve God. The message that something good finally emerged from all their difficulties is, after all, the message of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said to each of them, as to us, 'Follow me'. It is a testimony to his grace that, like a skilled surgeon, he is able to use a selection of strangely shaped instruments to fulfil some of his complex operations.

The occasional misprints and poor quality paper should not detract from a book to encourage all those who work with, or suffer from, disturbed personalities. It clearly illustrates that our weaknesses can be a channel for Christ's strength.

Janet Goodall is a retired Consultant Paediatrician and former CMF President

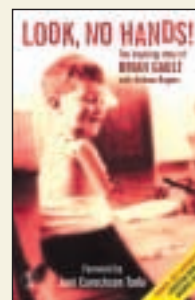
Look No Hands

Brian Gault with Helena Rogers

Hodder & Stoughton 2000

£6.99 Pb 200 pp

ISBN 0 34074 636 X



Although born without arms as a result of thalidomide, Brian Gault's description of his life is warm and encouraging, intertwining the themes of his Christian faith and living without arms. His story still has

pertinence today. Thalidomide is used in developing countries to treat leprosy but sadly, inadequate explanations, or written explanations to illiterate people, lead to affected children being born. Proceeds from the book go to help these children.

Much of the book is about his struggle to be free of artificial limbs. I nearly cried as he describes being left in hospital aged two years for artificial limb training. He endures hardships that make me wonder about the sufferings of today's prosthesis wearers. He was expected to maintain a low weight to



maximise efficiency of his limbs, leading to two miseries – his calorie restricted diet and squeezing into his limbs after his mum had fed him up in the holidays!

He later realises that his mother loves him just as he is, but you can understand why he should doubt this. Later he describes his desire to 'be himself' rather than be forced to wear artificial limbs that restrict his abilities rather than enhance them. This reminds me of the need to retain the patient's perspective of interventions, as we cannot assume that our own normality is preferable. Brian Gault eventually gives up artificial limbs at 13, the same year that he discovers Jesus loves him.

The landmarks of his Christian life such as youth groups, conferences and Christian service, will be shared by many, although solving problems such as how to get your shirt tucked in at Bible College will be new! He goes on to learn how to use new technology, such as his foot-steered car and word processor, to liberate his energy and time.

This is a warm and readable book – read it and pass it on.

Caroline Hutchings is a Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine in Southampton

Caring Well: Religion, Narrative and Health Care Ethics.

Ed. David H Smith

Westminster John Knox Press 2000

£ 17.99 Pb 276pp

ISBN 0 66422 256 0



Doctors have long struggled with ethical dilemmas such as the distinction between killing and letting die. This book uses narratives, like those written by two compassionate physicians about dying

patients, to explore doctors' motives and to come to a clearer understanding of this difficult boundary. Other essays look at the perspectives of hospital Chaplains on organ donation, and help to ground the whole ethics of transplantation in the context of managing individual grief.

The book is a collection of essays that explore narratives from literature, personal commentaries or interviews of professionals and patients. Three major areas of care, each with different ethical conflicts, are addressed. These are the care of children, organ transplantation and care of the dying. Most of the religious input is from a Christian perspective, although there is one chapter based on the reflections of Jewish physicians.

The authors are mainly Professors of Religion, Ethics or Philosophy, with one clinician, and all are American. Differences in cultural and legal background will therefore make this book less relevant for doctors based in other countries. Furthermore, the first few chapters focus on the methodology and as such are directed more at fellow-ethicists and theologians. Readers of *Triple Helix* might well find it better to start at Part Two and leave these early chapters to the end.

This book is not a comfortable read, but it will certainly raise many interesting questions and help us reflect on how our own spiritual experience influences our care.

Carl Whitehouse is Professor of Teaching Medicine in the Community in Manchester

From Medicine to Miracle – How My Faith Overcame Cancer

Dr Mary Self and Rod Chaytor

Harper Collins, 2001.

£17.99 Pb 259 pp

ISBN 0 00711 563 6



As a teenager, Mary Self developed a rare tumour of her leg, subsequently shown to be a mesenchymal chondrosarcoma. She had an above-knee amputation. Sixteen years later, when she might reasonably have

thought she was cured, she was unfortunate enough to develop a lung metastasis. This was successfully removed by surgery, while raising new doubts about her prognosis. Later that year, she developed pelvic pain. CT and isotope scanning now revealed a shadow on her

pelvic bone. Her doctors assumed it was a further metastasis, giving her a very poor prognosis. Subsequent scanning, however, showed that the shadow had decreased in size. Over the next few months, it disappeared completely. An estimated 10,000 people around the world had been encouraged to pray for her healing. Their prayers, it seems, were answered though not, it should be said, in the instantaneous manner of New Testament miracles.

Dr Self told her surgeon that she believed it was a miracle. He replied, 'I will buy that.' He is quoted on the dust cover as saying, 'I have been a consultant for eleven years and have not seen a case like it.' The book does not report his further comments, which were quoted at the end of a double-page feature in the *Daily Mirror* in December 1999, written by the book's co-author, Rod Chaytor. There he recorded the surgeon as saying: 'She is saying it is a miracle. I am saying it is unexplained. It is important to say we do not have proof this was a metastasis in the pelvis. Everyone assumed it was on the basis of the scans.'

A biopsy had in fact been performed. The book describes her meeting with this surgeon to be told the result (p239) but obfuscates the issue, leading the reader to believe that it was malignant. She states, 'It has been confirmed three times now' (p240). In the *Daily Mirror* article, however, Mr Chaytor reported that the biopsy did not confirm a metastasis and that the specialist believed the scans 'weren't completely consistent' with a secondary. Why did he not include these statements in the book? The answer, it seems, is that they undermine the whole story.

This reviewer was invited by BBC TV to comment on her case. I accepted on the condition that Dr Self gave me written permission to clarify these details with her surgeon. There is no substitute for having direct access to the medical evidence when investigating such claims. Despite three requests, she did not agree and the interview was cancelled.

I found the book tiresome reading. It describes the endless roller-coaster ride of her emotions, with overwhelming despair, rather than faith, at every set back. More disappointing was the failure to be open and straightforward about the truth.

Peter May is a General Practitioner in Southampton