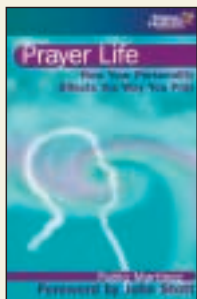


BOOKS

Prayer Life. How your



personality affects the way you pray

Pablo Martinez
Paternoster Press 2001
£7.99 Pb 156pp
ISBN 1 85078 436 1

'I would like my readers to think of prayer without guilt...prayer should not be just one more burden in life, but a pleasure to enjoy' writes Pablo Martinez in his introduction. His book goes a long way towards meeting this aim.

Combining his psychiatric training and experience as a pastor, Martinez explores why people with different personalities pray in different ways. Personality types are categorised using two axes to represent four psychological functions: thinking-feeling and sensation-intuition. A primary and auxiliary function can be identified (one from each axis), giving eight types, which are then doubled by the extrovert/introvert classification. As Martinez describes the different types, it is easy to identify with them and consider the various pitfalls and strengths of your temperament.

This approach helps alleviate the guilt that many feel about the way they pray (or fail to pray), a feeling that is often augmented by comparisons with others' prayer lives. Martinez urges us to be more accepting of others and ourselves: 'We are not required to like our temperament, but to work through it for God's glory in our lives', and allow others to do likewise. However, Martinez also offers guidance to help us develop in prayer; having identified our areas of weakness, we are better equipped to overcome them.

He moves on to explore the therapeutic value of prayer. In the last section of the book he provides a defence of Christian prayer against the charge that it is mere auto-suggestion, or no different from Eastern meditation.

John Stott has written in the foreword to this book, 'Here is a psychiatrist who is committed to Christ, knows his Bible, rejoices in Christ's cross, has a lively sympathy for struggling Christians and has much wisdom born of rich pastoral experience...I cannot imagine any reader failing to be helped by it, as I have been

myself.' This book is warmly recommended for personal reading, practice library and passing on to Christian patients or church members.

Peter Pattison is ICMDA Regional Secretary for Europe and the former USSR

Prayers for healing: A Burrswood companion



Michael Fulljames and Michael Harper
Canterbury Press,
Norwich 2003
£9.99 Pb 141 pp
ISBN 1 85311 503 7

After many years of experience at the Burrswood Christian Centre for Health Care and Ministry, the authors of this little book offer a series of morning meditations with relevant evening prayers to cover 31 days. As chaplain and doctor, their collaboration typifies the Burrswood aim for spiritual and medical care to go together when facing the mystery of healing and suffering. Situated near Tunbridge Wells, Burrswood is an independent hospital and outpatients' department that offers a variety of services including rehabilitation, counselling and palliative care, as well as Christian worship and healing.

We are taken through the sometimes raw emotions experienced by many sufferers at the onset of a disorder, or when awaiting diagnosis and prognosis, both favourable and fatal. A doctor's helpful or hurtful attitude is also made a matter for praise or prayer. Whatever the expected outcome, the sufferer is encouraged to move towards total trust in the God who, through the cross, has identified with human suffering and is able to use it to bring about wholeness of spirit.

There is no unrealistic insistence that healing and cure must go together, so different prayers express fear and acceptance of death as well as gratitude for recovery. Illness can produce many mood swings, yet not everyone experiences them all. If read by a sick person, this book would therefore be most helpful used selectively rather than sequentially. Alternatively hospital chaplains (or others) could mix and

match to suit particular needs.

The many relevant marginal annotations and references said more to me than some of the prayers and meditations themselves, yet these are for use by the sick, not the healthy. The authors' intention is to speak 'the common language of suffering', used here to express their own reactions to personal affliction and to convey how others have felt in theirs. It is, therefore, a helpful exercise for any health worker to listen to such messages, realising afresh that in times of trouble God is there, ready to be a very present help and healer.

Janet Goodall is a retired Consultant Paediatrician in Staffordshire and former CMF President

Curing the heart - a model for biblical counseling



Howard Eyrich and William Hines
Christian Focus
Publications 2002
US\$15.99 Pb 204pp
ISBN 1 85792 722 2

'Biblical Counseling' (sic) is greatly influenced by Jay Adams, founder of 'nouthetic' counseling, which has core principles of 'confrontation, concern and change'. The 'cure' in this model is not necessarily to reach a stage of 'feeling better' (p58), as 'the chief problem to be dealt with is a severed relationship with God'. The primary goal is therefore 'for people to become more Christ-like' (p157), not to 'rebuild a... wounded personality' nor to 'help [clients] perceive themselves as a person having worth'(p162).

Eyrich and Hines outline two premises. Firstly, the root of the 'counselee's' problems is sin. Secondly, Scripture is sufficient to deal with all problems. The only reference to persecution relates to the counselor rejected by a client. One of the flaws of this approach is the risk of our shortfalls becoming red herrings in the counseling process. Proverbs 30:6 is used to warn against adding to God's Word 'with other traditions or modern theories'. I would suggest, however, that common



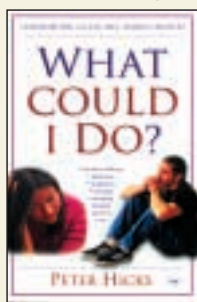
grace allows even secular studies to contain gems of knowledge about how we tick.

A checklist of problems given in a form to be worked through with a client seems arbitrary and haphazard, and problems 'with a physiological cause' are to be taken 'elsewhere', although there is no guidance as to which symptoms might suggest a physiological cause. The 'homework' task recommended for depression, would be near impossible for anyone with an affective disorder.

This guide is poorly structured, wearisomely repetitive and contains such mind-numbing statements as 'the age of the counsellee can be an important indicator of the person's maturity or lack of maturity'. I agree that 'obedience and true discipleship must come before happiness and contentment' and that the challenge not to short-change our patients/clients is vital. However, more compassion, humility and cognisance of human suffering are required than can be found in this book.

Karen Palmer is a Staff Grade Psychiatrist in Glasgow

What Could I Do? A handbook for making hard choices



Peter Hicks
IVP 2003
£9.99 Pb 352pp
ISBN 0 85111 299 4

This book follows on from 'What Could I Say?' by the same author (*Triple Helix*

2003; Spring:19). While there is some overlap between the two books, 'What Could I Do?' shifts the emphasis to the hard choices we all face by seeking to offer biblical guidance on a variety of difficult areas. The diverse range of topics covered includes environmental issues, sexuality, money and the use of time. The initial section deals generally with decision-making and is probably the only part of the book that would be read as a whole; the remainder is more likely to be dipped into rather than be read in one sitting.

My main criticism of the author's approach in this book is that he appears

reluctant to offer any definitive guidance. The introduction states, 'there's only one person who has the right to tell you what to do and that's God'. There is no mention of the authority delegated to others such as consultants, teachers, police and pastors. Therefore, in a messy and complex world, it all appears to come down to the individual Christian's personal view on the right course to take. To illustrate this, I was somewhat startled to see the following advice given to a woman facing an unwanted pregnancy: 'In the last analysis it is you who have the right and responsibility to choose to have an abortion or to have your baby.' Yet this appears to run contrary to the author's stated view that abortion conflicts with 'Christian morality and principles' (p191) and his use of the example of the misuse of abortion legislation when he argues against legalising euthanasia (p114). It is clear that he does not advocate abortion; it is just a pity that he hasn't stated this more clearly.

It would be unfair to write this book off on the basis of a CMF live issue – parts of it are excellent and in general the issues surrounding a broad range of topics are covered well. It is certainly useful to have a selection of compiled Scripture passages for each of the issues covered. Some readers will find that the range of options presented is a helpful approach; others, however, may be frustrated by this attempt to provide non-directional advice.

Tim Lewis is a former CMF staffworker and currently working with the Leprosy Mission in Nepal

The R Option



Michael Schluter and David John Lee
The Relationships Foundation 2003
£7.99 Pb 224pp
ISBN 0 9543879 0 2

'This book reminds us that it is the quality of our relationships that, more than anything else, determines our happiness, fulfilment and the sense of a life well lived.' (Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi).

Jonathan Sacks statement is powerful but

counter-cultural one. As Schluter and Lee outline, our highly individualistic age assumes that we function first and foremost as individuals – our everyday encounters serving mostly in a contractual, and 'rights based' fashion. Thankfully as Christians and doctors, we are aware of the faulty philosophy of such a view. As doctors, we see the value in nurturing relationships as we struggle to maintain the doctor and patient relationship in an increasingly pressured working environment. As Christians, we realise our true nature – relational beings made in God's relational image. However, the reality of nurturing our relationships can be challenging.

Schluter and Lee outline a way of looking at life 'relationally' – that is analysing the impact of our lifestyle choices on our relationships, motivated by Christian thinking on the importance of relationship. For example, on lunch- if the time spent with our children over a meal is more significant than any committee meeting, we might do well to spend some time thinking about what we will discuss, how the discussion went and what was going on in the individuals' responses – as we would do for any meeting with colleagues. On money – consider spending money to develop relationships, perhaps a night out with friends, rather than buying a new gadget. On coffee breaks – see sociability at work as crucial to effectiveness and productivity. In this respect, I have particularly valued the daily midmorning break of 10-15 minutes in my current practice. Day to day events as well as clinical questions are shared and I believe the teamwork is more effective as a result. All nineteen chapters are short and readable covering areas as diverse as lunch, leisure, sex, forgiveness and schooling.

The beauty of the book is that the aim of developing relationships is not for personal satisfaction. The wonderful truth this book subtly reveals is that fulfilment comes from putting other people's interests first. While this holds true for this life, it hints at an even deeper reality. As Jesus declared, 'many who are first will be last, and the last first.' (Matthew 19:30) I will try even harder not to miss the coffee break.

Liz Walker is a GP in Farnborough and former CMF chairman