

# reviews



## Good to Great and the Social Sectors

Jim Collins

- Random House 2006
- £6.99 Pb 37pp
- ISBN 1 9052 11 32 5



## Being Strategic about Leadership: *the principles that work in God's world*

Jill Garrett

- Christian Research Leadership Lecture 2006
- £2.50 Pb 16pp
- ISBN 978 1 85321172 0

These two papers are worth reading together. Jim Collins, a non-Christian and author of a larger volume on business management entitled *Good to Great*, has written this monograph specifically for managers and leaders in non-profit organisations. Jill Garrett, in a Christian Research Leadership Lecture delivered in 2006, refers to Collins' work and her own recent research which demonstrates that biblical principles are best practice for leaders and managers in both business and non-profit organisations such as charities and churches.

Thriving organisations have selfless leaders, who are primarily ambitious for the cause they work for rather than for themselves. They have a clear focus on 'what we do best and are passionate about' and do not allow themselves to get distracted by other worthwhile things; just as Jesus, who could have fed or healed many more people, fixed his eyes on Jerusalem and Calvary. Selfless leaders enable each team member to contribute their best to the organisation for the sake of those it serves, akin to 'enabling the saints for works of service', and they rise above circumstances by creating pockets of greatness in the context of systemic constraints (such as the NHS!) through conscious choice (commitment)

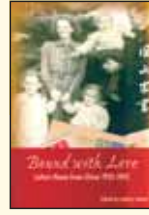
and discipline.

Other practical points are considered, such as the need to develop 'brand' reputation (demonstrating the fruits of the Spirit), and the importance of getting the right person (vocation) in the right place (functioning as a body). It is worth being rigorous when appointing personnel as once the wrong person is in place it is usually much harder to get them out!

The leader's behaviour has a powerful effect for good or ill. In one project 5,000 people were asked 'What would inspire you to follow someone?' and disturbingly one third of them said they had never worked for an inspirational leader. In a poll of 1,000 people who had left their jobs, 70% said they had not left their company but they had left their manager. Organisations thrive when the leader is humble, willing to acknowledge a mistake, quick to praise others, and works to develop a succession team who will take the organisation on further.

If you're keen to apply Christian principles in any Christian enterprise, wanting to avoid pitfalls and ready to learn practical tips, these short booklets are well worth the hour they take to read.

*Kevin Vaughan is CMF Head of Graduate Ministries*



## Bound with Love *Letters Home from China 1935-1945*

Edited by Audrey Salters

- Agequod Publications 2007
- £12.50 Pb 360pp
- ISBN 978 0 9557536 0 2

The story of a mission doctor and his family living in inland China during a very disturbed period is told in a series of letters sent home by both husband and wife. Edited by their daughter, who was born in Japanese-occupied China, there are passages interposed to explain the historical and political background of the time.

In a homely fashion one learns of the challenges of living in a very different culture: learning the language, obtaining supplies, and bringing up children in poor hygienic and dietary conditions, especially when latterly interned by the Japanese. Extended separation from family and home church, in their case for ten years,

emphasises the blessings and difficulties of communication and the joy of receiving practical gifts even when sometimes they were inappropriate. There are details of medical and surgical problems, many of which were war-related. We are told of the long tradition of Chinese medicine but that hospital care only arrived with the Christian missions. As a historical down to earth document of practical living for Christ in difficult circumstances it is fascinating, and should be of great interest to anyone with a concern for, or preparing to work in, outback Asia or similar situations.

*Arthur Wyatt is a retired surgeon who frequently visits China*



## Carry the Spices

Chua Choon Lan and Tan Lei Yong (eds)

- Medical Missions Foundation, Singapore
- No price quoted. Pb 259pp
- ISBN 978 981 05 9220 2

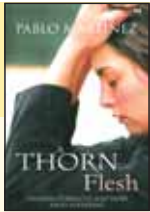
Anyone interested in medical missions and every would-be medical missionary should read this splendid book. Its 28 short chapters (each with evocative colour photographs) carry the first-hand accounts of some two dozen Singaporean medical missionaries and their families over the last 40 years. It is a reminder to any European or North American missionary of how the cutting edge of cross-cultural missions has shifted to Asia, Africa and South America and that some (often the majority) of their colleagues will be from these regions.

The setting is fresh and contemporary; the principles familiar: personal conversion is

essential before service can be contemplated; prayerful parents and wise pastors prepare the way for sacrificial choices; pride is an ever-present snare for the would-be servant of the Lord; the pathway of preparation is often long and tortuous, but God is faithful; issues of culture shock – and reverse culture shock – affect us all; and finding the right path for children's education is never easy.

There are accounts from Asia and Africa; from surgeons, public health teachers, dentists and doctors who were led into full time pastoral ministry. Highly recommended.

*Peter Pattison was formerly a medical missionary in East Asia*



### A thorn in the flesh: *finding strength and hope amid suffering*

Pablo Martinez

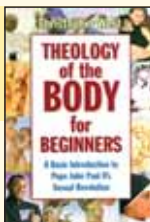
- InterVarsity Press 2007
- £7.99 Pb 192pp
- ISBN 978 1 84474 188 5

**S**ome people claim to have lost faith in God because he did not answer their fervent prayers for healing. Pablo Martinez, Christian psychiatrist and Bible teacher, reveals how prolonged suffering can instead enhance a relationship with God as the sufferer learns to stop futile (though not purposeful) fighting and discovers 'the supernatural antidote of grace'. Godly grace gradually enables those undergoing the sorest trials to display patient acceptance – 'the best "sermon" that we can ever preach'.

Pablo openly tells of his own protracted, distressing eye disease and intermittent surgery.

The 'thorn' of his title refers to anything similarly painful, limiting, humiliating and prolonged. He illustrates how God can provide a way out by helping the sufferer to look for and then accept *his* perspective on the problem. With prayerful support, reflecting on biblical examples, especially that of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, will in time take us beyond the suffering to find what it can achieve. Pablo's own painful journey has through God's grace produced a pearl. This book will enrich sufferers and carers alike.

*Janet Goodall is a retired paediatrician in Stoke-on-Trent*



### Theology of the Body for Beginners

Christopher West

- Ascension Press 2004
- \$11.99 Pb 151pp
- ISBN: 1 932645 34 9

**B**roken families, abortion, AIDS, internet pornography, clergy abuse, homosexual 'marriage': church and world are in a profound sexual crisis. Is there a way out? For such a time as this have we been given Pope John Paul II and his 'theology of the body'. Based on the words of Jesus, his reflections on the body and sex take us to the root of the modern crisis and chart the path to authentic sexual liberation. Yet the Pope's profound scholarship often intimidates the average person.

Christopher West therefore provides a short summary of this revolutionary teaching. I love his book because he speaks the truth in love, proclaiming clearly and

fearlessly, yet with gentle tone and effortless humour. Moreover, it's for our healing and redemption, rather than condemnation.

God created us male and female because in essence our sexuality is an icon: the physical represents divine truth. The ultimate purpose of marriage is to point to the infinitely deeper union within the Godhead, and between Jesus and the Church. Sex should therefore be revered and held in high esteem, not grasped at grubbily. If sexual sin is a problem for you, read this book. If not, read it anyway, better to minister to those who struggle in this area.

*Charlie Vivian is an occupational medicine consultant in Cheltenham*



### Complementary and Alternative Medicine *Should Christians be involved?*

Robina Coker

- CMF 2008
- £8.00 Pb 137pp
- ISBN 978 0906747384

**I**n a climate where alternative medicine has become increasingly popular, Dr Coker's substantially revised version of her 1995 book seeks to explain the range of therapies that now exist and to suggest ways to handle patients and relatives who may request advice on such issues.

A good overview analyses the different practices critically, both from medical and Christian perspectives, and the level makes it extremely accessible to non-medics. There are discussion points at the end of each chapter that could be used in small groups (work- or church-based) and an invaluable A-Z chapter which outlines the basic principles of a

number of available therapies – very useful when a patient asks your opinion on a therapy you have never even heard of!

A variety of case studies is included, which help us as doctors to consider how we would respond to different scenarios. The book is a very flexible and useful resource, especially for those in general practice, providing practical information and also helping us to think through some of the issues before being confronted with them in surgery. It could easily be shared with interested patients and church members.

*Abi Crutchlow is a psychiatry trainee in Surrey*



### Foundations for Medical Ethics

Sean Doherty

- Grove Books 2007
- £2.95 Pb 28pp
- ISSN 1470-854X

**M**ost Christian medical ethics books on the market are written by clinicians, aiming to provide biblical answers to tricky issues. Sean Doherty's thought-provoking booklet starts from a different premise. Doherty is an Anglican curate and has led a medical ethics course for undergraduates, which formed the basis of the book. Rather than tackling particular issues, he aims to set out relevant theological issues and apply these to the medical world.

In five short chapters, he begins by setting out the fundamental assumptions that shape the background of contemporary medicine. Although the booklet is not extensively referenced, the first chapter addresses humanity's

quest to overcome our limitations, as well as the rise of consumer-driven practice, where the role of the doctor is largely to fulfil the patient's desires. He goes on to describe the goodness of creation, and how suffering originated, before exploring how creation will be redeemed. The final chapter examines how we should think about health and healing today.

This pamphlet is unlikely to provide answers about specific ethical issues, but Doherty's approach is refreshing, and he raises many questions about the medical project which are worth reflection.

*Helen Barratt is an academic clinical fellow in public health in London*

## reviews



### Using the Bible in Christian Ministry *A workbook*

Stephen Pattison, Margaret Cooling, Trevor Cooling

- Darton, Longman and Todd 2007
- £14.95 Pb 160pp
- ISBN 0 23252 6818

This book arose out of research between the Bible Society and Cardiff University. It aims to enable those in pastoral ministry to use the Bible more effectively. Workbook style, it gives opportunity for reflection and group work. Two strong features emerge. It helpfully acknowledges that our tendency to respond to our circumstances sinfully is fundamental in every pastoral issue. Our preconceptions, about when and where biblical input is appropriate, are also challenged. There are novel suggestions as to how this might be done sensitively in various contexts.

There are weaknesses though. It tries to be non-prescriptive,

leaving readers to reflect on their own views. This approach, in a book that aims to encourage people to *use the Bible* in Christian ministry, is somewhat surprising! Secondly, it merely hints at how the gospel provides an overarching approach to pastoral care. However, pastoral carers desperately need detailed guidance on this subject.

If you are looking to review and challenge your practice, then this book is a good place to start. Look elsewhere though for practical help on interpreting and applying the Bible to pastoral situations.

*Jason Roach is medically qualified and training to be an Anglican minister*



### Gay Children, Straight Parents *A plan for family healing*

Richard Cohen

- Intervarsity Press USA 2007
- \$12.00 Pb 233pp
- ISBN 978 0 8308 347 2

This book offers psychotherapist Richard Cohen's advice from his personal experiences to families who have a homosexual son or daughter.

My husband and I are parents of a gay son who is a Christian, and we found what was written in the first part of the book to be very helpful. Parents are encouraged to love their homosexual sons and daughters unconditionally, and are also offered further helpful advice explaining various coping strategies when dealing with very difficult issues. These will particularly apply to Christian parents.

We found the second part of the book more difficult reading, as it involves certain aspects of the author's psychotherapeutic plan of action to enable parents to assist their children through the process of 'healing' from their homosexuality. My husband and I both felt very uncomfortable with some of his methods, which include many references to what he calls 'same-sex parent display of physical affection'.

My feelings are that this book may be better suited for the American culture, rather than for Britain.

*'Ruth' lives in Wales*

### Healing for the Wounded Life *How to Understand Your Illness and Find Biblical Solutions*

John Gordon

- Thankful Books 2007
- £9.95 Pb 256pp
- ISBN 978 1 90508 410 4

Dr Gordon is a devout Christian clinician who lets God into every aspect of his professional practice, and then offers the fruit of his deep reflections. His scholarly book will repay careful study on many different levels: as a guide for Christians struggling with health issues, as a guide and reference for practitioners such as hospital chaplains, and as a basis for Bible study groups.

He reiterates the link between truth and health; that there is no way to the Father except through Christ; and that the essence of recovering health is accepting Jesus as personal Saviour, repenting, and being guided by the Holy Spirit. These are familiar phrases, but this book gives

exemplars and biblical references to help us appreciate when they may be operating in our lives.

I did not find it an easy read, mainly because the author's reach is so wide and his grasp so thorough. This meant engaging in several different ways, which I found I could not do all at one reading. This level of engagement needed may put off many who would benefit. Alternatively, the work could be presented as several books to make it more palatable to a popular audience.

*Margaret Whitelaw is a psychologist and member of BACIP*



### Who am I? *Experiences of Donor Conception*

Alexina McWhinnie

- Idreos Education Trust 2006
- £6.95 Pb 66pp
- ISBN 0 9554031 0 3

Joanne, Christine and Louise were all conceived following donor insemination (DI). Having been aware early in life of this, Joanne experiences increasing 'genetic bewilderment'. Christine's domineering mother used this secret knowledge as a weapon against her. The eighteen months after Louise learned the truth were the darkest of her life.

Social scientist Dr McWhinnie considers research into the lives of families in which children have been conceived by gamete donation. Around 90 published analyses confirm these three stories as being typical. When the pain of fractured identity and family strain becomes intense, a DI-conceived person may even

feel angry they were ever born.

The issue of donor anonymity is another issue. Louise speaks for her co-contributors: 'the least harmful scenario...is one where the child is told the truth from an early age, and where identifying information is available about the donor'. McWhinnie concludes: 'It is more than time that the voices and experiences of DI offspring should be recognised and listened to...they carry for a lifetime the consequences of assisted reproductive technological intervention: intervention which they do not choose or consent to'. I couldn't agree more!

*Gordon Stirrat is Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Bristol*