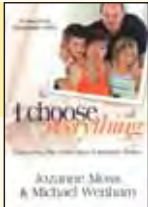


My Donkey Body

Living with a body that no longer obeys you
Michael Wenham

- Monarch Books (Lion Hudson) 2008
- £7.99 Pb 160pp
- ISBN 978 1 85424 889 3



I Choose Everything

Embracing life in the face of terminal illness
Jozanne Moss and Michael Wenham

- Monarch Books (Lion Hudson) 2010
- £7.99 Pb 192pp
- ISBN 978 0 85721 012 8

These two books are linked by a common author, Michael Wenham, an Anglican priest. He has never met Jozanne Moss, only communicated by email. There is a CMF link, as they were introduced by Peter Saunders.

What the authors have in common is that both are living through the progressively disabling and ultimately fatal condition of Motor Neurone Disease (MND). Both books contain honest, moving accounts of this experience and the interplay between it and the authors' Christian faith.

In *My Donkey Body* Wenham tells his own story of disease onset, diagnosis and progression. He tells it straightforwardly with gentle humour, tackling along the way an array of challenging issues including his personal relationship with God, maintaining faith in the power of prayer that yet does not bring about healing, and his approach to the ongoing push to legalise assisted suicide when many would see him as a prime example of a person who might 'benefit' from it.

Wenham's contribution to *I Choose Everything* (a quotation from St Therese of Lisieux, who died aged 24 from tuberculosis) is also informed by his experience of MND but takes the form of theological counterpoints to Jozanne Moss' description of her own journey.

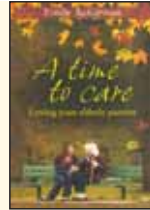
Her MND began when she was only in her thirties, a mother of two young children, and is moving faster than his.

She too tells the story of her physical deterioration and the frustrations and fears it brings about, as well as the intense sadness of realising she will not live to see her children grow up. Yet at the book's recent launch in her home town in South Africa, Jozanne said: 'This book is not about me or my illness, but about God's faithfulness and love to us as a family'. And it is.

Filtered through their different characters and circumstances both authors show how, despite everything, they remain convinced of God's love in Jesus Christ, and perceive their own and their families' needs met through that love, shown in small, unexpected but numerous ways.

Michael and Jozanne's stories deserve to be read by health and social care workers but also by any Christian who has ever contemplated disabling or terminal illness and thought: 'I wonder how I would cope if that were me...?'

Nigel Sykes is a consultant in palliative medicine at St Christopher's Hospice



A time to care

Loving your elderly parents
Emily Ackerman

- IVP 2010
- £7.99 Pb 190pp
- ISBN 978 1 84474 487 9

There is plenty of help in our churches for parents of young children – toddler groups, parenting courses, crèche on Sunday. This book is an excellent resource for the increasing number of us who are at the other end of family care. Each thoroughly biblical and accessible chapter closes with thought-provoking questions and quotations, so that the hard-pressed carer will benefit from just considering those even if they can't find time to read a chapter at a sitting. The appendix provides a very helpful list of books, websites and support group details.

Carers certainly need

encouragement and sympathy but Emily is not afraid also to challenge unbiblical thinking and 'tell it like it is'. She helpfully points out the many unlooked-for positives of the caring role – for instance learning new skills, and the opportunity for spiritual growth.

I highly commend this book and hope it will find a wider readership than simply those already committed to caring for their parents. To quote another reviewer, it is 'honest, down-to-earth, spiritually sensitive, encouraging and realistic'.

Jen Watkins helped care for her mother who had Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases



Surprised by grief

A journey into hope
Janine Fair

- IVP 2010
- £7.99 Pb 143pp
- ISBN 978 1 84474 472 5

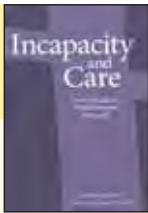
Starting at the moment of her husband's unexpected death, Janine Fair, mother, doctor and vicar's wife, explores the impact of this tragic event on herself, her young family and her faith. In a direct and punchy style, she examines her spiritual and psychological weaknesses, dissecting how God uses events to change her. She lays bare emotions of overwhelming grief, anger, bitterness, self-pity and despair in the context of the daily struggle to survive.

This book is not a theological treatise but is run through with a golden thread of faith. Janine shows how God used Psalms, Bible verses, songs and pictures

to bring her to repentance for the times she had distanced herself from people and refused to accept the help God was offering. Using the metaphor of a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis of suffering, she finishes in a place of surprising joy and hope. While acknowledging that aspects of grief will often be present, she thanks God for the grace he has given her over four years.

I would recommend this book for any Christian who has not experienced the loss of someone close. It may prove helpful for those taking their own journey through grief.

Claire Stark Toller is a specialist registrar in palliative medicine in the Oxford Deanery



Incapacity and Care
Controversies in Healthcare and Research
Edited by Helen Watt

- The Linacre Centre 2009
- £11.95 Pb 146pp
- ISBN 978 0 90656 111 9

It was winter 1983, while doing obstetrics at medical school, that I witnessed the sterilisation of a young woman with mental disability. We met her at the hostel one day and she was operated on the next. This always felt questionable, but it was only while reading this book that I understood why.

Drawn from the Catholic tradition, this collection of essays explores contemporary ethical problems, which are instantly recognisable to those involved in clinical practice. All the contributions examine aspects of care for people without capacity. There are profound insights into PEG feeding in dementia; research on those who lack capacity; sterilisation of people with intellectual

disability; and the Mental Capacity Act. The chapter on non-voluntary euthanasia is a mine of information on the Dutch experience, unequivocally exposing the 'slippery slope'.

The contributions are of a uniformly high academic standard, giving integrity to the arguments crafted. The authors each explain the rationale for Christian values which we otherwise grasp only intuitively much of the time. This book takes one by surprise. Not obviously a best seller, but giving the reader a new perspective on human dignity and worth framed by the love of God. Worth the read.

Steve Sturman is a consultant neurologist in Birmingham



Turning the World Upside Down
The Search for Global Health in the 21st Century
Nigel Crisp

- Royal Society of Medicine Press 2010
- £12.95 Pb 228 pp
- ISBN 978 1 85315 933 6

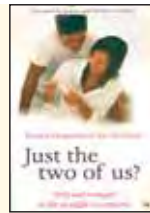
Five reasons to buy. First, it is short. Secondly, it is packed with facts about the health status of the world. I personally will be using the many powerful quotations and facts in future talks. Thirdly, it is written by the man who for five years ran the NHS – the world's biggest healthcare organisation.

Crisp knows the issues facing healthcare in the richest and poorest countries. Commissioned by Tony Blair to visit as many places as he could, to talk to healthcare givers, receivers, planners and managers, he has listened to the needs and stories of hundreds, and quotes them widely. He is able to take a

sensitive issue, eg the emigration of doctors from poor to rich countries, look at it from all sides, then discuss it concisely and objectively.

Fourthly, he does what the title promises: he rejects constraints inherent in traditional methods of delivering healthcare and turns the donor-recipient relationship upside down. Finally, he offers suggestions as to how all countries in the 21st century can work together, learning from each other as we address global need in healthcare, and the social, political and economic inequalities that accompany it.

Chris Lavy is a professor of orthopaedic surgery in Oxford



Just the two of us?
Help and strength in the struggle to conceive
Eleanor Margesson and Sue McGowan

- IVP 2010
- £7.99 Pb 191pp
- ISBN 978 1 84474 475 6

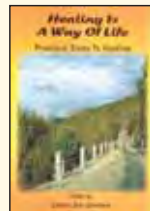
This is a gentle, sensible walk through issues that appear when infertility crushes your identity, written by two women whose infertility had different outcomes. They discuss questions of concern to Christian couples longing for a child, some of whom may have suffered miscarriages or stillbirth. The book is also meant for those who support such couples, giving positive suggestions and revealing ways in which friends and family can cause pain by thoughtless remarks or questions.

Sections explore the biblical perspective, what makes a family, marriage, men's advice and experiences, adoption, and medical treatment. Personal stories are included and helpful

reflections end each section. A poignant chapter talks about letting go of the dreams you had for your future. Maybe the dreams have taken you over.

We are made in the image of a Father God and thus with the 'stamp' of a parent. Therefore we naturally love and nurture others and find childlessness hard. The authors note that in the New Testament Paul shows this father love for fellow Christians, and today we can use this grasp of parenting in a much wider sense than with our own children. This is a book of encouragement, comfort and strength to face whatever the future may hold.

Clare Cooper is an early-retired doctor in Sussex



Healing is a way of life: Practical steps to healing
Talks: Canon Jim Glennon
Compiled & Edited by Zillah Williams

- Zillah Williams 2009
- £14 Pb 261pp. Available from CMF
- ISBN 978 0 64651 862 6

After experiencing healing following a nervous breakdown, Canon Jim Glennon became well known for his healing ministry, from 1960 until he died in 2005. This compilation preserves his teaching as a practical resource for today's reader. Set out as daily readings (five/week for a year), each day has a Bible verse, a reading, the sermon notes, a key thought, and a sentence prayer.

Many helpful topics relate to faith and healing, and I was challenged over the need for discipline and persistence in prayer. I found myself reviewing my capacity to pray in faith without doubting, to truly forgive, to let go of the burden, and to

remember the reality of the Kingdom of God. He clearly believes in working alongside medical care, but I do worry that some who remain unwell might feel accused of lack of faith. Some faith-enhancing ideas expressed (believing for others and accepting Christ for others) raise eyebrows.

Although I understood his arguments better by the end, they needed further reflection. Some parts I found repetitive and a little tedious, and I was uneasy about some dogmatic statements and biblical interpretation. The book should be used both with an open mind and with discernment.

Jean Maxwell is a retired palliative care consultant in Essex