

Understanding sexual abuse

A guide for ministry leaders and survivors
Tim Hein

- IVP 2018, £12.00, 158pp, ISBN 9781910012475
- Reviewed by **Hilary Johnson**, consultant in child and adolescent psychiatry in Buckinghamshire

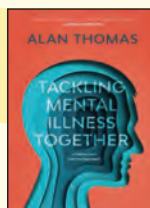
Tim Hein writes as a Christian leader and from his personal perspective and experience as a survivor of sexual abuse. Tim writes with sensitivity to support survivors who may be exploring and developing an understanding of their own situation for the first time. Additionally, he aims to equip churches to support survivors with compassion, care, confidence and knowledge. He acknowledges that he does not write as a psychologist or a therapist, but clearly draws from his own experience of therapy.

Hein offers support to the reader throughout the book, whether survivor or listener, gently introducing various topics

with reassurances that the content will not be traumatic to read. However, he advises that any book written on this subject is likely to be a challenge for anyone who has suffered abuse themselves.

The chapter on forgiveness is particularly insightful, both for those who preach forgiveness and those who practise it.

The book contains well informed advice and explanations using personal examples. It is well written with the authority of a survivor, in a challenging but hopeful style, which will equip anyone working in pastoral care.



Tackling mental illness together

A biblical and practical approach
Alan Thomas

- SPCK, 2017, £7.00, 200pp, ISBN 9781783595594
- Reviewed by **Felicia Wong**, CMF Head of Graduate Ministries

Mental illness is now in the public domain more than ever before. Moreover, in our churches we are coming face-to-face with brothers and sisters struggling with mental illness. Unfortunately, some are doing so alone and in silence.

This easy-to-read book is written by a psychiatrist to help those involved in church ministry. Its aim is to help readers understand what mental illness is, the range of conditions, causes and treatments. Alan Thomas, does this by using a medical and biblical framework with case studies to bring to life various situations. He handles the difficult issue of mental

illness and personal responsibility well.

An interesting read, this is a good, comprehensive resource for Christians looking for something accessible that explains mental illness. It covers the history of mental health therapies, the culture and changing attitudes around mental illness, diagnosis, management and other resources. It is helpful in getting church leaders and members thinking about how they can best support others struggling with mental illness, from showing understanding and compassion to when to seek professional help.



The robots are coming

Us, them and God
Nigel Cameron

- Care, 2017, 148pp, ISBN 978090519530
- Review by **Claire Wilson**, psychiatry trainee and MRC Clinical Research Fellow, King's College London

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is relevant to us as Christians and also as doctors. Cameron effectively offers a biblical perspective on the issue in this short and easy to read book. He provides an accessible introduction to this rapidly developing field, which at times can seem a bit daunting to explore.

Cameron discusses the opportunities and challenges posed by AI to many aspects of life, such as employment and leisure time. But many books on the topic do this. What makes this book really worth reading is the uniquely Christian view that the author brings: artificial intelligence challenges what it means

for us to be human, created in God's image.

What makes us unique? This idea is further explored as Cameron unpacks the nature of our human relationships but also our potential relationships in the future with robots and machines. How should we treat them? This exposes a raft of ethical dilemmas. Cameron provides a historical account of AI development with frequent reference to Scripture. There are also frequent questions posed which allow the reader to reflect as an individual or to facilitate group discussion.

While he touches on the implications of AI for healthcare, there is certainly a niche for another book exclusively on this issue for Christian doctors.



John Stott and The Hookses

David Cranston

- Words by Design, 2017, £15.00, 86pp, ISBN 9781909075542
- Reviewed by **Chris Lavy**, consultant orthopaedic surgeon based in Oxford

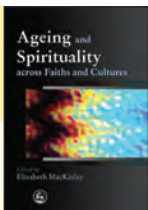
David Cranston is a man of many talents. Still operating as one of Oxford's favourite urologists, he finds time to think, paint and write. This latest book, illustrated by Cranston's own watercolours and many old photographs, takes a quirky look at one aspect of the life of John Stott.

For many of us John Stott is remembered and loved as one of God's greatest gifts to the church. A man whose talks and writings opened the Scriptures to us and whose clear, explanations of theology flooded truth into our lives.

One of the resources that kept John Stott's mind so fresh and

relevant was his time away with nature and with God. He bought a small cottage in Pembrokeshire, Wales in 1954 that looked over West Dale Bay and beyond that to the open Atlantic. It was here that John Stott came regularly for the next 50 years, to be still, to listen to God, to think, to write, to watch birds, and to spend time with close friends.

David Cranston had the great honour to know John personally and tells the story of the cottage and how it developed. He also includes inspiring chapters written by key Christian leaders whose lives were enriched by their time at The Hookses.



Ageing and spirituality across faiths and cultures

Elizabeth MacKinley (ed)

- Jessica Kingsley, 2010, 272pp, ISBN 9781849050067
- Reviewed by **Cameron Swift**, Professor at Kings College, London, specialising in geriatrics

Clarity about the concepts and inter-relationships of 'ageing' and 'spirituality' is urgently needed. This is firstly because of demographic change and secondly, because of an escalating need to balance biotechnical progress with 'whole person' value.

Ageing is explored against background demography and across religious and cultural contexts. But an evidence-based clinical/biomedical perspective is missing. Areas of common ideological ground include 'respect' for older people and 'duty of care' (a family imperative in Islam). In care provision, awareness and sensitivity are rightly emphasised, and some practical tools to assess 'spiritual need' are proposed.

Spirituality is widely repre-

sented as diverse, subjective, psycho-social, and culture-driven, and implicitly commended as pluralistic (versus 'fundamentalist'), with distinction drawn between 'internalised' spirituality and organised religious observance. An informative chapter usefully summarises basic Islamic teaching. Those looking for an integrated scriptural Christian /scientific lead on this important topic will not find it in this compilation, but the cross-cultural insights are important.

In my view, it's this understanding that together with transparent evidence from the contemporary sciences (biological, clinical and social) on ageing, which comprises the necessary forward rationale for ethical practice, attitudes and service progress.



The 'conscience of Europe'? Navigating shifting tides at the European Court of Human Rights

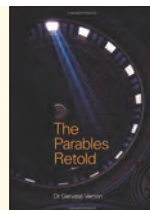
Robert Clarke (ed)

- Kairos, 2017, £18.00, 235pp, ISBN 9783950385137
- Reviewed by **Trevor Stammers**, Reader in Bioethics, St Mary's University

A book primarily for lawyers by lawyers affiliated to ADF international – an advocacy group 'to protect and promote religious freedom'. The first part is a critique of the 'evolutive approach' of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The shorter, second part of the book gives details on the workings of the ECtHR, such as how its judges are elected and how to engage with the Court.

The chapters on abortion, euthanasia, assisted reproduction,

surrogacy and conscience will be of interest to CMF members, especially those engaged with bioethics and public policy. I was surprised to learn how many of ECtHR's judgments in these areas had been quite restrictive in these areas compared with UK law. However, the Court's willingness to allow countries room for manoeuvre, when adjudicating on challenges to decisions on bioethical matters by conservative jurisdictions, is being increasingly criticised. It currently offers some possibility of redress against decisions overruling the right of conscientious objection in the UK.



The parables retold

Gervase Vernon

- CreateSpace, 2017, £5.00, 92pp, ISBN 9781548706746
- Reviewed by **Julian Churcher**, Associate Head of Graduate Ministries

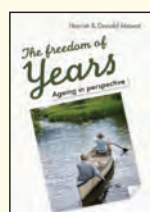
The author takes 30 of Jesus' parables or sayings (mostly from Luke's gospel, with a few from Matthew's), bracketed by a verse from John's gospel and two poems (by Seamus Heaney and George Herbert). From these he has written an attractively produced collection of short stories set in the present day, the recent past or (in one instance) the future.

Some are based in true history (with helpful links to source information) but most are of course fictional, ranging worldwide through countries and cultures. Dedications at the beginning of some left me wanting to learn more about each individual's connection with the story: biographical

subject or creative inspiration for example? Typos are distracting, especially when applied to famous names (eg 'Sachs' for 'Sacks', 'Ghandi' for Gandhi) and I felt that detailed scene-setting was at times unnecessarily complicated.

I was left with deepened admiration for the ingenuity of the original parables, containing every time just enough 'scenery' to engage the audience, and enable the events and exchanges within them to convey memorably the core message intended.

As he writes in the preface this is 'a book to dip into', and royalties go to an Essex charity addressing homelessness; this is a suitable book especially for enquirers into the gospel.



The freedom of the years

Ageing in perspective

Harriet & Donald Mowat

- Bible Reading Fellowship, 2018, £8.99, 192pp, ISBN 9780857465061
- Reviewed by **Peter May**, an author and retired GP in Southampton

I enjoyed this book. It gave me the opportunity to reflect on the varied processes of ageing – physical, mental, social and spiritual. By the age of 60, most of us can recite a litany of minor physical ailments, which become increasingly tiresome. We look forward in retirement to read all those books we have neglected, only to be frustrated by eye strain and the tendency to fall asleep as soon as we sit comfortably in our favourite chair. Family circumstances change unpredictably. Tasks we have laboured over for many years come to an end, or are given over, often reluctantly, to others. How then should we fill our days meaningfully? What

new roles might we take on that seem cut out for us? These insights should help us redeem our days and also to care for other ageing people with greater understanding, sensitivity and sympathy.

This jointly authored book is written by a married couple, who have exceptional credentials for the task. He is a retired GP and consultant in Old Age Psychiatry, while his wife is a social scientist and gerontologist. They bring the issues down to earth by following the ageing process in the lives of two very different semi-fictional characters. The book concludes with eight practical tasks for the reader to focus on.