The Search for God and the Path to Persuasion

Peter May

Reviewed by John Martin, CMF Head of Communications

Peter May is a gifted evangelical whose insights and approaches have lasted. The Search for God is packed with useful outlines and worked examples for sharing the gospel.

Evangelism, he says, is primarily dialogue. Conversation is a skill to be cultivated and he offers copious insights on how. He isn’t terribly keen on the term ‘apologetics’; cultivating the art of ‘persuasion’ is closer to the term ‘apologetics’; cultivating the art of ‘persuasion’ is closer to the.

The Search for God is packed with practical tools to assess ‘spiritual health’ and its implications. It might be next to a state-of-the-art corporate hospital but have no access to it.

Post-independence, government-funded hospitals emerged, but due to the vast population they can only provide healthcare to 20% of the poor. There is therefore a huge gap, which charitable and mission hospitals can help to fill. Local Indian missionaries are starting to meet the demand, but they need help. There is a clear role for the Indian medical Diaspora, and also foreign missionaries, who can help with short and long-term placements, funding and play a vital role in research, teaching and training.

The practice of medicine is a gift from God. The harvest is plenty but the workers are few. This book will prove an inspiration to those who are called to help.

Ageing and Spirituality across Faiths and Cultures

Elizabeth MacKinley (ed)

Reviewed by Cameron Swift, Professor at King’s College School of Medicine

Clarity about the concepts and inter-relationships of ‘ageing’ and ‘spirituality’ is urgently needed for healthcare professionals.

Ageing (attitudinal perceptions and misperceptions, and their consequences) is explored against background demography and speculated across a range of religious and cultural contexts. 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 represented 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.

The cross-cultural insights are important and valuable. Refreshingly, one chapter on ‘orthodox faith’ deals not with Orthodoxy (eg Eastern or Greek) but explores (in the specific context of dementia) the core Christian understanding of spirituality as ‘personhood’ – every human being made in God’s image – and its implications.

Against the Flow

The inspiration of Daniel in an age of relativism

John Lennox

Reviewed by Tom Roberts, former CMF Communications Coordinator

John Lennox says that we live in a culture where ‘God has lost his glory… holiness has degenerated into an exclusively negative concept’. Either Christianity is held to be worthless, or it is simply ‘one choice’ in the marketplace of ideas. In Against the Flow, he takes hold of the biblical book of Daniel as ‘a clarion call to our generation… not to lose our nerve or allow the expression of our faith to be… squeezed out of the public sphere’.

Working through Daniel chapter by chapter, Lennox draws out essential lessons on topics such as Daniel’s more cryptic visions.

At over 400 pages this is no light read, and at times is perhaps a little too exhaustive in detailing every aspect of the historical setting. Nonetheless, Lennox is a deep thinker with a first-rate mind, and his analysis here is well worth the effort.

This is a vital book that will help Christians understand how we can stand firm in an increasingly secular age.