

Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer

Tyler Staton

- Hodder & Stoughton, £14, 2022, 272pp, ISBN: 9781399808040
- Reviewed by **Steve Fouch**, CMF Head of Communications

Not another book on prayer! We've had so many in recent years from such luminaries as Pete Greig and Tim Keller. Surely, we don't need yet another one?

It turns out we did. Staton is a young US pastor and leader in the 24/7 prayer movement, and he has a lot of real-world experience as an intercessor. Staton leads us step-by-step through prayer in all its dimensions by drawing deeply – and sometimes with shocking frankness – from his personal prayer life and taking the Lord's Prayer as his template. He invites us to dig deeper into the wonder and mystery of time spent in the presence of our heavenly Father. Along the way, he delves into areas of prayer with which many evangelicals are often less familiar or comfortable – including silent prayer, confessional prayer, and prayer in the 'middle voice' (look it up).

If all that sounds shockingly old-fashioned and traditional or a bit too progressive, then you are probably right. He draws on ancient traditions from the early church, the middle ages, and the Reformation (and even the Counter-Reformation) to flesh out a contemporary prayer discipline steeped in the experiences of the saints down the ages. That may sound a bit too hide-bound by human tradition. But Staton is also never less than thoroughly biblical as he explores these dimensions of prayer.

Do you yearn for a deeper relationship with God? Are you seeking to ground your prayer life more deeply in Scripture or to learn how to persist in prayer and faith when life is tough and insanely busy? This book won't be the solution! But it will point you in the right direction and gives you some helpful tools for the journey. The rest will be for you and the Lord. Well worth reading and rereading.



With a Light Touch: A guide to healthcare in frailty

Dr Ian Donald

- Onwards & Upwards, 2021, £12, 134pp, ISBN: 9781788159296
- Reviewed by **David Smithard**, *Triple Helix* Editor

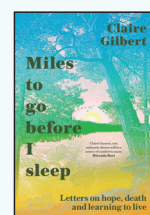
Longstanding CMF member, Ian Donald is a Physician in Old Age Medicine at the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. An old-fashioned geriatrician. As you read his words, you can feel the empathy that he has for his patients. They are more than people to be examined and diagnosed; they are his friends.

His book takes you gently through aspects of caring for older people. He covers the 'Geriatric Giants' (falls, incontinence, immobility, confusion, and polypharmacy) and dispels common myths, such as 'if nothing can be found to explain confusion, it must be a Urinary Tract Infection'. How often, as a geriatrician, have I been presented with this as a diagnosis with no clinical evidence to support it. I have also repeatedly heard the dreaded fictitious diagnosis of 'acopia', despite the presence of a high temperature or recurrent falls. I could go on!

If you have little time to read this small book, read the last two chapters. Here Dr Donald focuses on planning for the end of life and coming to terms with the reality that death comes to us all. He approaches

this with subtlety and kindness, bringing together medicine and a Christian perspective, even when tackling the difficult issues such as providing fluids as death draws near or assisted suicide.

I would recommend this book to all health professionals irrespective of their speciality (paediatricians, midwives, and neonatologists excepted).



Miles to go before I sleep: Letters on hope, death and learning to live

Claire Gilbert

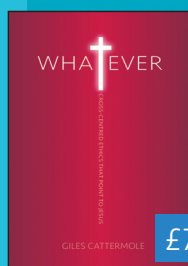
- Hodder and Stoughton 2021 £10.99 288pp, ISBN: 9781529359732
- Reviewed by **Patricia Wilkinson**, a GP in East Lancashire

Describing the year after the author's diagnosis of myeloma, this book takes us through diagnosis and treatment, all the while sharing the author's thoughts. Gilbert decided to write to friends as 'Dear readers' in a series of diary entries and letters detailing her journey, feelings, experiences, and normal life.

She is honest about her ambiguity towards treatment and being entered into a clinical trial, especially when assigned to the bone marrow transplant arm.

I found this a frustrating book in many ways. There is a lot of repetition, for example about horse riding and which horse it was on a particular day. Her faith remains strong, and there never seems to be any doubts or questioning, not that these are obligatory, although she is generally open and honest.

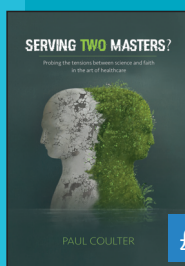
The book ends with her preparing for her transplant in March 2020. I would have liked a short paragraph saying how things were, but perhaps that is for a sequel. Did I gain



Whatever

Giles Cattermole

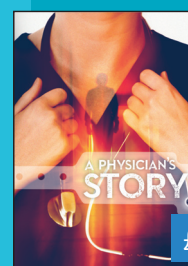
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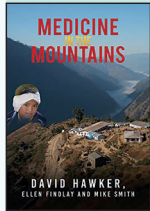


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CMF reviews Christian books relevant to readers interested in health, healthcare, and bioethical issues from a biblical, Christian perspective. If you would like to write a review or have a relevant book for review, please get in touch with CMF via communications@cmf.org.uk

any insights into living with death? I don't think there was anything new or unique contained in this book, and I am not sure who would benefit from it.



Medicine in the Mountains

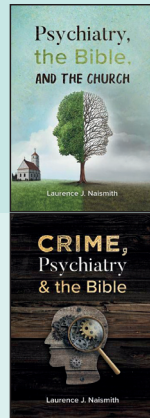
David Hawker, Ellen Findlay, and Mike Smith

- Austin Macauley, 2022, £8.99, 204pp, ISBN: 9781398420755
- Reviewed by **Richard Scott**, a GP in Ramsgate

Medicine in the Mountains comes hot on the heels of the author's second book, *A Week in August*, which celebrates 70 years of Kingston Grammar School's Christian Union summer camps. I was converted, aged 14, at one of these camps, and recall being inspired by old-boy David Hawker, a Christian anaesthetist in Nepal. My student elective was sorted!

Hawker *et al's* new book places my elective memories in a wider context. Unlike his previous biography of the first missionary surgeon in Nepal (*Kanchi doctor*), *Medicine in the Mountains* is a collegiate effort. Nurse Ellen Findlay began work in Pokhara in 1970, whilst Mike Smith, an ENT surgeon, arrived in 1980. In 1992, their survey confirmed that few patients beyond major bus routes attended their hospital. Who cared for the rest? Fifteen million Nepalis lived in remote, inaccessible towns and villages hidden away in the mountains, neglected and often with serious pathology. Mobile medical camps were required.

The book takes us to the first 'ear camp' in 1993, with porters carrying equipment on their backs and suspended from their foreheads, including an operating microscope. Excellent, unsparingly detailed



Psychiatry, the Bible, and the Church Crime, Psychiatry & the Bible

Laurence J Naismith

- Faithbuilders Publishing, 2021, 214pp, £12.95, ISBN: 9781913181697
- Faithbuilders Publishing, 2020, 244pp, £10.99, ISBN: 9781913181550
- Reviewed by **David Smithard**, Consultant in Geriatric Medicine at Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, a Visiting Professor at the University of Greenwich, and is the *Triple Helix* Editor

Laurence Naismith is a retired forensic psychiatrist with degrees in theology and a teaching ministry in Cyprus. His book, *Psychiatry, the Bible and the Church* is very readable and aimed at the lay reader, particularly church leaders. The author identifies examples of possible mental disorders within the Old and New Testaments and explores the issues from a medical (psychiatric) and theological point of view. Sometimes, the links are a little tenuous, but he provides an opportunity to explore the broader issues around the topic.

notes capture the dilemmas involved with evocative pictures adding to the flavour. Geography lessons are thrown in, and the tales are hair-raising. God's provision shines through as dental, gynaecological, surgical, plastic surgical, and medical camps were spawned, even during the extreme violence of the Maoist insurgency. A lovely quote from a patient summed up the team's ethos: '*No others are doing what you people are doing. You operate on us, give us food and clothing. What kind of people are you?*' I loved the answer from a visiting surgeon: '*I have never spent any time with anyone who had such faith. You have made a very hardcore atheist surgeon much more reflective.*'

In one example, 'Rachel and White Lies', Dr Naismith acknowledges that lying is not a psychiatric disorder but goes on to explore the issues around factitious medical conditions.

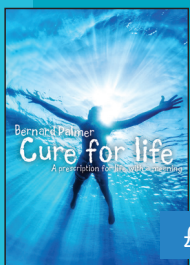
I enjoyed the book, and it is certainly one I will share with my pastor.

C rime, *Psychiatry & the Bible* explores crimes documented within the Scriptures (including murder, manslaughter, rape, treason, perjury, and theft). The book's first part summarises Hebrew, Roman, and modern UK law, drawing some interesting parallels. Naismith provides a different and interesting approach to examining the biblical text. While the book is well written and the arguments clear, there were times when I thought there were better examples of the said crimes than the ones chosen.

Personally, I found the text a little repetitive, but others may find his approach useful. Professionals from many spheres, not just medical, will find the book interesting and valuable. The text is clear, and those with no specific training will be able to get enjoyment from it.

The book ends with the political upheavals of 2008: the disbanding of the monarchy, and governmental restrictions on foreigners. With locals being trained and hospitals improved, the long-term objective was for Nepal to care for its own. Accordingly, and following the massive earthquake which devastated central Nepal, the camps concluded in 2015. Ellen comments that the camps are not her work but God's, and he will bring it to an end in his time.

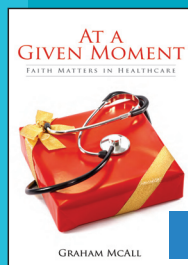
This book is quite an undertaking. It reminds us that missionary medics still have a part to play. Read it, be inspired, and whether a student or retired consultant, ask yourself, is God speaking to me? ▶



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Graham McAll

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Steve Fouch & Catherine Butcher

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THE BEST PLACE FOR
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Where is God in all the Suffering?

AMY ORR-EWING

Where is God in all the Suffering? Amy Orr-Ewing

- The Good Book Company, 2020, 144pp, £8.99, ISBN: 9781784982768
- Reviewed by **David Smithard**, Consultant in Geriatric Medicine at Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, a Visiting Professor at the University of Greenwich, and editor of *Triple Helix*

Professor John C Lennox writes in the foreword, 'This book arises out of the conviction of the author that if Christian faith is worth considering, it needs to be deep enough to cope with our most rigorous human scrutiny and our most heart-rending questions'. This little volume covers many subjects in its 130 pages. It starts with the question 'Why?'. Why does suffering occur? Is it a punishment for our past wrongs, the wrongs of our parents, or just the way of life?

At the beginning Orr-Ewing states, 'Books on suffering written by academic types rarely connect with people who are actually suffering', yet when I was reading this book, I felt it was missing something. I kept thinking this book did not cover the subject as well as CS Lewis did 80 years earlier. So, I dug out my copy of *The Problem of Pain* and found the arguments deeper and the questions better argued. However, Lewis' English is more difficult to read, and many today might struggle with it.

Nevertheless, Orr-Ewing's is a good book and worth a read. However, I would also recommend going back and reading Lewis to complement it if you want a deeper exposition of the topic.

Letter to the American Church

Eric Metaxas

Letter to the American Church Eric Metaxas

- Salem Books, £15, 139p, ISBN: 9781684513895
- Reviewed by **Greg Gardner**, a GP in Birmingham

Dieterich Bonhoeffer's biographer, Eric Metaxas, has authored an essay applying lessons from the life and

writings of Bonhoeffer to the American church. He unpacks the famous quote, erroneously linked to Bonhoeffer, 'Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.' The book's theme is that large parts of the American church (and, by implication, Western churches in general) have been and continue to be silent in the face of evil and advancing statism.

In a chapter called 'The spiral of silence', Metaxas explains the idea, derived from Bonhoeffer, that if you do not speak, you are not being neutral but are contributing to the success of the thing you refuse to name and condemn. Conversely, those who speak out make it easier for others to speak out.

Drawing lessons from the silence of 12,000 German pastors in the face of rising Nazi evil in the 1930s, Metaxas asks whether history is repeating itself in America. There is an incisive commentary on the parable of the talents and chapters on faith, evangelism, and politics.

The book is short, readable, and uncomfortably relevant.



God on Mute: Engaging the Silence of Unanswered Prayer Pete Greig

- David C Cook, £11.99, Revised edition 2020, 400pp, ISBN: 9780830780716
- Reviewed by **Steve Fouch**, CMF Head of Communications

A stone-cold classic of modern Christian writing. Greig is devastatingly honest and realistic, but full of faith and hope as he grapples with some of the hardest questions any Christian can face. Why does God not answer some prayers? Why was God silent when I needed him the most? Why do some people have incredible stories of answered prayer, but I have nothing but silence and disappointment?

If you have ever asked those questions (and few of us haven't at some point), this book is for you. Compassionate, wise, deeply scriptural, and highly practical – it will help anyone struggling with the burden of unanswered prayer. ◦

Cut to the Soul



Sarah Louise Bedford

Editor: Dr Rachael Pickering

Sharing from her own experiences and insights gained from those she has met in her journey of recovery from self-harm, Sarah Louise Bedford focuses on how God's good design for our lives can be lived out in the reality of a damaged world that can lead to some people resorting to hurting themselves.

Honest, practical, compassionate, and grounded in a profoundly biblical spirituality, Sarah Louise has written a book for anyone who self-harms, their family, friends, and professional carers, whether they hold a Christian faith or not.

If you are looking for a biblical, Christian book to help you deal with self-harm, then this is for you.

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