

Christianity and The New Eugenics:
Should We Choose to Have only Healthy or Enhanced Children?
Calum MacKellar

- IVP 2020 ,224pp, £12.199, ISBN: 9781783599134,
- Reviewed by **Trevor Stammers**, Reader in Bioethics at St Mary's University and Director of the Centre for Bioethics and Emerging Technologies

Most Christians will have no idea of the history of eugenics, aside from vague associations with the Third Reich. They will certainly not have any awareness of how deeply embedded the ideology of the new eugenicists is within the NHS and indeed, most other Western healthcare systems. Hence, this book that aims to examine the past to learn lessons for the present will be a total eye-opener to many readers.

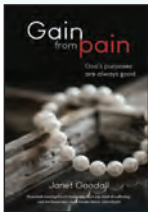
It first examines the rise of eugenics in Nazi Germany but also charts the course of the practice in the UK and US. Frances Galton, Dean William Inge, Winston Churchill, Arthur Balfour, Neville Chamberlain, Glanville Williams, Francis Crick, Julian Huxley and Robert Edwards all feature in the gallery of shame which MacKellar unveils. In the US, many Bible-believing Christians were also swept up in the eugenics movement at the start of the 20th century. 'In fact, the Nazi government '.... looked to the USA for favourable results of sterilization policies, which were portrayed as being both feasible and humane' (p22).

The second and largest chapter explores the Christian perspective on eugenics. The biblical theology of creation is briefly considered followed by an in-depth

discussion of what it means to be created in the 'image of God'. Other themes in this chapter include procreation and its meaning, eugenics and human equality, discrimination and the disabled, and questions about eugenic selection and the instrumentalization of children. A prominent theme throughout is that of unconditional love. *'...if parents set preconditions and do not accept their child for the mere sake of his or her existence... the child will always be aware that his or her very life was related to the selection procedure and associated preconditions, instead of being appreciated for the mere fact of existing.'* (p74)

The final main chapter explores ten different methods of eugenic selection ranging from the selection of sexual partners to cloning, infanticide and germline editing. Along the way, many other areas of beginning of life ethics, such as child and embryo adoption, saviour siblings and designer children, are critically evaluated from a Christian perspective.

With lists for further reading, an excellent glossary and both a general index and an index of scriptural references, this book is an excellent summary of where the new eugenics currently stands and how it has embedded itself within Western healthcare.



Gain from Pain
God's purposes are always good
Janet Goodall

- Gilead Book Publishing, 2020, £8.85, ISBN: 9781999722456
- Reviewed by **Ruth Butlin**, a retired medical missionary and member of the Triple Helix Committee

At only 173 pages divided into 17 short chapters, this is an easy read. But, as each chapter ends with suggestions for further reading (both Bible passages and other books), it could lead on to wider study.

A small book with a large message spelt out in its subtitle 'God's purposes are always good'. It reassures us that, in distressing circumstances, we can by the Holy Spirit's help learn to trust in God's long-term creative purposes.

There are no startling new theological insights, but rather a distillation of a lifetime's thought on the subject informed by the author's professional experience as a Paediatrician who sees '(her) patient is the whole family, not just the sick child' (chapter 5).

It is a book for Christians, full of anecdotes of people who have suffered in different ways; an eclectic mixture of people - from the Bible, from more recent history and from our own generation. Many of those whose experience is described have left us a

precious legacy (a hymn or some prose or an example, or even an institution) which might aid us in our own struggles with pain. Each anecdote is presented in the context of scriptural truth, with a focus on the redemptive suffering of the incarnate Christ.

Speaking of personal calamities, the author writes, *'When the agony is raw, there will be little comfort in a well-intentioned comment that "God can bring great good from it", though people of faith learn by experience to trust this truth, even in the dark'* (from chapter 15).