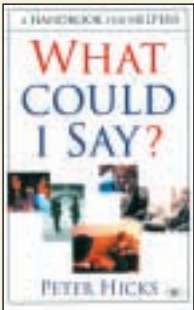


BOOKS

What Could I Say?



Peter Hicks
IVP 2000

Price £9.99 Pb 305 pp
ISBN 085115381

Peter Hicks has set out to produce a handbook for the Christian lay counsellor or 'listening friend'.

The result is admirable and would prove a valued resource for any caring Christian organisation or home. The first section is a short description of some of the major principles of Christian counseling. These are outlined in brief, easily read subsections such as, 'I sat where they sat', 'Make it easy to be honest', 'Don't judge'. Acceptance, listening, openness, empathy, care, confidentiality and thoughtfulness are all emphasised and combined with Christian spirituality.

The much longer second section addresses 71 life events and issues. Some, such as pornography, occupy only two pages, while others, such as marriage and bereavement are discussed more extensively on six or seven pages. Subjects addressed include singleness, single parents, sexual issues, divorce and parenting, as well as those less commonly considered such as change, disability and step families. Also selected are common medical problems such as depression, addiction, substance abuse, Alzheimer's disease, miscarriage and abortion.

There is no pretence to deal with anything in depth. Each section has a helpful but brief overview that is usually followed by a subsection on offering practical help, and another entitled 'What could I say?' A number of Bible references are given, relevant to each particular section. Many sections are concluded with a carefully selected list of useful books or Christian resources, as well as national secular and Christian agencies relevant to the problem.

The author does not attempt to solve the many ethical issues, but is to be commended on his encouragement to assume a distinctly Christian approach. If you are looking for radical or alternative insights, this is not the book for you. Rather, it is 'a safe pair of hands' for the lay

Christian who wants to help. It would not be out of place on the bookshelf of a caring professional.

David Child is a General Practitioner in Birmingham

Tales from the Congo Forest



Peggy Burton
King's Highway Books
2002
£ 6.99 Pb 163pp
ISBN 0 9541015 2 9

At a recent whole day meeting on 'Surgery in the

Tropics' at the Royal College of Surgeons in London, several speakers regretted that little had changed in tropical Africa. Indeed, thirty years after some had spent time working there, conditions appear to have regressed economically and medically. This collection of stories by Peggy Burton, a nurse who worked with her doctor-husband in the Belgian Congo fifty years ago, remains a useful and challenging source of information about conditions likely to be met there.

How does one manage to make diagnoses and treat desperately ill patients when there is no X-ray machine, pathology laboratory or blood bank? Has any reader had to stuff a burst tyre with grass in order to get home? Without proper tools, how do you deal with an impossibly large tree trunk lying across the road? This book is a valuable source of lateral thinking and improvisation. Over and over again, Peggy and her husband James Burton describe how God answered their prayers in difficult medical and life situations.

Fascinating chapter headings such as 'A Weighty Problem and a Goat', 'River Boat Riots' and 'Pythons and People Power', provide an insight into the culture and lifestyle of the village dwelling Congolese. The chapters are short and the whole volume is light reading, although there is a heavy ending. The Burtons returned home for health reasons shortly before the ghastly events of the Simba rebellion following the granting of independence from Belgium in 1960. Many of their missionary and African Christian friends were appallingly treated at this time and several lost their lives.

This book is a companion to their

autobiography 'Born to Serve', which also tells how God used these seeming disasters in their lives to prepare them for other fields of service. It is a challenge to any young Christian of an adventurous character and would make an excellent Christmas or birthday gift.

Arthur Wyatt was formerly a Consultant Surgeon in Greenwich and latterly has made many short-term overseas working visits

The Saline Solution



Sharing Christ in a Busy Practice - Small Group Video Curriculum
Christian Medical & Dental Society, P O Box 7500, Bristol, TN 37621-7500 USA
A Paul Tournier Institute Video Release 1999.
\$99.95

Christian doctors often face a challenge and dilemma. We know that we have been called by God to be witnesses to Jesus. We work with patients who often have anxieties and spiritual needs as well as physical illness. We would like to address these needs but feel uncertain about what to do. Is it ethical to talk to vulnerable patients about faith? Are we only in medicine for the patient's medical care or has God given us other responsibilities?

The Saline Solution is a practical training programme that addresses these questions and enables doctors to become witnesses to Jesus in the workplace. The course promises that doctors will learn to discuss spiritual matters with their patients in a way that is comfortable for both parties. The course teaches how to take a spiritual history, how to write a 'spiritual prescription' and how to develop a 'spiritual-consult network'.

The Saline Solution was devised by Walter Larimore and William Peel for the Christian Medical and Dental Society in the USA. The course material consists of a written Participant's Guide together with videotaped presentations. The programme is divided into ten sessions that can be followed as a weekend retreat or as ten separate meetings. Each session contains video segments, a case study, group discussion and prayer time. It is envisaged that this material could be covered

BOOKS

in about 90 minutes. The most effective way to use the course is to participate in a group with other learners.

The Participant's Guide is an impressive publication. As well as steering people effectively through the course, it is packed with well researched essays on such issues as 'The Faith Factor in Health - what does the research show?' The ethics of evangelism in the doctor-patient relationship is tackled thoughtfully. Practical skills are taught in a way that is easy to retain, for example, the questions involved in taking a spiritual history are encapsulated in the mnemonic SPIRIT.

The videotaped material is produced professionally. There are presentations from the course authors and testimonies from participants on the course. Professional actors are used to portray doctors in different settings, highlighting issues for discussion and consideration by the course participants.

Overall, this is an excellent course that should really help Christian doctors to integrate their faith with their medical work. The only drawback is that the material is written and presented in the context of American culture. This means that some of the written material is less relevant to British medicine, for example one session is devoted to 'office environment', which might be difficult to change into an NHS hospital outpatient clinic. Sometimes the style of the videos is reminiscent of American news programmes, which British participants might find less accessible. I would certainly commend the course, but feel in time that we need an Anglicised version.

Chris Summerton is a Consultant Gastroenterologist in Manchester

David Livingstone: The Man behind the Legend



Rob Mackenzie
Christian Focus
Publications 2000
£11.99 Hb 389pp
ISBN 1 85792 6153

This book is the third biography of David Livingstone to appear in the last few years. It avoids the modern tendency to

historical revisionism so common in many biographies today and provides a clear, honest and straightforward account of the life and work of Livingstone as a pioneer Christian missionary in Africa. The author has lived long in Africa and has read widely in the primary and secondary sources of his material.

He describes the three themes that dominated Livingstone's life as those of 'evangelism, exploration and emancipation'. To these we must add his robust Christian faith and unwavering sense of vocation which inspired all his activities. The author gives graphic accounts of the incidents of Livingstone's life, many of which have formed part of the 'legend', but which nevertheless were actual and historical.

There are numerous references of medical interest in the book. Livingstone prescribed his own pills, 'the Zambezi rousers', for treatment of fever and although they contained only three grains of quinine, they were even said to be successful in treating malaria. Attacked by a lion in 1884, he sustained a compound fracture of his left humerus from which a false joint eventually resulted. This false joint was one of the features by which his body was identified when it was received in London in 1874. An appendix to the book reproduces the report of the post-mortem examination of Livingstone's body after it had been brought to London 'by faithful hands over land and sea'.

There are many references too to Livingstone's work as an evangelist, mostly quoted from his diaries and letters. He spoke to individuals in personal evangelism and to groups in informal services. However, Livingstone soon learned that the task of pioneer missionaries like himself was to be sowers of the seed, not reapers of the harvest. That was left to others who came after him.

This book contains much more than can be indicated in a brief review, but it can be confidently recommended as a handy, readable and well-informed factual account of

the life and work of one who was a faithful servant of God and of the people of Africa in his generation.

John Wilkinson is a retired Consultant in Public Health and a former medical missionary

Rebuilding the Matrix – Science and Faith in the 21st Century



Denis Alexander
Lion 2001
£12.99 Pb pp510
ISBN 0 7459 5116 3

This book on the interface of science and faith is a real work of scholarship that should be in the library of all serious readers. It is written by Denis Alexander, a Fellow of St Edmund's College, Cambridge and current Chairman of the Molecular Immunology Programme at the Babraham Institute. The early chapters show how easily false paradigms with no foundation of truth can be insidiously assimilated into our worldview. Scientific discoveries have by no means 'disproved' the existence of God but are continually used by secularists to promote their view that this is so. The following chapters trace the development of scientific enterprise from its medieval roots to today's post modernism.

A central chapter, 'Reweaving the Rainbow' makes a powerful case for Christian theism. The later chapters cover three aspects of evolutionary theory, firstly showing that it is by no means incompatible with belief in a creator God. Then follows an excellent critique of the claims of those who see evolution superseding belief in God as either creator-sustainer of the universe or the source of moral behaviour. The author thirdly suggests that care for our neighbour depends on our often-unacknowledged belief that he or she is made in God's image.

There are descriptions of a huge number

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of historical figures (the index of names occupies seven pages) who demonstrate the consistency of the link between the study of natural science and the Christian faith. We see the origins of conflict 150 years ago when 'scientists' were first so labeled and had to fight to wrest their terrain from the powerbrokers who were often clerics. The battle was more one of professional rivalry than God versus Science. The penultimate chapter focuses the miracles and resurrection of Jesus. The length of the book is daunting but the chapters are complete in themselves and the author has a light, sometimes humorous touch, making it easy to read. It is thoroughly recommended.

Caroline Berry is a retired Clinical Geneticist and Secretary of Christians in Science

Jesus, MD



David Stevens with Gregg Lewis
Zondervan Publishing House 2001
\$16.99 Hb 224pp
ISBN 0 31023 433 6

David Stevens starts from the premise that very few people these days have contact with shepherds, princes or kings, but to describe Jesus in terms of the Great Physician will strike a chord as everyone has had contact with a doctor. Stevens is currently the Chief Executive Officer of our sister organisation in the United States but writes from his life experience as a doctor in the USA and as a medical missionary in Kenya. He is a great storyteller.

In his introduction he asks what sort of doctor Jesus would have been, and which speciality would have claimed him as its own. He made the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, cured infectious diseases, heart failure, palsy, menorrhagia and had much contact with children and the mentally ill. More importantly, he suggests, 'by looking at both the practice and the person of Jesus I have begun to see not only the kind of doctor but the kind of person I want to be'.

Using the template of a doctor's working life, Stevens develops his theme using intriguing chapter headings, each starting, 'The Great Physician...', and ending,

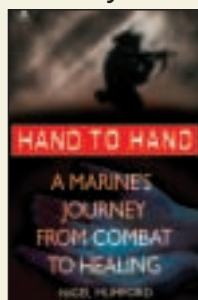
'regularly spent time with his chief', or, 'established his own residency programme', or, 'knew the power of touch'. Stevens goes on to say that people didn't require an appointment to see Jesus, interruptions were taken as opportunities and that Jesus knew what it was like to be 'on call'. Jesus practised excellence with compassion, knew how to 'properly scrub', 'advocated a unique saving plan' and 'specialised in impossible cases'.

This is a scripturally based book but the Americanisms are a bit off-putting and it took me a while to work out what some of them meant. The book is lavishly illustrated with stories from Stevens' own experience and having been a missionary doctor himself he can't help but identify Jesus as the missionary medic *par excellence*.

He hopes that the book's usefulness will extend beyond the medical fraternity. I doubt this, but it will certainly open the eyes of doctors to the excitement and challenge of missionary medicine and I would love to see it put in the hands of all students setting off for an elective overseas. It shows us all the way that Jesus approached people and how we should practise medicine if we want to follow in his footsteps and walk in his ways.

Peter Armon is CMF Overseas Support Secretary and formerly a Consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Hand to Hand – a Marine's Journey from Combat to Healing



Nigel Mumford
Hodder & Stoughton
2002
£5.99 160 p pb
ISBN 0 340 78714 7

Written by Marine Commando Nigel Mumford following the

reported miraculous healing of his sister, this book covers the story of his journey through which he overcame disorders such as post-traumatic stress syndrome to become a minister of healing. As the reviewer, I have two relatives with chronic, incurable diseases - an infant with Cystic Fibrosis and a young mother with progressive Multiple Sclerosis. I write this with them in mind.

The biblical basis for the author's ministry is typical of the genre: 'We are commanded

to preach the kingdom and heal the sick' (p64). There is no reference to the next phrase, 'raise the dead', or to the command not to take the Gospel to the Gentiles (Matthew 10:5-10). The Great Commission of Matthew 28 gives a very different mandate. Mumford quotes 1 Corinthians 12:4-12, writing, 'I believe that we are all, without exception, given gifts of healing' (p124). This is the exact opposite of the central point that the apostle Paul is making in this passage; different gifts are given to different Christians for the common good. The author then goes on to say, '[James 5:14-16] offers, in my opinion, the biblical root of the healing ministry...these words need to be read and re-read to know this is where the journey of healing begins. It incorporates the laying on of hands...' (p120). This passage, however, does not mention the laying on of hands but rather anointing with oil and praying by the elders.

Even in his treatment of the Gospel, Mumford appears to be muddled: 'God sees us as perfect creatures', (p40) but he then says, 'The past is gone. We may still have our guilt but with God's help we can let go of the pain' (p112). He has little to say about the Cross or forgiveness of our sins, even in his prayers. He does not distinguish Christ's miracles from ours, and asks how we can carry out the healing ministry of Jesus (p123).

There is no medical documentation on the medical cases. A kidney stone passes naturally, avoiding an operation. A clinical diagnosis is not confirmed by investigations. His 'best case' is an infant with bowel obstruction due to a (umbilical?) hernia. It resolved spontaneously (p105). While he claims the benefit of prayer can never be scientifically proven (p46), I would suggest that these are everyday medical events.

In a section strangely entitled, 'Why are some healed and others cured?', he focuses on a five-month-old baby with Cystic Fibrosis. As he prayed, the sun came out and shone on the child. 'It was to me as if God was sending us a message of hope'. It is not clear what he means by this and he appears to have no understanding of incurable diseases. I think this book is naïve, deeply subjective and seriously unhelpful.

Peter May is a General Practitioner in Southampton