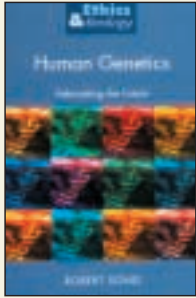


BOOKS

Human Genetics – fabricating the future



*Robert Song
Darton, Longman &
Todd 2002
£8.95 Pb 143 pp
ISBN 0 232 52393 2*

This book by a lecturer in Christian ethics at the University of Durham is a scholarly

work, providing an accurate and realistic evaluation of the current and future promise of molecular technologies in health care. There are some excellent sections, particularly the review of the twentieth century eugenics movement and the current research in behavioural genetics. There are clear accounts of the issues involved in gene patenting, genetics and insurance, and throughout, the author reflects a positive attitude to disability.

Why has so much attention been paid to the potential dangers of the new genetics? Song argues that such fears are not based on ignorance, prejudice, the 'yuk factor' or a fear of the future but rather on concern about 'interfering with nature'. Whilst pharmacogenomics and somatic gene therapy do not raise distinct moral issues, Song highlights pre-implantation diagnosis, germline therapy, reproductive cloning and stem cell research for detailed discussion. He rehearses the arguments in all of these areas and concludes with the most important moral consideration in these debates, namely the status of the embryo.

Song argues that the desire to have a healthy child genetically related to oneself, coupled with the desire to give one's child the best possible start in life will inexorably lead to the acceptance of genetic enhancement, as the technology becomes possible - so is it wrong? Is there a Christian alternative perspective? He reminds us that the Christian hope is not based on efforts to improve our individual genomes but on the transformation of our bodies into a resurrection body. He calls for the church to witness to an abundant life freed from the compulsions that make genetic enhancement seem inevitable.

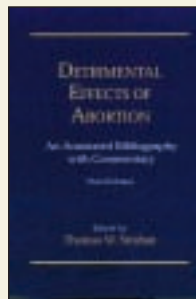
Could genetic knowledge widen the gaps in society? The Christian community is called to carry one another's burdens. Song places this view alongside the potential for discrimination on the basis of a person's

genetic make-up. This subject is timely, given the recent report from the WHO commenting that poor countries could lose out on the benefits of genome research.

Although there are occasional grammatical errors, these are only minor irritations in an otherwise well structured and thought provoking book that I fully recommend.

Alan Fryer is a Consultant Clinical Geneticist in Merseyside

Detrimental Effects of Abortion: An Annotated Bibliography with Commentary



*Ed. Thomas Strahan
Acorn Books
2001
£24.95 pb 261pp
ISBN 0 9648957 0 6*

When abortion was decriminalised in the UK in 1967 its supporters argued that it

should be more widely available because it was safer than a full term pregnancy. For decades this idea persisted. Slowly but steadily evidence has been accumulating that there are considerable health costs built into an abortion decision and many of these are not at all well known. Thomas Strahan, a Minnesota lawyer, has published a bibliography of evidence on the detrimental effects of abortion with a brief commentary on each entry. With approximately 1,300 references the scope of this work is vast. Most of the references are from mainstream journals including the social sciences and psychology but he has also included material from the grey literature such as PhD theses and medical bulletins.

There is no index but in order to facilitate searching Strahan has divided up his book into 140 section headings. Inevitably there is sometimes overlap. There is a large section on how abortion affects adolescents and there is coverage of subjects as diverse as placenta praevia, domestic violence, rape, incest, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, breast cancer, and the impact of abortion on marriage and family.

This project is ongoing and the author invites correspondence at Strahan@pmlink.com. Information about studies that are not included in the publication is always welcome. The publishers intend to produce

updates periodically and news about these will be published on their web site afterabortion.org. The book is also available in searchable electronic form. As a reference book it should have a place in most medical libraries but would be of help to anyone wanting to learn more about the latent pathology of induced abortion.

Gregory Gardner is a General Practitioner in Birmingham

Fire in my bones



*Dick Anderson
Christian Focus 2001
£6.99 Pb 230 pp
ISBN 1 85792 676 5*

'A tiny needle in the almighty hand of God' – this phrase captures the wonder of this challenging story. I

really enjoyed the overview of decades of service, illustrating the fruit that comes from prayerful passion for mission. However, it is long after the seed is sown that any fruit appears and Dick Anderson is very honest in sharing the buffetings and personal struggles as well as the blessings he and his wife, Joan, experienced along the way.

Going to work among the Turkana in a remote part of Kenya, the barriers of culture, language, discomfort and misunderstanding seem huge. Add the spiritual battle and the need to subject his family to a multitude of risks (there is a heart-rending account of his daughter nearly dying) and the chance of establishing a new church appears hopeless. Yet, the thrill of the book is to revisit the same area decades later and to see the fruit of vibrant fellowships and growing maturity.

In addition to his account of pioneering work for Africa Inland Mission in Kenya, Mozambique, Comoro Islands, Sudan, Seychelles and Chad, there are honest and helpful chapters on leadership (a really tough period of being criticised), team working and the impact on his family. Heart-warming pen portraits of Africans, both patients and fellow-workers, move the story from mere history to mission with all its tides of encouragements and disappointments.

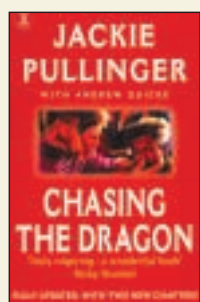
From the colonial era to the present, the context changes but the challenges remain. Poverty and treatable diseases confront our complacency, whilst the call to share the good

BOOKS

news of Christ is still compelling. Be challenged: 'when the offering reached 105 shillings [about £1.20] their joy knew no bounds'. Be inspired: 'precious saints, often unshod and clad only in rags, lifting hands to God in joyful worship'. May this book fan into flame the fire in our bones too!

Ian Spillman, Consultant Paediatrician, Cheshire; previously Medical Superintendent Kisiizi Hospital, Uganda with Tear Fund.

Chasing the Dragon



*Jackie Pullinger with Andrew Quicke
Hodder and Stoughton
2001
£5.99 Pb 254 pp
ISBN 0 340 78569 1*

This is a remarkable and exciting book, filled with episodes of adventure, intrigue, crime, unspeakable cruelty and violence. For the medical reader there is much description of disease, addiction and appalling poverty. There are vivid descriptions of court cases and prison life.

Chasing the Dragon is also a chronicle of the amazing work of the Holy Spirit in healing bodies, teaching minds, saving souls and changing the lives of individuals, communities and deprived and depraved societies.

This book is the thirty year story of a young English woman, Jackie Pullinger, who was led by God to Hong Kong and its infamous Walled City and who, despite many difficulties, discouragements and set-backs, was and is the conduit for an amazing work of the Holy Spirit in spreading faith in Jesus to drug addicts, prostitutes, pimps, pushers and Triad gang leaders. The reader is enthralled by the wonderful stories of Goko, Winson, Geui Jai, Johnny and many others who have been brought to Christ, sometimes instantly with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and sometimes after much delay.

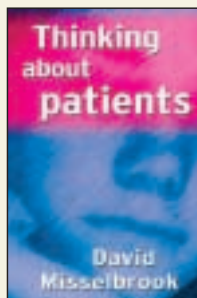
The book includes many cases where heroin addiction was instantly 'cured' without withdrawal symptoms, but with the addict immediately praying confidently in tongues and often receiving knowledge of Jesus despite barriers of language and literacy. Such accounts are a challenge to those of us working with addicts on a daily basis and who long to see such 'miraculous'

cures, yet only occasionally do so. There is, however, running through this challenging book, a down to earth sense that a mission such as Jackie Pullinger's is not one of quick fixes by a God who is putting on a show for visiting (short term) missionaries. It is, rather, an account of long haul work for the Kingdom where, despite many disappointments and apparent failures, faith and an almost naïve trust and complete reliance on the Holy Spirit's power push back the influence of evil and deprivation.

Having read the first edition about 18 years ago and been enthralled, I can say only that the second edition with two new chapters to bring us up to date is even better. Go get it!

John Latham is an Inner City General Practitioner in Dublin

Thinking About Patients



*David Misselbrook
Petroc Press 2001
£29.95 Pb 214pp
ISBN 1 900603 49 7*

This book, by a Christian GP and VTS Course Organiser in South London, is written to promote a multi-dimensional model of medicine. The first four chapters explore the changing role of medicine in society, looking at its scope, achievements and problems as we find them at the beginning of the twenty first century. The doctor's model of disease is contrasted with the patient's model of illness, and there is a discussion of how the doctor's world is constructed. The ways in which the patient's world differs from this construction is considered at some length.

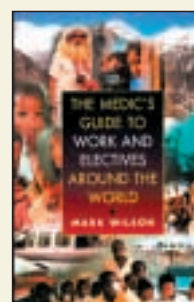
The next four chapters describe the non bio-mechanical elements of a multidimensional medical model, and how disease, illness and medical activity can only be truly understood when our social and cultural programming, as well as our individual thinking, are included in the total picture. The final chapter poses questions about the role and future of medicine.

It is an enjoyable book to read, well structured with clear summaries at the beginning and extensive references at the end of each chapter. Brief book reviews are scattered throughout. The author's wit and humour, as well as his impressively wide

reading, are also evident. Although it covers little new or original ground, it contains comprehensive references to key source material that would be very helpful for someone less familiar with this terrain. It will be of interest to all Christian GPs as it is encouraging to read the thoughtful reflections of other Christians struggling with the demanding realities of life in the National Health Service today.

Huw Morgan is a General Practitioner and GP Trainer in Bristol

The Medics' Guide to Work and Electives around the World



*Mark Wilkinson
Arnold 2000
£14.99 Pb 480 pp
ISBN 0 340 76098 2*

This is a book that should prove to be of great value to students or junior doctors looking for ideas about electives or work

overseas - in the developed or developing world. It is full of useful information. Users are encouraged to contribute further ideas and updates on places visited with the tempting offer of a £200 prize for so doing.

Divided into 3 sections, the first talks about 'Getting ready' but the last is no more than an appendix containing the addresses of nongovernmental organizations (CMF included) and embassies in the UK, USA and Australia. There is a helpful summary of travel vaccinations and a list of organisations that might contribute funds to the trip.

Website and email addresses are given for most embassies, but not for the individual NGOs and hospitals. This may be deliberate. The author suggests that it is better to write a personal letter, as this is considered 'more polite' in many cultures, than to make initial contact by email. Furthermore, the recipient of a letter is less likely to dispose of this than an electronic offering.

By far the longest section is on 'Destinations'. Countries get a very brief introduction (population, language, capital, currency and international telephone code) and a slightly longer comment on the medical scene, need for visas, climate and crime rates. The amount of information given relates more to the popularity of a destination



than its size or importance. In some instances there are simply lists of medical schools or hospitals. In others, eg Gibraltar, places are mentioned but addresses are not given, which will prove frustrating.

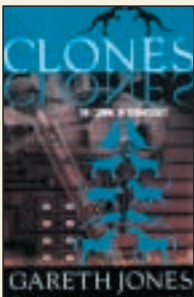
Countries are grouped under continents, which is fine if you have a good grasp of geography, but where exactly are the Maldives? The author could take a leaf out of the new edition of *Operation World* that now lists countries in alphabetical order. Not every country is mentioned, Yemen, Somalia and the Central Asian Republics for example. The index lists countries but not hospitals and European countries are found under 'Europe' rather than their own names. Myanmar is still called Burma.

Throughout the book the writer is very even handed in his comments about mission hospitals, most of which he feels offer an 'excellent' elective experience. In one place he comments, 'they are more efficiently run ...and often have a better social life!' Of Kisiizi (Uganda), he writes, 'you will have to work hard' and it is 'very Christian but no-one holds anything against non-Christians'. I discovered one which requires the applicant to get in touch with me to be interviewed to ensure that he/she really is a Christian.

All in all, this book is a good buy but watch out for the new edition of CMF's own guide on the subject.

Peter Armon is CMF Overseas Support Secretary

Clones – The clowns of technology?



Gareth Jones
Paternoster Press 2001
£12.99 Pb 192 pp
ISBN 1 84227 086 9

Lighten up, says Gareth Jones. Don't take ethics so seriously. Think about it, yes. Work hard with it, yes.

By all means be intellectually rigorous, but then add a dash of humour.

His title poses a question: *Clones – the clowns of technology?* Clowns, he says, are eccentrics who live on the edge of society and entertain by invoking introspection: 'Their inconsequential bumbblings are caricatures of our own folly; they reveal what we seek to hide... they help us laugh at our failings, and

laughing to realize that humans are sometimes stupid and often frail.'

In rehearsing the arguments about the excessive hype surrounding biotechnology and the need to form a biblically inspired view of what it is to be human, he develops two themes. One is that human reproductive cloning is exceptionally unlikely to take place, and the other that even if it does occur, it shouldn't be seen as shocking. He even opens the book with an imaginary view of life in 2050 in which the majority of Christians have accepted reproductive cloning, but sadly, he presents no potential chain of events that lead to this change in opinion.

Jones' enthusiasm for therapeutic cloning is evident throughout the book. The centre of the book provides a simple guide to some of the techniques involved, but more usefully presents a run through of various strands of ethical thinking from many secular and religious points of view. This makes it a useful read for anyone wanting to discover the historic context underlying current debate.

For Jones, a key characteristic of humanity is our freedom, and he maintains that cloning will not alter an individual's ability to be free. Jones' aim is to bring us face-to-face with the clone, to force us into asking what we make of him or her, and what that person tells us of ourselves. His or her presence may make us laugh at ourselves, at our pretensions and extraordinary belief in our own abilities. From Jones' original definition, this may make clones clowns, however, Jones concludes that clones would not be clowns but rather, normal people living at the centre of society. So, who is the clown and who is laughing?

Pete Moore is a Freelance Science Writer and Editor of the CMF Files

The Ethics of Transplantation



Keith Rigg
Grove Books Ltd 2001
£2.50 Pb booklet 24pp
ISBN 1 85174 479 7

Keith Rigg is a consultant transplant surgeon in Nottingham and Reader at one of the local churches. He

is well placed to write this 24 page booklet on the ethics of transplantation. Transplantation is here to stay and most members of the Christian community, as

well as other religious groups, welcome it. However, there are many different ethical questions that need to be discussed and it is important that all members of the medical profession are aware of them.

This booklet, one of the excellent Grove series, looks at transplantation under four main headings: 'Outlining the issues', 'The donor perspective', 'The recipient perspective' and finally asks: 'What next?' The first area introduces us to an overview of transplantation, and outlines the ethical principles used to develop a framework for our thinking. There is then a section on the definition of death and what happens to the body after death, followed by introductory paragraphs on donation, informed consent, funding and the supply of organs.

The donor perspective looks at both cadaveric, living related and unrelated donation, while the section from the recipient's perspective looks at the benefits, risks and allocation of organs. The final two pages look towards the future with a brief introduction to anencephalic donors, xenotransplantation and genetic engineering.

This booklet provides an excellent introduction to the field. Inevitably, within 24 pages much of the discussion is painted with broad brush-strokes, omitting detail. This is of itself no criticism of the work, but apart from the references cited in the text, there are no specific guides to further reading, which would have been helpful. All the same, this booklet provides an excellent starting point for discussion of some of the issues surrounding transplantation.

David Cranston is a Consultant Urological and Transplant Surgeon in Oxford

The CMF Website on CD-ROM £3 (Special Offer)



The CMF website is still available on CD-ROM: over 30 back issues of *Nucleus* and 10 issues of *Triple Helix* together with ten years of CMF government submissions on ethics, the full set of *CMF Files*, a year's supply of daily devotions, the *Confident Christianity* evangelism training course, *Cyberdoc* web reviews, a quarterly newsround of issues in medical ethics and much more. Most queries can be answered within two or three mouse-clicks from the homepage. To order see the insert.