



Healing God's way
From natural to supernatural
Angela Walker

- CreateSpace, 2014, £11 Pb 189pp, ISBN 9871502325662
- Reviewed by **Peter Pattison**, retired missionary and GP

Angela Walker is a CMF member who trained in Liverpool and specialised in paediatrics. She has spent most of the last ten years in Uganda and neighbouring countries.

This is a dangerous book; dangerous because it will stir a hunger for God and challenge half-hearted discipleship or compromises with sin. The first and last chapters are particularly good on this. It challenged me.

Angela has been on a learning curve of discovering the spiritual roots to many common diseases. She has been practising what Paul Brand and others termed pneumo-psychosomatic medicine. She would concur with some of our American colleagues who have suggested that failure to take a spiritual history could be construed as negligent practice.

However, this is also a dangerous book because, having come face to face with all forms of demonic activity, Angela gives the impression (maybe unintentionally) that *all* diseases have spiritual roots, that experiences in Africa can and should be replicated in Western Europe (where the spectrum of pathology, spiritual as well as physical is overlapping but different).

Most seriously of all, she gives the impression (probably inaccurately) that her discovery of spiritual roots to disease has, for her, rendered her training in medicine and paediatrics irrelevant. This impression is enhanced by the oft-repeated phrase, 'I believe that...'

Read it with a warm heart and a discerning mind. Expect to be challenged and be prepared to respond to the Holy Spirit.



Crazy busy
A mercifully short book about a really big problem
Kevin DeYoung

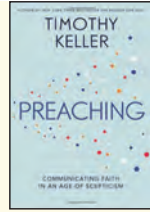
- IVP, 2013, £8.99 Pb 119pp, ISBN 9781783590230
- Reviewed by **Chris Lavy**, consultant orthopaedic surgeon

Hands up those who are secretly a bit proud when people say 'you are one of the busiest people I know'. Many Christian doctors run a busy NHS practice with a role in management, plus some private work, and a smattering of national committees, plus a commitment to mission, a church group, and I've not even started on family life yet.

Kevin DeYoung is a dynamic American pastor who describes many of our lives when he says his average day is a cross between a perpetual summer camp and a three ring circus. This book is

short, readable and funny but serious. I read it on a train journey because my PA told me I had to change my life.

DeYoung is my kind of writer. He warns us of three serious spiritual dangers of an over-busy life. It can ruin our joy, it can rob our hearts, and it can cover up the rot in our souls. He then gives us seven common and practical areas of busyness which we can review and consciously change. Finally, from the Mary and Martha story in Luke 10 he shows us one thing that is necessary, which trumps all busyness; a close relationship with Christ.



Preaching
Communicating faith in an age of scepticism
Timothy Keller

- Hodder & Stoughton, 2015, £16.99 Hb 310pp, ISBN 9781444702170
- Available as an ebook.
- Reviewed by **John Martin**, CMF Head of Communications

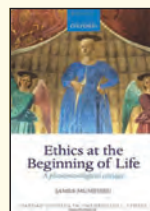
Tim Keller continues to amaze with his prolific output. In his words this is 'a manifesto, not a manual'. Plenty of books detail preparing expository sermons; this is an *apologia* for a certain kind of preaching to engage minds and hearts shaped by the culture of our times.

The author pre-supposes the infallibility of the biblical text; expository preaching is its handmaiden. He insists, however, there is more to it than mere exegesis. Part of it is taking biblical context seriously, not just where words appear in the text, but where the text fits within the Bible as a whole. Thus expository preaching always points to Christ and his saving work; the hearer should always be left

without doubt as to what is the meaning and efficacy of the gospel. The preacher must know how to speak into the prevailing culture and be able to bring the resources of the gospel to its questions and needs.

We tend to skip footnotes and appendices. Nearly a third of this volume is devoted to them. It is here that Keller offers some of his most useful resources for the budding preacher, not least his account of how he himself prepares.

It's worth buying the book for chapter five alone where Keller addresses the theme of how to preach to people whose worldview is shaped by relativistic and hedonistic late-modern culture.



Ethics at the beginning of life
A phenomenological critique
James Mumford

- OUP, 2013, £67 (Pb £25) Hb 212pp, ISBN 9780199673964
- Reviewed by **Trevor Stammers**, Programme Director in Bioethics and Medical Law, St Mary's University, London

This book is not a light read, but for those with a good grounding in moral philosophy and theology, it proves as rewarding as it is challenging. Phenomenology has traditionally been used by feminist writers largely to support abortion. But this work is remarkable in being the only one (to my knowledge) to use the phenomenology of pregnancy or what Mumford dubs 'the human emergence of the newone', to argue a moral case against abortion.

It is erudite and, though a dictionary may be needed alongside, it is also lucidly and

engagingly written with plentiful illustrations drawn from works as diverse as Shakespeare's plays and Shriver's *We Need to Talk about Kevin*.

Mumford takes Scripture seriously and cogently but is equally familiar with Nietzsche. He notes that, in the end, the latter also concluded that it is the Christian doctrine of the *imago Dei* which 'granted man (and *Mensch* as each individual man) absolute value, as opposed to his smallness and accidental occurrence in the flux of becoming and passing away'. Exactly so – and this book demonstrates clearly why.



Healed at last *Separating biblical truth from myth* Scott Blackwell

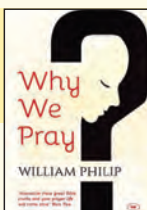
- Matthias Media, 2014, £8.99 Pb 199pp, ISBN 9781922206565
- Reviewed by **Peter May**, retired GP

This thoughtful, theological reflection on healing is written in the light of personal illness and pastoral experience. Christ-centred, caring and well written, his motivation to write came from being told he should seek healing for his short leg, by a man who was visually impaired but could not see the irony!

The book gets better as it progresses but I have two misgivings. Firstly, he rather scolds miracle healers, which will make it difficult for them to read – which is a shame.

Secondly, and more importantly, he gives too much credence to Jack Deere’s evidence (1993) supporting contemporary miracles. Healing presents great difficulties for lay

people, who cannot distinguish between incurable, remitting, psychosomatic and hysterical illnesses. Everything seems to be miraculously cured at healing crusades, but that is not so. Sir John Houghton’s consultation, involving over 30 charismatic healers, theologians and doctors, met four times between 1991–94. Not a single case of Christ-like miraculous healing could be verified (See Lucas E, ed. *Christian healing – What can we believe?*). Yet such miracles would make headlines. If a fixed curvature of the spine like mine was immediately healed (Luke 13:13), I would be four inches taller! Prayers may be mercifully answered, but Christ-like miracles must be very rare if we cannot properly document one.



Why we pray William Philip

- IVP, 2015, £7.99 Pb 112pp, 9781433542862
- Reviewed by **Tom Roberts**, CMF Communications Coordinator

Praying can be hard, and teaching on prayer can often leave us feeling discouraged and guilty that we don’t pray more. The author of this short book feels the same, but thinks he has identified the problem. The real reason we don’t pray is that we forget *why* we pray, turning prayer into yet another burden on top of everything else in our busy lives.

But Philip holds that ‘we learn most about prayer simply by learning about God’. The more we understand about the God we pray to, the more we will be drawn to prayer, because ‘the real truth about God is never discouraging...the Lord himself

is never depressing’. Philip then takes the reader through four key truths about why we pray: because God is a speaking God, because we are sons of God, because we have a sovereign God and because we have the Spirit of God.

The short, well-structured chapters, lively style and good illustrations make this an easy read. Questions at the end of each chapter help the reader to reflect and apply. This book is a wonderful reminder of the astonishing privilege we have to freely come to our heavenly Father in prayer, knowing that, ‘through our union with Jesus, he can’t not hear us’.



Half the sky *How to change the world* Nicholas D Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

- Virago, 2010, £12 Pb 352pp, ISBN 9781844086825
- Reviewed by **Rhona Knight**, GP in Leicester

Fierce, pragmatic, full of inspiring stories of courage and determination, *Half the Sky* is essential reading for every one of us – whichever our gender, wherever we are. There are not many books that I recommend everyone should read, but since I read this book, I have echoed the book cover accolade and told many people about it, used it in sermons, and tweeted about it.

The book of real-life narratives is written by a couple who have encountered first-hand the unnecessary suffering of women globally, particularly in cultures where women are devalued and denied education; are subjected to rape and violence; are trafficked into prostitution. It also tells of

extraordinary women, who, when given the opportunity, have overcome unbelievable obstacles and made an immense difference.

The title *Half the Sky*, is based on the words of Mao: ‘Women hold up half the sky’. From an oppressive culture of foot-binding, the position of women in China has improved immensely. Chinese cities are ‘one of the best places to grow up as female’ (p229). Change is possible. The book evidences how education and employment for women are key factors in preventing child marriage, forced prostitution and trafficking. It demonstrates how grassroots, culturally appropriate interventions change lives and shows how you and I can become involved. Truly transformational.



Protestant social thought in Latin America Dr H Fernando Bullon

- Regnum Books, 2015, £16 Pb 261pp, ISBN 9781908355553
- Reviewed by **E John C Parker**, retired GP

The application of the Christian Faith to Economic and Social development in South America has generated much interest, some of which has been labelled ‘liberation theology’.

The author is of an evangelical persuasion but the book is a fair and balanced account, set in the Latin American context, of both evangelical and ecumenical thought going back to the latter part of the nineteenth century. He then describes how protestant missions and churches have demonstrated a strong social conscience, usually with a well thought out theoretical framework, and how this has been worked out on the ground. Medicine features highly in this,

but also education, agriculture and ethics as well as substance abuse. It attempts to answer the question ‘what is the church good for and does it make a difference?’ Worthwhile questions indeed.

Dr Bullon is based at the evangelical University of the Americas in Costa Rica and is regarded as the premier protestant thinker and theologian of socio-economic development theory and the role of the church in Latin America today. He has written a rich and extensively researched study which would benefit anybody wishing to think seriously about mission strategy in South America. It also provides a very extensive bibliography on the subject.