

is growing, overturning past prejudices and animosities as it races forward' (p.260). This seems a rather overblown claim, as SSQ is probably unknown to the majority of scientists (it was to me before reviewing this book) and to the world at large it is probably of little consequence (whether it should be or not is a moot point). Therefore, while at times making interesting reading, I do not think that this book, or the SSQ project, are likely to have the impact that the editors seem to hope for.

There is a companion volume of interviews with scientists involved in SSQ: Mark Richardson & Gordy Slack, *Faith in science: scientists search for truth*, London: Routledge, 2001. (Reviewed on p. 78 of this issue of *Science & Christian Belief*.)

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**Neil Messer (Editor)**  
*Theological Issues in Bioethics: an Introduction with Readings*  
London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002. 286 pp. pb. £14.95.  
ISBN 0-232-52441-6

Here is an unusual book. Neil Messer, now Professor of Theology at Lampeter, has assembled a series of extracts from a wide range of writers who put forward their individual views on various aspects of bio-ethics. The chapters cover a broader than usual spectrum of topics: life, death, our bodies, health, health economics, doctor/patient relationships and our attitude to both the natural world and the animal kingdom. The book's focus is theology with scientific factors given little explanation, but at the conclusion of each chapter there is a vignette based on a real life ethical dilemma with questions to consider arising from the readings.

Each chapter consists of relevant passages from two or three Christian

authors from differing theological positions with Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Evangelical representatives plus contributions from Feminist and Liberation theologians. Some, such as Stanley Hauerwas and the late Paul Ramsey are well known, but others much less so. In a future edition more information on the various contributors would help to set their pieces in context.

With such a broad selection of authors we are exposed to a wide range of views and no doubt if all the authors were in a conference together there would be arguments. But the disputes would be over detail and priorities. What comes over is the degree of agreement on the Christian essentials such as justice and the value and dignity of each individual in God's sight. In fact the only confrontational readings are papers taken from *Science and Christian Belief* (1993) where Oliver Barclay and Andrew Linzey take very different views on Christian attitudes to animals.

Most of us are aware of the Roman Catholic stance on bioethical matters but the Eastern Orthodox extracts gave me new insights with their spiritual emphasis and focus on kingdom ethics. Likewise we need also to listen to the Liberation theologians with their warnings on the potential harm ill-considered introductions of high technology could have on those living in the developing world. As a clinical geneticist I particularly enjoyed feminist theologian Karen Lebacqz's musings on the status of the embryo, based on the work of Thielicke and her splendid essay on the disempowerment experienced by becoming a patient, whether one is a hospital consultant or an unemployed immigrant woman. John Hull's piece 'A Blind Person's Conversations with the Bible' in the chapter on 'Health, Disease and Wholeness' brings a welcome perspective from a person with an impairment that need not be a disability.

The paucity of science is a little surprising, particularly in view of the

author's previous life as a molecular biologist, but perhaps there is no real need for theologians to get mired in biology. There are many books on bio-ethics but most focus on technology and there is a great need for sound theology – for theologians to be aware of the issues and to make their distinctive contribution to these problems that will face most of us at some time in our lives. Here is material with a God-centred stance. Much of it is old, William May on covenantal relationships remains fresh although Paul Ramsey's discussion on resource allocation seemed dated, but there are new insights too and the book provides a good foundation for the rising generation of theologians to build on, both pastorally and in research. For those of us who work in science the book provides a healthy confrontation to our pragmatic and often materialistic outlook and can be recommended as a means of widening our horizons.

It is well referenced and indexed with a useful glossary of both scientific and theological terms.

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

**John Jefferson Davis**

***The Frontiers of Science and Faith – Examining Questions from the Big Bang to the End of the Universe***

IVP (Downers Grove, Illinois), 2002.  
200 pp., pb. US\$15.00.  
ISBN 0-8308-2664-5

John Jefferson Davis is a Professor of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, although his first degree is in Physics. He has a strong track record of publications on the interface between science and faith in both theological and scientific journals, and his achievements have been recognised on more than one occasion by the Templeton Foundation, including the Award for Quality and

Excellence in the Teaching of Science and Religion (1998). In *The Frontiers of Science and Faith* Professor Davis uses his expertise in physics, theology and philosophy to the full as he addresses ten topics related to the impact of new scientific research on traditional Christian doctrine. As the author himself states in the preface, his basic presupposition is that 'the results of modern science, properly understood, are no threat to Christian faith. Christian faith and scientific method are understood to be complementary ways of knowing God's creative work, each having its distinctive ways of knowing, methods and areas of validity.' Each chapter is a separate essay and several have already been published as independent papers, including three in this journal. This is apparent in the style of writing that is somewhat academic, with extensive references as detailed footnotes. As such, I found it quite hard going in places and a little disjointed; it is certainly not a book for bedtime reading. But what of its contents?

The first chapter is a consideration of 'Genesis 1:1 and Big Bang Cosmology' in which it is argued that Genesis 1 speaks of a real beginning to the universe, an *ex nihilo* creation, just as does modern cosmology. Even if, in the distant future, there emerges a 'theory of everything' it will still be God who 'breathes fire into the equations' and gives meaning to the universe. Chapters 2 and 3 tackle issues related to Quantum theory. The first of these, 'Quantum Indeterminacy and the Omniscience of God', considers such issues as whether God can know the future at the same time as we possess free will and our actions have significance. If God is outside of time, how can he be religiously available within his creation? He suggests that an analogy for the immanence and yet the transcendence of God is the particle and wave characteristics of an electron. He concludes that we as creatures have a voice and a vote but God has the veto. However, no consideration is given as to how God imposes his will and direction on a