*St Margaret’s – Bethel – St Mark’s*

**Tough**   [**Questions**](https://pixabay.com/illustrations/question-mark-question-response-96288/)

Suggested further reading.

* The list below is by no mean exhaustive.
* They are books which I have found helpful.
* Not all the views expressed will necessarily be mine!

**What’s So Special About Christ?**

**The Gospel in a Pluralist Society. Leslie Newbiggin. SPCK Classics.**

The author served as one of the first bishops of the Church of South India. A missionary at heart, he reflects on how the Christian gospel needs to be proclaimed in a society such as ours which struggles with the truth claims of Jesus.

**The meaning of Jesus: Two Visions. Marcus J Bourg and N T Wright. HarperCollins**

Two new testament scholars hold a debate on the nature of the historical Jesus. N T Wright, former bishop of Durham, better known as Tom Wright, takes a more orthodox view while Marcus Borg, former professor in Oregon USA argues some more progressive ideas.

**In the Steps of Jesus. Peter Walker. Lion Hudson**

Peter has taught in both Oxford and the States, but his passion is Jerusalem and the lands of the bible. He has led visits to the Holy Land for over thirty years. He led the recent study tour in which Elaine and I shared. This book serves to enhance our understanding of the unique nature of Jesus and the land in which he lived, died and rose again. The book helps with this section of tough questions and to further illustrate our presentation of the trip.

**Do Science and Religion Mix?**

**Can Science explain everything? John C Lennox. The Good Book Company**

Professor John Lennox is Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford as well as holding other notable academic titles. He made a commitment to Christ as student against the advice of some of tutors but has never regretted it. This book handles a complex subject in a warm and engaging way.

**Dawkings’ God Genes, Memes and the Meaning of Life. Alistair McGrath. Blackwell Publishing**

Alistair was one of my tutors. He is currently the Andreas Idreos Professorship in Science and Religion in the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford so bringing issues of Christian faith and science together is what he does. He has one of the best minds of our day, yet his writing is accessible. In this book he takes on Richard Dawkins at his own game. For balance one should read Dawkin’s ‘The selfish Gene’ and ‘The Blind Watchmaker’ first’!

**Can the Bible Help us With Sex?**

**A Better Story. Glynn Harrison. The Good Book Company**

Glynn was formally Professor of Psychiatry at Bristol University. A lay reader in the Church of England, he now travels and speaks widely on issues of faith and psychology. In this book his thesis is that the sexual revolution of the last fifty plus years has produced a distorted view of human sexuality. The church meanwhile has tended to pedal a message of shame and hypocrisy. While the teaching of scripture around marriage and celibacy is hard, we need to embrace it as a better story for human flourishing.

**The Plausibility Problem. Ed Shaw. IVP**

Ed describes himself as ‘same sex attracted’ yet in this book he defends a traditional position on sexuality, marriage and celibacy. He recognises this as a painful walk for himself and other like-minded people but sees it as the best way to live. He also gently chides his fellow Christians for a lack of understanding of his needs.

**Covenant & Calling: Towards a theology of same sex relationships. Robert Song. SCM Press**

Robert Song is Professor of Theological Ethics at Durham University. In this book he looks at what the bible says we might become in Christ and sees the possibilities for a number of committed relationships including those which are ‘same sex’. It’s a thoughtful attempt to marry biblical themes to contemporary understandings of sexuality.

**How can God Justify Suffering?**

**Those who wait. Tanya Marlow. Malcolm Down Publishing**

Tanya Marlow, a writer and broadcaster explores through the lives of four biblical characters what it means to wait for healing from God. She suffers herself from ME and questions whether the church should always presume that to be healed means to be ‘normal’.

**Fear No Evil. David Watson. Hodder and Stoughton**

Up until he was diagnosed with terminal cancer, David Watson had a worldwide teaching and preaching ministry which began in York after he took over a church about to be closed and turned it around. The growing congregation then moved to a larger church St Michael Le Belfry, under the shadow of the famous minster. This is the book which describes how he comes to terms with his illness and seemingly unanswered prayer. Written over thirty years ago, it’s still a powerful read.

**The Problem of Pain. C S Lewis. Collins**

Written back in 1941, this little classic is still in print. Being quite philosophical in nature, it’s not an easy read but it is quite short. Digested in small chunks, it’s manageable. The book has stood the test of time because Lewis does attempt to answer this most thorny of questions quite convincingly although at the end of the day, we are in the realms of faith, not watertight argument!

**Jonathan Smith July 2019**