

## Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

### *Ethics and the Beginning of Human Life*

Megan Best

Paperback. 532 pages. Price: \$34.99  
Available from: [www.koorong.com](http://www.koorong.com)

***A woman has just fallen pregnant and needs a battery of tests as part of their antenatal care. A couple is seeking advice on 'what next' because they are having difficulty falling pregnant. A young woman is pregnant and doesn't want to be.***



real strength of this book is its putting together in one volume, both the medical facts we need, and an evangelical ethical framework we also most definitely need. We need both medical knowledge and a biblical ethic if we are to have any hope at helping our patients and their families in this very complex and changing field. I'll let you read the book and find this out for yourself, but on the medical side, for example, she examines every type of contraception on the market, and soon to be on the market! I have already used the book as I counsel women on which contraception they might like to use. On the ethical side, in the first few chapters Megan teaches a framework for thinking ethically which is holistic and biblical-theological.

**T**hese are regular scenarios in my practice as a GP, and they regularly cause me heart ache. As Christian doctors, we know they all have gigantic ethical impact. We can feel a responsibility to say something to save a life, or stop a death, and at the same time sensitively and carefully inform our patients of some of their legal options. As you know, legal and Christian are not the same thing today. The direction of flow in obstetrics today that patients find themselves in is convenience and self-centredness. Our patients are often bewildered and confused, and don't realise they have choices.

I am very glad I have read Megan's book and can't recommend it to you highly enough. It's a long read (508 pages) but every page is worth the effort. She is meticulous in her research. I cannot begin to think how long it must have taken for her to put this book together and can only suppose she has had a lot of help from colleagues, both medical colleagues and theological ones. There was so much that I found helpful and interesting. Of particular note, her survey of the history down through the ages, of society's view on abortion, helps us see how the unravelling of a Christian view of procreation has occurred in the West. There are sections throughout "for doctors" which are of a more technical nature. There are all sorts of practical applications which will help us as we advise couples suffering from infertility. She is scientific and backs up her findings with evidence. She is wonderfully compassionate and pastoral. It is a book for Christian couples, pastors, and I believe most of all, Christian doctors.

Megan takes the reader in a logical sequence, from the biology of pregnancy, through to the complex scientific minefield of human embryo research. However, I feel the

What do we mean by holistic? Take having a child as an example. Having a child is not in itself sinful. It is a godly, sacrificial, other-person centred action. God creates life and gives himself for his creation in redemption. And he tells us to "fill the earth". But is it always, *entirely* right? What if the main motive in having a child is to make my life fulfilling and worth it? What if having a child is my life's dream, my all in all? Then it becomes an idol. The child replaces God, and we risk making our child's life misery because they will never be able to meet all the expectation we have just placed on them. Megan recognises and teaches that motivations and Christian character are just as important as the act. Motivation, intentions, consequences, as well as actions are important.

Ethics is a fascinating subject. It's the sharp edge of life where we think and act and interact with the world, using our knowledge of God and life, to make decisions. We need the Bible and we need each other (pastors, church, commentaries, testimonies, theologians and historians). We need to be students of the Bible, we need to develop in Christian character (put on virtues, take off vices). We need development of a Christian world view to think things through in a gospel context, and we need prayer that God's Spirit will give us wisdom and grace. As doctors we also need accurate, evidence based medical knowledge. Megan Best's book, "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made" is a gift from God. She has achieved so much in this one book. We will do well to read it.

*Dr Andrew Moore*