



# Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Christianity, and Culture: Between God and Illness

*Roberto Patarca Montero, Jim Rotholz*

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Share the Biblical view of the value of human life! This fascinating first-person account offers an insider's view of what it means to suddenly move from being a healthy, productive member of society to being severely limited. *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Christianity, and Culture: Between God and an Illness* tells the story of the author and his wife, who were both struck down with CFIDS in the midst of their busy lives of service. Because Dr. Rotholz is also a trained anthropologist, he can bring a scholarly perspective to understanding the social, emotional, and cultural impact of this devastating illness. His devout Christianity gives a Biblical context to this discussion. *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Christianity, and Culture: Between God and an Illness* analyzes the secular cultural values that make disability seem like shame. Because our culture exalts worldly status and financial success, many CFIDS sufferers find themselves facing a deep sense of humiliation, worthlessness, and failure when their disease puts their lives on hold. Dr. Rotholz offers a Biblical perspective of human beings as the image-bearers of God. This alternative vision of values is exemplified in the culture of the Bushmen of the Kalahari in Africa, the Bruderhof Christian community in the USA, and the life of a Black woman from the American south. *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Christianity, and Culture: Between God and an Illness* presents a powerfully reasoned, deeply felt analysis of the tug of war between our culture and Biblical standards, including:

- achievement, status, power, and wealth as the elements of our culture of success
  - the anxiety that lies behind the stress of economic productivity
  - the economic factors that influence our cultural bias against the disabled
  - the Biblical meaning of suffering
  - faithfulness as the Biblical measure of success in life
- The power of this extraordinary book goes well beyond the CFIDS community and even the community of the disabled. *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Christianity, and Culture: Between God and an Illness* offers a new and meaningful vision of what makes life worth living for anyone, well or ill, young or old. Scholars and practitioners in anthropology, medical sociology, social work, the health professions, pastoral care, and theology will find it a powerful aid to understanding the world of the disabled and treating others with respect. The disabled and those who care for them will call it a blessing.

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