

Views from the Pews – Doctor Michael Moseley

Why was the late Doctor/Broadcaster so popular? What was it that enabled him to communicate so well with diverse readers and viewers? Here is a theory that can go out to you for testing.

We live in difficult times. Perhaps more than ever, there is tension between personal responsibility on the one hand, and corporate responsibility on the other. This tension – often politicized – is particularly acute when we talk about health, about public health systems, the money needed to fund them, and socio-economic change such as greater longevity.

The suggestion here is that Dr Moseley had found the ‘sweet spot’ a point of balance, of general consensus amid all the shouting. He seems to have been able to reconcile competing ideas in a way that cut across political dogma, in a way that was easy to understand.

He recognized the uniqueness and value of the human body, the importance of our understanding it, and the power we each have to alter our own health outcomes by changing aspects of our lifestyle that have immediate impacts on our individual health.

He was particularly interested in diabetes, obesity, exercise (or its absence), and diet. He pushed his own body to the limit, knowing the power of personal example, of practicing what you preach.

It is well known that a large proportion of health difficulties can be traced back to personal lifestyle choices, and he was in fact an advocate for public health services, arguing that those services may not survive in their present form unless we take increased responsibility for our own health.

He empowered people, which is perhaps why he is so sorely missed.

As Christians, we are particularly exercised by the tension between personal and corporate responsibility. God made us, and gave us powers of self-determination. We are therefore responsible for our own wellbeing. But we are also called upon to be responsible for others, even those others who may in our eyes be responsible for their own ill-health.

Did Dr Moseley know where the balance lies? What does our congregation think?

And as an aside, what might we learn from Jesus’ lifestyle? His diet? We can be fairly sure that His was what we would now call the Mediterranean diet. Unprocessed grains and a lot of oil and fish, fewer carbs, and of course a great deal of exercise. Was Dr Moseley ever asked for comment?