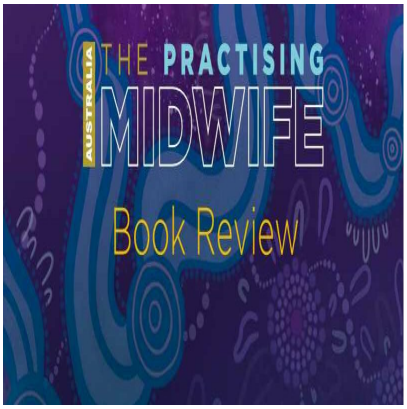
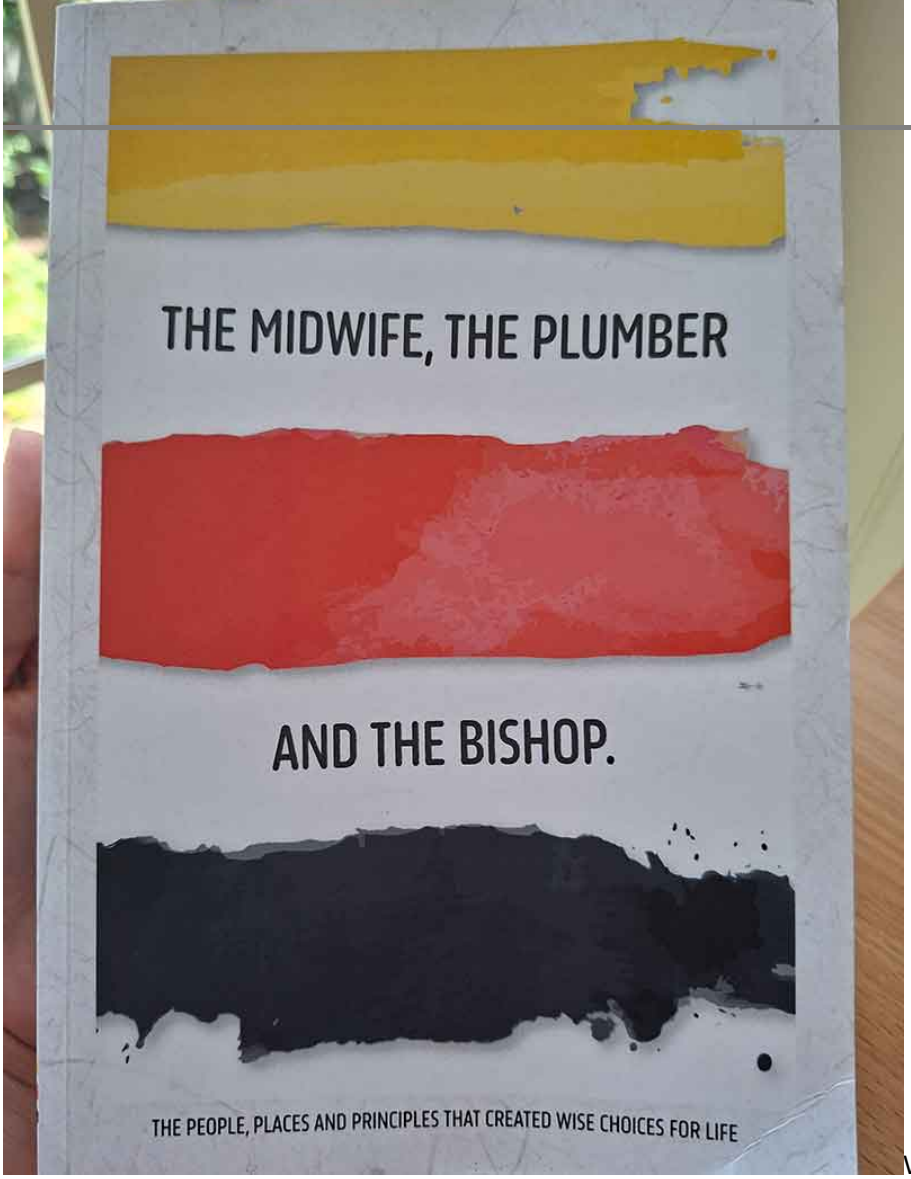



## Description

**Book Review:  The Midwife The Plumber and The Bishop: The People, Places and Principles that created Wise Choices for Life**




Written by Marg Docking, edited by Ruth

Close

Format: Paperback

Publisher: Wise Choices for Life

Published: 2024

Pages: Unknown

ISBN: Unknown

RRP: AUD 34.99

**Reviewed by: Rachel Bennett, Lecturer – Paramedicine & With Women Project Cameroon founder**

*“I can’t make your decision, I won’t tell you what to do, but I will tell you how it works. That gives people their own autonomy. It respects them. It enables them to make informed choices.”*

Margaret Docking’s life is fascinating, woven with rich anecdotes and formative experiences. She grew up in country

Victoria and trained as a nurse at the Alfred Hospital. In the 1970s, she worked among Aboriginal communities in Aurukun, on the Cape York Peninsula, alongside Dutch nurse Pim, who encouraged her to pursue midwifery. Margaret witnessed first-hand the benefits of Birthing on Country, and later, the harm caused when women were forced to birth away from country, beginning in 1978.

After birthing her own four children, Margaret found herself working in Uganda. She recounts a pivotal meeting with a Bishop concerned about maternal deaths in his parish. Her husband, John, a plumber, captivated the Bishop with a practical explanation of how obstetric fistulas occur. Margaret reflects, *"My life focus changed for the better as I discovered the truth that men, even tradesmen, men from non-medical backgrounds, could learn basic midwifery skills and communicate them to other men."*

Together, Margaret and John founded an NGO and community education program, *Wise Choices for Life*, which continues to grow in impact. The program equips key community leaders in Uganda with life skills training in sexual and reproductive health, enabling them to share this knowledge within their communities.

Margaret wrote this book at the end of her life, almost as a form of therapy, while facing a terminal cancer diagnosis. She concludes: *"I have a lot of laughs. I have a lot of good times. I live life to the full, and writing these stories has been very therapeutic. I can see God's hand in my life."* She passed away in 2021, two months after completing her manuscript.

Purchasing the book supports the organisation, but it offers far more than it costs — a powerful and inspiring story of a humble, courageous, and compassionate woman and midwife. Margaret listened deeply, learned from her mistakes, and gave her life in service to others.

**Category**

1. Book reviews
2. News & Views - AU

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1. 2025
2. book review

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