

The Grand Healing Narrative and Our Unique Niche



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Health for all Nations

Christian Global Health in Perspective Course



CHRISTIAN JOURNAL
FOR
GLOBAL HEALTH



HEALTH
FOR ALL
NATIONS

Objectives

1. Acquire a comprehensive overview of the biblical healing metanarrative.
2. Understand the vital role of global health engagement in the healing of all nations.
3. Appreciate the diverse healing methods and supreme character of Jesus.
4. Discern the unique role you might play as His follower in this unfolding story.

Why a theology of global health?

- For a *raison d'être*
- For touchpoints with the ancient texts
- To deepen our devotion to Christ
- To sustain us in the challenges of healthcare
- For drawing maps of meaning
- To integrate our faith and practice
- To understand the world we serve
- To know who humans are
- To follow the mission of God

Healing and the Mission of God

“to heal and reconcile his whole creation. . . the whole created cosmos.”(Col 1:20)

Christopher Wright

“the key idea and dynamic here is reconciliation—a reconciliation that heals earth’s multiple alienations.”

Howard Snyder

Healing and Salvation

Western soteriologies “apparently focus so much on the gospel’s personal benefits, in particular concerning an individual’s eternal destiny, that they neglect its communal and cosmic, perhaps even bodily dimensions.”

Daniel Treir

Salvation is much more than justification or reconciliation with God (Rom 5:9-10)

Healing and Salvation

“Salvation in the context of human society en route to a whole and healed world. . . as coherent, broad, and deep as the needs and exigencies of human existence. . . Anyone who knows that one day there will be no more disease can and must actively anticipate the conquest of disease in individuals and society now.”

David Bosch

Healing and Salvation

“If salvation is understood in the sense of healing, there is no conflict between the religious and medical, but the most intimate connection,” leading to an intensive collaboration of helpers.

Paul Tillich

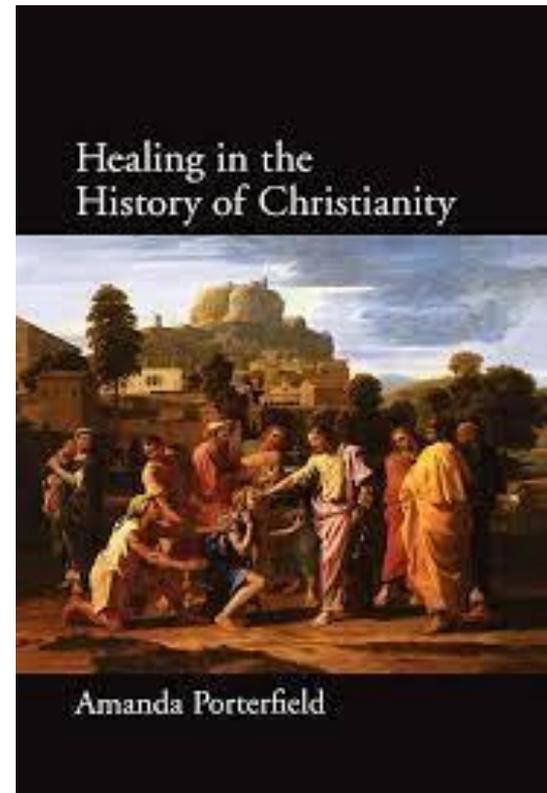
“The web of relationships between religion and medicine, between faith and bodily well-being, is thus extraordinarily dense.”

Mark Noll

Healing and Mission

- “Healing is a persistent theme in the history of Christianity, threading its way over time through ritual practice and theological belief, and across space through the sprawling, heterogeneous terrains of Christian community life and missionary activity.”

- Amanda Porterfield



Healing in Misson

“In the emergence of Christianity, far from being a marginal interest, health care was part of the core of its mission and strategy for gaining converts . . . health was portrayed as one of the most persistent practical concerns of those who eventually converted to Christianity.”

Hector Avalos

Offering “transforming service” which validates and confirms the truth and fullness of the gospel message.

Samuel Escobar

Healing as Good News

"All the forces and powers that touch human life come under scrutiny. Those that oppress the poor and destroy life are to be exposed and denounced. Good news means that men and women can be set free from life-destroying powers."

- Wilbert Shenk



Biblical Healing Metanarrative

Creation _____ Shalom _____ physiology

Fall _____ Dis-ease _____ pathology

Redemption _____ Healing _____ practice

Consummation _____ Mission _____ purpose



Genesis 1-3

- Order out of chaos & dominion
- Intimacy, health & warnings
- Disintegration & Alienation



Genesis 10 - 12

- Table of the Nations – Universal Scattering
- Abram of Ur – Particular Gathering

- Disease inflicted on others – cursing
 - By judgment
- The Antithesis - healing – blessing
 - By request (eg. Abimelech's fertility 20:17)

- Abraham "blessed to be a blessing"(12) to all nations

Exodus

- Mt. Ebal – curses Mt, Gerizim – blessings (11:29)
“choose life, that your descendants may live”
- “None of these diseases . . . For I, the LORD am your healer” (15:26)
- Prohibition of idol worship
- Blessing to food and water for obedience

- “I will take away sickness from among you, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.” (23:25-26)

Leviticus

- Diseases making one Unclean
- Quarantine (13:18-14:3)
- To preserve the community
- Priests as physicians (14)
- Forgiveness & healing tied together
- Warnings for disobedience:
“I will bring on you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and sap your strength.” (26:16)

Numbers

- Prayers for healing of Miriam (12:13)
- Bronze snake (21:9)



John 3:14



Deuteronomy

- Healthy blessings through obedience (28:1-14)
- Consequences of disobedience (28:15-68)
- Ordained by the justice of God
- Balanced by healing mercy

“See now that I myself am He!
There is no god besides me.
I put to death and I bring to life,
I have wounded and I will heal” (32:39)

Judges

- Prostitution and invasion



- 40 years of rest (*shaquat*)
טקף (9:28) under Gideon



The Kings

- Irrevocable Judgments

- David's remorse (2 Sam 12)
- Another hope

- Revocable Judgments

- Hezekiah's recovery (2 Kings 20)
- Prayers for the people (2 Chron 30:20)
- Healing of the land (2 Chron 7:14)

"I have heard your prayer and see your tears; I will heal you"

Job

- God's sovereign permissive will
"He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds,
and His hands *also* heal." (Job 5:18)
- Satan revealed as destructive agency
- Job trusted God
"Though He slay me, yet I will trust Him." (Job
13:15)

Job

- Foreshadow and hope of resurrection – of complete healing:

“As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,
And at the last He will take His stand on the
earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet
from my flesh I shall see God.” (Job 19:25&26)

Proverbs

- Pleasant words are sweet to the soul and **health** to the bones. (16:24)
- Good news is health to the bones (15:30)
- Wise speech brings healing (12:18) just as the
- Father's word brings life and health (4:22)

marpe' מַרְפֵּה

Prophets - Isaiah

God intends to “make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the Lord . . . The Lord will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the Lord, and he will respond to their pleas and *heal* them.” --

Isaiah 19

Prophets - Isaiah

- Woes to an obstinate nation – given “the bread of adversity and the water of affliction”
30:20
- Yet the hope remains when he, “binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted.”
30:26

Prophets - Isaiah

- Preserve life to promote praise.

“Lord, by such things people live; and my spirit finds life in them too. You restored me to **health** and let me live . . . the living, the living praise you.” (38:16 & 19)

חַלַּם *chalam* - to dream (prophetic) or to be healthy, be strong or to restore to health.

Prophets - Isaiah

- Suffering Servant “by his wounds we are healed” (53)
- Enlarging Tent (54) of barren woman
- “peace, peace to those far and near . . . And I will heal them.” (57)
- And for those who care for the sick, poor and oppressed, “and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.” (58)

Prophets - Isaiah

- The year of the Lord's favor (61) quoted by Jesus applied to himself (Lk 4:18)
 - Proclaim good news to poor
 - Comfort the brokenhearted
 - Proclaim freedom
 - Release from darkness
- "All who see them will acknowledge they are a people the Lord has blessed . . . before all nations." (61:9&11)

Prophets - Jeremiah

- Tension between mortal wound and longing for healing and restoration
- “If you repent, I will **restore** you that you may serve me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman.” (15:19)

אָרוּכָה *arukah*

“Heal me, O Lord, and I will be **healed**; save me and I will be **saved**, for you are the one I praise.” 17:13 רָפָא *rapha* יָשָׁא *yasha*

Prophets - Jeremiah

- Egypt: “you multiply remedies in vain; there is no healing for you.” (46:11)
- Babylon: “We would have healed Babylon, but she cannot be healed.” (51:9)
- “Your wound is as deep as the sea. Who can heal you?” (Lam 2:13)
- Key Remedy: the Balm of Gilead (8:22)

Prophets – Ezekiel

- Oracle against the shepherds of Israel who have “*not* strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have *not* brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.” (34:4)
- Oracle for healing leaves from tree of life in Jerusalem (Ezek 17:22-23 cf. Gen 3 & Rev 22)



Prophets - Hosea

- Ephraim turned to the King of Assyria but he could not heal him. (5:13)
- “He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us . . . that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the Lord.” (6:1-3)
- “They did not realize it was I who healed them.” (11:3)

Prophets - Nahum

- To Assyria: “Nothing can heal your wound; your injury is fatal.” (19:1)
- Creates a longing for protection and healing
- To Ninevah: judgment for idolatry, but a hope:

“Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims **peace!**”
(1:15) ׀לִשְׁׁלָמִים

Prophets - Zechariah

- Oracle against foolish shepherds who “will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy.” (11:16)
- Curse to the right eye and arm
- The donkey-riding King “will proclaim **peace** to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.” (9:10)

Prophets - Malachi

- Day of the Lord judgment of the arrogant & evil – “sword, famine & plague”
- “But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.” (4:2)
- Prophetic Silence 400 years

God's desire for his people in OT

- to heal (disease – a common result of disobedience to the Law),
- to restore (to a more original good state – before the results of the fall)
- to make whole (instead of fragmented)
- to give life (and avoid death)
- to speak blessing (instead of cursing)
- to deliver or save (from danger and enemies)
- to forgive sin (the cause of much disease)
- To anticipate a righteous King

Messiah to be healer

- Prophet
- Priest
- King
- Healer
 - “Physician, heal yourself”
 - Elijah to heal widow in Zarephath
 - Elisha to heal Naaman the Syrian



Luke 4:14-30

Gospels - Matthew

“Jesus went throughout Galilee, **teaching** in their synagogues, **preaching** the good news of the kingdom, and **healing** every disease and sickness among the people.” - Mt 4:23

& 9:35



Gospel - Matthew

- Extended to the Gentiles
 - Roman Centurion's servant (Mt 8:5-13)
 - "Many will come from east and west"
 - Canaanite woman (Mt 15:24-28)
- "... he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick." (Mt 8:16) fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy (Is 53:4)

Gospels - Matthew

- Faith is important for the healed
“your faith has made you well”
σώζω *sozo*
- Faith is important for the healer
“because you have so little faith”
(Mt 17:14-20)
- **Object** of saving (healing) faith matters
- Symbol instead of Source (2 Kings 18:4)



Gospels - Mark

- Throngs of people
- Late hours without complaint (1:32-34)
- Not neglecting daily solitude with Father
- Better than the physicians
- Resulting in relationship with God and restoration to the community



“Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in **peace** and be freed from your suffering.” (5:34)

Gospels - Mark

- The pointed question “what do you want”
- The blind man’s felt need “I want to see”
- The calling of him Rabbi procures relationship and leads to salvation (σῶζω - *sozo*)



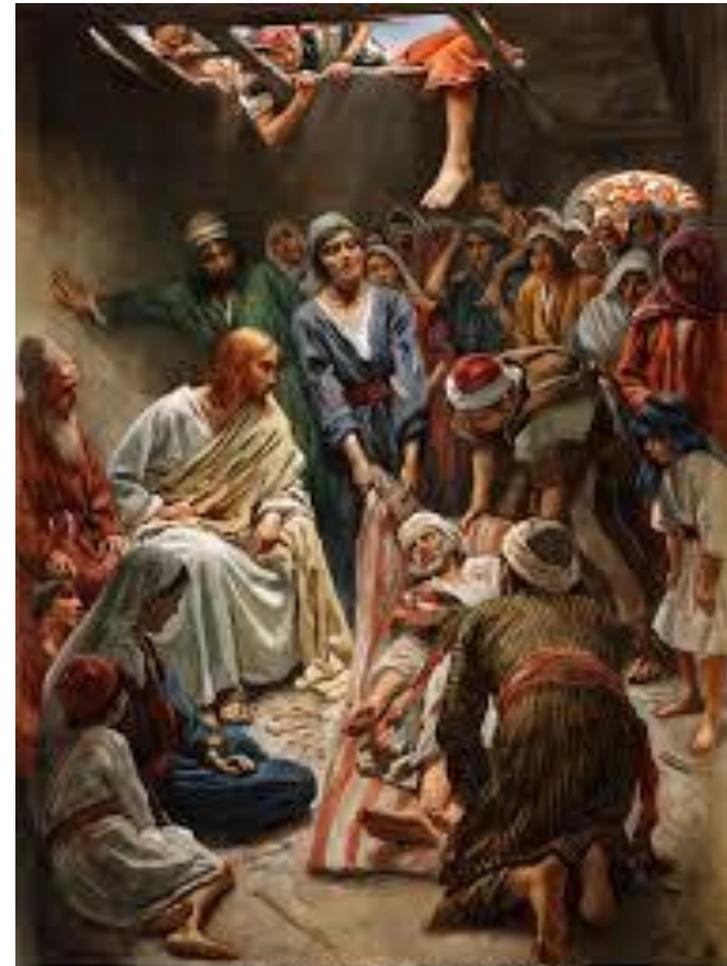
Gospels - Mark

- Simon's mother-in-law & the crowds (1:29-34)
- He expelled the fever
- She immediately waited on them
- Purpose in healing is service and capacity building



Gospels - Luke

- Jesus likened himself to a physician (*iatros*)
- He healed the paralytic & forgave sins
- Literary parallel (5:31&32)
 - Healthy & righteous
 - Sick & sinners
- Need for repentance (*metanoia*)



Jesus Heals The Paralytic by Haric Cooping

Gospels - Luke

- Healing was a platform “level place” for delivering his greatest sermon (5:31&32)
- His word was powerful (7:7)
- He sent out the 12 and then the 72 (multiply):
“Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’” (10:9)
- Crippled woman was bound by Satan, and needed to be set free from these bonds (13:15-17)

Gospels - Luke

- 10% of lepers healed (*katharizo* – cleansed) returned to give praise and thanks to Jesus and be completely healed (*sozo* – made whole, rescued, saved) (17:11-19) A Samaritan!

- Literary bookends : 
- "Physician, heal yourself!" (Lk 4:23)
- "Messiah, save yourself!" (Lk 23:35)



Gospels - John

- Emphasis on Jesus' miracles including healing
- Healing the royal official's child (4:48-54) resulted in salvation for whole household
Community Transformation
- Healed so others may believe:
"at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves" (14:11)
- Caution to those seeking miracles alone
- Attributing healing to God takes time (5:13-15)
- Goal is life in abundance (Jn 10:10)

Gospels - John

- Physical healing always has spiritual meaning
“I am the light of the world” he said before restoring sight.
- “Jesus heals out of compassion, and Jesus heals to make a theological point. . . sound theology also heals the human spirit [and body] . . . it is the source of perfect healing, of life itself.”
- Frederick Gaiser

The Gospels

- He healed out of compassion, the basis of his calling for workers for the harvest field
- He called & empowered the 12 to heal (10:1)
- He permitted healing on the Sabbath
- He used the medium of touch
- He also used talk & tokens & transcendence*
- Seeing and believing produce streams of living water (Jn 7:38), fruitfulness (Jn 15:16), and human flourishing (Mt 13:23)

Acts

- Healing blessing extending to all peoples
- In response to opposition Peter & John prayed for boldness to proclaim and to “stretch out your hand to heal . . .” (4:30)
- Drew great crowds & all were healed (5:16)
- Jealousy & jail time.
- But they never stopped.



Acts

- Philip healed the Samaritans who then paid attention to what he had to say, “so there was great joy in that city.” (8:5-8)
- Simon the Sorcerer sought to utilize his gift of healing for profit “full of bitterness and captive to sin” (8:19-23)

Acts

- Aeneas was healed and “all those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.” (9:35)
- Tabitha was revived so “many in Joppa believed.” (9:37)
- Official’s father healed on Malta led to favor and support for Paul’s mission (28:8-10)
- Herod afflicted with a fatal illness for taking the divine glory (12:22-24)
- Elymas the sorcerer struck blind for opposing the disciples (13:9-11)

Acts

- Paul & Barnabas spoke boldly for the Lord, “who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders.” (14:3)
- In Lystra they healed a lame man, but rebuked praise: “We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God.” (14:8-15)

Epistles

- *Sozo* (σώζω) used 40 times, as saved or healed, preserved, rescued
- Past, present perfect, and future tenses
- Carrying with us the death of Jesus, so the life may be revealed
- Outward wasting & inward renewal (2 Cor 4)
- Enduring all things for the sake of the elect (2 Tim 2:10)

Epistles

- Dead in sins & desires of the flesh (*sarx*)
 - Made alive in Christ (Eph 2)
- “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and **renewal** by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.” (Titus 3:3-6)

(*anakainosis* - renewal, renovation for the better) – the new creation

Epistles

- Sabbath rest for God's people
“that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.”(Heb 12:13)
- To become more fit for the Lord's service
- Prayer of faith to make the weak strong (James 5:14-16) & forgives sins
- Jesus came to destroy Devil's work (1 Jn 3:8)

Revelation

- Hatred of behavior not peoples (Ephesus)
- Afflictions & poverty acknowledged (Smyrna)
- Asclepios' temple & Emperor's – Satan's throne (Pergamum)
- Strengthen what remains (Sardis)
- Rich arrogant needing balm for eyes (Laodicea)

Revelation

- 4 Horses: conquest, conflict, famine, plague, wild beasts - depopulation
- 7 Seals: disease, war, natural disasters
- 144,000 remnant not subject to decay, mutation (scorching heat), hunger or thirst
- Many woes & bitter-sweet scroll
- Fallen is Babylon by plague, death, famine

Revelation

- “And the leaves of the tree are for the healing (*therapeia*) of the nations (*ethnos* – a multitude associated or living together of the same race)” (22:2)
 - Fresh water
 - Nutrition
 - Light
 - Peace
 - Presence
 - Garden city



Healing is . . .

- Salvation (*yasha/rapha, sozo*) Jer 17:14
- Liberation (*eleutheria*) Gal 5:1, Acts 26:18
- Wholeness (*holokleros*) 1 Thes 5:23, James 1:4
- Blessedness (*beatitudo*)
- Peace (*shalom, eirene*)
- Flourishing (*eudaimonia*)
- Restoration (structure, function, purpose, meaning).
- Redemption (never beyond repair, of infinite worth)
- Reconciliation (2 Cor 5) “all things”
- Renewal (Rev 21:5) “all things”

Healing requires . . .

- Sacrifice, Touch, Talk, Tokens, and Transcendence
- Compassion (*splanknos*)
- The Word of God (*logos*)
- Repentance (*metanoia*)
- Purification (*kathairo*)
- Holiness (*hagnizo*)
- Acquiring Virtue ● Rejecting Vice
 - Temperance
 - Fortitude
 - Prudence
 - Justice
 - Faith
 - Hope
 - Love



Redemptive History

- Value of every human life
- Christus Medicus trope early church
- Healing atonement
- Hospices (xenodochia)
- Hospitals
- Religious orders
- Deaconess movement
- Medical missions & the frontiers
- Christian Medical Commission “Health for All”



Your Unique Niches

- All disciples
- All professions
- All nations

- One body, many parts

“they will do even greater things than these.” Jn 14:12



Your Unique Niches

- Considerations:
 - Grand healing metanarrative
 - Least-reached people groups
 - Quartet of the vulnerable
 - Global data – Local reality
 - Disparities & gaps
 - Cultural inclinations
 - Gifts & passions
 - Connections & samplings
 - Calling & confirmation



Your Unique Niches

- Areas of service:
 - Local church
 - Health promotion & disease prevention
 - Public health
 - Community health
 - Healthcare Service
 - Healthcare education & training
 - Health systems strengthening
 - Research
 - Discipleship

Your Unique Niches

- Areas of service:
 - Prayer
 - Friendship
 - Dedicated financial support
 - Logistic support & training
 - Missionary member care
 - Encouragement
 - Short-term projects
 - Mobilization of long-term workers

Your Unique Niches

- Sectors of service:
 - Christian Mission organizations
 - Denominations
 - Government Ministries of Health
 - Private hospitals
 - NGOs
 - Development & Justice Movements
 - Multilateral Organizations
 - Mobilization of long-term workers

Your Unique Niches

■ Obstacles

- Fear
- Risk aversion
- Cost
- Comfort
- Pride
- Independence
- Nearsightedness

■ Challenges

- Trust in Chaos
- Perseverance in Suffering
- Wartime lifestyle
- Boundaries
- Moral injury mitigation
- Inter-dependence
- The long view

Your Unique Niches

- Assurances
 - Christ is in you, the hope of glory (Col 1:27)
 - Health promoting work is at the heart of mission
 - You are part of a stream of healing work in history
 - You are cheered on by a great cloud of witnesses
 - You hold an Isaiah 61 vision for a better world
 - You are fulfilling the work of Christ and the commission to preach and heal
 - You are people of influence
 - You stand in the gap before all nations (Ezek 22:30)

Your Unique Niches

- “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet” - Frederick Buechner



Dialogue



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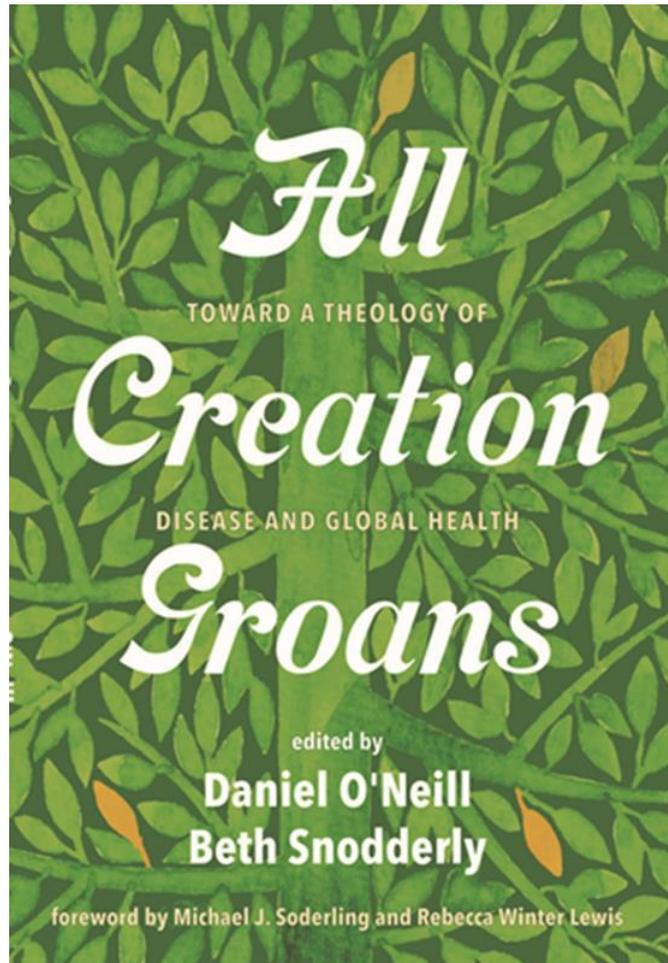
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Resources



Jesus' Diverse Healing Methods
Webinar

<https://mailchi.mp/icmda/webinar134>



Lausanne
Global Classroom

<https://lausanne.org/lausanne-global-classroom/health-for-all-nations-episode>



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Resources

- EMQ Special issue on Healthcare Missions

<https://missionnexus.org/emq/emq-archives/emq-volume-59-issue-4/>



- Mission Frontiers special issue on Healthcare Missions

<https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/archive/healers-and-preachers>

