

of congregational life, and teaching members how to engage with a group discernment process, possibly employing techniques such as “Samoan Circles,” role-reversal presentations, and “clearness” processes (148-49).

Overall, Sian and Stuart Murray Williams accomplish their aim by presenting a compelling argument for congregations to embrace practices associated with the multivoiced church. However, *The Power of All* could be improved by offering a less polarizing, more sympathetic view of what the authors call the “monovoiced” church in order to entice readers from such a tradition. Their critique of traditional monologue-style preaching would have been enhanced by engaging with or citing recent literature from the field of homiletics that could augment their suggestions. (Examples include Lucy Rose, *Sharing the Word* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997], and John McClure’s *Roundtable Pulpit* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1995] and *Otherwise Preaching* [St. Louis: Chalice, 2001].)

This book would be useful for multivoiced congregations seeking to strengthen practices, for study by small groups, Sunday school classes, or leaders at traditional congregations, and for seminary students in worship and leadership classes.

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Willard M. Swartley. *Health, Healing and the Church’s Mission: Biblical Perspectives and Moral Priorities*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012.

This is a book about the need for health care reform in the United States and how Christians and Christian churches might contribute to that reform. It is therefore a call to US Christians to remember who they are as heirs of Jesus Christ and the church that developed over the centuries from the first century till now. In the process of sketching out this picture, Willard Swartley holds the healing disciplines and practices that characterized the ministry of Jesus and the early church together with the care of the sick, the dying, and the dead that developed in subsequent centuries. He regards these two elements—healing and health care—as the Christian tradition that

ought to inspire Christians today to work for health care reform.

The care for the sick in the ancient church developed into health care and medical practice over the following centuries. But over those same centuries the church's practice of healing ministry on the model of Jesus and the early church diminished. In fact, the rite of anointing in the Roman Catholic tradition was eventually turned on its head, such that healing was the last thing anyone expected to happen to the person being anointed. Such persons were rather expected to die, their sins forgiven as promised in James 5:15. And hope for healing was relegated to shrines, springs, and the bones of saints.

It seems to me that a crucial aspect of the discipleship Jesus taught his disciples was largely lost through the medieval period, the Renaissance, and the Reformation. Although significant recovery of healing ministry occurred in the latter third of the 20th century, a book with a title like the present one reminds me that a healthy healing ministry requires renewal in each generation. I am reminded that Jesus, after being baptized by John, began his ministry of teaching, healing, and proclaiming the arrival of the reign of God. John—now in prison—was apparently disturbed by Jesus' compassionate healing of Jews, Syrians, Romans, and other foreigners from all sorts of illnesses and disorders. In his perplexity, John sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was "the one who is to come" or whether they should look for another. When they asked Jesus this question, he continued healing the people around him. Then he said to them, "Go tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, people are cleansed from dreaded skin diseases, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the Good News is preached to the poor. How blessed are they who have no doubts about me" (Matt. 11:2-6; Luke 7:21-23).

Not only was Jesus' own work characterized to the core by ministries of healing, he trained his disciples to do the same. According to Luke, the outer echelon of the disciples came back from their training mission reporting fruitfulness that exceeded Jesus' own expectations for them (Luke 10:17-24). Nothing is clearer from these gospel texts than that the ministry of word, prayer, touch, and anointing for healing was essential to the discipleship that Jesus taught. Furthermore, a central theme of Acts and the epistles is that the developing life and ministry of the early church continued to be marked by

works of power and ministries of healing. Cultivating healing ministry is a crucial element of how Christians and the church need to honor the call to discipleship.

Swartley does well in speaking about the challenges of health care reform, calling Christians and Christian churches to see this as a crucial part of living out the church's own health care tradition. But it will not be easy. Important books like Marcia Angell's *The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What to Do About It* (New York: Random House, 2005) and Ben Goldacre's *Bad Pharma: How Drug Companies Mislead Doctors and Harm Patients* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2013) reveal that the pharmaceutical-medical complex is broken far more seriously than the vast majority of us realize. It involves principalities and powers likely to be far more resistant to correction or reform than we might hope. *Health, Healing and the Church's Mission* provides a wealth of information to help us recall our heritage and engage this challenge.

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Wes Bergen. *You Are Not Going to Heaven (and why it doesn't matter)*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013.

This book is designed to challenge many popular views of the Bible, to distill "Good News" out of both testaments, and to stir the church to action, so that it can bring salvation to the world—truly laudable goals! Yet not only the title of the book shocks the reader. So do many of its claims. The Bible, Bergen claims, is such a diverse book it has no discernible core message. Its Old Testament portraits of God and New Testament portraits of Jesus are wildly inconsistent. Readers must say yes to some and no to others (2, 3). The Bible's authors also had choices to make. Unfortunately they often made very bad ones: "Sometimes the writers experienced God in a certain way, yet wrote something else. When this is true, we need to learn from their experiences, not from their writings" (9).