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.

Lawrence M. Yoder, Professor of Missiology emeritus, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Virginia

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).

Specifically, the God of the Exodus and the God of Revelation do not exist. God did not intervene to fix things in the past and will not do so in the future. "There is a definite place in the world for comforting fantasy, but the church is not that place" (161). So we should quit expecting to go to heaven. As for Jesus, Matthew and Luke pretty much got things wrong. As they portray Jesus, his "life does not provide a true picture of how God really acts in the world" (44). These are some of the astonishing claims Bergen believes will help the contemporary church get on with the task of bringing salvation to the world.

I did not expect to benefit much from a volume built on such an unpromising foundation. Yet I found much to applaud along the way. I loved some of the author's eye-opening over-simplifications like "The idea of God in the Old Testament is not simply the idea of God, but an offer of assistance, like putting out a sign saying, 'Free Help!' In the same way, the language of the Holy Spirit is God's way of saying, 'Yes, I really want to help'" (139). Bergen's refreshing candor, his humble spirit, and his deep desire to motivate the church to love and serve shine through clearly.

The sections of the book that tease out the Bible's "Good News" are filled with insight. Yes, indeed, "We're all in this together." Yes, the Bible teaches a deeply satisfying "contentment"; it promotes the "Genesis model" of getting along; it puts limits and warnings on militarism; it calls us to wisdom; it recognizes the whole range of human emotions; it presents God as "our refuge and strength."

But do we really have to jettison the God of Exodus and Revelation to find this Good News? Do we really have to put large question marks over Matthew's and Luke's Gospels? Can we really trust the "scholarly consensus" (as if there were such a thing!) on the dating of OT writings and the radically revisionist interpretations of them that this apparently justifies? (See page 81 for examples.) Do we really solve the problem of devaluing the OT by devaluing the NT *even more*? Bergen claims: "While the Old Testament is guilty of avoiding reality, when it comes to the question of salvation, the New Testament is even more so because it often refuses to deal with the reality of the central character it proclaims" (39).

Yet despite many questionable claims, Bergen presents many inspiring and thoroughly biblical conclusions:

> And so the church reaches out and tries to be part of the solution to the problems of the world. In doing this, it could proclaim a theologically sophisticated doctrine of the omni-whatever Deity. Or it could, honestly and humbly, offer what it has and what it is, while proclaiming, watching, and listening for the voice and action of God. This sounds like a fairly easy choice on the surface but has proved difficult in practice. Hopefully we will keep practicing. (119)

What a humble and honest proposal and what a challenge! But surely the church will have all the more to offer if it believes passionately in the God of the Exodus (the God who breaks the chains of oppression and sets captives free), if it follows faithfully the God of Revelation (ruling with the slain Lamb, not compromising or giving up on creation until heaven fills it), and if it models itself after Christ, as portrayed not only in John and Mark, but also in Matthew and Luke.

Timothy J. Geddert, Professor of New Testament, Fresno Pacific University Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California

Jennifer Graber. *The Furnace of Affliction: Prisons & Religion in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

From the inception of the American republic, the scope and influence of religion in the life of public institutions have been the cause of red-hot debate. A primary locus of this debate has centered on religion's salvific aims and civic functions within the modern prison. Jennifer Graber's *The Furnace of Affliction: Prisons & Religion in Antebellum America* offers a well-researched, clearly articulated historical account of the struggle over Protestant Christianity's religio-social role in the antebellum prison, predominately as the prison developed in New York State at Newgate, Auburn, and Sing Sing.

By way of a multilayered textual approach weaving together personal narratives, news accounts, court cases, Christian theology, and political philosophy, Graber offers a nuanced historical account of the largely