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but as an “alien work of God” that includes physical afflictions that can strengthen and deepen faith. At the same time, Christians should resist that same physical suffering through use of medicines and health care. In addition, Luther teaches, in his lectures on Joseph in Genesis, that it is a sin to recklessly endanger the body, ignore opportunities to alleviate pain, or fail to provide for bodily needs. Lomperis points to Luther’s distinction between the inner person (the soul liberated by faith) and the outer person (responsible for action) to highlight that the freedom of the inner person compels the outer person to resist suffering through appropriate means and also to extend care to neighbors in need.

From this foundation, Lomperis develops Luther’s “theology of means” and “theology of idolatry.” Medicine is a created “means” through which God’s Word works healing power. Miraculous faith healings also rely on divine agency; however, Luther believes that God prefers the created means, rather than miracles, for conveying power. As Luther states, “The use of medicine is permitted, yes even necessary, for it is the means created for the preservation of health” (p. 114). Luther’s concern surfaces when humans, seeking physical cures, place more trust in the created means (medicine) rather than in the creator God; such misplaced trust constitutes idolatry. Luther’s reading of Isaiah 38 illustrates this balance: the prophet prescribes treatment, but healing power resides in the divine Word, not in the remedy itself.

This book fills a notable gap in scholarship on Luther’s theology of the cross in relationship to physical and embodied suffering and the proper use of medicine. While Ronald Rittgers explored a *Reformation of Suffering* (Oxford University Press, 2012) and Susan Karant-Nunn a *Reformation of Feeling* (Oxford University Press, 2012), Lomperis extends these trajectories into a “reformation of medicine.” Her work situates Luther’s theology of the cross within embodied experience, offering a nuanced theological account of how Christians might respond to physical suffering. This well-researched book draws extensively on primary texts such as Luther’s biblical lectures and treatises such as *The Freedom of a Christian* and *Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague*, while also engaging thoroughly with the historical theology of Luther and of medical care. Lomperis intersperses the chapters with engaging vignettes of Luther’s life and story, which place the theological issues within a narrative context.

Lomperis’s argument proves pastorally compelling and theologically sound. Luther’s dialectic in a theology of medicine—to accept suffering as spiritually formative while resisting it through the created means of medicine—offers a framework for Christian participation in health care that avoids both fatalism and therapeutic

idolatry. The final chapter moves from historical analysis to constructive application, urging Christian communities to advocate for equitable health systems. However, the book could go further in addressing these systems. Concrete examples of justice-oriented initiatives, such as the Black Church’s tradition of providing clinics for underserved populations, would strengthen the case. Likewise, naming systemic barriers, such as health insurance monopolies and pharmaceutical pricing, would sharpen the ethical challenge.

Stylistically, the book provides accessible content without sacrificing scholarly rigor. Its organization reflects careful thought, and the bibliography is robust. While primarily suited for theologians and ethicists, pastors and Christian health professionals should also find it valuable. In fact, I plan to encourage my brother, a pediatrician, to consider reading sections on Luther’s theology of medicine and its applicability in current health-care contexts.

Lomperis offers a timely and faithful retrieval of Luther’s theology of health and health care: “when afflicted by physical suffering, Christians should purposefully and diligently utilize available means to resist it” (p. 87). At the same time, Christians place the power of healing with God, without placing an idolatrous trust in the medicine itself. This book deserves attention from anyone interested in the intersection of theology and health care.

Reviewed by Rev. Dr. Melanie L. Dobson, associate professor, Lefler and Wohltmann Chair in Methodist Studies, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary.

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SCRIPTURE AND SCRUBS: A Christian Calling to Healthcare by Michael E. Sherr, Jason K. Lee, and Angelia M. Mickle. B&H Academic, 2025. 240 pages. Paperback; \$27.99. ISBN: 9781087789224.

Frontline healthcare workers see medical dramas unfold before them each day—stories of heartbreak, heroism, compassion and diagnostic dilemma no less vivid than plotlines from *The Pitt* or *Grey’s Anatomy*. Daily realities may be either more incredible or somewhat mundane, but for Christian health professionals (CHPs), there is always a deeper story. Each interaction provides opportunities to reveal God’s loving grace, to be a divine ambassador in a broken world.

Sherr, Lee, and Mickle have collaborated to write a book for frontline healthcare workers, challenging us to see and understand the spiritual significance hidden in every day’s work. Their passion is that CHPs would develop spiritual competencies that strengthen their clinical skills and knowledge, modeling both professional excellence and deep spiritual sensitivities, and being willing to be used by God in each patient encounter.

The three co-authors come from different disciplines, having had diverse professional experiences before filling academic appointments at Cedarville University. Sherr directs the social work program as associate dean and professor. Lee is a professor of theological studies and leads Cedarville's Center for Biblical Integration. After taking a variety of roles in nursing, Mickle is now a professor and dean of the School of Nursing. Together they encourage Christians in medical fields to integrate Christian faith into daily work, understanding how God works through healthcare workers as a means of common grace in the usual course of their professional duties.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, entitled *What Are You?*, begins by relating stories of Christian healthcare workers in a variety of fields who care for physically and emotionally vulnerable patients. The narrative then paints a portrait of the "God of the Bible," retelling the overarching narratives of God's interactions with humans from Creation to Christ. The divine covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the New Covenant each illustrate the story of divine grace.

The authors are explicit that God's grace, though expressed both as saving grace and as common grace, is one grace with two expressions. They define healthcare workers as "servants of common grace," caring for people with broken bodies and spirits, conduits for God's love and healing power, even when not speaking.

Part II, entitled *What Do You Do?*, defines five spiritual competencies that CHPs should cultivate: giving comfort, giving and receiving forgiveness, pointing patients toward permanent glory, becoming a jar of clay, and working as an ambassador of Christ.

This book is rich in biblical references and quotations, with a scripture index listing hundreds of passages. Stories of Augustine of Hippo, Tertullian, Basil of Caesarea, John Calvin, Charles Spurgeon, and many other faithful historical figures enliven the text. Biographical sketches of CHPs fill each section, illustrating the wide variety of professional roles within healthcare and describing encounters, both mundane and memorable. We meet nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists, certified nursing assistants, and medical school professors in various chapters.

One of the CHPs profiled is an Air Force Reserve nurse who managed a skilled nursing facility for COVID-19 patients. She had a small team—one licensed practical nurse and three medics working twelve-hour shifts without interruption—to provide total nursing care for 57 sick patients. She spent Christmas separated from her husband and three children. Another, a physical

therapist, worked with an enraged teenager awakening after three weeks in a medically induced coma. The patient had sustained 62 fractures in a motor vehicle accident, limiting his every movement. The therapist persevered despite angry insults, and his patient learned to stand on his own and walk with assistance. When discharged, he was full of joy and gratitude, saying he wants to train as a physical therapist.

The structure of *Scripture and Scrubs* challenges Christ followers in healthcare to identify first as CHPs, a high calling that transforms each job description. The book traces physical frailties to the fall in Genesis and finds spiritual meaning in the basic work of healthcare, reminding patients of their mortality and relieving the suffering that originated as a consequence of disobedience.

Once that dual identity is established—blending professional excellence with Christian mission—the authors outline work specific to this spiritual calling. The section on giving and receiving forgiveness illustrates how essential it is that CHPs practice giving grace in relationships with coworkers and with patients angry at their infirmities. Giving comfort for physical, emotional, and spiritual pain requires us to identify with others and devise methods of relief. This is sacred work.

This book does a good job of casting the vision for Christians in healthcare to understand their holy calling, extending care and mercy to vulnerable patients and families. Each chapter concludes with discussion questions adaptable to students or working professionals in various fields. The topics raised should spur good discussion and application to everyday situations for a wide audience.

Healthcare is a demanding field, requiring physical endurance, emotional strength, integrity and intellectual creativity to meet daily challenges. The book's recommendations for CHPs fall mostly in the realm of practicing spiritual disciplines: the study of scripture, prayer, meditation, and involvement with a local church and with other believers—all strong remedies.

I would have liked more detail on exactly how the authors and the profiled CHPs incorporated spiritual practices into their busy lives. What prompts do they use to pray for patients or coworkers? How do they fit in Bible study or Christian fellowship when they have to pull a double shift? What guardrails do they put in place to assure they give their family members the time and attention needed? How was their faith sustained in troubled times? The profiles at times seemed to focus on professional duties rather than exploring more personal spiritual histories.

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Recent stories of the COVID-19 pandemic illustrate the overwhelming requirements of healthcare under stressful conditions. The book discusses how we can be “jars of clay,” conduits of God’s grace despite our personal imperfections, but stops short of recommending more holistic care for health workers. Burnout was frequently cited as a consequence of neglecting prayer or Christian fellowship, but this could have been more comprehensively addressed.

Despite being written by academics with teaching credentials, the book is not written with research citations for an academic audience. *Scripture and Scrubs* is intentionally anecdotal with strong scriptural and theological support. Literature might have been cited highlighting the positive association between spiritual practices and resilience or the tangible benefits to organizations when their frontline healthcare workers are well cared for. Pairing scriptural truths with the conclusions of research studying the effectiveness of spiritual practices would have strengthened the book’s recommendations, particularly for students.

The theological discussions in the book are rich, but they go beyond entry-level doctrine. Challenging texts such as “Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated” might be off-putting even to experienced Christians, especially if they read the book individually rather than discussing it with other CHPs. There is good material here, but it is best suited for mature Christians.

I would recommend this book for group discussion. As an encouragement to Christian believers, either studying or working in healthcare, it can be an inspiration to deeper understanding of our calling. Jesus practiced a healing ministry as he spread news of the kingdom of God. We have the mandate and the privilege of continuing what he began.

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PHYSICS

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THE ESSENTIAL EINSTEIN: Scientific Writings by Diana Kormos Buchwald and Tilman Sauer, eds. Princeton University Press, 2025. 560 pages. Hardcover; \$35.00. ISBN: 9780691131078.

and
THE ESSENTIAL EINSTEIN: Public Writings by Diana Kormos Buchwald and Tilman Sauer, eds. Princeton University Press, 2025. 400 pages. Hardcover; \$35.00. ISBN: 9780691272191.

This two-volume collection of Einstein’s writings covers 38 of Einstein’s most important scientific papers and 96 selections written for non-specialists and the general

public, translated where necessary from German to English. These papers span over 50 years, from the four breakthrough publications of his *annus mirabilis* in 1905 all the way to his final ill-fated attempt to unify gravity and electrodynamics in 1955, the year of his death.

The thicker and more challenging book, *Scientific Writings*, has a cover picture of the less familiar young Einstein; the more accessible *Public Writings* has the familiar elderly Einstein of popular imagination, all wrinkles and wispy white hair. This is symbolically appropriate, in that 22 of the 38 scientific papers (including all of Einstein’s most famous and revolutionary ideas) have dates *before* 1919, while 89 of the 96 public writings were written *after* 1919. These book-end photographs tell the story of Einstein’s explosive transformation from an obscure patent clerk into a universally recognizable icon (and iconoclast) of the radical new world of modern physics.

From 1903 to 1919, Einstein is madly eclectic, firing off papers in a half-dozen different fields: kinematics, optics, gravitation, statistics, thermodynamics, and magnetism. Anyone with an undergraduate physics major (or an equivalent self-education) will wander this period like the visitor to a well-tended and well-labeled garden, recognizing familiar landmarks that appear in any modern textbook. Here are the Lorentz transformation equations, written with Einstein’s original convention of using Greek letters for the new coordinate system – and (confusingly) the name “beta” for what today we call the gamma factor! Around this corner, there is a discussion of radioactive decay that first mentions that it is “natural to consider any inertial mass as a reserve of energy” (*Scientific Writings*, p. 125), and derives that energy as mc^2 . A few steps further along the path, the first (and initially quantitatively incorrect) prediction of the slight deflection of rays of distant light passing close to the sun. Then the forest turns darker and thicker: 1915 leads into a mysterious thicket of differential geometry that expresses his new theory in notation radically unlike anything that had come before.

At this point, the *Public Writings* timeline begins to run in parallel with the *Scientific Writings*, creating a fuller story of Einstein’s travels, interests, and audiences. Cambridge’s Arthur Eddington, a Quaker inspired as much by Einstein’s pacifism and cosmopolitanism as by the novelty of relativity, now steps forward as a tireless public-relations agent for Einstein, scoring him numerous opportunities to give lectures, write magazine articles, and give press interviews. Here are several of the articles that laid the foundations of Einstein’s legend in England and America, culminating in Eddington’s Southern-Hemisphere expedition – originally proposed to extend Eddington’s conscientious objector status on the grounds of its indispensable importance.