The Groaning Creation and Our Response

Was Ralph Winter, in his later writings, on to something important in the progress of the mission to the frontiers through engaging the Church in the battle with disease? We think so. Much progress has been made since his death in 2009 in articulating a more nuanced vision. *All Creation Groans: Toward a Theology of Disease* (Pickwick, 2021) is a cohesive compilation from theologians, health professionals, scientists, and missiologists that address theodicy questions related to disease and death that people have always faced, but that are being asked even more urgently and frequently during and after the current coronavirus pandemic.

The book is, in one sense, a post-humous festschrift for missiologist Ralph Winter and medical missionary Daniel Fountain, building on their legacies and enhancing a long-overdue theological and missiological conversation that highlights the often-forgotten responsibility of the Church to promote health and wholeness throughout the world.

The book brings together the exegetes of Scripture and the exegetes of humans in a full-orbed response to disease. It addresses the demythologized, dualistic and reductionist tendencies in the Western church and healthcare industry by addressing theological questions such as the following, from a variety of biblical, historical, global, scientific, contemporary, missiological and practical perspectives: Does the Church’s mandate to care for creation include fighting the root causes of disease? By tracing the origins of disease—physical, social, and spiritual—can more effective approaches be embraced when faced with major global health challenges? How do we embrace a wholistic approach to life and death given the reality of evil, the powers, corruption, and disordered relationships? In what ways are we to understand the atonement as the continuum of the healing and liberating action of Christ and that of His followers throughout the world?

God desires for His people to demonstrate God's loving character not only by caring for the sick, but also by applying recent scientific knowledge and an integrated spirituality to attack the roots of disease globally. This is an important and often overlooked part of our basic mandate to exercise good dominion and to glorify God among all the peoples of the earth.

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