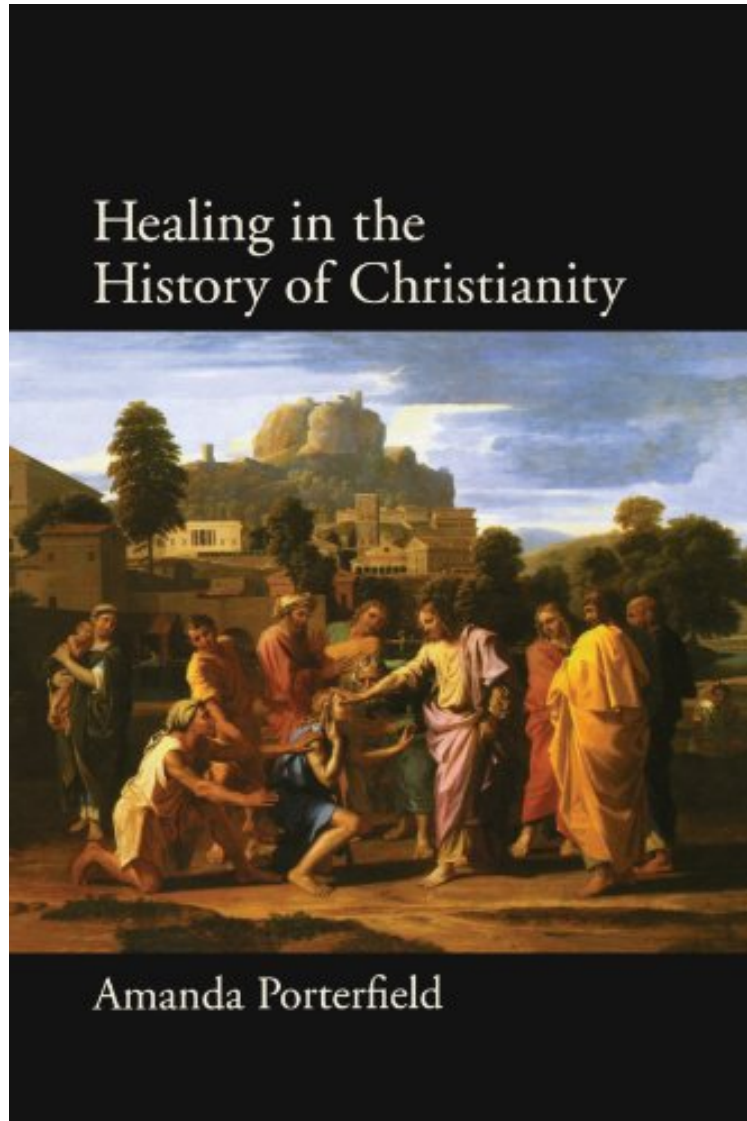


[Library ebook] Healing in the History of Christianity

Healing in the History of Christianity

Amanda Porterfield

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Amanda Porterfield : Healing in the History of Christianity before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Healing in the History of Christianity:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. A Worthy Effort that Leaves Some More to be DesiredBy Craig StephansAmanda Porterfield follows the course of healing as an expression of Christianity during the faith's history starting with Jesus' own ministry. Through her studies, Porterfield discovers that healing has consistently been a central element in the faith throughout its global reach. Porterfield explores how Christians have attempted to relieve sickness and suffering in response to Christ's example and his redemptive work. This spans the practice of laying on of

hands and exorcisms of the first Christians to more recent medical centers inspired by the faith. *Healing in the History of Christianity* takes readers on a journey patterned by brief stops with Jesus, his early disciples and those who would come in the proceeding centuries throughout Europe, Asia, North and South America, Russia and Africa. Porterfield shows how Christian healing continually revamps itself in time and place. Christianity has inspired its adherents to reach out to the suffering in many forms. Porterfield examines a plethora of these; however, due to the scope of this exercise many facets are left untouched. An attempt to trace the history of healing in Christianity becomes a study of the history of Christianity itself. Porterfield shows that the Christian message without the ministry of healing is found to be incomplete. In her survey, she helps paint the picture of Christian healing, sometimes with broad strokes and at other times with precise artistry. Porterfield's willingness to approach this subject with an open mind and follow various paths assures that all readers will learn surprising details. Conversely, readers may also wonder what inspires Porterfield to follow some trails such as Native American ghost dances while ignoring others such as Mother Teresa's ministry to the poor and suffering. The author makes minimal use of Scripture and often seems uncritically dependent on secondary sources and to lack both intimacy and depth with her topics. Rather than discussing Jesus' ministry of healing and his disciples' continuation of it, Porterfield gets bogged down in source criticism of the gospels themselves. She falls into the trap of the ill-informed Jesus Seminar practices of labeling portions of the gospel as valid and others as embellishments. As she examines the early church, she fails to highlight the central role of healing in the book of Acts or spend much time on the writings of Paul, James and Peter who also highlight healing among Christians. Porterfield fails to mention the spiritual gift of healing cited by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. She connects Paul's inspiration to Greek stoicism which is strange considering he repeatedly urged his audiences to rejoice and describes his own weeping and joy. This is one example of Porterfield's apparent disconnect with her subject, but is replayed throughout the book, as the author seems to follow tangents inspired by secondary sources. I wish she had also discussed contemporary healing ministries, Christian hospital systems and their impact today. Despite the book's flaws, readers are sure to stay interested and to share Porterfield's conclusions about the significance of healing in Christianity.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. As a non Christian it gave really good coverage of the "who's Jesus" questions I had while ...By CustomerAs a non Christian it gave really good coverage of the "who's Jesus" questions I had while providing a thorough background and history of the healing traditions perpetuated in Christianity. Not only that but it's easy enough to read that I didn't abhor picking it up for class every day.

Amanda Porterfield offers a survey of ideas, rituals, and experiences of healing in Christian history. Jesus himself performed many miracles of healing, and Christians down the ages have seen this as a prominent feature of their faith. Indeed, healing is one of the most constant themes in the long and sprawling history of Christianity. Changes in healing beliefs and practices offer a window into changes in religious authority, church structure, and ideas about sanctity, history, resurrection, and the kingdom of God. Porterfield chronicles these changes, at the same time shedding important new light on the universality of religious healing. Finally, she looks at recent scientific findings about religion's biological effects, and considers the relation of these findings to ages-old traditions about belief and healing.