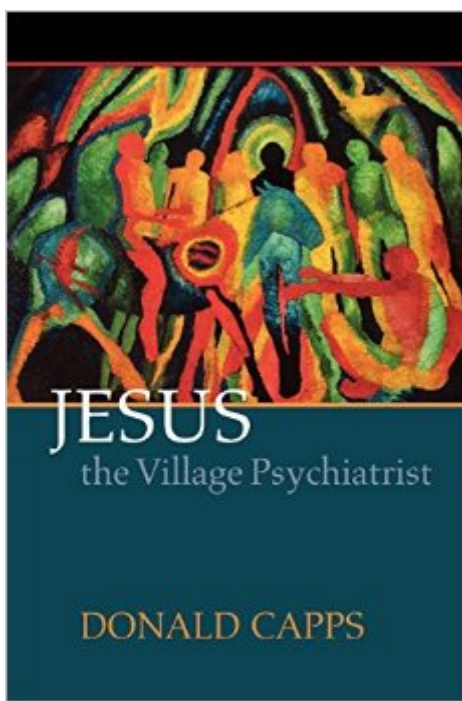


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Jesus The Village Psychiatrist



Synopsis

All of the Gospels and the whole of Christian tradition depict Jesus as a miraculous healer who can cure blindness, leprosy, hemorrhages, and a host of other maladies. But how did Jesus actually heal? In this fascinating book, Donald Capps argues that Jesus was keenly attuned to the psychological causes of illness and through his ministry brought healing to body and soul alike. Capps argues that one of Jesus' purposes was to heal people from mental illnesses, which people in the ancient world would have seen manifested in physical ailments such as blindness, paralysis, or other symptoms. Fully engaged in historical Jesus scholarship, Capps carefully examines Jesus' deep concern for both physical and emotional health and shows how his proclamation of the kingdom of God envisioned a world without mental illness.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Professor Capps' books on pastoral care are worth reading. However this one was somewhat disappointing. Surely, by placing Jesus' healing stories within somatoform disorders that might be approached with non-supernatural powers places Jesus importantly with those practicing pastoral care. Doing so brings power to Jesus' own statement that the disciples would do greater acts than they witnessed him doing. If Jesus' healings were due to supernatural power that he alone possessed as Son of God then there is no way that his disciples could hope to continue his work. So, I appreciated Capps' presentation of conversion disorders. However, it seemed that he tried to place all of Jesus' healings in that same bucket and doing so some of his explanations of events

seemed forced. Example: "Whether the boy was reacting to severe physical punishment or to severe restrictions on his physical movements is difficult to tell" (page 97). One might better conclude that it is IMPOSSIBLE to tell from the information given us in the report. Yet, it appears that Capps goes on as if the boy was reacting to such. It makes his argument, but it starts to feel that we are balancing on a house of cards. However, my major disappointment was in how the book ended--with a few paragraphs on Jesus receiving care. I would have preferred to have Professor Capps suggest possible avenues available to practitioners of pastoral care based on his insights of Jesus and somatoform disorders. I would have thought that this would have been why he would have written the book. Unfortunately he left me with "now what?".

This book contains as much information about the DSM IV as it does about scripture. In some ways it seemed a stretch for me the way the author interpreted what Jesus was thinking and doing. Interest to join Freud and Jesus in many different ways through the text. Certainly a cutting edge provocative attempt to deepen our knowledge of Jesus' miracle working.

I was asked to read this book for a pastoral care instructional session. It is a valuable tool to see the possibilities of how Jesus healed people. It is not in any way discouraging the miracles, just giving basis for more critical thought of the ways miracles can happen.

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