

Review: Fearfully and Wonderfully: The Marvel of Bearing God's Image

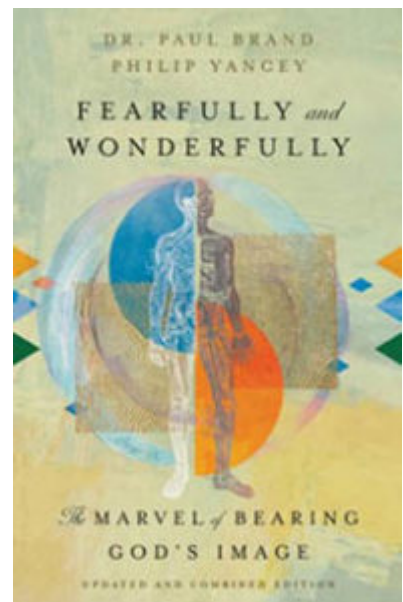
September 17, 2019

Fearfully and Wonderfully: The Marvel of Bearing God's Image

By Philip Yancey & Paul Brand (IVP)

I've had Dr. Paul Brand's *The Gift of Pain* on my reading list for a long time, and when I learned Philip Yancey had written an update of Brand's classic and combined it with other works, I couldn't pass up the new book.

Having an equal fascination with the workings of the human body, my wife and I read *Fearfully and Wonderfully* together. Many times, we simply had to stop reading as we marveled over how incredible are the systems and cells of our bodies.



Brand was a renowned missionary physician who first became famous for his work in India among people afflicted with leprosy. Prior to Brand's

work, little was known about the cause or treatment of leprosy, mostly as a result of people's fear of being infected during the close contact research requires. Brand discovered the part pain—or the lack of it—plays in the deformities and maladies leprosy victims eventually suffer.

Writing in the persona of Brand, Yancey works his linguistic magic in chapters on bone, blood, the brain, nerves, skin, sight, touch, breathing, musculature, pain and more.

He includes story after story of Brand saving people's eyesight, preventing others from bleeding to death, and restoring the use of hands and other extremities. He reveals details—both from Brand's own work and discoveries since Brand's death—such as the capacity and lifespan of individual red blood cells, the awe-inspiring number of neurons in a space as thin as a hair's breadth, and the specificity of brain regions and their linkages throughout the body.

In nearly every chapter, Yancey describes the functioning of the physical body as analogous to the spiritual Body of Christ. The parallels are equally fascinating.

For example, skin has the function of encapsulating a human body, protecting the sensitive internal systems from cold, heat, injury and infection. At the same time, the skin absorbs vitamin D from the sun necessary for the absorption of calcium into the bones. Further still, skin contains the body's ability to feel the world around it and to grasp it without harming it.

Yancey compares the abilities of the physical body's skin to followers of Jesus being the physical manifestation of Christ in the world, "sensitively (perceiving) the people we contact" and responding to "a constant stream of signals" from them communicating their need. This is just one of many connections Yancey makes between anatomy and the Christian life.

Squeamish readers may find *Fearfully and Wonderfully* difficult to read for its straightforward accounts of surgeries and other medical procedures that leave little distance between physician, patient and reader.

Teachers and pastors will appreciate the numerous illustrations provided in *Fearfully and Wonderfully* that will captivate their hearers and enliven biblical truths in new ways.

*Eric Black, executive director/editor/publisher
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