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# The Wounds of Faith and Medicine, and the Balm of Paradox

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*Christian bioethics: Non-Ecumenical Studies in Medical Morality*, Volume 20, Issue 3, 1 December 2014, Pages 330–358, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cb/cbu028>

**Published:** 20 October 2014

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**Abstract**

This article is written by the parent of two babies who died in infancy from an untreatable congenital illness. The author is a Christian and the article focuses on the manner in which parental prayers for a miracle, hospital care, and church affiliation interacted in this context. While the care of church and hospital was a deep boon, nevertheless, the collision and—even more so—the collusion between the reality outlooks, epistemic assumptions, and authority structures of the church and the hospital produced what I will call the wounds of faith and the wounds of medicine. A balm does not remove a scar, nor does it restore a limb that is amputated. But a balm sees a wound for what it is and enables the sufferer to live with that wound. In this analogy, the balm refuses to provide an “answer” that dissolves either the wound of faith or the wound of medicine. An appreciation of paradox—both in the context of faith and the context of medicine—is the only balm that this author has found to be healing. Yet, the paradox is profoundly problematic to both faith and medicine in the modern Western context. This article concludes with an attempt to understand why the very idea of the paradoxical is so hard for us modern Western people to recognize, let alone live with constructively.

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Online ISSN 1744-4195

Print ISSN 1380-3603

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