



# **Beholden: Religion, Global Health, and Human Rights**

*Susan R. Holman*

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**Beholden: Religion, Global Health, and Human Rights** Susan R. Holman  
**Winner of the 2016 Grawemeyer Award in Religion**

Global health efforts today are usually shaped by two very different ideological approaches: a human rights-based approach to health and equity—often associated with public health, medicine, or economic development activities; or a religious or humanitarian "aid" approach motivated by personal beliefs about charity, philanthropy, missional dynamics, and humanitarian "mercy." The underlying differences between these two approaches can create tensions and even outright hostility that undermines the best intentions of those involved.

In *Beholden: Religion, Global Health, and Human Rights*, Susan R. Holman—a scholar in both religion and the history of medicine—challenges this traditional polarization by telling stories designed to help shape a new perspective on global health, one that involves a multidisciplinary integration of religion and culture with human rights and social justice. The book's six chapters range broadly, describing pilgrimage texts in the Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic traditions; the effect of ministry and public policy on nineteenth-century health care for the poor; the story of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as it shaped economic, social, and cultural rights; a "religious health assets" approach based in Southern Africa; and the complex dynamics of gift exchange in the modern faith-based focus on charity, community, and the common good. Holman's study serves as an insightful guide for students and practitioners interested in improving and broadening the scope of global health initiatives, with an eye towards having the greatest impact possible.



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