

THE DIVINE HEALING MINISTRY – THEN AND NOW



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The Healing Ministry – Then And Now

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INTRODUCTION

There are many churches and individuals practicing divine healing, and there is a multitude of methods and theories surrounding what they do. It has always existed somewhere in the Church from the earliest times and healing stories have been told throughout the history of the church, some regarded as attested truth, and others, legend. What we need to find out is whether divine healing is a Biblically supported Christian ministry; how was it practiced during the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles; did it carry on after the last Apostle died; why the ministry seemed to decline after the Fourth Century; were the subsequent accounts of healing authentic; and how did the healing ministry reactivate during the late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.

We need to establish that the practice of divine healing, as distinct from the practice of medicine, is validated and described in the New Testament, and how that practice and outcome is compared to subsequent practice and outcomes connected to different Christian groups since. Then we need to come to a series of conclusions about whether the ministry of divine healing is appropriate for today's Church, and whether it can be practiced in conjunction with medical practice; and if so, how it should be practiced to be consistent with what is described in the gospels and the book of Acts.

Before we begin, we need to define exactly what we mean by *divine* healing. If we look at Mark 16:18, it says, "They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." It is important that we examine the word *recover*. The word implies something gradual rather than instantaneous. If a person regains perfect health instantaneously, this is better defined as a miracle, rather than healing. Recovery implies that the person's body affected by sickness turns from deterioration to normal functioning. There are accounts where Jesus told people they were healed but not straight away. The ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19

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were told to go and show themselves to the priest, and while they were going, healing took place. It did not happen immediately, but while they were on their way to the priest. A blind man was ministered to by Jesus and reported that he saw people like trees (Mark 8:24). But the man who took up his bed and walked at the Pool of Bethesda experienced a miracle because his lameness disappeared as soon as he got to his feet (John 5:1-17).

Divine healing is when a person is healed of a sickness or disease by the direct power of God without or apart from normal medical intervention. If a person goes to the doctor and gets medication for, say, influenza, and then goes to church and receives prayer for healing and then gets well, it really cannot be proved that the healing actually was divine, or was the result of medication. But if a person is given up by the medical profession because he has a terminal inoperative cancer and then goes to church and receives prayer and the cancer starts reducing and finally disappears, then we can assume that the healing was divine, because it could not have happened through any medical intervention. So, the definition of divine healing is when a person gets well as the result of prayer in a way that it could not have happened through the natural process of healing or by medical intervention. Therefore a person with the common cold who receives prayer and after a couple of days gets well cannot say he or she has received divine healing because the condition would have come right by it following its natural course to full health. But if the cold symptoms started to disappear right away and by the time the service was over there was no sign of them, and no palliative medication had been taken, we might be more inclined that divine healing had taken place.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

So, what is God’s attitude toward healing? There are some references in the Old Testament that show this:¹

“Saying, If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God and will do what is right in His sight, and will listen to *and* obey His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord Who heals you” (Exodus 15:26).

As we can see, God is saying that healing people is part of what He does. Notice that for those subject to the Law of Moses, He lays down conditions for healing. This implies that divine healing was not for everyone under the Old Covenant, but was limited to those who were faithful to God and did what was right, not in their own sight, but in His sight. This involved listening to and keeping His commandments and statutes. It seems by this reference that it was a matter of prevention from sickness and disease on the above conditions. This is attested in Psalm 105:37 where it says that God “brought them out of Egypt with silver and gold and there was none feeble among his tribes.”

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases (Psalm 103:1-3).

We see that God not only heals some diseases, but all diseases. In this reference there are no conditions attached, but because this was still under the Old Covenant, the same conditions that God stipulated in the Exodus reading still apply.

¹ Scriptural references and my adaption of the exposition of them were with the kind permission of Simon Wilson, co-author of: Cornel Marais and Simon Wilson, *Administering The Children’s Bread, The basics of healing under the New Covenant*, 2010: Auckland, NZ: Charisma Ministries

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So it could be argued that while Israel was being faithful to God, disease was rare, or was not mentioned frequently. There is the account of Elisha healing Naaman, but Naaman was an Assyrian afflicted by leprosy (1 Kings 5). King Hezekiah was afflicted by a boil that threatened his life. He prayed and God gave instructions of how to get it healed and He gave Hezekiah 15 more years of life (2 Kings 20:1-11). King Asa in later life was diseased in his feet (2 Chronicles 16:12) and because he trusted in the physicians instead of in God, he lost his life. These illnesses seemed to appear when Israel declined from its purity of allegiance to God and there was a tendency toward idolatry which waxed and waned depending on the faithfulness of the king to God.

When we come to the ministry of Jesus, we see that Israel had fallen away dramatically from its simple observance to the Law of Moses, into a complicated system of formalised rules and commands mainly administered by the Pharisees, the strict branch of Judaism. Therefore, sickness and disease were rampant in the land.

Jesus showed the nature of God in His compassion for the sick (Matthew 14:14; Mark 1:41). His ministry of healing was wide-spread and remarkable. When John the Baptist in prison sent disciples to Jesus to find out for sure if He was the Messiah, Jesus replied as follows:

"Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:3-5).

This shows clearly that Jesus' ministry of healing was a significant sign that He was the expected Messiah. It also shows that healing was a prominent part of His bringing the good news to the unconverted Jews.

Jesus reemphasises His mission when He goes to the synagogue and reads out of the book of Isaiah:

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"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free" (Luke 4:18).

He quotes from Isaiah 61:1, but adapts it to suit the characteristics of His ministry. Note what He says next:

"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).

Through this, Jesus shows the assembled group that Isaiah was writing about Him and His ministry.

Paul, in Acts 10:38, testifies to the nature of Jesus' ministry:

"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."

So, it was quite clear that divine healing was an integral part of the mission of Jesus, to show the nature and character of God. What we need to see now is whether the ministry of healing continued after His death, resurrection and ascension. We see that not long after the Day of Pentecost, Peter and John are going to the temple for a time of prayer. They see a lame man who had been lame since birth. They stopped and said "Look on us." The man looked at them expecting money, but look at what Peter says to him:

"Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3:6).

He then takes the man by the wrist and lifts him up, and immediately the man's legs gained strength and he started walking, leaping and praising God. This had a dynamic effect, and sick people came from towns all around Jerusalem, and the account reads that all who came were healed (Acts 5:16).

The ministry of healing continued through the ministry of the Apostle Paul:

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Paul raised a young man from the dead after he had fallen from a height after falling asleep during an evening teaching session (Acts 20:7-12).

There were at least two other events of healing through Paul:

“God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them” (Acts 19:10-12).

“And it happened that the father of Publius was lying *in bed* afflicted with *recurrent* fever and dysentery; and Paul went in *to see* him and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him” (Acts 28:8).

There were probably many more healings through Peter, Paul and the Apostles, but as Luke was writing a diary of the events to show how the Holy Spirit was working in the infant stages of the Early Church, therefore his role was not to write a comprehensive history of the ministries of the Apostles. He wrote enough to show examples of the type of ministry that Peter and the Apostles performed in order to get the gospel out to the unsaved pagans of their time. It is the same as what John said about the ministry of Jesus, that if everything was written about what Jesus did and said, the whole earth would not have contained all the books that would have been written (John 21:25).

Something that is totally missing from Scripture is any teaching or indication that the ministry of healing through the elders of the Church or any Christian believer was designed for a temporary period, such as during the Apostolic period or at the completion of the Biblical Canon. As we will see from the following historical evidence, that the supernatural ministry of healing continued well after the Apostolic period and the completion of the Canon.

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Historical Evidence

Did the divine healing ministry continue after the deaths of Peter and Paul? We need to examine the subsequent history of the Church to find out.²

Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) records instances of divine healing in his time:

“For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city, many of our Christian men exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men.”³

Irenaeus (A.D. 125-200), records works of healing done during his ministry:

“For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have been thus cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come; they see visions and utter prophetic expressions. Others still heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole.”⁴

Origen, another principal Church father records his experience of divine healing:

“Some give evidence of their having received through his faith a marvellous power by the cures which they perform, involving no other name over those who need their help than that of the God of all things, and of Jesus, along with a mention of his history. For by these means

²Hyatt, Eddie L; 2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity; 2002: Florida; Charisma House.

³ Justin Martyr, *The Second Apology of Justin*, Vol. 1 of *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, 190.

⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Vol. 1 of *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, 409.

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we too have seen many persons freed from grievous calamities, and other ills, which would not be cured neither by men nor devils”⁵

These are just three examples of divine healing continuing after the last Apostle died. This contradicts teaching from some Christian groups that divine healing existed only while the Apostles were alive. But while Origen indicates the decline of divine healing during his time, he does not indicate cessation.⁶

Instances of divine healing were still apparent in the Fourth Century in the ministry of Hilarion (A.D. 305-385). He found a paralysed man laying outside the door of his home and after laying hands on him, “with miraculous speed, the limbs were strengthened and the man arose and stood firm.”⁷

Benedict (A.D. 480-547), tells the story of an accident where a monastery wall fell on a construction worker, killing him. The mangled body was brought to him, and within an hour of prayer, the young man rose up, went and continued his work on the wall.⁸

The Quaker, George Fox (1624-91) recounts how a fellow Quaker by the name of John Banks suddenly developed excruciating pain down his left arm and hand which could not be relieved by the doctors. Fox laid hands on Banks and said, “The Lord strengthen thee within and without.” That evening, while he was having supper at a friend’s house he suddenly realised that the pain had completely gone.⁹

John Wesley (1703-1791) had 250 documented accounts of divine healing during the course of his ministry. At one time was struck down with a severe fever with pain in his neck and back. The words “These signs shall follow those who believe” came to him. Immediately he prayed that God would increase his faith and confirm the words of

⁵ Origen, Against Celcius, Vol. 4 of The Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 473.

⁶ Eddie L Hyatt; 2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity; 2002: Florida; Charisma House, p23

⁷ Jerome, The Life of Saint Hilarion, vol. 6 of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 309

⁸ Hyatt, Eddie L; 2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity; 2002: Florida; Charisma House, 46.

⁹ Ibid, 91.

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his grace. Immediately the fever and the pain left him and his bodily strength returned. On another occasion, during a rough ride because of the lameness of his horse, he developed a pounding headache. Stopping, he lifted a silent prayer to God. Immediately his headache disappeared and the horse's lameness was healed as well.¹⁰

Pioneers of the modern Pentecostal movement, F. F. Bosworth (1877-1958), who authored the classic text *Christ the Healer*, Dr. John G Lake (1870-1935) experienced many instances of divine healing during their ministries. There are video clips on *Youtube* that provide visual evidence of divine healing through the ministries of Jack Coe (1918-1956), A.A, Allen (1911-1970), and Kathryn Kuhman (1907-1976).

There is enough evidence in these historical examples to show that the divine healing ministry that was made prominent through the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles continued through the centuries to a greater or lesser extent.¹¹ What we need to do now is to examine these different healing events and the modern practice of the divine healing ministry in the light of the Biblical practice exemplified by the way Jesus healed people.

¹⁰ Ibid, 103.

¹¹ For a more complete list of the early Church fathers, religious revivals, missionaries and present century ministries involving healing miracles, see David Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 1965, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, p. 162,163.

THE METHOD OF JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES

It seems that Jesus did not use any particular formula for healing people. It is also apparent that He never asked His Father to heal on any occasion. The feature of how He went about each healing is that He gave very simple, one-sentence commands.

In Mark 2, when the paralytic was lowered through the roof to Jesus, Jesus said, “Arise, take up your bed and go to your house.” Immediately the man got up and went out, amazing all the observers. Jesus did not spend an extended time asking God to heal the man. At the beginning, all Jesus felt He had to do was to say to the man, “Son, your sins are forgiven”. That would have been enough to heal the man without anything else. He extended His command for the sake of those who criticised Him for declaring the forgiveness of sins.

In Matthew 15:22-28 a Caananite woman brought her sick daughter to Jesus. After being impressed with her persistence, He told her, “Let it be to you as you desire,” and the daughter was healed. This is an example of a gentile woman having great faith as demonstrated by her persistence after an initial rebuttal by Jesus.

Another example of a strong faith is that of the Centurion who came to Jesus for healing of his sick servant (Matthew 8:5-13). Jesus was going to accompany the Centurion back to his home, but he told the Lord to “speak the word only and my servant will be healed.” The man’s faith prompted Jesus to say that He had not found such faith, not even in Israel. Jesus told him to go his way and as he believed let it be done for him, and the servant was healed right at the time Jesus said those words.

Another example of someone being healed as the result of personal faith is the woman with the issue of blood in Luke 8:43-48). She had the faith to believe that if she touched the hem of His garment she would be healed. As soon as she touched the garment, the flow of blood stopped. Jesus commended her for her faith and told her to go in peace.

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The event of the healing of the two blind men (Matthew 9:27-30), is the one instance where Jesus enquired whether these men had faith to be healed. They have an affirmative answer, and all Jesus did was to touch their eyes to heal them.

In Matthew 8:1-3, a leper came to Jesus and said, “If you are willing, you can make me clean”. Jesus said, “I am willing. Be cleansed”, and immediately the man was cleansed from his leprosy. This is the only example when someone came to Jesus and enquired of His willingness to heal. Matthew recorded this event and the Lord’s affirmative reply because he wanted his readers to be assured that Jesus is always willing to heal.

When Jesus came to Peter’s house and encountered Peter’s sick mother (Matthew 8:14-15), all He did was to touch her hand and she was healed. In Luke 4:38-39, He rebuked the fever and it left her.

The raising of Talitha from the dead (Mark 5:35-42) involved Jesus issuing a very short command: “I say to you, arise”, and immediately she arose and walked.

There was a woman bound by a spirit of infirmity for 18 years (Luke 13:10-17). Jesus said, “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.” Then He laid his hands on her and she was straightened up, totally healed. Here is an example of a command and the laying on of hands for healing.

Jesus told the man with the withered hand to stretch it out (Mark 3:1-6), and it was immediately healed.

The next example is where Peter and John, having learned from Jesus, did what He did. On their way to the Temple, they encountered the lame man. Peter gave the command “In the Name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk!” Then they took the man by the wrist and lifted him up. There is a difference. They did not heal in their own authority as Jesus did. They used the Name of Jesus. But the rest of it was the same. They gave the command as Jesus did. However, they did something that Jesus was not recorded as doing. They got hold of the man’s wrist and lifted him up, and as they were doing that, the man’s

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legs and ankles gained strength and he was able to walk and leap and praise God (Acts 3:1-16).

So, there are some important characteristics about how Jesus healed people:

He never asked His Father to heal them.

He did not pray long, involved religious prayers.

He gave simple commands.

He did not require faith for healing

However, He acknowledged the faith of some and told them that their faith had healed them.

Once He asked if two individuals had faith to be healed.

When asked whether he was willing to heal, He affirmed that it was.

He healed at least one person from a distance, demonstrating that geographical distance does not limit Him.

Peter used a command similar to that of Jesus to heal Aeneas (Acts 9:32-35). He said to him "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed," and that is exactly what Aeneas did.

When the Apostles followed these points, sick people were healed, often immediately. But there were differences. We have already seen that Peter assisted a lame man to his feet. In another event, people brought their sick into the streets so that the shadow of Peter as he passed by hoping to bring healing to them (Acts 5:15). There is no actual record that any were actually healed at those times, but such was the faith in Peter's healing ministry. People brought handkerchiefs to Paul and were healed through them. There are no records that Jesus actually healed that way, but it worked for Paul (Acts 19:12).

The laying on of hands was used by Paul, in obedience to Mark 16:18, to heal Publius from a "bloody flux", and the man was immediately

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healed. As has already been mentioned, Irenaeus, Hilarion and George Fox used the laying on of hands to heal people.

There are two people, Benedict and John Wesley, who prayed to God, and healings took place. It is not certain whether this was always successful or whether these two events were exceptions to the rule and that the healings occurred through the grace of God. However, John Wesley did base his faith on Mark 16:18 and the man with the painful arm was healed.

Now that we have examined how Jesus and the Apostles went about healing sick people, and how those healings were replicated through the Apostles, Church fathers, and other prominent ministers of the Gospel through the centuries, we want to survey the current literature of modern healing ministries and their practices to see the similarities and contrasts to healings that actually worked through the Lord and those who followed Him.

THE EXPERIENCE OF MODERN HEALING EVANGELISTS

The first healing ministry to be examined is the work of Guy Bevington (1876- ?), a Methodist Holiness itinerate evangelist who worked mainly in the Ohio area in the United States of America.¹² He performed his evangelistic ministry in rural areas around Cincinnati and the healing component arose out of his study of the scriptures, which he gives a good catalogue of them on page 19 and 20 of his *Remarkable Miracles*.

What is characteristic about his approach to healing, or any other miracle that he sought God for was that he would go to some secret place and remain there in prayer until he got either a vision of it happening, or there was a positive outcome. His first account of healing was for a woman who had been bed ridden for nine years. He was ordered from the house by her unbelieving husband, so he went into a “haymow” and remained there for seventy-two hours. She was raised up 12 hours “after the Lord touched her” , and the husband hunted him out and got saved.¹³ He bases his method on James 5:16-17 which says that “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

His view about the availability of divine healing through the Atonement is consistent with Isaiah 53 and Matthew 8:16-17. He also reflects the loosing of the woman in Luke 13:16 as one of the most compelling examples of the Lord’s willingness to heal.

But in the early stages he had a real struggle over healing for himself. He had rheumatic and heart trouble and had a whole range of medications to deal with them. He spent many hours agonising in prayer and finally he received “I am the Lord who healeth thee.” He came to the point in this thinking that the Lord could not use him in the healing ministry if he used his “faithful standbys” to maintain his

¹² Guy C Bevington, *Remarkable Miracles*, 1973, Plainfield NJ, Logos International.

¹³ Ibid, p. 20.

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own health instead of having faith in God.¹⁴ He stopped taking his medications and then started to feel really sick. He said that he pleaded the promises until he became well, and never had any of those problems again.

He tells the story of a Brother Allen who was in the last stages of tuberculosis. By the time he arrived at the home, the man was near death. Bevington says that he spent nine hours finding out whether it was God's will to heal him, and another 20 hours in prayer until he felt in himself that he was on the right track. He continued in prayer for 46 hours until he saw him in his mind's eye as a healed man. He then finished his praying, believing that that Brother Allen was totally healed. He received a letter from Brother Allen's wife who described to him how her husband got out of bed, got dressed in exactly the way that Bevington saw him in his mind's eye.¹⁵

This method of extended private prayer until he got a "vision" of the answer was a unique feature of the way Bevington approached God to get answers to prayer. He spent time ascertaining whether his request was the will of God. Then after being assured that it was the will of God, he then went into what he described as prevailing prayer until he "saw" the answer. At one stage, he spent three weeks in a hollow log, fed by squirrels until he received the answer. This type of prevailing prayer happened time and time again with remarkable results.

Bevington so passionately believed in the healing power of God that for his whole life he refused to get medical attention when things went wrong with him. One remarkable example was when he accidentally scalded his foot when he spilled a whole pot of boiling water on it. Under normal circumstances, the foot would have been very badly burned and when he got his sock off, the foot was very red and inflamed. His companions warned him that if he did not get immediate medical assistance it would be very likely that he might lose his foot. Bevington held on to God in faith and the foot was completely healed. This kind of faith takes real courage to believe God

¹⁴ Ibid, p.28.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 54.55

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in this way, but his faith was rewarded and his foot totally recovered in a much shorter time than would have been considered normal.¹⁶

These events were just some of the many healing testimonies that are recorded in Bevington's book. His ministry occurred before the "official" appearance of the Pentecostal movement as we know it. He calls Dr J. R Dowie (spelled "Dowey" in his book), a prominent Pentecostal healing minister, "an objectionable professor", quoting Mark 13:22 about "false Christs and false prophets, deceiving the people", which might lead us to think that he felt the same toward the other early Pentecostals, although he advertised one of his meetings as "A Pentecostal Meeting."

Bevington's healing ministry seems to have always taken place in private homes, and did not appear to be part of his evangelistic meetings which were held mainly in small halls and schoolhouses. He never had mass healing meetings nor is there any record that he actually preached healing. The remarkable thing about him is that he got miraculous results in evangelism and healing from private, extended, prevailing prayer, where he took "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" literally, using the example also in James of Elijah praying fervently that it would rain on Israel and remained in prayer, no matter how long it took, until the rain came (James 5:16-18).

He lists that healing is not: *healing by remedies, imaginary healing, exercise of will power, power of magnetism, mind cure or metaphysics, spiritualism, faith or prayer cure* which he says being simply the avenues of healing, is not *immunity from death* but strength for life, and is not *presumption and insubordination to God's will*.

He then goes on to list what he believes is divine healing: *the direct power of God upon the body, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, founded on Christ's sacrifice and work of redemption, through the resurrection life of Jesus Christ and the personal indwelling of Jesus Christ in the body, in and through the Holy Spirit, through the faith of the sufferer or his faith united with the faith of others, submission to the*

¹⁶ Ibid, p.117-120.

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*Divine will, for the service and glory of God, a fact of Church history, sign of our Lord's approaching advent, and a testimony to the Word of God and the truth of Christianity in this day of unbelief.*¹⁷

John Alexander Dowie (1847-1907)¹⁸ had his healing ministry in Australia and the United States. His method was to conduct large elaborate "divine healings" in front of large audiences. He is accused of staging some of these healings with audience plants and other dubious methods. This is probably why Guy Bevington referred to him as "objectionable professor". He put all his trust in divine healing and forbade his followers to seek medical attention for sickness. He was very critical of "unscrupulous" medical doctors, and this is probably why there was a lot of controversy around his ministry and much "bad-mouthing" of him and his methods.

A less cynical view of Dowie is recorded as follows:

"John Alexander Dowie holds a unique and definite place in the development of apostolic ideals for the Church of the Twentieth Century. His life mission and work present a fascinating, romantic object lesson for those interested in progressive Christianity."¹⁹

His first experience of divine healing was to minister to a dying young girl. His method was to pray, quoting "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26), then asking God to heal, laying hands on her. The fever left her. His healing ministry progressed after that. He says, "I have been praying with the sick, I may say, every day of my life, so that now in some years I have prayed as many as fifty thousand times, and in others as many as seventy eight thousand times in one year." (*Leaves of Healing*, March 20, 1896).

He was probably the first healing evangelist to conduct mass meetings and to have people up on the stage for prayer and the laying on of hands for healing. There are thousands of recorded testimonies of healing, and although he was hated by the medical profession, he was

¹⁷ Ibid, p.81-82.

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Alexander_Dowie

¹⁹ <http://truthinhistory.org/life-ministry-of-john-alexander-dowie.html>

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held in high regard by his peers in the ministry and those who followed after him.

Unfortunately, like some other prominent ministries, he developed some unorthodox views, such as believing that he was a second “Elijah”, and had a very autocratic and authoritarian leadership style which caused the eventual downfall of his Christian “city”, Zion. However, in spite of these weaknesses, he remains a significant pioneer in the healing ministry.

One of the deacons in Dowie’s church was Dr. John G Lake (1870-1935)²⁰, a healing evangelist with medical training. He conducted a very successful healing ministry in South Africa, but not without controversy in which he was accused of misappropriating funds. A more supportive view suggested that Dowie supporters, jealous of his success, spread false rumours back to his supporters in the United States, and there is a theory that Lake’s first wife did not die of a stroke but that her drinking water was poisoned by members of Dowie’s South African church.²¹

He went into the plague stricken areas of South Africa to minister to the sick and dying. He told the medical doctors who tried to warn him to keep away that “the germs would not live on his body due to the Holy Spirit alive in Him”. He was able to verify this by showing through a microscope that germs died when they came in contact with his body.²²

On his return to the United States, he set up a healing room attached to a church in Spokane, Washington. His method was to lay hands on the sick people, believing that on doing that, the life of Christ flowed from him into the sick person. Unlike other healing evangelists, he did not stop at praying for the person once. He believed that multiple sessions of prayer were necessary to bring healing, that a healing minister should not give up until the person was healed. He also used commands instead of requests to God to achieve the healing. It is

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_G._Lake

²¹ <http://www.zimeye.com/preacher-john-g-lakes-wife-was-murdered/>

²² http://www.godsgenerals.com/person_j_lake.htm

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claimed that 100,000 persons were healed in one year. Critics of the ministry tell us that it is impossible for one man to individually minister to that many persons in one year, and therefore they say that Lake's claim is false.²³ What they don't mention is that Lake recognised that the number of those requesting the ministry was becoming so large that it was too much for one man, so he trained a team of "divine healing technicians" to assist him in the ministry.

Many of these team members enjoyed the same successes as he did. This demonstrated that the healing ministry was not to be limited to "specially anointed" healing evangelists, but that any member of the body of Christ could successfully perform the ministry if they followed the correct scriptural guidelines.²⁴ This is consistent with the ministry of Jesus in that He trained twelve disciples to carry His ministry on after His ascension.

Like many of the early Pentecostals who considered it a sin to consult the medical profession, Lake had little confidence in doctors after seeing some of the unsatisfactory methods and practices during his medical training that he felt were putting patients in greater risk of losing their lives instead of bringing healing. This was one of the reasons why he never completed his medical training to become qualified as a doctor. But his medical training enabled him to take a more academic approach to the ministry than that of his peers. One of the things that sets him apart from all other healing ministries is that he did train others, and so his ministry continued after his death,²⁵

²³ <http://www.spiritual-research-network.com/healingrooms.html>

²⁴ It is important to note that the criticism page before mentioned says that Lake's healing room movement was taken over by Cal Pierce, who visited and prayed over Lake's grave presumably to receive Lake's "anointing". Although Pierce claims that he is now the current spokesman for the Lake ministry, this is untrue. Lake's family do not recognise him as the successor to Lake's ministry, therefore Pierce is self-appointed. The Lake family officially recognises Curry Blake and the JGLM ministry as their authorised representative. Curry Blake says that there are distinct theological differences between him and Pierce. Blake is similar to Lake in that he conducts "DHT" training, but does not run healing rooms. Further information can be found on Blake's website: <http://www.jglm.org/>

²⁵ The ministry was picked up and carried on by Lake's daughter, Gertrude and her husband, Wilford. They carried the ministry until Gertrude's death in 1986 and Wilford's passing in June of 1987. Shortly before Wilford's passing, he

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while the ministries of the other healing evangelists ceased at the death of the evangelist.

A contemporary of John G Lake, on the British side, was Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947), from Bradford in the North of England. He started out in ministry assisting his wife who was an evangelist in her own right. He had no academic qualifications and was a plumber by trade. He was a chronic stutterer and had no confidence in public speaking, so he did the more mundane duties around the mission in support of his wife. After encountering the Pentecostal movement through the Baptism in the Spirit, his public speaking was transformed, so much so when he preached his first sermon, his wife was reported as saying, “In a voice that all around her could hear, “That’s not my Smith, Lord, that’s not my Smith!”²⁶ From then on, he had no difficulty with preaching.

His healing ministry started at the breakfast table at home when his children became sick. He says that the power of God fell and he and his wife laid hands on the children and they were instantly healed.²⁷ As he continued his healing ministry what emerged was his strong compassion for the sick. This continued to be his primary motive for being involved in the healing ministry. He often ministered healing in private homes, on the street, and in mass healing meetings. A notable healing took place when he got off a streetcar to pray for a person laying in agony on the sidewalk. The person was immediately healed and free of pain. He attracted criticism over his methods when he punched a man in the stomach as part of his ministry to him for abdominal pain. Wigglesworth said, “I was punching the devil, and his stomach got in the way!” In another meeting, it was said that he kicked a spinal-deformed child off the stage. What the critics did not mention was when he kicked the child and the parents ran over to him, fearful of further injury, they found the child not only not crying but completely healed. Although methods like that are not advisable

appointed Rev. Curry R. Blake as the General Overseer of John G. Lake Ministries (<http://www.jglm.org/who-is-jglm/>)

²⁶ <http://www.smithwigglesworth.com/life/bits.htm>

²⁷ <http://www.smithwigglesworth.com/life/healing.htm>

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for everyone, these showed the extent of Wigglesworth's faith and trust in God.²⁸

Smith Wigglesworth was very particular about his personal affairs and very upright and honest about the financial administration of his missions. This is why he is one of the few healing ministries that never attracted criticism for doubtful practices, and there was never any accusation of audience plants or false claims of healing. Instead, there are thousands of testimonies of genuine healings, attested in the medical records of the patients involved. The accounts of the healings were reported in newspapers in every city around the world where he visited. Here is one such report from The Wellington Evening Post newspaper, 30 May 1922:

SMITH - WIGGLESWORTH REVIVAL MEETINGS

Another of the Smith-Wigglesworth revival meetings will be held in the Town Hall to-night. Those who have attended the earlier meetings state that some wonderful results have been achieved.

The Dominion newspaper on 31 May had a much more comprehensive unbiased report from a reporter under the following headline:

“FAITH HEALING — EXTRAORDINARY SCENES AT TOWN HALL —
THE DEAF MADE TO HEAR.”²⁹

The healing ministry of Smith Wigglesworth was unique in the sense that it was uncomplicated, universally supported by all church denominations that believed in divine healing for today, and successful for thousands of people around the world. Out of all the healing ministries studied in this paper, this is the most authentic and

²⁸ <http://northeastboard.com/thread/8589/smith-wigglesworth-miracles-name-jesus>

²⁹ The full report may be read at <http://www.revival-library.org/catalogues/pentecostal/robertshv.html>

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believable, involving a man who was always consistent in his theology and practice until he died at the age of 88 years.

A divine healing ministry that was made very prominent through television and radio was that of A.A. Allen (1911-1970). What made Allen different from John G Lake and Smith Wigglesworth was that his ministry was centred on his tent crusades and mass healing meetings. There was a lot of showmanship with his preaching and praying and his method was to preach a “faith-building” message which some critics might have described as “hyping up the emotions”. Regardless of whether that was true or not, the audience was raised to heightened state of expectation and confidence that healing could take place. The reason why the “building-up” message was preached first was that Allen’s premise was that people needed faith in order to be healed.

Roberts Lairdon gives an excellent account of Allen’s ministry in his *God’s Generals*” series.³⁰ As an *Assembly Of God* minister, Allen operated under a strict code of practice specified by that church, so there were no reports of audience plants or other dubious practices. The only real criticism that could be levelled would be the tendency to treat the sick people as a “side-show”. The other weakness of this type of ministry is that there is a great emphasis on the man, A. A. Allen, and not so much on Christ as the healer, although, in fairness, Allen repeatedly acknowledges that he cannot heal, but it is Christ who is the real healer.

Allen is described as “the most persecuted healing evangelist” in that his methods and success drew attacks from traditional church denominations who accused him of drawing people away from their churches. There was an incident where he was arrested for drunk driving and this affected his standing with the Assemblies of God, and as a result he surrendered his ministerial credentials and conducted the remainder of his ministry as an independent. Several of his closest associates who knew him well maintained that he was “set up” and falsely accused. He was never actually charged or convicted. There was controversy over his death because of the autopsy report

³⁰ www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4xlG0FWWto

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showing that the state of his liver suggested alcoholism. An explanation for this was that he was in serious pain because of arthritis in his knees and was planning on surgery, but instead of taking the prescribed medication, he resorted to alcohol to dull the pain.³¹

His main method was to use a combination of prayer request to God, commanding the sickness/disease to leave, and the laying on of hands. His ministry was similar to that of Jack Coe (1918-1958) in that they both ministered through mass healing meetings under canvas and used the same healing line “sideshow” methods. Jack Coe was not the same type of showman that Allen was, but his results were similar. He also died before his time from health problems arising out of his unwise diet and over-weight issues.

Kathryn Khulman (1907-1976)³² was another prominent ministry featuring divine healing. She initially set out to have an evangelistic ministry because she felt that was her calling, but remarkable and spontaneous healings started to occur and remained a feature throughout her ministry. The unique feature was that she did not have a healing line as such, but had the ability through the Word of Knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8) to know when a healing occurred and was able to say the nature of the healing and many times the area of the auditorium where the healing occurred. There are testimonies of people with terminal diseases healed as they were travelling to the meeting.³³

There were, and are, many more healing ministries being performed, but the ones mentioned here are the standard examples of the methods and results that the majority of healing ministries around the world have employed. While it is quite true that there were exaggerated claims of healing, audience plants, showmanship, “sideshowing” of sick people, “seed-sowing” of money to gain healing, and other dubious practices highlighted by the critics, the sheer

³¹ http://www.godsgenerals.com/person_a_allen.htm

³² http://www.godsgenerals.com/person_k_kuhlman.htm

³³Accounts of the miracles that occurred in conjunction with her ministry can be found in Kathryn Khulman, *I Believe in Miracles*, 1968, 1992, Bridge-Logos.

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volume of testimonies attested by medical records and unbiased independent witnesses of people who were miraculously healed and stayed healed, has to be convincing of the genuineness of the ministries and the resulting outcomes for thousands of people as the result of these healing evangelists.

What is remarkable is that genuine healings occurred in spite of the weaknesses and shortcomings of the evangelists themselves. John Dowie, believed that he was the second Elijah; criticised the medical profession and refused to pray for people who took medication; and caused financial ruin for many of his followers who joined him in Zion City through his autocratic leadership and ineptitude at financial management. A. A. Allen, who was accused of alcoholism, showmanship, refused to acknowledge and work with local churches, ended up with crippling arthritis and caused his own death by the mixture of painkillers and alcohol he was taking to try to cope with those symptoms. Jack Coe, whose overeating and refusal to accept dietary advice caused his early death. Kathryn Khulman made an unwise marriage choice which nearly halted her preaching career, and then walked out of her marriage causing many pastors to reject her as she was establishing her ministry. William Branham (1909-1965), who had a successful healing ministry and a remarkable gift of the Word of Knowledge, ³⁴ went against the advice of his peers in the ministry, who recognised that his calling was In the healing ministry, and attempted to be a Bible teacher with disastrous results for the Pentecostal movement.³⁵ Yet, remarkable events continued to occur right up to his death in 1965 resulting from a motor accident.

The common factor with all these men and women was that they put their whole trust in God and knew that His strength is made perfect in their weakness and that the grace of God was sufficient for them. (2 Corinthians 12:9). It is unfortunate that their critics did not have a good understanding of that scripture and the bestowal of the righteousness of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21), basing their judgment of

³⁴ http://www.godsgenerals.com/person_w_branham.htm

³⁵ He taught that there was no Trinity, only Jesus Christ, and after his death, his followers started the “Jesus Only” movement which evolved into One Pentecostalism, causing a major division in the Pentecostal movement to this day.

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these ministries on their weaknesses, instead of the grace of God which made their ministries successful. Kathryn Khulman, for example, was very aware of her weaknesses, and before every meeting, pleaded with God that the Holy Spirit would remain with her to achieve the outcomes that were needed for the people who came seeking healing, and then after a service when she thought no-one was watching she was seen on her knees praising God for the great number of people healed during the service.³⁶ These were people who were acutely aware of their weaknesses but they had absolute faith in Jesus Christ, whom they put in first place in their lives and ministries. That was the key to their success.

Now, having examined the “standards” of the modern healing ministry which are copied by most if not all ministries that have followed them, we need to survey the healing “literature” that has been written by those who are respected for their knowledge in the ministry.

³⁶ http://www.godsgenerals.com/person_k_kuhlman.htm

LITERATURE SURVEY

Signs and Wonders; Maria Woodworth-Etter (1844-1924)

Maria has a chapter in her book³⁷ where she answers questions about divine healing. Her definition of divine healing is that it is an act of God's grace, by the power of the Holy Spirit, by which the physical body is delivered from sickness and disease, and restored to soundness and health; that all the people of God in the Old and New Testament received the blessing; that it is a redemption blessing (in other words, part of the Atonement); predicted by prophecy; that a person can possess salvation without healing; that Jesus healed everyone; that faith was exhibited generally by the people following Him and "coming to Him" for healing; Jesus healed because of His great compassion for humanity; Healing has never ceased; the Bible does not teach any doctrine that healing was only for the beginning of the gospel dispensation; History shows that for several centuries there was no other method of healing in the Church; that as it is always His will to save, so it is always His will to heal; sickness is an abnormal condition and can never be a blessing from God; if sickness does not come from God then it must come from the devil.

She taught that the Bible nowhere commands us to combine prayer with medicine, that most of the scripture references about physicians is negative; that most members of the medical profession are non-Christian infidels and were never designed of God to administer drugs or poisons of any kind; she quotes 2 Chronicles 16:12 concerning Asa and his diseased feet dying because he trusted in physicians instead of in God for his healing.

³⁷ Maria Woodworth-Etter, *Signs And Wonders*, This printing 1997, New Kensington, PA, Whittaker House. P. 184-189.

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Power Healing; John Wimber (1934-1997).

Wimber was one of the respected names in the current healing ministry. He was the founder of the Vineyard Christian Fellowships and during his ministry had remarkable results in healing. He describes his theology and methods in his book.³⁸

He does not limit healing to the physical body only; he includes *healing of the spirit*, which is a restoration of our relationship with God, He uses the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:5) where Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven” as part of His healing process. He also lists *healing of the effects of past hurts* and while this is an important part of Christian ministry, there are doubts as to whether it is directly connected to physical healing because Jesus never enquired about a person’s past before healing him. *Healing of the demonised and mental illnesses* is also listed, and this is backed up by Jesus dealing with dumbness and blindness (Matthew 9:32; 12:22) epilepsy (Mark 9:14-29), high fever (Luke 4:38-39) and crippling (Luke 13:10-17). Wimber does make a distinction between a *mental condition* caused by demonic influence, and one caused by mental illness. *Healing of the dying and the dead* is in terms of giving comfort and assurance.³⁹

He views the excluding of modern medicine in the healing process, and trusting exclusively in modern medicine for healing as extremes. He believes that we should pray with an integrated understanding of the whole person when we are praying for them; that we are praying for the whole person as well as for the person’s condition.

In the chapter on Bodily Healing, he lists the different types of conditions that can affect the body and he lists them as *spiritual*, *physical*, and *psychosomatic*. He maintains that God heals all these types of conditions.

He encourages people to seek medical advice and in support he quotes the experience of Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1-11), where a poultice of figs was put on the boil. He explains why some quote the example of Asa

³⁸ John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Healing*, 1986, UK: Hodder and Stoughton.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 77-78.

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who died after depending on physicians. He says that the physicians of his time used occult practices to treat sick people, but Asa's sin was that he did not seek the Lord for healing.⁴⁰

Wimber details a number of reasons why people do not get healed as the result of prayer.⁴¹ He says that some *do not have faith for healing*, and he quotes James 5:15. In this verse it says that the prayer offered in faith will heal the sick person. But this is a misreading of the verse. It is the elders who are offering the prayer, not the sick person. The instruction is for the sick person to call for the elders of the church. It is the responsibility in terms of this verse for the elders to use faith in their praying. Therefore, if a sick person is not healed in response to the elders' prayer, it is more likely the lack of faith in the elders themselves that has caused the failure. Many people whom Jesus ministered to were healed even when they had no faith, and the lame man in Acts 3 was merely looking for money and did not demonstrate faith for healing. It was Peter who demonstrated faith.

The next point Wimber makes is that person's *sin can stop a healing taking place*. He uses James 5:16 as his support. But this is also a misreading of that verse, because it does not say that not confessing sin to one another will hinder healing. In verse 15 the healing comes first, followed by the forgiveness of sins and not the other way around. Jesus healed unconverted Jews who were still in their sins. This did not stop Jesus healing them, and the only time he mentioned sin was after a healing when He said, "Go and sin no more." This strongly suggests that even if there was serious sin in the person who was healed, the expectation stated by Jesus was that after the healing the person was not to sin any more.

He also makes the point that *widespread disunity, sin and unbelief in bodies of believers and families inhibits healing*. He quotes 1 Corinthians 11:30 to support this. This is also a misapplication of the scripture. What Paul is saying is that people are partaking communion unworthily in the sense that they do not fully appreciate the symbolism of the bread. The bread stands for the broken body of

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 151.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.164.

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Jesus that makes us whole. This is healing in the Atonement. If it had anything to do with sin, why use the wine for the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from sin? The reason why people are sick in the Corinthian church is because they do not come to the communion believing that partaking the bread as a symbol of the broken body of Christ is for healing of sickness. Because they do not believe it, many remain sick and die before their time.

Also, to say that unbelief in others inhibits healing is being inconsistent with the experience of Jesus when He went to His home town and could not do any great works because of their unbelief, but He still healed people, demonstrating that the unbelief of His family and friends did not stop Him from healing the sick (Mark 6:15).

The other point he makes is that people do not pray correctly because of an *incorrect diagnosis of the problem*. It is true that people don't get healed because of incorrect praying, but not because of a wrong diagnosis. We are not medical experts, and Jesus never expects us to be. Jesus did not stop to seek a medical diagnosis before He healed anyone. He gave simple commands, like, "Take up your bed", "Be it according to your faith", "Go your way, your servant is healed". The incorrect praying consists of praying lengthy religious prayers, asking God for something He has already provided in the Atonement. Jesus never asked His Father to heal anyone, and the instructions He gave to His disciples was, "Heal the sick", not "seek a diagnosis so you can pray accurately for the condition."

He is, however, correct in his last point. This is what John G Lake discovered. *People do not get healed instantly all the time*. The verse "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18), speaks of gradual improvement rather than instant results. So, to give up after one prayer when there are no discernible results is a definite reason why people do not get healed. Guy Bevington knew this and this is why he adopted the extended "prevailing prayer" method of achieving healing. Smith Wigglesworth was known to spend a whole night in prayer beside the bed of a sick person. We don't know how long St Benedict was in prayer before the dead worker was healed.

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Wimber gives a set of guiding principles for the practice of the ministry of healing.⁴²

The first point he makes is that *God wants to heal today*. This is clearly demonstrated in the experience of different Church fathers, leaders and ministers through the centuries, and by the attested results of our current healing ministries.

He stresses the importance of *corporate ministry* in that younger people wanting to develop a healing ministry need to be mentored by those who have scriptural knowledge and experience. The example of Paul and Timothy demonstrates it, along with John G Lake training his team of “DHTs”.⁴³

The next point he makes is that *we develop our trust in God by action*. This goes along with the concept that we do what we believe. Faith is mental asset until it is activated. A person can say he believes in divine healing, but until he starts to lay hands on people for healing, his belief remains a mental idea. When Jesus told some that their faith had made them whole it was because they did something tangible to demonstrate their faith. See the account of the woman with the issue of blood (Luke 8:43-48); the lowering of the paralytic through the roof (Mark 2:4); the Caananite woman (Matthew 15:21-28).

He says that we are able to heal the sick because *we are empowered by the Holy Spirit*. This is true, because once Jesus had ascended, the Holy Spirit arrived to empower the Church to continue His ministry. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can do the works that Jesus did (John 14:12).

He stresses *the importance of loving relationship between our brothers and sisters in Christ*. This is totally consistent with Paul’s stress on love in 1 Corinthians 13 and 14:1.

The last point he makes is that *Jesus wants to heal the whole person, not just a specific condition*. This is consistent with the mission of Jesus when He quoted the Book of Isaiah (Luke 14:18). He does not

⁴² Ibid, p. 182-184.

⁴³ Divine Healing Technicians

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limit Himself to the healing of the body, but He includes mental states (broken heartedness) and preaching the “good news” so that people can get right with God.

What Wimber is setting out is basically the foundation of current Charismatic theology in the area of divine healing, but as we have observed, there are issues of inconsistency with scripture and the practice of Jesus and the Apostles. Nevertheless, there are sufficient testimonies of successful healing as the result of his method, and so there is merit in his approach as long as we are prepared to “pick the meat from the bones.”

How to Have a Healing Ministry without making your church sick; C. Peter Wagner

Wagner is another prominent author in the area of divine healing. His book is a work worth considering.⁴⁴

He spends the first third of his book describing his path from being an Evangelical who did not have any experience in the supernatural power of God to being a believer in “The Third Wave”, defining it as the emergence of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit outside of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. This enabled a traditional church to exercise the gifts of the Spirit without having to change its nature, unlike previous churches which were expected to identify themselves as “charismatic” to be able to use the gifts in their services.

He then identifies “the signs of the kingdom”⁴⁵ in which he includes “No one is sick”. He uses that part of the Lord’s Prayer which says “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). This introduces his assertion that because there are no sick people in heaven, there should be no sick people on earth, fully vindicating the supernatural divine healing ministry.

⁴⁴ C. Peter Wagner, *How to Have A Healing Ministry without making your church sick*. 1988, California: Regal Books.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 100-101.

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He says, in response to those who believe that Mark 16:9-20 was added later by an editor in the Second Century. Wagner quotes Michael Harper: “In my opinion the authorship is not important. Every word of the passage is consistent with the Acts of the apostles, and so can be accepted whoever the author was”⁴⁶

He suggests that starting a healing ministry in a church could be seen as the natural result of the presence of Jesus and His kingdom.⁴⁷ He goes on to say that signs and wonders [including healing⁴⁸] should be as normal a part of a church as believer’s baptism. He says that some, such as Baptists, Mennonites and Church of Christ argue that we cannot have a true church without it, while others, such as Presbyterians and Lutherans think they have true churches without it.⁴⁹ He also says that the purpose of his book is to help Christian people and churches enter into a regular, effective healing ministry.

He goes on to say that sickness is definitely not God’s will, but if it is not God’s will, why then are people sick? He puts forward his views about that:

He says that sickness originates from Satan, and works in three major ways to bring sickness and suffering on people:

Satan causes sickness directly, through demonization. He shows that 25 percent of Jesus’ healings as recorded in the Gospel of Mark involve demons.

Satan indirectly uses the natural results of the Fall to cause sickness and suffering.

Satan tempts people to fall into sin, and sickness can result from it. He makes the point that God punished sin by sickness. He quotes several Old Testament examples and a couple of New Testament ones,

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 102

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.106.

⁴⁸ My insert.

⁴⁹ *How to Have a Healing Ministry*, p. 107.

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including the blinding of Elymas (Acts 13:6-12), and the sick at Corinth through their abuse of the Lord's Supper.⁵⁰

He quotes three examples of a girl who suffered a broken neck, and a colleague who was a quadriplegic. He quotes Romans 8:28 to give the impression that all things work for good for those who love God.⁵¹ This seems inconsistent with his assertion that it is always God's will for people to be healed, and that the will of God should be done on earth as it is in heaven. So, why then does God allow these people to remain disabled when it is inconsistent with His will? It may be consistent with Mr Wagner's theology to explain why some people do not get healed, but it could very well be that the theology could hinder faith in anyone praying for the healing of these disabled ones.

He says that we can do the works that Jesus did, because we are connected with the same power source as Jesus was. This shows that Jesus healed people through the power of the Holy Spirit, and this is consistent with Paul when he said that Jesus laid aside His former glory and took on the form of a servant (Philippians 2:7), making Himself no more powerful than any other man, therefore totally dependent on the Holy Spirit to perform His ministry.⁵² This gives us great confidence in ministry knowing this, because we can exercise faith to heal the sick without worrying about whether we have the power to do it.

He makes the point that Jesus did the works He did out of obedience to the Father (John 6:38). This brings up a good point for us, because as Jesus was obedient to the Father in what He did, we minister in obedience to Jesus. So when we pray over someone and lay hands on them for healing, we are doing that out of obedience to what Jesus has commanded, and not primarily for the expectation of results, which are in God's domain. He says that because Jesus was 100 percent human, He had to learn obedience. Because the servant is no greater

⁵⁰ We have already considered the type of abuse of the Lord's Supper that might have caused sickness at the church in Corinth.

⁵¹ *How to Have a Healing Ministry*, p.110-111.

⁵² *Ibid*, p.124.

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than his master (John 15:20), we have to learn obedience also. However, he makes the wise point that no one will match the effectiveness of Jesus of His miraculous works than we can match His love,⁵³ but we can learn to love better and heal better.

The Believer's Handbook; Lester Sumrall (1930-1996)

In his book, he has a chapter entitled: The Lord is Healer (Jehovah-Rapheka).⁵⁴ The purpose of the book is to give new believers a basic guide to the Christian faith, therefore it is not a comprehensive theological work, but is directed at normal church members, to see biblical answers to life and spiritual issues that confront them.

He says that God made us and is able to heal us,⁵⁵ if we do what He tells us to do. Because he is an active evangelist with a ministry of healing he has often encountered people asking him, “Why haven’t I been healed?” “Why is my baby born retarded?” He says that not all these questions will be answered in this life. He goes on to say that most of the questions about failure in healing can be answered by examining the way we live.

He has a very interesting answer to a well-known evangelist who maintained that the gifts, including healing had ceased because we do not need them anymore. Sumrall puts the question to him: “What does he do when he gets sick? Does he say, “I know this sickness must come from the Lord so I’m going to pray for more sickness”? “Please don’t make me well, Lord because that would be a bad testimony”? Sumrall doubts it.⁵⁶

He suggests another reason why people do not get healed: pain could be their God. He says that either pain is their God or God is their God.⁵⁷ This goes along with the idea that some people prefer to remain

⁵³ Ibid, p.129

⁵⁴ Lester Sumrall, *The Believer's Handbook*, 2002, New Kensington PA: Wittaker House.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p76.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 80-81.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 82.

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sick because they can get a lot of mileage from the sympathy they receive from their loved ones and friends.

He says that we are free agents and can choose to fight against the sickness or surrender to it. He completes the chapter by challenging his readers about whether they want to surrender to the devil who is the source of their sickness, or put God in charge of their lives.

Sent To Heal, A Handbook on Christian Healing; Harold Taylor

The next book is a handbook on Christian healing used by the Australian Order of St. Luke,⁵⁸ originating in the United States of America in 1947 by Rev. Dr. John Gaynor Banks, a priest of the Episcopal Church, and is now firmly established in many countries around the world.

Taylor's definition of healing is that the relationship of men and women with God has been fractured and broken by sin and disobedience and this relationship needs to be restored, and that the restoration is accomplished by the healing of body, soul, and spirit. He says that all healing is from God. Sickness or ill-health may be physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual, and all may need healing. He says that healing is more than physical cure; is not complete in this life; and is the concern of the Church. Healing and salvation are available in Jesus Christ and it is the Church's responsibility to make this available.⁵⁹

When discussing methods, Taylor agrees that God is not restricted to any one method, however successful it may be. He says that healing can occur through a natural process without intervention from anywhere; through the use of medication; or supernatural through the laying on of hands and the prayer of faith. There is an error, according to Taylor, that the supernatural method is spiritual and other methods are not.

⁵⁸ Harold Taylor, *Sent To Heal, A Handbook on Christian Healing*, 1993, Ringwood, Victoria, Published by The Order Of St Luke The Physician.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 11-12.

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He quotes Francis MacNutt's categories of sickness: of the spirit caused by personal sin, requiring confession and prayer; emotional sickness caused by hurts of the past, requiring prayer and counselling; and physical sickness caused by accident or disease, requiring prayer and medical care.⁶⁰

He stresses the importance of prayer in that it consists of our relationship with God and that He is present with and active on behalf of His people. Concentrating on healing prayer, he says that it is not just seeking God about a physical condition but seeking to be with God and to be open to His will. Faith is an essential component and it is just as much a trust in God's faithfulness and promises as it is faith in the person praying, and that the power of love is sufficient to meet all our needs.⁶¹

He says that prayer should be specific, positive, confident, inclusive in the sense of recognising others in the healing process, and in the Spirit. He discusses the laying on of hands and draws attention to some of the misconceptions about it, i.e.: that it is the transfer of some spiritual healing energy; each person possesses an energy field that can be tapped; that it is for the understanding of the significance for personal growth. He goes into some depth with the study of the laying on of hands as described in scripture and the significance of it for healing.⁶²

The Price Of God's Miracle Working Power; A. A. Allen

This is a significant work in the area of divine healing. His is the only book that sets out a specific list of God's requirements for a person aspiring to have a healing ministry.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 99.

⁶¹ Ibid, p.103.

⁶² Ibid, p.108-112

⁶³ A. A. Allen, *The Price Of God's Miracle Working Power*, First published 1950, this printing 2002, Paul A Allen & Family,

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The book starts off with his account of his prayer-closet preparation for the ministry he was about to embark on. In this session alone with God, he was given a list of requirements that he must meet if he is to conduct his ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The first requirement was that "*The Disciple is not above his master, nor the servant about his Lord.* What the instruction meant to him was that Jesus Christ was to be always greater no matter how effective or famous he became.

The second requirement was: "*The disciple is not above his Master, but everyone that is perfect shall be as his Master.* This meant that he could be equal to Jesus in the sense that he could do the same works that Jesus did.

The next requirement was: "*Be therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect*". This is the goal for every Christian. The scripture instructs us to walk worthy of the calling that we have received.

The next requirement: "*Christ is the example*". We need to study carefully the ways that Jesus went about things because He is the example of the way we should live, minister and conduct ourselves.

Next Requirement: "*Self Denial*". We must give our lives completely into the hands of Jesus. We are not here to please ourselves, make a name for ourselves.

Next Requirement: "*Take up our cross and follow Him*" requiring a life of self-denial and a concentration on the mission to which God has called him,

Next Requirement: "*I must decrease and He must increase.*" This meant that even though he would become successful and famous in the healing ministry, he would not think himself more important than his Master, Jesus.

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Next Requirement: “*Keep clear of idle words and foolish talking.*” It was important that he set an example in the way he spoke to others and that if he became foolish in his talking they might think that his mission is not all that important to him.

Next Requirement: “*Present your body as a living sacrifice.*” This was in recognition of the demands put upon him in ministry. His life was not his own, he belonged to the Lord and whenever need presented to him, he was to make himself available, even if it meant losing out on sleep, family life, or even his personal safety.

Next: “*We are partakers of His divine nature.*” This is to recognise that because we have Jesus living in us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we become just like Jesus in the way we think and conduct our ministry.

There were *personal issues* of which God made him aware and of the need to deal with them. They were not put in the book because they were matters only between him and God.

Healing, Francis MacNutt

The ministry of healing is not confined to the Protestant Evangelical, Pentecostal, Charismatic Church, but the Roman Catholic Church has always had divine healing as an integral component of its doctrinal basis. This is well-expressed in the work of Father Francis MacNutt,⁶⁴ a Roman Catholic priest in his book, which is “the first comprehensive Catholic book on healing by the foremost authority on the healing ministry in the Roman Catholic Church today.”⁶⁵

He surveys the main objections to divine healing: To answer those who say “*we want nothing to do with faith healing*” he points out the difference between “faith-healers” and the ministry of healing. “*faith-healing*” suggests that it is the recipient who requires faith to be healed, while Jesus ministered healing without requiring faith on the

⁶⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_MacNutt

⁶⁵ Francis MacNutt, o.p., *Healing*, 1974, USA: Ava Maria Press, front cover.

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behalf the recipient most times. The attitude of those who would say “*my sickness is a cross sent from God*”, to ask for healing would be to oppose God’s will and refuse the cross He offers. He says that nowhere in the gospels does Christ encourage people to embrace and hold on to their sicknesses; on the contrary, He saw sickness as the work of the devil which He came to destroy. Others will say, “*It takes a saint to do a miracle and I’m no saint*”. He at first felt this way when confronted with praying for a sick person, but he took another look at Mark 16:18 and discovered that it was *believers* (not saints) who were to lay hands on the sick so that they will recover.⁶⁶ To counter the statement “*we don’t need signs and wonders any longer, we now have faith*”, he emphasises that it is the compassion of God that He reaches out to heal the sick and that has never changed from the days of the Early Church until now. He has encountered “*miracles do not take place; they represent a primitive way of expressing reality*”. He says that although the previous four statements do not directly strike at the very possibility of God moving with direct healing power, this one does, because it questions the possibility of a God who acts directly in history and in our personal lives. In contrast to that, he says that a person who has known God’s love and healing power senses the presence of God *within himself*, the immanent God who works in and through His creation.⁶⁷

He says that the main message is that Jesus saves. The salvation of souls was paramount in everything He said and did. But what did He include in that message of salvation? Luke 9:1-2 expresses it very well:

“He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.”

⁶⁶ As a Catholic priest he always believed that Christ healed people but it had to be done through one of the Catholic saints. This is why he hesitated at first to pray for sick people. Often, Catholic people prayed to one of the saints to heal a sick person. When he read Mark 16:18 closely he discovered that praying for the sick was the ministry of every believer in Christ and not just for Catholic saints.

⁶⁷ *Healing*, p. 39-45.

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After sending them out, He sent seventy-two more, instructed them to go in pairs, visit all the towns, and

“Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you. Cure those in it who are sick and say, “The kingdom of God is very near to you” (Luke 10:1, 8-9).

MacNutt uses this to show that preaching the kingdom of God was not merely a doctrine; it contains the very power of God, liberating men and women from the wretched state they were in.⁶⁸

Later in the book he gives eleven reasons why people are not healed: *lack of faith, redemptive suffering* in the sense that there is a *higher purpose* for the sickness, *a false value attached to suffering*, sin, *not praying specifically, faulty diagnosis, refusal to see medicine* as a way to cure sickness, *not using natural means* to preserve health, “now is not the time”, a different person has to be the instrument of healing, the social environment prevents healing from taking place. John Wimber, years later, as we have already seen, came to the same basic conclusions.

Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church; David Pytches

He gives several reasons why people do not pray for the sick.⁶⁹ He says that they have a *faulty world view* in that they have a rational view of the world; if they have never seen such healing, it doesn't happen. A *lack of power* is another reason where if the goal is the acquisition of knowledge there will never be the experience of power. Another reason is *the absence of an acceptable model*. If we have never seen effective healing ministered in a way that we can relate to, we will not involve ourselves. A *concern for God's reputation or our own* can hinder our faith to pray for healing, expressed by “It is not that I think that God can't heal; it's just that I believe he doesn't usually do it. Anyway I don't think we should bother God about such a small thing

⁶⁸ Ibid, p .54-55.

⁶⁹ David Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 1965, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, p. 161.

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as a headache when there are so many problems in the world which are vast and horrific.” Another hindrance is *a fear of how others will react once we begin praying for healing*. Fear of being friendless or regarded as fanatical can destroy faith in a person. A very concerning reason is *a lack of encouragement from the rest of the Body of Christ*.

That last point brings to mind the phrase “bad company corrupts good morals” (1 Corinthians 15:33). Although the context is about believing or not believing in the resurrection of Christ, the phrase is one that can be applied universally. In the case of the ministry of healing, a person may believe that divine healing is for today, and can be convinced by Scripture and history that he can “lay hands on the sick and they shall recover”, but because he is in a cessationist⁷⁰ environment where other members of his church are opposed to it, this can corrupt his faith and make it ineffective through lack of practical application. It is appropriate at this stage to examine a Cessationist article.

Cessationism, “The Gifts of Healings,” and Divine Healing; Richard Mayhue.⁷¹

Mayhue makes the statement:

“The study of divine healing must include the tragic abundance of false teachers with false teaching s and false practices, who claim biblical authority, but upon closer examination are clearly not of God. Do “gifts of healings” mentioned in 1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30 still operate today as in NT times? This sign-gift ceased with the close of the NT canon.”

He does not back this statement with any scripture reference, in fact, if he was asked to provide a definite reference from the Gospels or the Epistles that definitely states that the ministry of healing was designed to be temporary, he would not be able to

⁷⁰ The belief that the supernatural gifts of the Spirit ceased after the Apostolic era.

⁷¹ The article can be found at <http://www.tms.edu/m/tmsj14j.pdf>

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do it. There is no doubt that there are false teachers connected with the healing ministry, but not for the reason he makes out.

“Does God still heal as He did in both the OT and the NT? An inductive study of the biblical record (including the OT, Gospels, Acts, and NT Epistles) establishes unmistakable characteristics of genuine divine healing. The biblical standards become the measure by which alleged contemporary divine healing claims should be judged, whether of God or not.”

Mayhue is correct in this, and we have already gone through the Biblical evidence about the way Jesus and the Apostles went about healing the sick.

“Next, God’s ultimate healing promise of salvation in 1 Peter 2:24 deserves attention. In context, the passage speaks of spiritual healing (salvation), not physical healing.”

It is apparent that Mayhue does not believe that healing, along with salvation is included in Isaiah 53:5. He misses the connection that Matthew makes when he quotes Isaiah in connection with Jesus healing the sick where he quotes “by His stripes we are healed” (Matthew 8:16-17). Peter, after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, he states “by His stripes we were healed” (past tense). If we link the three scriptures, we see that the Atonement, which is an event that has happened in the past, provides for salvation and healing. This is an example of Mayhue making the Scripture agree with his personal theology, instead of adapting his theology with Scripture.

“Finally, a series of theological observations lead to the practical conclusion that Christians should focus on the spiritual/eternal rather than the physical/temporal.”

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He is correct that Christians should focus on the spiritual/eternal as well as the physical/temporal, but this is not a reason why believers should not exercise their compassion for the sick and seek to alleviate their sufferings. As we see in the Gospel and Acts, Jesus and Apostles did focus on the spiritual/eternal but that did not stop them praying for the sick with the expectation that the sick would be healed. In actual fact, Mayhue's comment originates from the pagan philosophy of Plato and Aristotle which emphasised the spiritual over the physical. Origen and Augustine were influenced by Plato, and Thomas Aquinas was influenced by Aristotle and the mixture of these philosophies which originated from pagan Hellenistic thought brought big changes to Christian theology. This had a serious impact on the healing ministry in the second and third centuries and also through the Medieval period.⁷²

“When God does heal today, it will not be through human agency, and it will be characterized as were His healings recorded in Scripture”.

Mayhue is partly correct in that He does not heal through human agency in the sense that there is some type of power that the healing evangelist has flowing through him to heal a sick person. He is also correct when he says that the healings that come through Christ as those as recorded in Scripture. What he misses is the link between the healing minister and the healing itself. The link, as we have seen, is the faith of the person praying for the sick. James says it is “the prayer of faith” that will heal the sick person (James 5:15), and it is the faith of the act of the laying hands on the sick person that brings the recovery. As Bevington states, “Healing is the direct application of the power of God.” This means that Jesus heals the person directly as the result of the faith of the person praying. This is what was recorded in Scripture and the historical events.

⁷² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_philosophy

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“Cessationism involves the belief that the NT miraculous sign gifts (cf. Acts 2:22; 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:3-4) ceased with the apostles’ passing and the NT canon’s completion.”

Mayhue attempts to prove that the miraculous gifts ceased. The first reference is the Acts reference, where it states that Jesus miraculously healed people. So he is acknowledging that divine healing did actually occur during Jesus’ earthly ministry. He then uses the 2 Corinthians and Hebrews references to say that signs, wonders and miracles are the characteristics of a true apostle. There is nothing in these references to say that the miraculous healing ministry ceased. He is trying to read into these references using his own definition of “apostle” meaning that a true apostles were only the original twelve and that the miraculous was limited to them and ceased when they died. In actual fact, this notion was first suggested by John Calvin in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 12, and neither did he provide any Scriptural backing for his view.

“Whatever theological position one takes on the subject, it is imperative that it be strongly substantiated by Scripture, lest he sincerely believe in promises that God never actually made.”

Mayhue would be entirely correct if he had any Scriptural backing for his cessationist theology, which he has not.

“Once the apostles were authenticated and the early church established, the apostolic signs gradually disappeared, for they had served their God-intended purpose.”

While it is true that the ministry of healing gradually disappeared from the mainstream Church, it was not for the speculated reason that Mayhue suggests. All major historians agree that the diminishing of the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit, including divine healing,

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happened because of the institutionalism of the Church.⁷³ A. J. Gordon, Baptist minister and founder of Gordon College in Boston was correct when he said:

“It is not altogether strange when the Church forgot her citizenship in heaven and began to establish herself in luxury and splendour on earth, she should cease to exhibit the supernatural gifts of heaven.”⁷⁴

Rodney Francis, the founder and director of the Gospel Faith Messenger Ministry⁷⁵ comments that the ministry of divine healing is a crucial factor in the growth of the Christian Church:

“If divine healing was not a major part of the Christian message, why, then did Jesus make it a major part of His earthly ministry? And why did it continue throughout the Book of Acts in the Early Church? The need today amongst every culture of people is to be healed of their plagues and infirmities...The healing, plus the convincing evidence of the Scriptures, is what brings people to a place of repentance before God. And when that is happening, the Church has to grow!”⁷⁶

Mayhue goes on to make another speculative statement for which he has no Scriptural support:

“Most likely, “gifts of healings” involved a temporary sign gift which was used by God to authenticate the apostles, was evidenced sparingly apart from Peter and Paul, was bestowed on a one-time-only basis, and was to be renewed by God’s sovereign will. Therefore, the “gifts of healings” in 1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30 were not intended by God to be operative today.”

⁷³ James L Ash, Jr., ‘The Decline of Ecstatic Prophecy In The Early Church’, *Theological Studies*, 37 (1976): 227.

⁷⁴ A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of Healing*, (Harrisburg, PA, Christian Publ., 1961), 64.

⁷⁵ <http://www.gospel.org.nz/index.php/about-us/the-director>

⁷⁶ Rodney Francis, *Divine Healing, A Key to the Growth of the Christian Church*, 2004, Hamilton, NZ: Published by “The Gospel Faith Messenger” Ministry, p. 127.

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For a Bible teacher in a recognised Seminary who says that it is important to base one's theology on Scripture, he is seriously contradicting himself by making a statement that is entirely a baseless theory founded on his own inaccurate theology. He carries on in his article to quote other cessationist theologians to give weight to his theories and this shows that whatever he teaches, he does not demonstrate a belief that the Bible is the final authority on God's will concerning the healing ministry.

The concern about Mayhue's teaching and that of other Cessationists is that they are implying that all the recorded healings, including those attested by medical professionals, are false. Does this mean that Mayhue is accusing all these thousands of people who have testified to miraculous healing of lying? Or are his claims just plain religious and academic arrogance? The answer has to be left to those willing to consult all the evidence, Scriptural, historic and contemporary.

The literature that has been selected for the survey is just a portion of the many books and articles that have been published on the healing ministry. But the ones chosen here from a variety of sources, from the late nineteenth century to the present, represent the main issues that confront our churches and those who feel that they have a calling to pray for the sick.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that we come to after surveying the Biblical basis for divine healing, the experience of the Church fathers and subsequent priests, pastors and healing ministries, and the survey of supporting literature is that the divine healing ministry is just as important today as it was at the time when Jesus and the Apostles were reaching out to people with the good news of the kingdom of God.

Cessationist-based theology is in error for the simple reason that there is no teaching in Scripture to support the views it expresses. There is not one scripture anywhere in the Gospels that support that for any reason that the ministry of miraculous divine healing had ever ceased, or was intended to cease before the Second Coming of Christ. It is contrary to common sense that Jesus would make miraculous healing such a prominent part of His ministry, and then tell His disciples that everyone who believes will be able to do the same works (John 14:12). Jesus would have said “everyone who believes only during the Apostolic era”, if that is what He intended. It is also difficult to believe that Paul would go to such lengths as to teach the Corinthians what the supernatural gifts of the Spirit were and how to use them if they were only for his own lifetime. Just imagine as the Apostle John was on his death-bed, saying to the crowd outside who had come for healing, “You’d get in here quick and get prayed for, otherwise when I am dead, it’s all over!” Just imagine if he was halfway through praying for a sick person when he died. Would that mean that the sick person would miss out on healing? Would that be consistent with the compassionate character of Jesus who actually does the healing? It is doubtful, and yet there are misguided religious folk who believe that Jesus could be like that.

So, having established that the divine healing ministry started by Jesus and the Apostles continued through Church history until the present day, we need to make conclusions about how it can be put into practice to ensure the involvement of power of the Holy Spirit.

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It is agreed that healing can take many forms, from the natural process of healing built into the human body, as the result of the medical discoveries that have been made, the skill of doctors and surgeons, and through prayer and the laying on of hands.

The early Pentecostal view that medicine and doctors cause more harm than good for healing is not acceptable. The example of Asa is quoted by these people, but they don't take into account that the physicians described in his time used occultic practices and that is the reason why he refused to use them. Most medical professionals do not use occultic practices so to use Asa as an example is a misapplication of Scripture. In fact, refusal to consult medical professionals by many during the early days of Pentecostalism caused much unnecessary suffering and premature death among those who should have been treated and cured.

It is noted that in the Order of St Luke Manual on healing, Taylor gives space to describe relaxation, visualisation, affirmation, and meditation as therapies to assist the healing process. He is careful to mention that these can be controversial among Christians and will require careful consideration and discernment.⁷⁷ However, upon examination of how Jesus and the Apostles went about healing people, none of these methods are mentioned. We do not see Jesus telling a sick person to “just sit down there, relax, meditate, and visualise your healing.”

When we closely examine the methods used by Jesus to minister healing, we see that He did not use any hard and fast formula or method. He responded to the situation as it presented itself. To a lame man lying on a mat-type bed He commanded, “Take up your bed and walk”. He told the paralytic who was lowered through the roof to “roll up your bed and go home”. He told the Centurion, “Go home, your servant is healed.” He told a blind man to “go and wash in the Pool of Siloam”. Another time all He did was to touch a blind man's eyes and the man regained his sight. When He recognised that a

⁷⁷ Harold Taylor, *Sent To Heal, A Handbook on Christian Healing*, p. 107. In chapter 11 of the book, Taylor examines alternative methods, including New Age, and the Christian response to some of these alternative methods.

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condition was caused by a demon, He commanded the demon to leave, such as in the case of one who was deaf and dumb. He rebuked a fever in Peter's mother-in-law, probably in no uncertain terms to "leave her right now!" That implied that the fever "had ears to hear" and obeyed the Lord's command. He told a young dead girl to "arise" and she came to life and got up.

The Apostles followed the same methods. Peter addressed the lame man in Acts 3, "in the Name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk!" and then assisted the man to get to his feet.

What this means that if we want to do the same works that Jesus did, we need to follow His example. There is no record in the Gospels that Jesus ever asked the Father to heal anyone. He commanded the healing on His own authority. We know this because He said, "The Spirit is upon me, because He has anointed me"...etc. What this means is that He was anointed, in other words, given authority from the Father, and then enabled with the power of the Holy Spirit to perform His ministry, including that of miraculous healing. That means that He did not have to ask the Father to do it because the Father had given Him the authority to do it Himself.

The bestowal of authority to heal is shown in the Lord's instructions to His disciples and to the seventy-two, to "heal the sick". He expected them to go out and use the authority given to them to say to a sick person, "receive your sight", or "you are healed", or "take up your bed and walk", in the exactly the same way that Jesus did it.

After the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost, the disciples, starting with the 120 in the upper room were not given just delegated authority as they were before. Because the Holy Spirit came and dwelt right inside them, it was as if Jesus was inside them ("Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27)) This is why Peter told the crowd that it was not on their own authority the lame man was healed but it was through faith in the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:16).

So, because we are "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:13), we can do exactly what Peter did because we are "hooked up" to

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the same Holy Spirit and therefore can use our faith in the Name of Jesus Christ to minister healing to the sick.

The view of John Wimber and Francis MacNutt that the lack of specific prayer is a hindrance to healing is correct in the light of what we have just seen, because when people pray lengthy, religious prayers and asking God to provide something He has already given in the Atonement. Praying “If it be your will” suggests that if it is not God’s will for, say, a person with terminal cancer, then it must be His will for that person to die a slow agonising death, which seems to be inconsistent with God’s compassionate nature. For a person to die a slow, agonising death seems to be the way the devil wants someone to die because it is more consistent with his nature. It is no wonder that the sick person does not get healed, because these are not the ways that Jesus nor the Apostles went about it.

The writers who maintained that it is always God’s will to heal sick people is supported by Jesus telling a leprous man that it was His will to heal him (Luke 5:12), and the fact that on several occasions Jesus healed “all who came to Him” (Matthew 12:15,15:30). The only people who were never healed by Jesus are the ones who never came to Him. This is the same today; many people in our churches remain sick because they don’t believe that He can or wants to heal them and so they refrain from receiving prayer for healing.

Jesus, Peter, nor Paul are never recorded as having mass healing meetings with faith-building messages and healing lines in the way depicted in the descriptions of type of ministry performed by Jack Coe, A.A. Allen, Kathryn Khulman, William Branham, Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborne, or Benny Hinn. And yet, supporting these modern healing evangelists there are thousands of testimonies of genuine miraculous healings, recorded on YouTube, on DVD, and written in newspaper articles, books and ministry magazines. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that God, in His grace, has looked on the hearts of the healing evangelists and those who have come, and has healed them out of His compassion for them. In the face of accusations of falsehood and dubious practices, because of the genuine results, we

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have to conclude that God's strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9), and to give these ministries the benefit of the doubt.

We have to say the same for the ministries of Guy Bevington, John Dowie, John G. Lake, Smith Wigglesworth, and Marie Woodsworth-Etter. Jesus never resorted to extended hours and days of prayer to achieve a single healing in the way that Bevington did. We know that He did go away to pray (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16), but that would have been more of His desire to have fellowship with the Father. When He encountered a sick person, He did not wait to pray but took direct action. Jesus did not set up healing rooms in the same way that Lake did. He went to where sick people were mostly, and those who came to Him did not come to receive healing "therapy" in a specifically designed "healing" room. Jesus did not go into trances in the way that was described of Maria Woodsworth-Etter, nor did those receiving healing "fall in the Spirit". In fact there are no reports in Scripture of any manifestations of that type.⁷⁸

Yet, these ministries had remarkable incidences of genuine miraculous healings in spite of the personal weaknesses and inaccurate theology of the healing practitioners. We have to accept that "by their fruits we shall know them" (Matthew 7:16).

At this point we have to refute the critics of these healing ministries who imply that the ministries are false. There is a scripture that says that the spiritual will be able to judge all things but is himself to be judged of no one. (1 Corinthians 2:15). But a close reading of the verse shows that the spiritual person can judge all *things* and not people. It is acceptable to evaluate a ministry to see if it fits in with scriptural parameters or not, but it is not acceptable to judge the personal life of the practitioner by publicly announcing that he or she is false because of aspects of the personal life that do not fit in with the critic's view of what is right or wrong. However, if, in the case of

⁷⁸The consideration of manifestations like falling down, shaking, going into trances, or any those phenomena that has been reported in revivals and meetings through the history of the Church, belongs to a different type of study than this one.

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Jack Coe who had an eating disorder that made him obese, it was right for his peers in the ministry to speak to him about it.

A favourite scripture that critics quote is Matthew 7:15-23. While it is correct to say that only those who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of God, and it is true that there will be many who will try to get into heaven by using their ability to prophesy, cast out demons, and do miracles in the Name of Jesus. But can this reference be applied to the ministries mentioned here? If we examine the biographies, preaching and writing of these healing evangelists, we see a common thread running through them. They have a strong love for Jesus, make embracing Christ as Saviour their priority, have deep compassion for sick and suffering people, and acknowledge that any miracles that have occurred during their ministry have been the work of Jesus working in response to their faith in Him. Every one of these will freely acknowledge that their only qualification for entering into the kingdom of God is that Jesus died on the cross for them and rose from the dead to make them justified before God. Notice that the false ones are using what they have done supposedly for the Lord in His Name to get them into the kingdom of God. Because God is the one who looks upon the heart of people, we cannot really say who is genuine or false. We have to give them the benefit of the doubt and leave it to the Lord to be the Judge of them.

David Pytches' list of reasons why people do not pray for sick people gives a good insight of why people continue to be sick in our churches. It seems more certain that when people say that it is not God's will to heal today, or that divine healing ceased at the end of the Apostolic age, or that there are no role models for them, or "why pray when they can go to the doctor", it could be an excuse to cover up the fear of having their reputation affected, losing their friends, and being considered a fanatic. In the light of specific Scriptural and Historical evidence it is easy to believe that these people are using inaccurate cessationist theology to cover up for their own fears and lack of faith.

So, in conclusion, what do we do in the light of all this? As Lester Sumrall said, "If you want to know the will of God, read the Bible. If

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you want to walk in the Spirit, do the Bible.⁷⁹ This is in harmony with “*but be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*” (James 1:22, NKJV).

Finally, it is not enough to say we can do it, and should do, but we need to know how to do it. Here are some guidelines from an experienced practitioner in the healing ministry:⁸⁰

How to Minister Healing:

Determine the problem: – Name of sickness, symptoms or what the person is

unable to do.

Attack: --- Cast out, evict, command the spirit of infirmity/name of sickness/symptoms to leave. Lay hands where possible. Anoint with oil if available.

Check: --- Ask person to check for changes. It’s good to do a check before you minister to have something to measure against. If no change, see Step 2. If slight change, see step 2. If significant change, see step 2. If complete healing manifests, see step 4.

Praise: --- Give thanks to Jesus and testify of what happened.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Administering The Children’s Bread, The basics of healing under the New Covenant, p.23.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 45.

ANNOTATED BIBIOGRAPHY

These books provided the background reading for this paper. Not all of them were used in the writing of the text, but they provide a valuable resource for further reading. Not all of the views and opinions expressed in these books are the same as the views of the author of the paper, but the authors listed gave excellent insights and points to ponder so as to provide a good foundation for my research, discoveries and conclusions. The annotations are taken from comments made by the authors and those who have provided short cover reviews.

Allen, A.A., *The Price Of God's Miracle Working Power*, First published 1950, this printing 2002,

Paul A Allen & Family.

This is an account of how Evangelist A.A. Allen sought God to find His will concerning the ministry he was to perform. The results of that time were a list of requirements that God had for him in order to have a ministry that included demonstrations of God's miracle working power. Good insights for anyone aspiring to a similar ministry.

Bevington, Guy, C, *Remarkable Miracles*, 1973, Plainfield NJ, Logos International.

The value of this book does not end in the power of its testimony, though that is enough to make it memorable. Combined with that power is a style that even in unpolished form is reminiscent of Mark

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Twain. The resulting charm and the authenticity of narrative make this volume a true Logos classic.

Bonnke, Reinhard, *Even Greater*, 2004, Frankfurt Germany: E-R Publications.

Even Greater delivers dramatic faith building true stories about ordinary people from around the world. People just like you, with whom God did extraordinary works despite broken dreams, failure and weakness. His grace is freely given.

Deer, Jack, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*, 1993. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

Deere provides a strong biblical defense for the Spirit's speaking and healing ministries today. He also describes several reliable cases of people who were miraculously healed or who heard God speak in an unmistakable way. Finally, he gives sound advice for using spiritual gifts in the church.

Fee, Gordon, *God's Empowering Presence, The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, 1994,

Peabody, MS: Hendrikson Publishers.

“With the energy and care that is a trademark of his work, Gordon Fee here fills a significant gap in Pauline Studies. Both those who find talk about the Holy Spirit congenial and those who would happily marginalize it will be instructed by this book. Fee makes a genuine contribution as he examines Paul's letters in conversations with both the exegetical tradition of the academy and the present needs of the

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church.” (Beverly R. Gaventa, Associate Professor of New Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary)

Francis, Rodney, *Divine Healing, A Key to the Growth of the Christian Church*, 2004,

Hamilton, NZ: Published by “The Gospel Faith Messenger” Ministry.

“This book, written by a practitioner, encourages the Church today in a convincing, scholarly and lively manner not to neglect the timeless commission to “preach the good news and heal the sick”. It carries a positive message that the healing of the whole person is the goal of the Gospel, and that miraculous, physical healing confirms the entrance of God’s Kingdom in power” (Rev. Phil. Johnston, “Elim Christian Centre,” Cheltenham, England)

Hill, Steve, *Operating in the Miraculous*, 2005, Dallas, Texas: Clarion Call Marketing.

For nearly three decades, Steve Hill has circled the globe, preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He and his wife, Jeri, have planted churches in Argentina, Spain, and Russia. He has preached in stadium crusades, churches and conferences around the world, and his messages are presently aired on television stations in over 150 nations. He is the author of eleven books.

Hunter, Charles and Frances, *Healing Through Humor*, 2003, Lake Mary, Florida: Creation House Press.

Laughter is absolutely the best medicine as it charges the immune system and triggers the relaxation response. In this stressful world

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where 75 to 90 percent of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress-related complaints or disorders, I believe that Healing Through Humor is a vital part of the healing process. Laughter stops stress in its tracks. (Don Colbert, M.D., author of the best-selling Bible Cure series)

Hyatt, Eddie L; *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity*; 2002: Florida; Charisma House.

This book offers convincing evidence that the modern Pentecostal and Charismatic movements are rooted in the two-thousand-year history of the Church. Those who identify with these movements will be affirmed in the experience of the Holy Spirit and will gain a new respect and appreciation for the movement of which they are a part. Those outside the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements will also benefit by reading this volume in that they will gain an understanding of this movement that Harvard professor Dr. Harvey Cox says is “reshaping religion in the 21st century.

Johnson, Bill, *When Heaven Invades Earth, A practical guide to Miracles*, 2003, Shippenberg P.A:

Treasure House.

It is truly possible for human people to walk in the divine and Christ came to show us the way. It is by rediscovering our true identify in Him that we can begin to move into the promises of God regarding the miraculous. Bill Johnson not only teaches the supernatural, he imparts it by changing the way we think. By laying a carefully constructed biblical foundation for walking in the supernatural power of God, *When Heaven Invades Earth* provides all the equipment you need to experience miracles every day.

The Healing Ministry – Then And Now

MacNutt, Francis o.p., *Healing*, 1974, USA: Ava Maria Press.

“This is the most sensitive and pastorally wise book on the ministry of healing that I have read. It combines extensive practical experience, psychological insight, deep faith in God’s healing power, and compassion, in an age in which the sacraments of reconciliation and of anointing of the sick are undergoing a renewal. It is of important pastoral significance.” (Donald L. Gelpi. S.J., author of *Pentecostalism, a Theological Viewpoint*)

MacNutt, Francis, o.p., *The Power To Heal*, 1977, USA: Ava Maria Press.

“...the most helpful book on healing that I have read. Father MacNutt deals directly with the difficult issues in the area of physical healing.” (Michael Scanlan, T.O.R., author of *Inner Healing*)

Marais, Cornel and Wilson, Simon, *Administering The Children’s Bread, The basics of healing*

under the New Covenant, 2010: Auckland, NZ: Charisma Ministries.

A practical manual supplying the biblical basis for divine healing through a thorough examination of the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles and their methods, and how we can adapt them to pray for the sick in our churches, streets and shopping malls. It is an excellent teaching resource that gives principles that really work.

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Pytches, David, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 1965, Minneapolis, Minnesota:

Bethany House Publishers.

A respected leader in the Renewal Movement in England, author David Pytches points out that this is not a rule book. It is rather a set of guidelines offered to local churches, basic teaching material to adopt or adapt in administrating the use of the gifts – defining them biblically, instructing on their proper use, and warning of possible abuse.

Sandford, Agnes, *Healing Gifts of the Spirit*, 1966, Great Britain: Arthur James Limited.

Agnes Sandford emphasises the gifts of the Spirit are not wrapped up in separate compartments. They weave and work together in a natural manner. The heart of the problem is this: the Holy Spirit of God being awakened within us enlivens and enlightens our spirits, bringing forth in us increased power in every way according to our need. This important book shows how these gifts can, and do, manifest themselves in our lives.

Sumrall, Lester, *The Believer's Handbook*, 2002, New Kensington PA: Whitaker House.

Lester Sumrall, a world-renowned pastor and evangelist, offers straightforward answers to these burning questions of life. The spiritual realm is all around us, and more things count on spiritual battles than we realize. Sumrall will give you examples of his

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encounters with angels, demons, and the living God that will convince you that there's more to this world than what you can experience through your senses.

Taylor, Harold, *Sent To Heal, A Handbook on Christian Healing*, 1993, Ringwood, Victoria,

Published by The Order Of St Luke The Physician.

Amid the welter of different interpretations and methods, this handbook steers a course which is both biblical and balanced in its treatment of man of the issues involved in the healing ministry today. Designed as a handbook for members of the Order of St. Luke, it will be of significant help to all interested and involved in this ministry.

Wagner, Peter, C., *How to Have A Healing Ministry without making your church sick*. 1988,

California: Regal Books.

As Dr. Wagner analyses how the conservative evangelical churches are finding a new vitality of faith, he describes how, from being vehemently anti-charismatic, he has come to recognise the value of charismatic ministry and ultimately to exercise a significant healing gift himself, though without joining a charismatic church. He deals in detail with power evangelism, demons at home and abroad, living the lifestyle of the Kingdom and the exercise of the healing ministry.

Wigglesworth, Smith, *Greater Works, Experiencing God's power*, 1999, New Kensington, PA:

Whitaker House.

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These words capsulize the life and ministry of Smith Wigglesworth. Because of the faithful obedience of one man, thousands were saved, physical healings were witnessed, and lives were changed forever.

Wimber, John and Springer, Kevin, *Power Healing*, 1986, UK: Hodder and Stoughton.

Healing is high on the agenda in many churches in the eighties. John Wimber tackles this controversial topic by constructing a practical theology of healing. Power healing is structured around his personal testimony from his calling to a healing ministry, the between years during which no-one was healed, to his current international ministry.

Woodworth-Etter, Maria, *Signs And Wonders*, This printing 1997, New Kensington, PA:

Whitaker House.

Maria Woodworth-Etter's ministry is often called the most powerful of the modern era. As God used this yielded vessel, many dramatic healings of the most incurably sick occurred. Broken bones were instantly mended, the lame walked, demons were cast out, and even the dead were raised to life.

http://www.jesustodayministries.com/be_filled_today/myth_cessation_gifts_of_holy_spirit_ceased_when_canon_scripture_completed_article.htm

This one of the best articles that provides a Bible-based examination of Cessationism.

The Healing Ministry – Then And Now