

# The Ministry of Healing

An Introductory Manual

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## Preface

I have had the privilege of being involved in healing ministry for many years. For more than ten years in my parish of Barming, Kent, in south-east England, we held a monthly Sunday evening Service of Prayer for Healing in our mission church and I would also, if requested, minister to people in their homes, often taking an assistant with me. For my last eighteen months in Rochester Diocese I served as Chairman of the newly formed Diocesan Council of Health and Healing, which had among its members several clergy, the Medical Director and Chaplain of Burrswood Healing Centre, various lay people qualified in different aspects of medicine, and an osteopath. It was a stimulating experience and, after I left to come overseas, they organized healing services and ran seminars all over the diocese.

About six months after arriving in the Philippines I gave a public lecture at St. Andrew's Seminary on 'The Healing Ministry in the Early Church and Today' (my Ph.D. thesis having been on Healing in the Early Church – my book under that title being published by Paternoster Press in 2009). Prime Bishop Soliba was interested and said, "Why should healing ministry be left to nuns and Pentecostals!" He encouraged me to take seminars and lead healing services in all the dioceses of the ECP, which I have been glad to do. It was also arranged for me to teach the Cure of Souls course for 4<sup>th</sup> Years at St. Andrew's Seminary, in which training on the healing ministry could be included. This I have now done for a number of years.

My early visits to dioceses entailed taking several sheets of paper for handouts. Now it is much better to have everything together in this little manual. The main published materials upon which I have drawn are listed in the bibliography.

This manual may be used for a **course of instruction introducing the Healing Ministry to a parish**. Discussion questions are provided towards the end of each chapter to facilitate this.

Some parish clergy are now practising a ministry of healing. I hope this manual may encourage more to do so. There is no magic formula. We must just ask God to fill us with his Spirit to bring relief to those in need. We are not in competition with the medical profession but complement its work, for God is the author of all genuine healing.

In Appendix A I have included the adapted Burrswood non-eucharistic order of service we used in Barming. It is specifically focused on healing, but the liturgy is not heavy. We found it very satisfactory. You would, I think, need to ask the permission of your diocesan bishop before using it. You could also to obtain from St. Andrew's Seminary an order of service of anointing ('Liturgy of Healing and Holy Communion') which has been used in SATS chapel on the first Thursday of the month for some years now and appears much appreciated.

In Appendix B I have placed the simple publicity sheet supplied in the report *A Time to Heal*, slightly adapted. In a small space it very aptly describes what the healing ministry is all about. You may like to photocopy it and use it – or translate it into your local dialect – to give initial information about the healing ministry to all the members of your church and beyond.

In closing I would like to acknowledge the valuable help of Bishop Yamoyam (now deceased) in sharing with me in a number of seminars and providing the information in this manual on exorcism, which I know about theoretically but he has practised! I wish also to record the gratitude of many in the ECP to the Rev. John & Christine Huggett who, in February 2011, crossed the world to share with us from their 30 years of experience of healing ministry in England. They travelled to all our dioceses conducting seminars and healing services.

A.D-F.  
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## Contents

1. Some Preliminaries	4
What is man? What causes sickness?	
What is health? What is a miracle?	
2. The Healing Ministry of Jesus	8
3. Christian Healing through the Ages	13
4. A Biblical and Practical Approach to the Healing Ministry Today	21
5. Developing the Healing Ministry in the Parish	29
6. Other Channels of Healing	33
7. Why Are Not All Healed?	35
Select Bibliography	41
Appendices:	
A - A Service of Prayer for Healing (non-eucharistic)	
B – Pew Leaflet advertising the Ministry of Healing	

## Some Preliminaries

### (1) What is Man?

Man is *nothing but*

Fat enough for seven bars of soap

Iron enough for one medium sized nail

Sugar enough for seven cups of tea

Lime enough to whitewash one chicken coop

Phosphorous enough to tip 2,200 matches

Magnesium enough for one dose of salts

Potash enough to explode one toy crane

Sulphur enough to rid one dog of fleas

(C. E. M. Joad, philosopher)

*Do you agree with this statement? Why/why not?*

Many of the ancient Greek philosophers viewed the human being as a duality, a material body with an immaterial soul. All agreed the soul was the life principle, i.e. it brought life to the body. The **Pythagoreans** (6<sup>th</sup> C BC) believed it was a divine spark trapped in a prison of matter from which it was only freed at death. **Socrates** (469-399BC) introduced the idea that the soul is the moral and intellectual personality. His pupil **Plato** (c.429-347BC) accepted both these views and analyzed the soul as consisting of three parts: a rational mind, noble emotions such as courage, and base appetites. Matter he thought inferior to the spiritual realm, even downright evil.

In contrast, the ancient Hebrews saw the human body as God's good creation into which he had breathed life (Gen.2:7). While they used the terms 'soul' and 'heart' of a person's intelligence and emotions they did not think of them as separable from the body. A human being they saw as a unified, living entity. When a person died only his ghost persisted in the shadowy region Sheol, 'the Pit' – not a pleasant prospect

- The Kingdom of God is creation healed. (Hans Kung)
- Reconciliation is the most radical form of healing.  
(Michael Buckley)
- The very name of Jesus, Saviour, speaks of growth and enlargement as a process whereby a power is unleashed that brings the life of individuals, or society, back into a new spaciousness in which all the cells, or members, are released and delivered to perform their full and purposeful function. (Donald Coggan)

*In groups discuss which of these statements you find the most helpful and why.*

### (4) What is a 'miracle'?

'Miracle' comes from the Latin *mirari* 'to wonder'. A miracle then is something that makes people wonder, it inspires awe. A Greek word in the Acts of the Apostles, *teras*, has this meaning (2:43, 6:8), but the more common words for Christ's miracles in the gospels are *dunamis* ('(act of) power' – e.g. Mt. 11:20-1), *semeion* ('sign', pointing to who Jesus is – e.g. Jn. 2:11), and *ergon* ('work' – e.g. Jn. 14:11-12).

With the upsurge of our modern scientific era in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the discovery of 'laws of nature' (such as gravity) by Sir Isaac Newton and others, people came to believe that everything in this material world is controlled by natural laws, and therefore miracles are impossible. But science progresses and today scientists do not talk of events as governed by unbreakable laws, so much as being statistically probable. So, special actions by a personal God cannot be ruled out. Parker *et al* express the situation well:

God has a delicate balance to maintain, if He is to see His purposes worked out. If He intervenes too much, He will rob us of the power to choose what we do with our lives. If He never intervenes at all, He has abandoned us to the powers at work in a fallen creation.

(*In Search of Wholeness*, p.27)

(Ps.88:3-6)! Significant life beyond the grave was inconceivable without the resurrection of the body (Is.26:19, Dan.12:2-3).

The Hebrews teach us then that we are an integrated whole and, in this life, we should value and care for our bodies. With the Greeks, however, we may feel we are not identical with our bodies and it is the immaterial part of us that will survive death – in a recognizable form, a ‘spiritual body’ (1 Cor.15:44).

## (2) What causes sickness?

In the ancient world, whilst many peoples made a connection between **sin** and sickness, it was pre-eminently in ancient Israel that sickness was viewed as divine punishment for sin. God had brought sickness on the Egyptians because of their evil. He would preserve the Israelites in good health so long as they kept their covenant with him, obeying his laws. Otherwise they too would become sick. (Lev.26:14-16, Dt.28:15, 21-22, 27-28)

Influenced by Persia and other countries in the Middle East the Jewish understanding of **evil spirits** (‘demons’) developed greatly. The book of Enoch, written in the period between the Old and New Testaments, expands the story in Gen.6:1-4, interpreting ‘the sons of God’ as angels, who had been sent to watch over mankind, but who had fallen in love with beautiful women and, through their illicit intercourse with them, produced giants, whose souls are the demons which afflict and oppress mankind. The book of Jubilees speaks of evil spirits being allowed by God to punish wicked men. Thus sickness could be seen as caused by them.

Belief in **natural causes** of sickness: climate change, insanitary conditions, germs etc was slower to develop. Modern medical science tends to see all sickness as the result of natural causes, though it will allow that there are some ‘psychosomatic’ illnesses - physical ills caused by a person’s mental attitudes. But,

whilst recognizing the enormous benefits of medical science today, we need not be intimidated into denying that sometimes sin, or even the presence of evil spirits, may be contributing to a person’s ill-health.

## (3) What is health?

*What do you think health is? Please discuss.*

Health has been defined as: ‘A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.’ (World Health Organization)

It involves not just our bodies but also our relationships with other people and the environment and, we must add, with God, for he gives a depth and dimension to life without which it is a pallid and meaningless existence (Ps.16:11, Jn.10:10). In Jn.14:27 Jesus bequeaths to his disciples his ‘peace’. This is not just an absence of conflict, it is based on the Hebrew *shalom*, meaning ‘blessing’, ‘wholeness’.

*Divide into groups of not more than 8 people and, by discussion, draw up two lists of items: one of ‘What makes us healthy’, the other of ‘What makes us unhealthy’. Share in a plenary session.*

## Healing

The Acorn workbook *Growing a Healing Ministry* brings together the following statements:

- Christian healing is Jesus Christ meeting you at your point of need. (Morris Maddocks)
- I don’t care if I never see another physical healing as long as people keep coming to Jesus Christ...That’s the greatest thing. (Kathryn Kuhlman)

- How do you think people with disabilities feel about the healing ministry? (If you have one in your group let that person answer this first. Note: it is common now to refer to such a person not as ‘disabled’ but ‘differently abled’.)

*The exercise is to show that healing ministry should be respectful, inclusive, communal and holistic.*

### **Skepticism about the Gospel Miracle Stories**

The scientific era’s skepticism about miracles (ch. 1, section 5 above) followed through into New Testament scholarship, expressed perhaps most notably in the work of Rudolf Bultmann in his book *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (in German, 1921) and later article ‘The New Testament and Mythology’ (in German, 1941).

That Jesus performed miracles cannot seriously be doubted. Even a statement of the hostile Jewish rabbis in the Babylonian Talmud indirectly confirms this when it says Yeshu, who was killed on Passover eve, ‘practised sorcery and enticed and led Israel astray’ (b.*Sanhedrin* 43a). Clearly he performed impressive ‘feats’ and convinced many.

Moreover, Luke starts his gospel with a declaration of the care he has taken to investigate and to record accurately what Jesus had said and done (Lk.1:1-4). He and Matthew sometimes abbreviate Mark’s stories and improve their literary style, but the fact that they do not mangle and change the substance of his stories show that they believe he was telling what happened and not just passing on his own ideas.

The Scandinavian scholar Birger Gerhardsson in his *Memory and Manuscript* (1961) tells of the careful teaching methods the

## **The Healing Ministry of Jesus**

A. E. Harvey in his 1980 Bampton Lectures (published as *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (1982)) pointed out how few healings by named individuals are mentioned in the historical records for the period 200BC – AD200. Indeed we can say with confidence that there was no-one in the ancient world whose healing ministry was remotely comparable to that of Jesus Christ.

Twenty-two stories in the gospels (omitting parallel accounts) describe in some detail his raising the dead (3 times), exorcising (4 times), healing blindness (3 times), paralysis (twice), leprosy (twice), fever, a withered hand, hemorrhage, deafness and speech impediment, a bent back, dropsy, a detached ear, and someone nearing death (once each). In addition, the gospel writers refer in summaries to many more of his exorcisms and healings. In the stories we have Jesus clearly puts people’s needs above legal requirements:

- five times he heals on the Sabbath, though Jewish oral law forbade healing then unless someone’s life was in danger;
- he shows no fear of ritual contamination – from lepers, hemorrhage or dead bodies.

He regularly tries to avoid publicity (Mk.1:44, 5:43, 7:36 etc). He always performs his healings free of charge, and he instructs his disciples to do the same (Mt.10:8). He twice specifically connects the sickness with sin (Mk.2:5, Jn.5:14) but clearly does not attribute all sickness to sin (Jn.9:3). He often speaks of faith as leading to a person’s healing (Mk.5:24, 10:52, contrast 6:5-6), and sometimes calls forth faith from a sick person by commands to do what seems impossible (Mk.2:11, 3:5). With healings his

methods are simple: **commands**, **touch** (Mk.1:41, 6:5) and the use of his **spittle** (Mk.7:33, 8:23, Jn.9:6), but his only recorded prayer is one of thanksgiving that God has heard him (Jn.11:41-42).

Noteworthy features of the exorcism stories are: Jesus' recognition by the evil spirits and their fear of him (Mk.1:24, 5:7, Lk.4:41), his **conversation** with the spirits, including asking their **name** (Mk.5:9-12), and his **commands** to leave the possessed person permanently (Mk.9:25). Departure of the spirits is very obvious, and is accompanied by such phenomena as shouting and convulsions (Mk.1:26, 9:26). In each of the raisings, the dead person has recently died, and the deaths appear to have been premature. His method is to **command** the dead person to rise – with immediate effect (Mk.5:41-42, Lk.7:14-15, Jn.11:43-44).

What was the purpose of Jesus' healing miracles?

- To demonstrate the arrival of the kingdom of God (Lk.11:20/Mt.12:28).
- To show that he was the promised Messiah (Mt.11:2-6/Lk.7:18-23).
- To express God's compassionate love for sufferers (Mt.9:36, 14:14 etc).

\* \* \* \*

An exercise for four groups (from the Acorn manual *Growing a Healing Ministry*):

Group 1: read Luke 8:43-8. Bear in mind the woman was, according to Levitical law, unclean (Lev.15:7, 25-30). She could not touch anyone nor enter a synagogue nor take part in worship.

- What do you notice about Jesus' attitude to her?
- What is the attitude of others in the story to her?
- Have you had any experience where you have received the ministry of healing, but feel you have not been respected?
- How would you convey an attitude of respect to the person for whom you are praying?

Group 2: read Luke 17:11-14. While the story does not directly involve medical care, the priests were regarded as the medical experts of the day in matters relating to leprosy.

- Why do you think Jesus asked the lepers to show themselves to the priests?
- In your experience, what is the attitude of those who work in the healthcare professions to healing prayer?
- Why do you think some people say it is 'faithless' to use medical help as well as prayer for healing?
- How would you encourage a healing ministry in your church that fostered an inclusive approach that made use of resources from other reliable medical avenues?

Group 3: read Luke 10:1-9. Consider the following questions:

- Do you think Jesus intended *all* his disciples to preach good news and heal the sick, or just those who were particularly good at it?
- What was the advantage of sending the disciples out in pairs?
- What is the advantage of many people being involved in the healing ministry in your church, rather than just one or two 'experts'?
- How can the healing ministry become a natural part of your church community that is a source of healing for your local community?

Group 4: read Matthew 9:2-7. Consider the following questions:

- Why do you think Jesus addressed this man's unforgiven sin, rather than his paralysis?
- Do you think physical illness can sometimes be due to an emotional or spiritual cause?
- If people who come for healing of a physical problem, are not cured but go away saying they were given peace in their hearts and feel much comforted, would you say they have received a healing?



In another writing he holds up as a warning the case of a Christian woman who had been possessed by a demon after venturing onto its territory – a pagan theater! (*Shows* 26.1-2)

The Church Fathers make much of the fact that the spirits Christians drive out of people claim to be the very gods the pagans worship. This showed the superiority of Christ over these other gods. By the mid-third century the minor clerical office of exorcist had appeared and become widespread in the Church.

The references to healings are less frequent, probably because they were less spectacular. Most impressive are the statements of Irenaeus of Lyons in his work *Against the Heresies* (c.AD 180). In a series of passages he tells of the Christian healing ministry, contrasting it with the despicable magical practices of the Gnostic heretics. In one he declares that the blind, the deaf, the weak, the lame and the paralyzed have been cured and even the dead raised. He goes on to point to these contemporary miracles as confirmation that Jesus himself had performed miracles:

Those who are in truth his disciples, receiving grace from him, do in his name perform (miracles) so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from him. For some do certainly and truly drive out demons, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe (in Christ) and join themselves to the Church ... Others... heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up and remained among us for many years. And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, throughout the whole world, has received from God in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practising deception upon any, nor taking any reward from them. For as she has received freely from God, freely does she minister. (*Ag. Heresies* 2.32.4)

Healing was one of the gifts of the Spirit new converts could ask for at the time of their baptism. By the mid-third century,

rabbis used to get their disciples to memorize their teachings accurately. He points out that Jesus was viewed by many as a rabbi and would no doubt have similarly sought the accurate transmission of his teaching and acts, and he finds some evidence of this by looking carefully at the gospels.

The scholarly studies of R. Latourelle, *The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles* (in French, 1986) and G. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: a Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (1993), and *Jesus the Miracle Worker* (1999) accept the historical value of the vast majority of Jesus' miracle stories, whilst allowing that effects of the initial period of oral transmission of the stories and the editorial work of the gospel writers are to be seen chiefly in the framework of the stories.

## Christian Healing through the Ages

The Church's approach to healing down the centuries may be roughly divided into three eras:

1. An age of **faith** – the Early Church
2. An age of **superstition** – the Church in the Dark and Middle Ages
3. An age of **skepticism** – from the Reformation to the 20<sup>th</sup> century

This is an oversimplification, and the ages are not sharply divided, but it gives us a useful overall picture.

### (1) An Age of Faith

In this early period the Church generally kept to the example and teaching of Christ in the matter of healing. The miracles of the Acts of the Apostles closely reflect Christ's own miracles in the gospels, except that healing is normally performed in the **name of Jesus** and, sometimes at least, there is **prayer** before the healing (9:40). Like their Teacher the apostles **command** the sick and the dead to rise and demons to depart. Like him they employ the **laying on of hands**. As with Jesus, it appears, their miracles are secondary to their preaching, bearing witness to its truth, and they are free of charge.

The New Testament epistles contain surprisingly few references to healing, but those there are, are very significant. St. Paul says of his own ministry that he performed miracles everywhere he went (Rom.15:18-19), and that they were 'the signs of a true apostle' (2 Cor.12:12). The latter phrase confirms the impression from Acts that miracles were particularly characteristic

of the apostles, though clearly they were not confined to them. In Acts miracles are also attributed to Stephen (6:8), Philip the 'deacon' (8:6-7) and Ananias (9:17-18). In 1 Corinthians 12 we hear of the Holy Spirit's 'gifts of healings', 'workings of miracles' and 'discernment of spirits', gifts clearly to laity as well as the Church leaders (vv.9-10, 28-30).

In the very practical epistle of James it is interesting to see a ministry of healing which involves prayer and faith, but also confession of sins and anointing with oil in the name of the Lord Jesus, it seems (5:13-16). The sick are to be brought to the church leaders for this ministry.

Not every case of dis-ease is healed for St. Paul pleads three times to have a 'thorn in the flesh' removed and was told, "My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor.12:7-10). He had been granted the privilege of visiting higher worlds and the 'thorn' was to stop him from being too proud.

There is clear evidence that the Apostolic Church's powerful ministry of exorcism in the name of Christ continued in the centuries that followed. It seems that Christians in fact soon became the predominant exorcists of the Roman Empire. The North African Church Father Tertullian drives this point home with glee in his famous defence of Christianity (*Apology*, AD 197), addressed to the magistrates of the Empire, when he asks them to imagine the dire effects of Christians' withholding their services as exorcists:

Who would rescue you from those secret enemies that everywhere lay waste your minds and your bodily health? I mean, from the assault of demons, whom we drive out of you without reward, without pay. Why, this alone would have sufficed to avenge us – to leave you open and exposed to unclean spirits with immediate possession. (*Apol.* 37.9)

They were, to use a space age metaphor, a sort of booster rocket to get the Church into orbit but could drop away after achieving that task. Luther thought the 'greater works' that Jesus promised his disciples would do (Jn.14:12) were teaching, converting and saving men spiritually. He had doubted the authenticity and inspiration of the epistle of James because it contradicted his key doctrine 'justification by faith' but, in his last year, he composed a healing liturgy based on Jas.5:14-16. When later Protestant missions were established, the founding of hospitals and clinics, alongside churches and schools, was usually part of their strategy.

The rise of our modern scientific age in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries led to the pervasive view that the world is entirely governed by laws of nature, and that deviations from the normal pattern of things, in the form of miracles, are impossible. As we have seen in chapter 1, scientists today are far less dogmatic about this, but the old way of thinking persists in many minds, particularly in the Western world.

The absence of an authentic Church healing ministry led to the rise of such sects as Christian Science. Its founder Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) denied the reality of evil and sickness. Their appearance was to be destroyed by a sick person's becoming aware of God's power and love, certainly not by medical treatment.

Even in an age of skepticism various places have also become associated with healing miracles. A very notable one is Lourdes in the French Pyrenees where, in 1858, a 14-year-old peasant girl Bernadette Soubirous claimed visions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Many sick are taken there today, some in ambulances, and numerous verified healings are claimed.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed an increasing revival of the Church's healing ministry. With the rise of Pentecostalism in America in 1900 and Neopentecostalism (later known as the Charismatic movement) within the mainline churches in the 1960s,

those possessing this gift were, it appears, few in number. From the fourth century there are reports that some of the monks still had such gifts, amongst the most notable being St. Antony of Egypt (c.251-356) and St. Martin of Tours (d. 397), patron saint of France.

The use of oil for healing is referred to on one occasion by Tertullian but also in a number of Church Orders (manuals of discipline and guidance in Church practices). In the *Apostolic Tradition* (c.215, Rome) a prayer is provided with which the bishop may consecrate oil offered along with the bread and wine at the eucharist:

O God, sanctifier of this oil, as you give health to those who are anointed and receive that with which you anointed kings, priests and prophets, so may it give strength to all those who taste it, and health to all those who are anointed with it. (AT 5)

Not until the 9<sup>th</sup> century had this sacramental rite lost its original purpose of healing and become a rite for preparing people for a 'good death'.

Another avenue of healing in the Church was baptism. We have clear evidence of this in some of the *Odes of Solomon*, the earliest collection of Christian hymns, it seems, dating from c.AD 100, a product of the Syrian church. Candidates were, through that sacrament, freed not only from sin but also from sickness. Baptismal healing continues to be attested throughout the period of the Early Church. In the Post-Nicene Church (after 325) there is also evidence of healing through the eucharist, though this is less frequent.

Before Constantine became Roman emperor in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century the Church was characterized by martyrdom. All who had given their lives for the faith were greatly revered. By the 5<sup>th</sup> century the cult of the martyrs was widely organized. Huge

shrines were built around their tombs in the cemeteries and became centers of pilgrimage. It became almost obligatory for a new church to contain some relic of a martyr within its walls. The presence of such a relic was believed to make available to worshippers there the powerful prayers of that martyr. Undoubtedly many healings and exorcisms did occur from some contact with martyrs' remains. Augustine sought to explain this phenomenon by referring to the faith of the martyr which took him to his death. But, while living healers could point out to those who came to them the need for repentance and amendment of life and speak of the wholeness Christ came to bring, the relics of martyrs were but mute witnesses and could lead to awe little different from that associated with magic. Whilst the Church Fathers encouraged the cult of the martyrs, they strongly condemned a practice derived directly from magic – the wearing by Church members of amulets (lucky charms) to ward off evil spirits and sicknesses, a practice which nevertheless appears to have become widespread.

## (2) **An Age of Superstition**

The expectation of healing at the shrines of the martyrs, and no doubt also the use of amulets, continued in the Dark Ages that followed the fall of the western Roman Empire (late 5<sup>th</sup> century), and the Middle Ages (11<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries). Relics of the saints and anything conceivably associated with them, such as the chains of St. Paul, the scissors that clipped the hair of St. John and, most important of all, splinters of the cross of Christ, were viewed as of inestimable value, channels through which the power of the unseen world was accessible. Fantastic stories were told of healings, but their factual content is dubious. The emphasis on healing within monasteries diminished.

Gregory the Great, pope during 590-604 when the Western Empire had long since fallen and the Lombards had settled in northern Italy, saw illness as one more way in which God

corrects his people. In his influential *Book of Pastoral Rule* he wrote:

The sick are to be admonished that they feel themselves to be sons of God in that the scourge of discipline chastises them. (II.13)

He saw it as a means of identifying with the sufferings of Christ. In the disintegrated world of that time comfort in life could hardly be expected. The vital thing was to ensure a good existence after death. Hence the growing use of unction with this purpose. Sickness was also viewed as a sign of God's wrath on human sin, and thus became seen as a valuable indicator of the state of one's soul. Bearing sickness patiently was then a means of purging the sin.

From as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century the Church had established hospitals and infirmaries, where the sick and the old were nursed and treated with herbal remedies. The monasteries created herb gardens. But in the 12<sup>th</sup> century monks, who had studied medicine and performed some surgery to make money, were forbidden to do so. Henceforth medicine became a lay affair.

The greatest theologian of the Middle Ages, St. Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-74) saw Christ's miracles as intended to prove his teaching and his divinity. Though Aquinas recognized that there were exorcisms and healings in his day he thought forgiveness of sins much more important than healing of the body. His Aristotelian emphasis on reason left, it seems, little or no place for direct experience of the work of the Holy Spirit in healing.

## (3) **An Age of Skepticism**

The 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformers of the Church accepted the view expressed earlier by John Chrysostom (c.347-407) in the east and western Medieval thinkers that miracles were to enhance the *apostolic* preaching of the Gospel and not really needed later.

cause of the malady (Mk.2:5, Jn.5:14). It is sensible then to provide an opportunity for confession before praying for any healing (Jas.5:16, 1 Jn.1:9). A possible approach is to allow a little time for silent confession and then say together a BCP form of confession followed by absolution substituting 'us' and 'our' for 'you' and 'your'.

## Methods

### Prayer (and fasting)

Jesus made prayer a priority (Mk1:35, 6:46...). Peter prayed before raising Dorcas (Acts 9:40) and the apostles generally were characterized by prayer (Ac.6:4, Eph.1:16...). In Jn.14:12-14 Jesus urges the disciples to pray direct to the Father in his name, and in that context says that, believing in him, they will do even greater miracles than his. In James 5:14-16 prayer is mentioned three times. It is vital then that we should spend time in prayer before any ministry of healing. (It is good if all who will be ministering at a healing service, clergy and lay, meet together for a while beforehand to pray for what lies ahead.) A wider prayer group supporting healing work will always be valuable. Prayer for a sick person should, if possible, be *specific* (cf. Mk.10:51) though one will usually also need to pray more generally. In prayer ministry ask each person whether a general prayer or prayer for something specific is wanted. *Fasting* shows our earnestness and can bring us closer to God (cf. Joel 2:12, 15), though one should not make oneself faint as that will produce an extra casualty! It is perhaps good to miss a meal before a particularly challenging assignment and never good to have a big meal just before a healing service.

Prayer ministry may need to be repeated a number of times. Francis MacNutt in his book *The Power to Heal* speaks of the value of 'soaking prayer' for particularly serious cases. This is prayer for hours on end by a number of people, working in relays if necessary.

came a new emphasis on the Holy Spirit and his supernatural gifts, including healing. The Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England rediscovered the original intention of sacramental anointing and, in 1915, founded the Guild of St. Raphael. Other organizations have followed. In England various healing homes have been established, most notably Burrswood founded by Dorothy Kerin who received a dramatic deathbed healing 1912. Today it has both a chaplain and a medical superintendent and offers both prayer ministry for healing and medical care.

Many important books have been written, including those by the charismatic American Roman Catholic priest Francis MacNutt and, in England, Bishop Morris Maddocks, sometime Adviser on Healing Ministry to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. The Acorn Trust, established to support his ministry, continues to provide speakers and publications to promote the healing ministry.

In 1998 the House of Bishops of General Synod of the Church of England commissioned a review of the ministry of healing. The outcome was the report *A Time to Heal* (2000), which recommended the appointment of an adviser on healing, with suitable support, in every diocese of the Church of England. This recommendation is now being implemented. The Report's emphasis is on bringing together many kinds of authentic spiritual and medical resources.

No doubt the 21<sup>st</sup> century will witness many new developments.

*To which of the three ages – the age of faith, the age of superstition, and the age of skepticism – would you say your own local church and community belong? How might you encourage them to move forward?*

## A Biblical and Practical Approach to Healing Ministry Today

### A Preliminary Point

The gospel stories tell of Jesus' healing a wide range of illnesses, both physical and 'mental'. It is never reported that he turned any sick person away. We may surely then conclude that potentially all forms of sickness may respond to his healing power. (Demonic affliction will usually best be referred to a specialist though, and we are unlikely to be called upon to raise the dead – whew!)

### **Prerequisites for Healing**

#### The Holy Spirit

It is only after his baptism, when the Holy Spirit came down upon him in the form of a dove that we hear of Jesus performing miracles. It is after Pentecost, when they were empowered by the Holy Spirit, that the apostles' powerful ministry of preaching and healing is evident. We too need to ask the Holy Spirit to work through us in healing.

#### Compassion

As Jesus healed out of a deep compassion for people we need such compassion. Deep caring for the people we serve and wanting to help them must be our primary motive. God loves them, and they are suffering; our role is to bring them into vital contact with him.

### Faith

Our look at the gospel miracles has shown us what a prominent part faith played in them. We ourselves need to trust that, as Jesus so readily healed people then, so God wants to heal people now. And we must encourage sick people today to have faith and be open to God's healing power:

- by reading and reflecting on the healing stories in the gospels and Acts,
- by telling them of more recent healings, such as that of Dorothy Kerin, and local instances if we know of any.

Ask the sick person whether s/he would like you to pray for him/her, and explain about the ministry you offer and that you may bring someone else along to assist you (almost essential when we are ministering to someone of the opposite sex, unless relatives are present). The person's answer 'yes' (like the willingness of someone to come to a healing service in church *and come forward*) is a 'mustard seed' of faith (Mt.17:20) which gives an opening to God's healing power. Tell the person that God expects us to trust him *before* we see the results of prayer ministry. Read Mk.11:24, explaining its context. The person's *relaxing* while you minister and *giving thanks* afterwards to God that he has heard the prayer and is responding in his way and time, even if s/he feels no different at first, are further important ways of exercising faith. (It is good too to have a declaration of faith included in a service of healing.)

#### Confession of Sin

We must consider whether some sin/guilt may be blocking the sick person's relationship with God. Is s/he harbouring deep grudges against anyone? (Mt.6:12, 14-15) Has s/he disobeyed God in some way? While Jesus denied that sin was the root of *all* sickness (Jn.9:1-3), in two miracle stories he indicated it was the

given you authority...over all the power of the enemy” (Lk.10:19). Jesus gave the twelve power and authority over all demons (Lk.9:1). (Cf. “By using my name they will cast out demons” - Mk.16:17.)

2. We have to know some of the symptoms of demonic bondage, i.e. vacant look, trance, extreme strength, strange reactions, heightened sexuality, vocal noises, active/passive resistance, violent reactions, depression, violent temper, seeing demons etc.
3. When possible come with a team of members who possess faith and are of good repute.
4. The main preparations of the team will be prayers and anointing – so that they are protected with the armour of God.
5. It would be invaluable to take one with the gift of discernment to help identify the spirit being dealt with.
6. The one to be delivered needs first to be informed and prepared.
7. Exorcism should be conducted in a safe place and away from the crowd.
8. It is best to have women minister to women and men to men.
9. Deliverance will probably need repeated commanding of the spirit(s) to leave in the name of Jesus Christ, without harming anyone, and to go to Jesus himself. It may involve some preliminary conversation with the spirit(s).
10. Follow-up will be necessary after the deliverance.

(Much of the information here is drawn from *The Shepherd's Staff*, ed. Ralph Mahoney – see bibliography at the end of this manual.)

## **Limits of Healing**

### Old Age

Whether we like it or not we are all aging. As one gets older the body wears out. It is not intended for eternity. (‘This world is not my home, I’m just a-passing through...’) It would be foolish

### Laying on of Hands

Many times in the gospels it is mentioned that Jesus touched the sick (or dead) person regardless of its rendering him ritually ‘unclean’ (Mk.1:31, 41...). The apostles did this too (Ac.9:41, 28:8). Touch is a sign of caring and comfort in our daily life. In healing ministry it carries this significance as well as being a physical channel of healing. In general in ministry, to avoid any charge of indecency, it is best to place one’s hand(s) gently on the needy person’s head or shoulder. Close relatives or friends can perhaps hold a hand.

### Anointing

Oil was widely used as a medicament in the ancient world (cf. the parable of Good Samaritan). In Old Testament times it was used in the ritual for cleansing lepers (Lev.14:15-18). While Jesus is never said to have used it, we hear of it in the mission of the Twelve (Mk.6:13). It may have been particularly used in Jewish circles for it is specified in the procedure laid down for healing in the strongly Jewish Christian epistle of James (Jas.5:14). Anointing here with olive oil in the name of the Lord (presumably Jesus) leads to expectation of healing. (Prayer, confession of sin, and faith are also involved.) The ministry of anointing for healing is usually reserved for clergy but can, with their permission, be performed also by laity. Some employ it routinely with all who ask for prayer ministry, others reserve it for the more serious cases. Where olive oil is not readily available corn, coconut or other more common oils can be used instead. Consecrate a suitable amount before the service in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for use in the ministry of healing. It is common for a priest or other recognized minister to use just one drop to make the sign of the cross on the forehead of the sick person with his right thumb while saying, “I anoint you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit ...”,

“I sign you with the cross, the sign of Jesus Christ our Savior and our Healer...” or some such words.

## **Other Matters**

### Gifts of Healing

Amongst the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church mentioned by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 are ‘gifts of healings’ and ‘workings of miracles’ (vv.9-10). These were not confined to ‘ordained’ leadership (vv.27-30). And so today it has been found that the prayers of certain clergy and laity are particularly used by God for healing. (E.g. J. Cameron Peddie, *The Forgotten Talent*). It is important that such people should be brought into the mainstream of the parish’s ministry of healing.

### Wounded Healers

Sick or handicapped people can sometimes still be effective agents for healing others. They have experienced suffering and may well want to relieve the sufferings of others.

### Healing of the Memories

This is prayer psychotherapy – getting a person to go back to a suppressed painful memory which is causing present problems, relive it, and then pray for God’s power and love to be poured into that memory and heal it. This can bring great release and relief.

### Healing of the Family Tree

Spiritual problems can run down through the generations in a family (cf. Ex.20:5). Grandchildren of a (spirit) medium can themselves suffer in different ways – perhaps see spirits, hear voices etc. K. McAll, in *Healing of the Family Tree*, speaks of

problems caused far into a person’s adult life by a dominating parent and recommends the psychological ‘umbilical cord’ should be cut. He tells of the great benefit found by women suffering guilt after abortions or miscarriages from holding a eucharist at which the fetus is named and committed to God as a real person and healing is asked for the whole situation. When a person exhibited strange symptoms without any obvious cause, he sometimes drew up that person’s family tree looking for abnormalities, such as a suicide or murder. If one was traced he then had a eucharist celebrated at which healing of that situation and the present abnormal behaviour were prayed for, with remarkable results.

### Deliverance Ministry

The methods Jesus employed for exorcism were quite different from those for healing the body. He did not lay his hands on the afflicted person but addressed a word of command to evict the resident demon(s). The phenomenon of spirit possession is quite familiar in South-East Asia. Exorcism had become very *unfamiliar* by the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in England, and distinguishing spirit affliction from psychological states such as hysteria was not easy. One attempted exorcism in the north of England went disastrously wrong and was reported in the media. In 1972 the Bishop of Exeter issued the report *Exorcism*. It recommended every diocesan bishop should appoint an experienced adviser to whom clergy could refer cases they encountered. This principle has generally been followed in the dioceses of the Church of England.

But in cases when it is not possible to call in a ‘specialist’ and we are faced with conducting an exorcism ourselves here are some practical points:

1. We have power over the enemy. Jesus says, “See, I have



- reliability and trustworthiness
- practising members of the church
- willing to accept training and supervision

The parish priest may have to withdraw from the team those who behave unacceptably (e.g. passing round confidential information about people's health).

### **Guidelines for Good Practice**

Confidentiality must be ensured – information about the sick/needly must not be passed on even to one's own family.

Consent: every person should know how s/he will be ministered to – explain about this, say, at the beginning of a service - and express consent.

Follow-up: Adequate provision is necessary (home visits etc), particularly for those who have received deliverance ministry.

Networks for advice, support and referrals: telephone numbers of relevant contacts should be available, perhaps on the church notice board, for emergencies – local doctor, others in caring professions, social services etc.

Non-exploitation: 'Clergy and team members must not exploit emotionally, sexually or financially those receiving healing ministry.' (*A Time to Heal: Handbook*, p.38)

Personal Conduct: 'The way in which clergy and lay team members behave with courtesy and consideration is part of the message of the gospel. First impressions count. It is considerate to dress appropriately and be conscientious about personal hygiene. The distinction between informality and intimacy is

for an elderly person to expect that, through healing ministry, s/he could be restored to the health of a teenager! But nevertheless older people should be encouraged to come for such ministry, praying for God's healing touch generally, for removal of pain, and for inner peace and strength to cope. Prayer ministry for the elderly must work hand in hand with the medical profession.

### God is Sovereign

We can believe, as a general rule, that God wants health and wholeness for us all. We pray for it for others and ourselves. But sometimes sickness persists. There may be some hidden purpose or value in it as in St. Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' (2 Cor.12:7-9). We must recognize that God is sovereign, and we have to 'let God be God' trusting that, though it may not feel like it, he still loves us as he still loved Jesus when he was on the cross. Resentment and bitterness will only make things worse. A woman was in great pain, dying of cancer, and felt God had deserted her. A priest lent her a crucifix and said, "There he is suffering with you". She found great comfort in this and sometime later could say with a smile, "I've found him again."

### An Exercise

*Spend some time discussing any of these sections. Which do you think are the most important? What are the dangers of blaming a person's sickness upon his/her sinfulness or lack of faith?*

## Developing the Healing Ministry in the Parish

### Value

The Healing Ministry in the parish is:

visionary – giving a glimpse of God’s kingdom,

prophetic – it calls us to reconsider our relationship with God, each other and the world, and to seek forgiveness and a new start in our lives,

dynamic – through it Jesus meets with us.

### Introducing the Healing Ministry

- Good to have an initial talk by someone who has knowledge and experience of the healing ministry.
- Perhaps use this manual for an introductory course for Vestry members and others interested. Introductory literature should be made available for all church members (e.g. leaflet in Appendix B at the end of this manual).
- The parish priest should establish a healing team from those with special interest in the matter, any with a ‘gift of healing’, and qualified health professionals in the parish.
- He should set up a prayer group to support the healing ministry and pray for the sick of the parish (can use an existing prayer group). All church members should be encouraged to pray for the sick and the parish’s healing ministry.
- A decision has to be made whether to hold regular, monthly

or quarterly, healing services (try *one* for a start), and whether they should be eucharistic or non-eucharistic – the former places them at the center of church life, but the latter allows a more specific focus on healing and more time for ministry. In the regular Sunday eucharist the time for healing ministry could be, say, at the end of the intercessions, or after the blessing; the latter allowing those who do not wish to be involved to leave the church building. A non-eucharistic service could be held at, say, 4pm or 6pm on a Sunday or on a weekday. A well-tried order for such a service is to be found in Appendix A of this manual. The bishop’s permission would, I think, be needed before using it.

Note: visiting speakers from time to time keep interest in healing fresh – one can draw on people with experience from other denominations as well as Episcopalians, and it is helpful sometimes for those who have experienced healing to give their testimonies.

### The Healing Team

This needs to be a group of people concerned about healing who are willing to pray together with faith, hope and love, seeking God’s will. Here lay people can assist the priest.

#### Personal qualities needed:

- patience and maturity to absorb disappointments and hurts that can come through trying to help others
- humility – acknowledgement that healing comes from Jesus Christ; also willingness to refer those in need to others with specialist knowledge if necessary
- compassion, empathy and discernment
- ability to listen – to the one seeking help, to others on the team, and to God

## Why Are Not All Healed?

In his book *The Problem of Pain* C. S. Lewis says that God whispers to us in our pleasures, but shouts in our pain. He calls pain ‘the megaphone of God’. It makes us very aware of wrong actions and leads us to rely more on God. Nevertheless, as Jesus spent so much of his time healing pain and ill health, Francis Macnutt is surely justified in laying down as a general principle:

God’s normative will is that people will be healed unless there is some countervailing reason. *(Healing, new ed., p.256)*

But, from his own ministry, he has discovered eleven reasons why people are not healed. I have taken the liberty of amplifying and renaming some of these and adding a twelfth reason from Parker *et al (In Search of Wholeness)*:

### 1. Lack of faith

This is indeed probably the greatest obstacle: limited faith either in the sick person or in the minister of healing. But one can get knotted up about whether one has enough faith or not, and how to increase it, and this only makes matters worse. The best approach is simply to relax, to express our need to God in prayer and leave it to him, in his love and power, to act as he sees best.

### 2. ‘Desirable’ suffering

There has been a certain tradition, particularly in Roman Catholicism, of desiring to share in Christ’s ‘redemptive’ suffering for the benefit of others (cf. Col.1:24). Those thinking

important. Informality can put people at ease, intimacy can lead to over familiarity and unnecessary risks.’ *(T. to H.H. p.39)*

Prayer: When praying for people by name in public it is pastorally desirable to ask their permission first.

Public statements: Be careful when dealing with the media. Nothing personal should be revealed without the permission of the person concerned. Accuracy is most important.

Reviews: Regular reviews of the way the healing ministry is being carried out are desirable.

Safety: People should not stop taking prescribed medication without first consulting their doctor.

Situations to avoid: Ministering to the opposite sex, children and adolescents on one’s own.

Support networks: All involved in giving healing ministry need to have someone experienced they can confide in from time to time.

Timing: ‘Reasonable time limits on healing sessions and services should be set...prayer for individuals in a healing service should not become an opportunity for counselling (which should be done at an agreed time later).’ *(T. to H.H., p.48)*

\* \* \* \*

*Discuss the above matters in relation to your parish.*

## Other Channels of Healing

### (1) Scientific Medicine

The general Medical Service of doctors, nurses and hospitals, both government and private, aim to provide treatment for sickness in its varied forms based on established scientific procedures and medications. It aims to operate within a framework of rigorous hygiene. Its personnel have a long and carefully monitored training. One ignores it at one's own peril. The physician and the pharmacist are also God's agents of healing (see Ecclesiasticus 38 in the Apocrypha).

But scientific medicine tends to treat the human being as a machine with malfunctioning parts needing to be repaired or regulated. Its knowledge is limited so still there is an element of trial and error in its treatments, and it relies on the body's natural healing properties to bring recovery. It does not deal with a person's social and spiritual dimensions. Healing ministry embraces the *whole* person. Along with medical treatment, and perhaps an element of counselling, it aims for healing at all levels. In general it is the height of folly to stop taking prescribed medication after prayer ministry, unless this course of action is confirmed by one's doctor.

### (2) Alternative and Complementary Therapies

Besides mainline medicine, people resort to a considerable number of alternative and complementary therapies. Some are very old, some have only come into prominence in the last few decades. They include:

- Acupuncture ● aromatherapy ● homeopathy
- hypnotherapy ● massage ● native healers
- osteopathy ● reflexology ● yoga

People considering a particular therapy need to enquire carefully about its principles, sources of healing, and spiritual values. Are these compatible with Christianity? Nevertheless, if the therapy is more concerned with issues of health care than spiritual care, in assessing it, points out John Huggett in his book *Breath of Life* (p.144), we should probably look more closely at the *nature* of the therapy itself than its *origin*. The beginnings of scientific medicine were, after all, within the context of ancient Greek religion.

Ask the particular therapist you approach what his/her credentials are and to whom s/he is accountable? It would be valuable to have more independent and professional scientific research done on the safety and effectiveness of the various therapies.

Discussion point : *Why do people seek these therapies?*

## 12. Not wanting to get well

Jesus asked the man who had been waiting for healing 38 years at the Pool of Bethesda whether he *wanted* to get well (Jn.5:6). There are some cases in which a sick person prefers to remain unwell as s/he has become accustomed to the lifestyle that goes with it. Perhaps the person does not wish to lose certain privileges it confers – being the center of attention, having others waiting on them etc.

\* \* \* \*

*What factors, do you think, most commonly hold back healing?*

\* \* \* \*

Bishop Maddocks answers the question, “What if nothing happens after prayer?” by saying he firmly believes that *all* prayer is answered, but that God frequently answers in ways we do not expect – e.g. regarding St. Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh’ (2 Cor.12:7-10).

Sometimes, when we have asked for healing, we have just been thinking of *our needs and expectations*. We need rather to focus on God, his glory, his will (cf.1 Jn.5:14).

There may come a time, he thinks, when we should cease asking for a person to be *cured*, but still pray they be *healed*. People dying still need prayers for wholeness and peace as they pass over to the next world.

*(Twenty Questions about Healing, chs.6, 12, 16)*

The charismatic Anglican priest Colin Urquhart points to the need for the Holy Spirit’s power and gifts. He says he normally

like that may not want to be healed. But such an approach appears to be based on the dubious view that Christ’s sufferings for us on the cross were inadequate. Then there are those who feel they are *identifying* with Christ’s sufferings by suffering themselves, being privileged to walk the same path as the Savior; but the origin of this attitude lay in sharing his *persecution* (1 Pet.4:13-14) and had no reference to sickness. Macnutt mentions yet a third category of people who, through falling sick, find a door opened for unexpected witness. He cites the case Agnes Sanford who was struck with flu whilst giving talks on healing to some Trappist monks, was moved to a Franciscan Sisters’ hospital, and was then able to talk to the sisters there about healing ministry. But this again was scarcely ‘redemptive’.

## 3. Deserved suffering

Some people feel God has sent them the illness because they deserve it on account of some wrong they have committed. They are depressed and unhappy. One must not pray for their healing against their will, but one can try to show them their view is wrong. An extension of this view is that of certain Filipinos who give themselves to be crucified on Good Friday as a means of paying for their sins. Such a view again runs quite counter to the central Christian teaching that *Christ* died to pay the price of our sins (Jn.1:29, 1 Pet.4:24 etc).

## 4. Sin

Here sin genuinely is the cause of the sickness, although perhaps not recognized as such. This is especially possible where resentment and the refusal to forgive someone are present. Somehow the need to forgive others is vital if we are to receive God’s forgiveness and blessing (Mt.6:12, 14-15).

#### 5. Not praying specifically

Although Jesus was well aware what was wrong with Bartimaeus yet he asked him to express his need of healing from his blindness (Mk.10:51). This suggests there is value in praying *specifically* for our needs rather than just trusting that God knows all. We can in fact pray *both* specifically *and* more generally for a person's overall health. MacNutt says he has found the need to be specific in prayer is particularly important in praying for inner healing (healing of the memories). The painful incident in the past needs to be pinpointed before healing can come. One may need to pray to God to reveal it. He tells the story of how he and a companion prayed for a missionary for whom life always seemed grey and dull, but without success. Then they asked God to show them what was the cause, and the companion had a mental picture of the missionary when she was about ten holding her pet dog which was taken from her and killed 'to put it out of its misery'. Prayer for healing of that memory brought light and color back into the missionary's life.

#### 6. Faulty diagnosis

MacNutt is thinking here of praying for physical healing when inner healing or deliverance is the real need. It is important always for ministers of healing to pray that God would give them discernment as to any deeper problem that lies at the root of the 'presenting problem' (the problem on the surface). If this is not given at least one must ask God in prayer to deal with the *root* of the problem we see.

#### 7. Refusal to see medicine as a way God heals

Sometimes prayer is not effective when medical help could

bring about the cure. James Cameron Peddie, who had a very pronounced gift of healing, tells of an occasion when his ministry proved powerless to relieve his son's pain, so the son was sent to hospital and had his appendix removed, and there was no further trouble (*The Forgotten Talent*, p.86-7).

#### 8. Not using natural means of preserving health

There is no substitute for developing a healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet, adequate sleep and relaxation. Smoking, taking excessive alcohol, etc are abuses of the body and not conducive to good health.

#### 9. Now is not the time

While some healings are instantaneous, more tend to be gradual, and may need repeated ministry. Some take place after a delay. Some may never happen at the physical level. God has his own time-table.

#### 10. A different person needs to be the instrument of healing

Perhaps 'the chemistry' is not good between a certain sick person and the minister of healing (i.e. there is natural friction rather than ease between them), in which case another minister might be better. Some healers seem to be used more in the healing of heart problems, while others of cancers etc. Humility is needed in letting someone else take over.

#### 10. The social environment prevents healing from taking place

We all need to live in a community of love. Hatred and bad relationships at home, school or work tend to cause all kinds of sickness that remain until they are dealt with.

leads sick people to baptism in (being filled with) the Spirit before praying for their healing. He thinks the gifts of the Spirit essential for the minister of healing: gifts of healing, discernment, prophecy, tongues. A lot of failure to see healing is the result, he believes, of not hearing God speaking to us by his Spirit.

*(God's Plan for Your Healing, ch.50)*

Not all agree with this approach but undoubtedly the Holy Spirit is the source of our power (Acts 1:8). Let no-one despair. Any Christian who earnestly wants to serve God and to relieve suffering, can be used effectively in this ministry even though they lack spectacular spiritual gifts.

O Breath of Life, come sweeping through us,  
revive thy Church with life and power.  
O Breath of Life, come, cleanse, renew us,  
and fit thy Church to meet this hour.

(Elizabeth P. Head)

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There follow the two **Appendices**:

A An Order of Service for a Non-Eucharistic Healing Service

B A Sample Pew Leaflet for publicizing the Ministry of Healing

These titles and the page sequence up to this point have been omitted from the pages that follow to allow ease of photocopying. If you wish to make a service booklet from Appendix A: put 2 & 7 on the back of 8 & 1, 6 & 3 on the back of 4 & 5. For Appendix B the order is 4 & 1, and on the back 2 & 3.



# A SERVICE OF PRAYER FOR HEALING

(Non-Eucharistic)

**Burrswood**, The Church of Christ the Healer  
The Dorothy Kerin Trust  
(adapted)



HYMN

THANKSGIVING & PRAYERS

HYMN or “Lead me Lord”

*Solo:* Lead me, Lord,  
lead me in thy righteousness,  
make thy way plain  
before my face.

*All:* **Lead me, Lord,  
lead me in thy righteousness,  
make thy way plain  
before my face.**

*Solo:* For it is thou, Lord,  
thou, Lord, only, that  
makest me dwell in safety.

*All:* **For it is thou, Lord,  
thou, Lord, only, that  
makest me dwell in safety.**

COLLECT (*stand*)

Heavenly Father,  
your Son commissioned his disciples to heal the sick,  
and through the Holy Spirit you bestow gifts of  
healing on his church;  
hear the prayers we offer in his name  
and grant your healing to those for whom we  
intercede,  
and those on whom we lay our hands,  
and those whom we anoint;  
that together we may bear witness to the gospel of  
salvation  
and the glory of your kingdom;  
we ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen**

THANKSGIVING

*This and other thanksgivings may be used*

Thank you for creating us  
Thank you for loving us  
Thank you for healing us

**Father Almighty**

Praise you for dying for us  
Praise you for rising for us  
Praise you for living in us

**Lord Jesus Christ**

Bless you for cleansing us  
Bless you for renewing us  
Bless you for strengthening us

**Holy Spirit of God**

*The response with other thanksgivings may be:*  
Let us bless the Lord: **Thanks be to God!**

*Sit or kneel*

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray

*A suggested, but optional, form of intercession:*

Lord, we bring before you:  
those who are suffering from physical and mental  
illness;  
those troubled by emotional and spiritual disorders.

We cry to the Lord in our trouble

**He sends forth his Word and heals us**

Those who are waiting for operations and those  
recovering from them;  
those with fears, and those in pain;  
those with disabilities and who are dependent on the  
care of others.

Heavenly Father,  
you sent your Son to proclaim the good news of  
your salvation  
and to manifest your healing power.  
Continue your gracious work among us by the  
power of your Holy Spirit,  
and grant that we who have received your  
forgiveness and healing  
may live your gospel and manifest your kingdom  
in all that we think and say and do, now and always,  
through Jesus Christ our Physician and Saviour.  
**Amen**

**O God, who has prepared for those who love you  
such good things as pass our understanding:  
pour into our hearts such love towards you,  
that we, loving you in all things and above all  
things,  
may obtain your promises which exceed all that  
we can desire;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

(Burrswood Fellowship Prayer, modernized)

THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Go in the peace of Christ:  
**Thanks be to God**

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God?

**We believe and trust in him**

May Almighty God strengthen this faith in us evermore.

HYMN or CHORUS

*Remain sitting or kneeling*

THE MINISTRY OF HEALING

*Those who can, come forward to the places appointed for ministry. Others may be ministered to in their seats if this is clearly indicated to those ministering.*

FINAL PRAYERS

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory  
are yours, now and for ever. Amen**

We cry to the Lord in our trouble  
**He sends forth his Word and heals us**

Those who draw near to death,  
those who have died whom we entrust to you,  
those who have lost loved ones  
and live in brokenness of heart.

We cry to the Lord in our trouble  
**He sends forth his Word and heals us**

Those who suffer from traumas of the past,  
those oppressed by evil,  
and those who cannot reach out to you in faith and hope.

We cry to the Lord in our trouble  
**He sends forth his Word and heals us**

Those trapped by poverty, war and famine,  
all nations in strife and distress,  
communities divided by prejudice and fear.

We cry to the Lord in our trouble  
**He sends forth his Word and heals us**

Stretch out your hand over us Lord,  
through Jesus Christ send us healing and salvation.  
May your Holy Spirit bring us your love and peace.

We cry to the Lord in our trouble  
**He sends forth his Word and heals us**

*Here, or in place of the above litany, the names of those sick but unable to attend this service are read out (slowly and deliberately, perhaps with a brief reference to their need) the list being broken periodically by a refrain such as:*

Lord in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer**

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

BIBLE READING

ADDRESS

*estimonies of God's healing*

MUSIC, HYMN or ANTHEM

CONFESSION

*The Leader introduces the confession in these or other words:*

Hear the words of comfort and encouragement which our Saviour Christ says to all who turn to him:

Come to me all of you who are tired and overburdened and I will give you rest.

Hear also what St. Peter says:

In all the world there is no-one else apart from Jesus who can save us.

Let us therefore express our need, in penitence and hope, repenting of our sins, and seeking the health and salvation of Jesus our Lord:

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,  
We come before you aware of our weakness,  
often seeking to live in our own strength.**

**But you are the God of our health:  
wholeness and salvation come from you.  
With sorrow and repentance we turn to you:  
cleanse us from our sins,  
grant us the peace of your forgiveness;  
heal us from our ills,  
and we shall rejoice in your salvation:  
lead us out from darkness to light,  
and clothe us in the loveliness of  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen**

May Almighty God who gives his Holy Spirit to all who call upon him,  
forgive your sins,  
heal your infirmities,  
strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life abundant and eternal,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen**

BELIEF

*The congregation are invited to affirm their faith*

Do you believe and trust in God the Father who made the world?

**We believe and trust in him**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ, who redeemed mankind?

**We believe and trust in him**



## **What can we hope for through this ministry?**

We believe that God loves us and wills the very best for us. But we also know that suffering of all kinds and ultimately death are conditions from which we cannot escape. But God is not distant. In Jesus Christ he shared in this life's suffering and death on the cross, and he can draw close to us in times such as these. However, his resurrection in the power of the Holy Spirit gives us hope that we might have a foretaste of his kingdom here and now and that through the Church's ministry we shall receive his love, strength and healing touch. What form that healing will take we cannot tell. It may be:

- ❖ Help to carry us through a prolonged illness or disability;
- ❖ a recovery more rapid than expected;
- ❖ experiencing our fear of death being driven out by God's love;
- ❖ a healing which is so unexpected that we immediately want to thank God.

The Church of England published a detailed report called *A Time to Heal* (Church House Publishing, 2000) which contains a great deal of information and guidance on the healing ministry. There are other helpful books written by Francis MacNutt, Morris Maddocks, John Huggett and other authors. A 'Liturgy of Healing and Holy Communion' which provides a ministry of anointing is available from St. Andrew's Seminary.

The healing ministry is for everyone; we all need healing in some way. Through the healing ministry, Jesus Christ meets us at our point of need.

## **THE CHURCH'S HEALING MINISTRY**

The Healing Ministry is:

### **VISIONARY**

because it beckons us towards the future and a glimpse of the kingdom, and the hope of the whole of creation renewed.

### **PROPHETIC**

because it calls us to reconsider our relationships with God, each other and the world and to seek forgiveness and a new start in our lives.

### **DYNAMIC**

because Jesus Christ is with us to the end of time: when we pray for his help, he comforts, strengthens and heals us, responding to our deepest needs.

The Church's ministry is a continuation of the ministry of Jesus Christ. We seek to fulfil it in the power of the same Holy Spirit who anointed Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan. Jesus' ministry was totally faithful and obedient to his Father. The gospel of the kingdom of God is the good news of healing which Jesus proclaimed. 'Go and preach the gospel...Go and heal the sick' summarizes the commission Christ gave to his Church. So Christians have always been called to have a special concern for those sick in mind, body and spirit. The Church's ministry can be described as one of healing – the healing of ourselves, and of our relationships with God, with one another and with our environment.



What are the most common forms of healing ministry?

### **Public and private prayers of intercession**

Christian worship has always included prayers of intercession customarily addressed to the Father through the Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Intercessory prayer, in which we pray individually and corporately, for those who are suffering, combines our love with God's love and our will with his will, so as to cooperate with him in fostering his kingdom.

### **The laying on of hands**

Actions can often speak louder than words and touch conveys a message of love and assurance as well as being a link with Christ's apostolic command to heal the sick. Hands are usually placed gently on or side by side of a person's head, or on his or her shoulders, and accompanying prayers said quietly and reverently. This form of touch can make a sick person feel less fearful or alone in their suffering.

### **Anointing**

We pray that, as we are outwardly anointed with oil, we shall be inwardly anointed with the Holy Spirit. It is customary for a priest to anoint a person with thumb or forefinger, making the sign of the cross, with a small amount of oil, on the forehead and sometimes the palms of the hands. Anointing is often accompanied by the laying on of hands and sometimes Holy Communion and reconciliation.

### **Reconciliation and Absolution.**

Confession is increasingly seen as an act of reconciliation which begins with God calling us back to himself. The Anglican tradition values the use of a general confession as a communal act in the liturgy and makes provision for private confession to a priest. Private confession may be made in a formal or less formal setting and may include spiritual advice and counsel as well as absolution.

Friendship, forgiveness, listening, acceptance and affirmation can also have a healing grace. So in different ways we are all able to take part in the Church's healing ministry, looking forward in faith to the kind of healing God wills for those for whom we are praying.

### **The healing ministry is available in the following ways**

- ❖ **publicly** as part of regular Sunday services
- ❖ **at healing services**, including the Eucharist, in institutions such as hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, prisons etc and at healing centers and conferences;
- ❖ **privately** within the home, hospitals and in churches;
- ❖ **ecumenically** across the denominations, including local services, the hospital and prison chaplaincies'
- ❖ **in cooperation with the medical and caring professions**