

CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Special
Double
Issue

Issue 142

Touching the hem of his garment

Christian experiences
of divine healing

*"And the prayer offered in faith
will make the sick person well;
the Lord will raise them up."*

James 5:15, NIV



HALLELUJAH ANYHOW Charismatic Catholic priests (pp. 38–40) worship in this 1976 image.

Did you know?

STORIES OF DIVINE HEALING
THROUGHOUT CHURCH HISTORY
DRAWN FROM OUR ARCHIVES



PRAYING AGAINST FLU During the 1918 global flu pandemic, many African Christians sought out healing through prayer rather than taking quinine (*above*) (pp. 44–46).

his death it was said there remained only 17 pagans.—*by Dan Graves, from our “This Day in Christian History” feature*

A COUNTRY CONVERTED

Nino (c. 296–c. 338) was carried away from her Roman home by Cappadocian raiders and enslaved in Iberia (now eastern Georgia). Frightened and lonely, she turned to her faith for solace, spending hours in prayer. According to Palestinian priest Rufinus, Nino healed a sick child through her prayers. Word of the healing reached the Georgian royal court; the queen, who was seriously ill, visited Nino and was also healed. Impressed by the enslaved girl’s faith and the apparent power of her God, both queen and king converted to Christianity.—*by Gregory P. Elder, from issue #57*

CHEERFUL AS A CRICKET

Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) ministered during the Black Death. Her biographer, Raymond Caputo, wrote,

The holy virgin had heard that Matteo [a hospital patient] had been struck down by the plague. . . . She hastened to see him, fired by charity and as though angry with the plague itself, and even before she reached him she started shouting from a distance, “Get up, Messer Matteo, get up, this is no time for lying in

PREACHING BLESSINGS Yoido Full Gospel Church (*below*) in South Korea (pp. 47–49) is the country’s largest Pentecostal congregation with over 800,000 members.



CHARISMATIC CATHOLIC REVIVAL: USED BY PERMISSION OF FLOWER PENTECOSTAL HERITAGE CENTER
ROBERT BENTLEY, QUININE PLANT FROM MEDICINAL PLANTS, 1880—WELL COME COLLECTION / PUBLIC DOMAIN
YOIDO FULL GOSPEL CHURCH, YEOUIDO ISLAND, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA, 23 SEPTEMBER, 2019—KEITMA / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

MY CHILD, GET UP Russian artist Vasily Polenov depicts the raising of Jairus's daughter (right) as told in the Gospels.

a soft bed!" At the words of this command, the fever and the swelling in the groin and all the pain immediately disappeared, and Matteo felt as well as if he had never been ill at all. . . . [He] got up as cheerful as a cricket, convinced that the power of God dwelt in the virgin, and went away rejoicing.—*by the editors, from issue #135*

MEDITATING ON CHRIST

Spanish mystic and reformer Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582) joined the Carmelite Order in 1535. One year later she experienced significant illness, including partial paralysis. During her healing she meditated on Christ's Passion and, she wrote later, saw visions of him to which she attributed her healing. Teresa's campaigns to reform her order faced opposition but ultimately succeeded in 1562.—*by Virginia C. Raguin, from issue #122*

SCRIPTURE AND HEALING

In 1707 Englishman Josiah Woodward wrote that newly immigrated French Huguenot refugees claimed a number of miracles, including that of Mary Maillard in 1693. Her left leg had been weak from birth, but as she heard Mark 2:1–12 being read, she "thought she heard a Voice saying, 'Thou art healed'" and found herself cured.—*contributed by Craig Keener*

SAVED FROM ADDICTION

Lilian Yeomans (1861–1942), a medical doctor who worked with prostitutes and the poor, became addicted to morphine and other drugs. In 1898, after almost 60 failed attempts to quit, she moved into a Christian healing home operated by John Dowie (pp. 29–31), who confiscated all her medicines. For two weeks she was in agony and hung between life and death, until she felt God tell her to attend a church service despite her miserable condition. Immediately afterward she began to feel better and soon was free of her addiction.—*by Dan Graves, from "This Day"*

GOD CARES FOR HORSES

One day, on the "gospel trail" with organist Treena Platt, evangelist Mary Cagle's (1864–1955) pony became ill. Having heard that John Wesley had once prayed successfully for the healing of his horse, Cagle decided to do the same. "I don't know how to pray for a horse," Platt protested. "Pray just like you would for a person," said Cagle; "we need her in the service of the Lord." Cagle wrote that they "prayed

"HAVE MERCY" British artist William Blake, often inspired by biblical topics, here (right) renders the story of Jesus healing Bartimaeus from Mark 10:46–52.

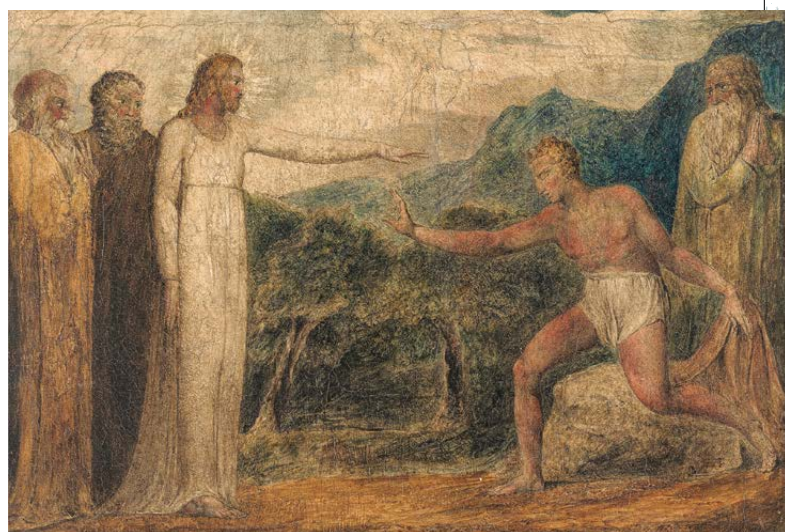


PRAYER PRESCRIBED The City of Faith Medical and Research Center (right) was one 20th-c. attempt to combine prayer and medicine (pp. 50–52).

through to victory" and went to the barn to find the horse already mending.—*by Jennifer Woodruff Tait, from issue #82*

BELIEVING IN JESUS

[Sometime in the 1980s] an old Christian woman in a Chinese village decided, after her eightieth birthday, to start preaching the gospel. She went to the village where her daughter lived and began to preach there; villagers afflicted with incurable diseases came to her. When she prayed for them, many were suddenly healed. . . . After she left these villagers decided her God was very good. They abandoned their idols, decided to believe in Jesus, and looked in nearby towns until they found a place where people worshiped Jesus.—*by Kim-Kwong Chan, from issue #52* **CH**

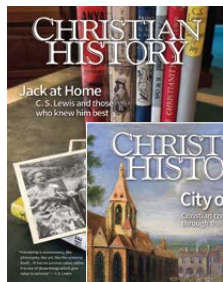


Letters to the editor

Readers respond to *Christian History*

THE HISTORY OF THE WHOLE CHURCH

I have received for some years your wonderful magazine.... Do you distinguish between Roman Catholicism and Christianity? If so, what differences do you see?—Boyd L. Personett, Spring Mount, PA



Our policy since our first issue in 1982 has been to write about Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and the various divisions of Protestants as three branches of the Christian tradition. Our mission statement (at christianhistoryinstitute.org/faq#belief) says in part: "Christian History magazine seeks to bring the story of the church to the people of the church, to see the best in every Christian tradition, and to acknowledge the full and honest story of the church universal."

LOVE FOR LEWIS

I read "Jack at Home" (*Christian History* #140) from cover to cover. Although I already knew much about him, I learned much more and felt that I really got a deeper and fuller sense of the man. Good work.—Sandra McCann, digital subscriber

This Episcopal priest has been receiving and reading *Christian History* for many years. No edition has impressed me more than your present edition, "Jack at Home." I read many of his titles in his early editions. Your selection of authors in this edition was of the highest standards; and considering the guidelines you as editor must follow, the highlights of the life of C. S. Lewis were well chosen—thank you!—Harry T. Harper, Chaptico, MD

You have once again assembled an impressive team of writers to highlight the various aspects of Lewis's life and times. Complementing that team is your staff who collect and insert the photography and artwork. They always enhance the articles and help to make *Christian History* the continuing success that it is.

As I have written to you many times before, you are fulfilling an important role in the Kingdom. It is our prayer that God enables you, through the faithful giving of your readers, to continue to publish this outstanding Christian magazine. May He richly bless you!—Tom Edmunds, Washington, NJ

We're so glad you enjoyed the issue! We loved working on it and getting to know Lewis and his friends and family better.

LEWIS, PLAGUES, AND THE IRISH

I thoroughly enjoy *Christian History*, even when the subject does not initially interest me. I invariably learn something worthwhile. I particularly appreciated the edition on epidemics, and the recent one devoted to C. S. Lewis....

Has there been any research done on the contribution of the early Celtic Christians, not only to the story of our faith, but also to civilization of the West? Years ago I was pointed to the book *How the Irish Saved Civilization* by Thomas Cahill. It amazed me to discover that the faith community of Connaught was considered the center of learning for the known world at the time, drawing students from all corners of Europe.—Margaret Buchanan-Coles, Helensburgh, UK

Take a look at our issue #60 on the birth of Celtic Christianity for more!

A STORY WE MISSED

Today's mail brought the new "Jack at Home" issue of *CH*. Very attractive. But that reminded me that I've been meaning to write to you about a serious omission in your higher education issue....

The only reference to the education of American Blacks was in reference to Oberlin and to Berea [with] no mention of the role that various Christian home-mission agencies in North America and other church groups played in the founding of many historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs): Morehouse and Spellman, Howard, Fisk, and more. These schools did a lot more for the education of African Americans than Oberlin.

Early HBCUs fall into two groups: those that focused on vocational training for formerly enslaved people (Tuskegee is one such) and those that had a dual focus on training people for the ministry and training teachers to spread literacy among the formerly enslaved (Howard, Morehouse, Fisk, etc.). To most White Christians, the HBCUs are a hidden part of America's Christian history. But they are a vital part.—David Neff, Baltimore, MD

Thanks for this correction and excellent suggestion. HBCUs and their founders definitely present a topic to cover in a future issue on education.

AND LOVE FOR CHUCK

I greatly enjoyed your issue about C. S. Lewis and those who knew him. Having subscribed to your magazine for several years, I think this is one of your best....

My purpose in writing you is to suggest that you do a similar issue on Charles Colson. I was a member of Congress from Virginia for 34 years. Chuck lived in my congressional district in Virginia, and I also visited with

him and his wife, Patty, after he moved to Florida. Chuck was a mentor to me, and I would often call him when I had tough votes in Congress or needed wisdom on difficult issues.... Because of his Christian faith, Chuck wrote about history, was part of history, and had a big impact on many people both inside and outside of government.
—Frank Wolf, Vienna, VA

Doing issues on twentieth-century figures can get tricky, but Colson has definitely been influential on modern Christianity and modern politics. We have added him to our list of potential subjects!

PREACHING A SERMON

I'm writing to compliment you on your Christmas card you sent to your mailing list. . . . It is the picture that is so breathtaking and so relevant. It shows the manger in the foreground, with the 3 crosses on the right, some distance away in a glow of light, standing on a hill. . . . It stands to speak the greatest sermon ever preached to the recipient who will "take it all in."...

My pittance of an offering may not seem like much, but I pray that God will increase its use once it is in your hands. I proudly display your card in front of the others I receive during this season, because your card says it all.—Marilyn Kirk, Leesburg, VA

Thank you so much for these kind words!

...AND PREACHING ANOTHER SERMON

I continue to thoroughly enjoy *Christian History*. It provides much background for sermon preparation and illustration. I also appreciate access to your filmed materials for deeper study of faith issues.—David S. Rudd, Lacona, NY

GO BACK FURTHER, PLEASE

I LOVE your magazine.... I own EVERY ONE of them and look forward to the arrival of each magazine. I'm sure you have your topics mapped out for the next couple of years, but I thought I'd make a suggestion anyway. I find the more current (twentieth-century) issues interesting and informative (Lewis, E. Stanley Jones), but I miss the REALLY early church history topics or individuals (the early church fathers, the apologists, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Clement, Ignatius, Anselm).—Randy Evans, Largo, FL

We do try to hit all eras of church history, but it's true we've not focused solely on the early church since #124 on early Christianity's spread through cities (2017). Many of our readers relate to more contemporary stories, sometimes with strong personal connections, and our topical issues often cover the full history

of the church (such as #141 and this one)—but we will look to visit the early church more fully as soon as possible.

CORRECTION TO ISSUE #141

The image of Peter Storey and Desmond Tutu on p. 45 of issue 141 should have been credited to Greg Marinovich and is copyrighted by him, all rights reserved.



Scan the QR code to be connected to CHI's "Donate" page to support our mission.

Meet the staff: EDWIN WOODRUFF TAIT

How long have you been at CHI and what is your role?

I've been involved with the magazine since 2003—over 18 years; as a writer at first when the magazine was at Christianity Today International, as well as when it moved back to Christian History Institute. From issue #108 (Charlemagne) on, I have been a contributing editor. I do a lot of brainstorming in collaboration with my wife, Jenn, I write articles, and sometimes I serve as an issue advisor. [We call him the Walking Encyclopedia.]



What is your favorite part of the job?

Probably writing. It's often painful while I'm doing it, but I like the results.

What do you most wish readers knew?

I think it's both difficult and wonderful to live the tension between scholarly engagement with Christian history and seeing it as a source of inspiration and enrichment for one's own faith. People experience this as a conflict, and I experience it as the kind of creative tension that I couldn't live without. To not ask the critical questions *or* to simply look at church history from a secular point of view feels so impoverished compared to wrestling with that tension. Looking at our past critically can—and does for me—come out of a place of deep faith.

What do you do in your spare time?

Read, watch movies, walk the dog, and garden. [Jenn adds: He just grew some really excellent broccoli.] **CH**

Executive editor's note

A few years ago, my wife, Linda, was drawn to the call in 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1 “to eagerly desire spiritual gifts.” We had both read those verses many times over the years, but these words had never stood out. Linda pondered them for weeks. A friend recommended Randy Clark’s book *There Is More*, and while she was reading it, another friend invited Linda to a Global Awakening conference where Clark was speaking.

A few months later, I agreed to attend a second Global Awakening conference with her. It was more Charismatic than I was used to, but what gripped me was the attendees’ eagerness for more of God and to be drawn closer to him in ways I had never seen before. Linda felt led to attend a Global Awakening mission trip in Brazil a few months later. Somehow, I ended up there with her.

HEALING POWER THROUGHOUT HISTORY

The morning before the conference started, I decided, against better judgment (and against Global’s instructions), to take a prayer walk with Linda on the beach next to the conference hotel—and was mugged by a young man who gave me a right hook to my jaw, sending me into the ocean. As we walked back to the hotel, I noticed how much my jaw hurt. I could not shut my mouth. At breakfast every bite was painful. After breakfast we met others on the mission trip going out to buy water. When one of them, Loraine, heard what happened, she asked if she could pray for my jaw. As soon as she prayed, my jaw felt about 60 percent better.

After the evening meetings, I saw Loraine in the hotel lobby; she asked if she could pray again. My jaw then felt almost completely better. I had no pain in my jaw the next morning or the rest of the trip.

This experience began an amazing week of witnessing supernatural healing, including healing of significant hearing loss in Linda’s right ear. We saw dozens, maybe hundreds, healed that week. At first I thought people were being polite, but soon clearly understood Jesus was moving in a supernatural way I had never before experienced.

I prayed for many people throughout the week and watched in amazement as God healed some with back pain, a woman whose feet had been in pain for over 10 years, and many more. I have continued to pray for healings since our return from Brazil. Some have been healed and many have not. I certainly don’t claim to understand the ways of God, but I have seen enough to have faith to continue to pray for healings.

After returning from Brazil, I was eager to see how we at CH had documented healings in our publications. I searched issues that deal with moves of the Holy Spirit (such as #82, *Phoebe Palmer*, and #58, *The Birth of Pentecostalism*), and, though these issues describe many gifts of the Spirit, I was surprised to see few stories of Jesus divinely healing throughout history. The team at Global Awakening has helped us shape and fund this expanded issue to help correct our oversight. I believe that Jesus healed many when he walked on earth and has continued healing for the last 2,000 years in ways known only by the Almighty. I pray we will all grow “to eagerly desire spiritual gifts” and keep our eyes open to the ways God is working in this aspect of Christian history. **CH**



Bill Curtis
Executive editor
bill@christianhistoryinstitute.org

In 2022, *Christian History* magazine is celebrating an important milestone—our 40th anniversary! Though we were warned in 1981 that a publication such as this could never survive, God has been faithful throughout four decades. Our 144th issue will be a special anniversary edition telling the history of Christianity in images. Now is a perfect time to subscribe to make sure you receive this special issue. Make sure you’re on our list—and tell your friends!



Managing editor's note

When Bill Curtis first brought the idea for this issue to me, it surprised me that divine healing had never been the focus of an issue of *Christian History*. As he's identified in his executive editor's letter, we've touched on many topics suffused with miraculous stories, from everyday life in the Middle Ages (#49) to spiritual awakenings in early America (#23) to the growth of the Holiness (#82) and Pentecostal and Charismatic (#58) movements. In addition our issues on the birth of the hospital (#101), Christians in science (#134), and plagues and epidemics (#135) show we've had a strong interest in the history of health care and healing.

But Bill's right: we've never put the subject of miraculous healing front and center. And he's also right about another thing: most Christians in most parts of the world through the ages have had a robustly supernatural faith that God can and does work miracles, including miracles of healing.

When you start searching for narratives about healing from different time periods in church history, you will quickly discover far more stories than you can count. Even when you've accounted for the obviously fraudulent, the obviously confused, and the difficult to prove, many stories from trustworthy sources remain, attested to by multiple witnesses.

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

As our issue advisor, Candy Brown, reminded us early in this process, divine healing is a significant theme in the Bible and throughout Christian history—across time periods, theological traditions, and geographical regions. Divine healing practices cannot be reduced to caricatures of fraudulent or

greedy faith-healing televangelists and are not necessarily in tension with modern medicine (which is, of course, also a way God heals). Prayer for healing has played a major role in world evangelization, and many Christians globally view healing as a central element of the gospel.

In fact, all these are truths I have known from my childhood. My grandfather Frank Bateman Stanger (you met him briefly in issue #136) was a firm believer in divine healing and wrote a book (*God's Healing Community*) commending prayer for healing to mainline churches. He even taught a class on the topic at Asbury Theological Seminary.

Here's the thing, though. In 1985 my grandpa was diagnosed with cancer and died 10 months later, teaching his healing class as long as he could. He died in the middle of the 1986 spring semester, with the last few class sessions—affirming miraculous divine healing—taught from his deathbed. His death occurred despite numerous prayers for miraculous healing and the best medical care imaginable. Sometimes people are only healed when they are finally at rest in the arms of Jesus, my grandpa once wrote. It was so for him.

I have a robust belief in the supernatural and God's divine ability to heal. I also have a deep understanding that God moves in very mysterious ways. I've carried both of those understandings together as I've edited the stories you will read in this issue. **CH**



Jennifer Woodruff Tait
Managing editor

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Don't miss our next issue, the second in our Bible in America series, on the Bible in the life of the church.

We thank the many readers who support this ministry, making it possible for us to provide *Christian History* in print. Please visit www.ChristianHistoryMagazine.org to renew or begin a subscription to *Christian History*.



GLOBAL AWAKENING: **EQUIPPING THE SAINTS**

"So, I realize the gifts of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12 are still used by God today, but how do I get started? **How do I pursue gifts of healing, working of miracles, and prophecy?** I wish I had someone who could give me practical advice."

After decades of pursuing a lifestyle of miracles, our successes and failures have taught us much. All around the world, God still confirms the Gospel message with healing, with miracles, with demons being cast out. God has providentially chosen to use Global Awakening to train clergy and laity to operate in the gifts of the Spirit. **It's time to learn how to begin ministering healing in Jesus's name.**

It starts with our **online practical ministry training program**, the Global Awakening College of Ministry. Take one course on a specific topic or go deep and get certified in healing ministry. Explore the courses at globalcollegeministry.com.

For those looking to **restart and get equipped for a new season of ministry**, the nine-month Global School of Supernatural Ministry is a great way to hit the refresh button. With on-site and online options available, it's a big commitment that pays back bigger rewards. Start something new at gssmusa.com.

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CHRISTIAN HISTORY



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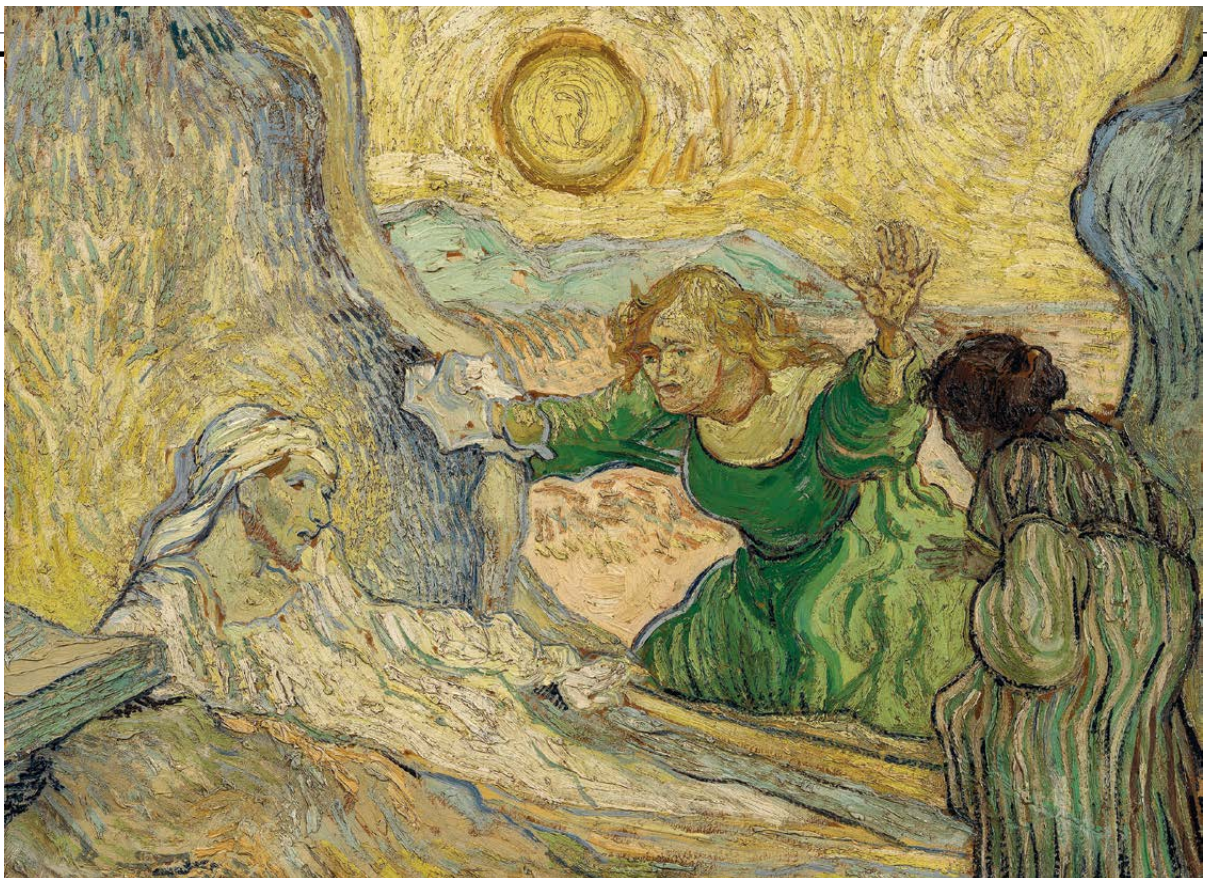
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Jesus the healer

THE RISE, RETREAT, AND RENEWAL OF DIVINE HEALING IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Candy Gunther Brown

In first-century Galilee, news spread quickly that Jesus healed sick people. The Jewish Scriptures had identified God as a healer (Ex 15:26) who had once restored a leper (2 Kings 5:1–15) and a dead child (1 Kings 17:17–24). The Gospels likewise brim with stories: a blind man runs straight to Jesus (Mark 10:46–52), a deaf-mute shouts praises (Mark 7:31–37), a paralyzed man walks home (Luke 5:17–26), lepers rejoin temple worship (Luke 5:12–16, 7:12–19), an epileptic boy is freed from a demon (Matt 17:14–18), a dead girl returns to her parents (Mark 5:21–24, 35–43), a chronically bleeding woman recovers instantly (Mark 5:25–34). Amazed and grateful, some left everything to follow Jesus; critics plotted to kill him. Moved by compassion Jesus even healed under circumstances (Mark 3:1–6) that fueled his enemies' anger.

POWER IN PRAYER

Jesus taught his followers to share this priority, sending them out to preach the gospel and demonstrate that the kingdom of heaven had come near by healing the sick and casting out demons. The Greek word *sozo*—"save," "heal," or "deliver"—appears 110 times in the New Testament. After the Crucifixion Jesus's followers kept healing people in his

LAZARUS, COME FORTH Healing and miracle stories are common in the Gospels, such as the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1–44), painted here by Vincent Van Gogh.

name. Peter caused a stir when a man lame for 40 years ran around the temple (Acts 3:1–11). When Paul healed a lame man, he could scarcely stop crowds from sacrificing to him as a god (Acts 14:8–18). Even Peter's shadow (Acts 5:14–16) and Paul's handkerchiefs (Acts 19:11–12) brought healing.

Not only apostles healed in Jesus's name; Stephen and Philip waited tables, yet they too drove out evil spirits and healed the sick. The gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12 include healings, miracles, and discernment of spirits.

For three centuries the church added half a million new converts every generation. Most joined after witnessing a healing or an exorcism, a majority of healings taking place in private homes through the prayers of ordinary Christians. Converting to Christianity was risky, sometimes carrying a penalty of prison or execution. But people converted anyway, many convinced that Jesus is the most powerful healer.

In the fourth century, church growth accelerated, but healing drifted to the margins. After Constantine converted

SAINTS ALIVE Even as some saints like Jerome (*below*, in a 15th-c. painting by El Greco) shaped church views away from physical healing, others like Benedict (pictured *right* on a 14th-c. reliquary) were famed for reported miraculous healings.

in 312 and the Edict of Milan (313) decreed toleration, Christianity transitioned from persecuted to state sponsored. Within a century, church members soared from five to thirty million. Many new converts were nominal Christians—attracted by gifts of money and food, or access to higher status jobs and marriages, but more likely to seek healing through familiar amulets and pagan spells than prayer in the name of Jesus.

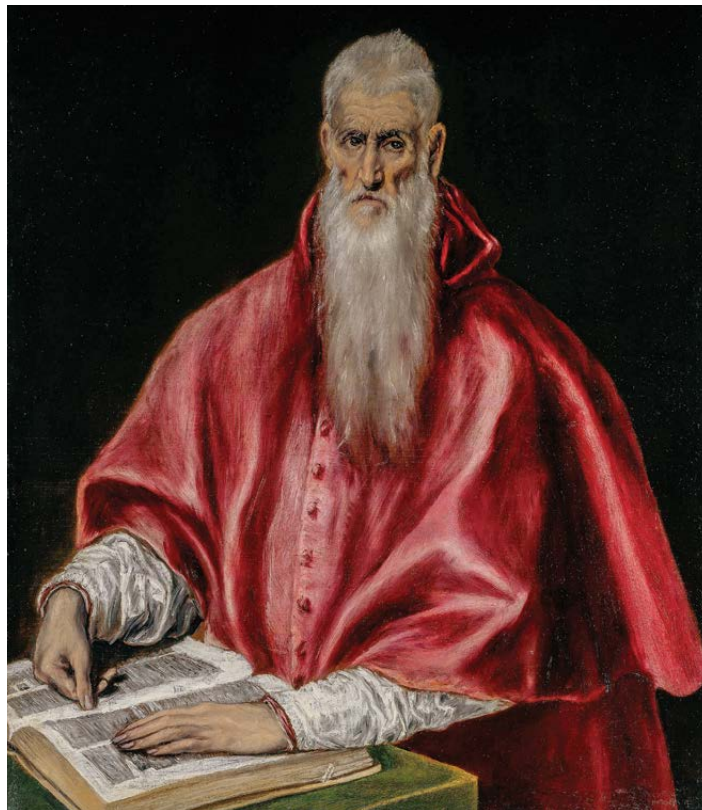
FLEEING TO THE DESERT

Seeking to combat nominal Christianity, church leaders identified certain Christians as saints whose exceptional faith should inspire others and whose prayers were most likely to produce healing. By the fifth century, some of these serious Christians fled urban corruption. People in need of healing sought prayer from these “desert fathers.” The desert fathers often felt reluctant to pray for healing, lest it imply that they were so prideful as to think *themselves* saints. People were instead sent to shrines of martyrs to seek intercession from deceased saints.

Even church leaders began questioning the legitimacy of seeking healing. Committed Christians often sacrificed physical health by engaging in ascetic spiritual practices. Moreover, Christians were incorporating Neoplatonic notions of the body as a prison of the soul. When ascetic monk Jerome (c. 347–420) translated the Bible from Greek to Latin, he rendered *sozo* in James 5:15 as “save” (*salvo*) instead of “heal” (*sano*), the term that he used for a healing in Luke 8.

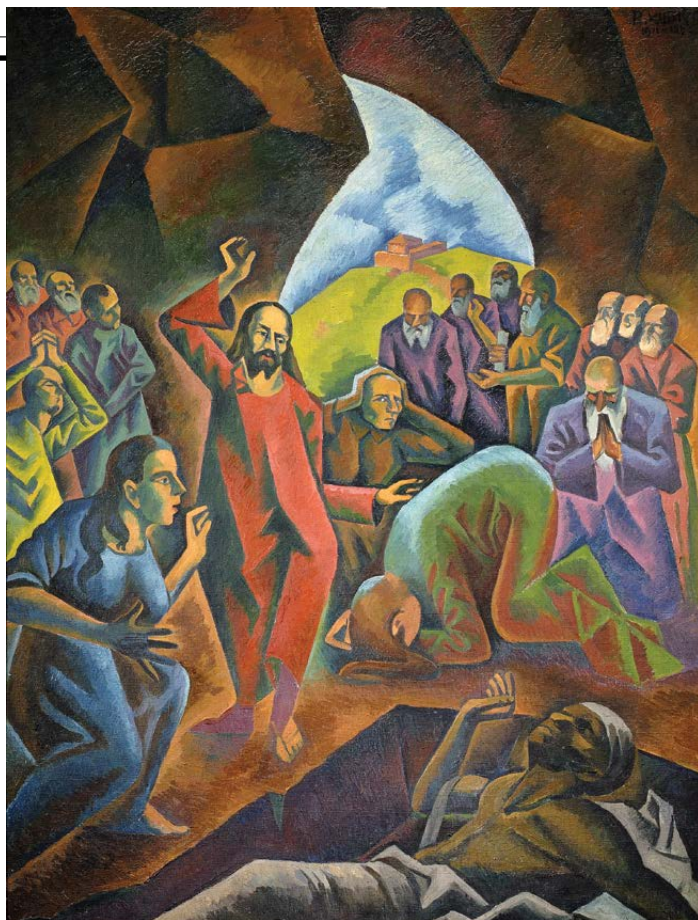
Few Christians had access to any other translation than Jerome’s until the Protestant Reformation. Even after the Bible became available in vernacular languages, versions like the one authorized by King James (1611) still followed the Vulgate in shifting emphasis from physical to spiritual healing: “The prayer of faith shall save the sick.”

By the Middle Ages, many Christians in Western Europe expected healing to be rare. Church leaders placed restrictions on who could pray for the sick or exorcise demons. The primary purpose of healing shifted from compassion for the sick to proving the holiness of those praying. Anointing of the sick with oil—encouraged in James 5—became a sacrament, but now only priests could perform it. Sacraments, by definition, always work. Because not everyone anointed recovered physically, the primary purpose was deemed spiritual preparation for heaven. Anointing of the sick was renamed extreme unction around the twelfth century; also called last rites, it was limited to those in danger of death who had received the sacrament of confession. The



harshness of penances assigned for sins discouraged many medieval Christians from going to confession before they were so close to death that the priest might excuse them.

During the Protestant Reformation, Roman Catholic authorities challenged Protestants to prove their novel doctrines with miraculous healings. The Reformers denied needing miraculous proofs because they were not preaching new doctrines but only the Bible. John Calvin (1509–1564) promoted the doctrine of “cessationism”—that Jesus ceased healing after the apostolic era, just as soon as the gospel could spread through the Word alone. Calvin (who often fell sick himself) dismissed Catholic healings as superstition or demonic deception, while teaching that God sends sickness to chastise sinners; rather than combat sickness as demonic, Christians should passively resign themselves to God’s will.



JESUS CALLING 20th-c. artist Bohumil Kubišta was also inspired by the story of Lazarus (left, c. 1911).

PRAYER OF FAITH A. B. Simpson (below) strongly encouraged healing prayer in the modern church.



study the Bible's promises of healing and receive prayer.

The nineteenth century was an exciting time for many Protestants as revivals spread across Europe, North America, and Australia, and missionaries fanned out across every continent. Many reported not only a “new birth” experience of forgiveness from sin through faith in Jesus, but also a “second blessing” of sanctification or holiness—an infilling of the Holy Spirit bringing freedom from the pollution and power of sin. Some Christians reasoned that if sickness is a consequence of sin, it should be possible to experience freedom from sickness as well as from sin.

Leaders of an emerging, globally networked divine-healing movement spoke of a “fourfold” or “full” gospel: Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Soon Coming King. As prophesied in Isaiah 53:5, Jesus, through his death on the cross, had made a full atonement for both sin and sickness, as “with his stripes we are healed.” Christians appropriated these blessings with the “prayer of faith” urged by James 5. Nineteenth-century teachers on healing, such as Canadian A. B. Simpson (1843–1919), founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, discouraged praying for healing “if” it is God’s will; they argued that the Bible reveals God’s willingness to heal and that Christians should confess their sins, claim God’s promise of healing, and then act as if healed—ignoring any remaining symptoms and using Christ-given strength to live for God and testify to others.

This understanding suggested that reliance on medical treatment—which many patients disliked anyway because of costs, side effects, and failures—showed lack of faith in God. Although many people’s symptoms disappeared after acting in faith, those who remained ill were sometimes charged with lack of faith or holiness, or died from preventable diseases such as malaria.

As the Age of Enlightenment swept across eighteenth-century Europe and North America, many Western Christians questioned the compatibility of miraculous healing—or anything attributed to the activity of spirits—with natural law. By the early twentieth century, a growing number of skeptical philosophers, scientists, and theologians had reinterpreted biblical stories of healing and exorcism.

Some raised questions about the historical reliability of miraculous biblical texts; others suggested naturalistic mechanisms for healing, such as the power of suggestion, or proposed reading miracles metaphorically. Conservatives reaffirmed literal interpretations but restricted healing to a past dispensation in which God interacted with humans by different rules than those governing the modern world.

FOURFOLD GOSPEL

But healing never disappeared from church practice, and stories of divine healing can be found in every time and place where the gospel has been preached. Luminaries from Augustine (354–430) to Martin Luther (1483–1546) to John Wesley (1703–1791) told such stories. Catholics often undertook pilgrimages to healing shrines like the one established in Lourdes, France, in 1858.

In nineteenth-century Germany and Switzerland, reports of healings and exorcisms by Lutheran pastor Johann Christoph Blumhardt (1805–1880) and laywoman Dorothea Trudel (1813–1862) captured attention. People came from far away to see and seek healing for themselves. To accommodate visitors, “healing homes” provided retreats for the sick to



NEW BLESSINGS From the story of Dorothea Trudel (right) to Vatican II (above), the last few centuries have seen a revival of interest in healing prayer.

During the twentieth century, three “waves of the Holy Spirit”—the Pentecostal revivals of the 1900s, the Charismatic renewal of the 1960s, and the Third Wave of the 1980s—encouraged prayer for healing and other gifts of the Holy Spirit. As a result of Vatican II, the Catholic Church reaffirmed the purpose of physical healing and restored extreme unction to its original name, anointing of the sick. It also validated lay practice of spiritual gifts.

The Charismatic renewal reconciled some Catholics and Protestants, brought healing into mainstream churches, and eased tensions between prayer and medicine. In speaking of “divine” healing, rather than “faith” healing, leaders shifted focus from human faith to God’s love and power, and shifted blame for failures from human shortcomings to a cosmic battle between God and Satan. Although nineteenth-century views persisted in the Word of Faith movement of the 1970s, most Charismatics and Third Wavers came to understand faith more flexibly, trusting God to heal through medicine or psychotherapy as well as prayer, all the while acknowledging symptoms and praying as often as needed.

STOREFRONT HEALING

Prayer for healing also become more democratized. Evangelists continued to preach the gospel and pray for the sick in large-scale services. But ordinary Christians increasingly prayed for family, friends, and strangers in hospitals, bedrooms, and grocery stores. At storefront healing rooms (nonresidential successors to healing homes), no fees are

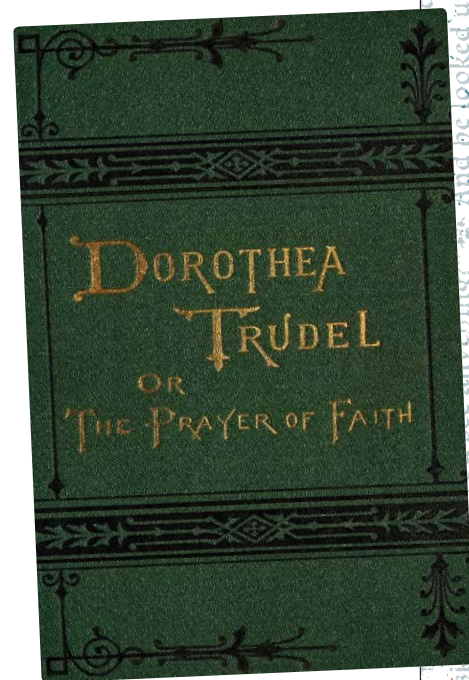
collected; instead, two or three lay Christians—Protestants and Catholics side by side—volunteer to pray for one person at a time, afterward reminding them to return to their doctors and continue taking prescribed medications.

By the year 2000, more than half a billion Christians belonged to churches that took biblical healings as modern models. Although many Western missionaries were cessationists, Christians in the Global South typically came to faith through healing or deliverance—their own or a family member’s. While Westerners questioned the existence of spirits, much of the world asked which spirit is the most powerful. For people plagued by sickness, poverty, violence, and insecurity, a “gospel” that is truly good news not only provides assurance for the afterlife but also meets practical needs, including for health and financial provision.

Today, as in the past, divine healing practices are more widespread and diverse than is often recognized. Identifying healing with the most visible, memorable examples—wealthy televangelists promising prosperity, high-profile scandals, children dying after their parents refused to take them to the doctor—scarcely scratches the surface.

Medical doctors—73 percent of whom, according to one national US survey, affirm that God heals today—often encourage their patients to seek prayer; they study medically remarkable healings and offer to pray for patients. The stories in these pages offer a more nuanced picture of how the global church has grown as more and more people conclude that Jesus is the most powerful healer. **CH**

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Astonishing deeds

BIBLICAL AND EARLY CHURCH TESTIMONY PRESENT JESUS AS A HEALER AND MIRACLE WORKER

Craig Keener and Médine Moussounga Keener

Jesus was on his way to the home of Jairus, one of the prominent leaders of the local synagogue (see Mark 5:21–43). The home was likely not far from the lakeshore where he was teaching, but many people crowding around Jesus may have impeded his progress. Despite his local position of authority, Jairus had bowed down before the traveling preacher because he was desperate: his daughter was near death and professional mourners were already standing by. Unfortunately for Jairus their slow progress was further interrupted.

A DIVINE INTERRUPTION

A local woman had suffered vaginal bleeding for 12 years. In contrast to prominent community leader Jairus, she could not approach Jesus openly or ask him to lay a hand on her. The bleeding made her ritually impure by the standards of Scripture itself; she dared not presume that Jesus would be willing to touch her. Synagogue rulers like Jairus often acquired that title as wealthy donors, but this woman was destitute, having spent all her means on physicians, with nothing to show for it. In contrast to Jairus, who was married and pleaded for his beloved daughter, this woman

RISE UP Henry Ossawa Tanner was inspired by the raising of Lazarus as seen in his *The Resurrection of Lazarus* (1896).

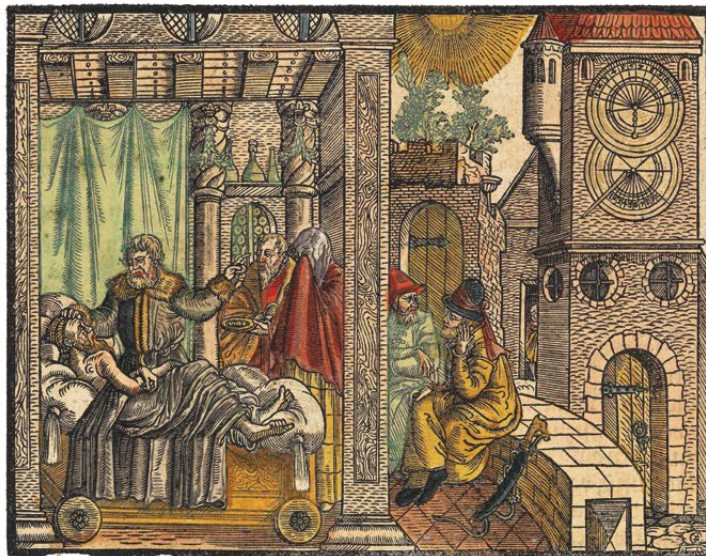
was unable to marry or have children.

Yet for her, as for Jairus, Jesus was the last and only hope. Afraid to approach him openly, yet confident in his power, she worked her way through the crowd. Her faith was desperate, even scandalous; she disregarded the law that would render all whom she touched as impure for the day. Like friends of the paralytic who would not let a neighbor's roof stand between their friend and Jesus's healing power (Mark 2:1–12, Luke 5:17–39), or the insistent leper who defied purity protocols by closely approaching Jesus (Matthew 8:1–4), or a Gentile woman who refused to be deterred even by an unflattering canine analogy (Matt 15:21–28, Mark 7:24–30), this woman staked everything on Jesus's ability to heal her.

As she touched the edge of his garment, she felt his healing power course through her. And then she got something she did not expect. Jesus turned, noting that power had gone out of him. Now both her shame and her act were publicly exposed!



HEALING OF THE KING New Testament miracles such as Jesus healing the blind man (left in a 14th-c. Armenian illustration) were performed against the backdrop of Old Testament miracles such as the healing of King Hezekiah (in a 16th-c. woodcut below).



prescribed bathing in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:14), Jesus cured by mere touch and command (Mark 1:41–42). Whereas David calmed a spirit-tormented heart, Jesus expelled demons right and left with his commands.

The reason scholars are hard-pressed to deny Jesus as a healer is that the evidence is so widespread in our earliest sources. Stories survive of ancient non-Christian healers, but most of these originated centuries after the reputed healings. The Gospels, by contrast, stem from within living memory

Rather than condemning her, however, he commended her faith. Yet this short interruption proved costly for the higher-status family of Jairus. Messengers brought him the news: your daughter has died. Now it was too late—or was it?

SURPASSING EARLIER PROPHETS

According to the Scriptures, Jesus wasn't the first to perform healing miracles. God raised dead sons through the prayers of both Elijah (1 Kings 17:21–23) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:32–36). Yet the Gospel records show Jesus raised a dead son (Luke 7:14–15), daughter (Mark 5:41–42), and friend (John 11:43–44), not primarily with prayers to God but with direct commands.

God had worked other healings in ancient Israel. After King Hezekiah prayed for God to heal him, the prophet Isaiah brought the Lord's promise of healing and a prescription of a fig poultice for his boil (2 Kings 20:7; Isa. 38:21). David's Spirit-inspired singing brought relief from Saul's demon-driven manic experiences. Elijah and Elisha, though, remain prominent models for Jesus's ministry of healing and food multiplication (1 Kings 17:14–16; 2 Kings 4:1–7, 42–44). Like Elisha, Jesus cured leprosy, sometimes specifically a foreigner's (Luke 4:27; 17:11–19). But again, Jesus went beyond his predecessors: whereas Elisha

Foretaste of the kingdom

"See! Your God will come with vengeance! With payback he will come and rescue you! Then the eyes of those who are blind will be opened, and the ears of those who are deaf will be opened. Then those who've been disabled will leap like a deer..." (Isa. 35:4–6)

"The Spirit of the Lord YHWH is on me, because YHWH has anointed me to announce good news to people who are in need..." (Isa. 61:1)

When in prison John heard about Christ's works, he sent word to him through his disciples: "Are you the Coming One? Or should we be waiting for somebody else?"

By way of reply, Jesus told John's disciples, "Go tell John the things you're hearing and seeing: Blind people are receiving sight, disabled people are walking, those with skin diseases are being healed and deaf people are hearing. Also, the dead are being raised and good news is being preached to people who are in need. It will go well with whoever does not get tripped up over me." (Matt 11:2–6; cf. Luke 7:18–23).

"But if I myself am expelling demons by God's Spirit, then [it's evident that] God's kingdom has come on you!" (Matt 12:28; cf. Luke 11:20) —Scripture translations by Craig Keener



of Jesus's life. Not only do multiple sources recount that Jesus raised the dead, including Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:41), but early second-century bishop Quadratus (d. 129) noted that some of those whom Jesus raised lived into his own time.

BELIEVERS AND SKEPTICS AGREE

Nearly all historical Jesus scholars acknowledge that Jesus's contemporaries experienced him as a healer and an exorcist. Those who rule out the possibility of divine activity prefer psychosomatic (i.e., mental) explanations for the conditions healed, although it is difficult to explain some of the conditions—particularly death—in such terms. Gospel scholars identify different layers of independent or semi-independent tradition in the Gospels, and all of these traditions depict Jesus as a healer. Indeed, nearly one-third of Mark's Gospel

TAKE UP YOUR BED In this 6th-c. mosaic in Ravenna, Italy, Jesus heals the paralytic man who was lowered through the roof.

recounts healings and exorcisms.

First-century Jewish historian Josephus (37–c. 100) spoke of Jesus as a wonder worker in his *Antiquities* (c. 93–94): “And about this time a wise man named Jesus arose, an author of astonishing deeds.” Josephus employed this term elsewhere for miracles performed by the prophet Elisha. Even Jesus's detractors acknowledged his wonders, though they attributed them to sorcery. This was true of later rabbis as well as the pagan critic Celsus, who wrote around 175 to 177.

Jesus's healing acts reveal divine compassion (Matt 20:34; Mark 8:2; Luke 7:13). He did curse a fig tree (as

Testimony: Healing children in Congo

My mother raised my sister in more ways than one. When Thérèse was two years old, she cried out that she was bitten by a snake. My mother found her not breathing. No medical help was available in the village, and my father was working out of town on the railroad. So my mother strapped Thérèse to her back and ran for about three hours to a nearby village, where a family friend, Coco Ngoma Moïse, was doing evangelism.

Coco Moïse prayed for Thérèse, she began breathing again, and the

next day she was fine. Although the medical expectation is that irreparable brain damage begins after six minutes with no oxygen, Thérèse experienced no brain damage. She later finished a master's degree at a seminary in Cameroon, returned to Congo for ministry, and recently retired.

Thérèse's case is not the only one. Craig and I interviewed other friends in Congo (including Canadian nurse Sarah Speer who was serving there) who have witnessed similar events.

Another friend, Jeanne Mabiala, worked as a WHO-trained midwife during the war. When a baby was born gray, with the umbilical cord wrapped around her neck, she concluded that the child had died in the womb hours before. As the father went out to make a coffin, Jeanne Mabiala and the other two women there, one Catholic and one Protestant, prayed. When the father returned, he found the child alive and well, and named her Mille Grace: “Thousandfold Grace.”

—Médine Moussounga Keener

LORD OF POWER Two German works of art a millenium apart show Jesus healing: in a 10th-c. codex (below), Jesus heals a blind man, and in a 1920 painting (right), he heals 10 lepers.



an object lesson) and allowed pigs to drown (to rescue a spiritually captive man). But most of his acts of power involve healing, deliverance, provision, or protection.

Jesus's acts are also signs of God's kingdom; he explained that setting people free from demons reveals that God's promised reign is already breaking into this world (Matt 12:28 and Luke 11:20). When John asked whether Jesus is really the promised kingdom-bringer, Jesus pointed to Isaiah's vision: blind eyes and deaf ears will open, the paralyzed will leap, good news will be preached to the poor, and God will birth a new creation (Matt 11:5 and Luke 7:22).

By themselves healings do not confer immortality or consummate kingdom promises. They are, however, a foretaste of the coming day when sickness and death will be no more. When Jesus's disciples expected him to focus on setting up a new political dynasty in the capital, Jesus instead stopped to bless children (in a world with more than 30 percent child mortality) and to heal a blind beggar (Mark 10:13–16, 46–52).

Such signs in the Gospels and Acts tended to be dramatic and draw attention as they broke ground for the kingdom. Today we see similar signs, often in settings where new ground is being broken for God's kingdom. Though these dramatic signs tend to be the ones that are recorded and visibly draw new converts, the Spirit can also stir gifts for healing in more ordinary ways. The gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:9 and Galatians 3:5 and the elders' prayer for the sick (James 5:14–15) need not be dramatic to be effective.

The record of divine healings continued to grow as Christianity spread; nearly a fifth of Acts involves healings and other acts of divine power. In his Gospel and in Acts, Luke presented the mission of the Jerusalem church and the mission to the Gentiles as parallels with the ministry of Jesus. Paul reported dramatic signs in his ground-breaking ministry of church-planting in unevangelized regions

(Rom 15:19; 2 Cor 12:12; cf. also 1 Cor 2:4; 1 Thess 1:5). Second- and third-century sources, both from Christians and from their critics, reveal that such signs continued to flourish among them. Historian Ramsay MacMullen (see our Recommended Resources, pp. 62–63) has demonstrated that the leading cause of conversion to Christianity in the 300s was healing and deliverance from demons.

READING THE BIBLE TODAY

Westerners who read biblical healing narratives through the lens of the Enlightenment legacy—when famous philosophers like David Hume (1711–1776) dismissed the miraculous—sometimes find the Gospels' miracle accounts unbelievable and exaggerated. This is not, however, the case for readers in many parts of the world. Indeed many non-western readers take these accounts as models (see sidebar, p. 14, as well as other stories throughout this issue). This may be closer to how they functioned in their original context.

When ancient seekers entered shrines of the Greek healing divinity Asclepius, they often encountered testimonies or models of body parts. Asclepius's priests posted these testaments to their god's power to encourage petitioners to trust their god. The Gospels may be presenting similar invitations to depend on Jesus's power when they recount his miracles. The continuance of such healing confirms what the author of Hebrews proclaimed: "Jesus Christ: the same yesterday and today and forever!" (Heb 13:8). **CH**

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Speaking with the saints

HEALING AND MIRACLES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Donald S. Prudlo

Have you ever tried to get help from someone high up in authority by appealing to one of their close friends? Maybe if your big ask came from the right person, it would be granted. Such was the role of the saints and martyrs in medieval Christians' prayers for healing. Christians in the Middle Ages earnestly believed that the God who had created heaven and earth and redeemed humanity with his own incarnational presence would come to their aid. They trusted that God continued to intervene in the life of the church to confirm the testimony of truth, to point to the path to holiness, and to heal broken bodies and souls. They knew it was God's power, but on a practical level, they wanted to appeal to one of God's friends to intercede for them.

GOD OUR PATRON

Patron-client relationships dominated the medieval period. Powerful patrons provided protection from an unfriendly society. These relationships were symbiotic—clients received gifts and security from the hands of the mighty, who in turn won recognition for their magnanimity and influence.

FRIENDS OF GOD This 15th-c. book of hours pictures Christ and the Virgin Mary surrounded by a great cloud of saints.

Medieval Christians understood the saints through these patron-client relationships. God the Father was often seen as terrifying and unapproachable. Christ had redeemed the people out of love but was also the one who would—in the repeated prayers of the church—"come to judge heaven and earth, and the world by fire." To defend themselves from this sentence of judgment passed upon their sins, Christians needed advocates, or patrons, before the heavenly bar. These patrons were the special friends of God, apostles and martyrs, who had "fought the good fight" and would argue on an ordinary Christian's behalf.

These men and women had also been neighbors who'd passed on; they were seen as continuing to care about their fellow Christians even from heaven, beseeching God for miracles of healing—a continuation of the practice of Christians on earth interceding for one another through prayer.



FLYING BISHOP 16th-c. artist Tintoretto illustrates a healing miracle (left) attributed to Augustine long after his death.

MARTYRS AND POLITICS Harold, the last Anglo-Saxon king of England, swears an oath on holy relics to William, the Norman duke who would defeat him in 1066 (below).



Some converts who had made their way to Christianity from Platonic philosophy and antimaterial heresies tended to downplay the saints. One such, at first, was Augustine (354–430). Disdaining the simple Christian faith of his mother, Monnica, he entered a life of sinfulness and searching. In particular he deplored his mother's devotion to pilgrimage and the veneration of martyrs. An intellectual, he elevated the spiritual and marginalized the physical body.

After his conversion back to Christianity, Augustine was forced to come down from this lofty philosophical perch to deal with the needs of everyday Christians as bishop of Hippo. He grew to appreciate the profound incarnationality of the lived religion of his flock. They were fed on material sacraments, piously donated to build material churches, and humbly made physical pilgrimage to the tombs of honored saints, considering them special friends of Christ.

In 415 seekers claimed to have discovered the tomb of Stephen the Deacon (Acts 6–7) in the Holy Land. Portions of his relics were sent all over the Christian world; some found a home in the town of Uzalis, near Hippo. Pilgrims streamed to the tomb to ask the saint to beseech God for healing. Augustine was astonished and convinced by these healings—so impressed, he essentially added a sidebar to record them in the midst of *City of God* (426):

Likewise Eleusinus, a man of tribunitian rank among us, laid his infant son, who had died, on the shrine of the martyr . . . and, after prayer, which he poured forth there with many tears, he took up his child alive. . . . I am so pressed by the promise of finishing this work, that I cannot record all the miracles I know. . . .

For when I saw, in our own times, frequent signs of the presence of divine powers similar to those which had been given of old, I desired that narratives might be written, judging that the multitude should not remain ignorant of these things. It is not yet two years since these relics were first brought to Hippo and the miracles that have been published amount to almost 70. . . .

To what do these miracles witness, but to this faith which preaches Christ risen in the flesh, and ascended with the same into heaven? For this faith the martyrs died, and can now ask these benefits from the Lord in whose name they were slain. . . . What is said to be done by the martyrs is done not by their operation, but only by their prayer and request. . . .

At the end of his life, Augustine had come full circle. While still one of the church's great thinkers, he had also returned to the simple faith of his long-suffering mother.

PERFORMING A VOW

Such practices and beliefs surrounding healing miracles endured throughout the Middle Ages and are still lived out in Catholic and Orthodox traditions today. Thousands of miracle stories from every century of the Middle Ages echo the healings at St. Stephen's shrine, many of which Catholic authorities diligently investigated beginning in the thirteenth century. Miracle stories were one of the most popular literary genres before the Reformation. Priests repeated them in sermons, pilgrims sought them, and—with a sense of vital living faith—ordinary Christians expected healing from a



kind and loving God who listened to his friends (most especially his own mother).

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)—another of Christian history’s great minds—crystallized the Catholic doctrine of healing miracles. He admitted that miracles could be wrought through the intercession of saints and living holy men and women; yet, because such things are absolutely beyond the order of nature, they are produced only by God’s power. He believed that this doctrine safeguarded the worship due to God alone from the honor granted to people based on their relationship to God.

Further, he thought that miracles should have a religious end or purpose—awakening the soul to the invisible things of God through marvelous healing of bodies or minds. A healing is not an end in itself, which is why nearly all miracle stories include the performance of some vow or the pledge to do some good or holy work. In that sense the miracle performed is for building up the church and for the salvation of souls on earth. The healing of bodies points to their glorification at the resurrection of the dead.

SIGNS AND WONDERS

One of Thomas Aquinas’s contemporary Dominican confreres was Peter of Verona (1205–1252), who died a martyr at the hands of dualist heretics (who denied the goodness of the body and the creation of the material world by God, and so rejected bodily healing miracles out of hand). Many stories tell that Peter performed wonders during his life:

One day when [Peter] was preaching in Milan . . . a mute youth was led to him by the piety of the crowd. He placed his finger—which had been consecrated to confect the Body of Christ—in the boy’s mouth. Upon doing this, his tongue was restored to health and the chains of speech were released. He asked the boy—who had been mute for nearly 10 years—what he had in his mouth. “Your finger,” he said, and at once he broke out in abundant thanksgiving in the presence of all, and returned an offering to Christ from his lips so newly opened. . . . The Lord reveals many signs and wonders for His glory through the saints.

MIRACLE WORKER One of the many miracles attributed to Peter of Verona was this healing of a young man’s leg (*left*); Peter is honored today with his compatriot Thomas Aquinas at the church of San Pablo in Valladolid (*above, l-r*).

Another story from after Peter’s death reads:

In the year 1314, the infant son of the merchant Peter de Galbato [died]. . . . His father and mother had seen many mighty miracles done for the brothers and sisters of their confraternity on account of the feast of Blessed Peter Martyr, so they began to call upon his great suffrages with tears, vowing an altar cloth, an image, and a candle to him. And when their son was not immediately raised the parents . . . were exceedingly saddened, and others began to say to them, “Why did we not succeed?” “Why did we not bear him hence for burial?” “What do you wish us to do?”

. . . Wailing for the resuscitation of their son, praying to Blessed Peter Martyr, [they] said, “Truly we believe and confess that God will restore him to us by the merits of Blessed Peter Martyr,” and when they had uttered these words, not ceasing to cry and to pray to the saint, suddenly the infant revived. And the father and mother carried the boy to visit the relics of the martyr on the vigil of the Holy Cross, as they had vowed, and promised to make more offerings at his tomb, giving thanks to God and the Blessed Martyr.

From the earliest days of Christianity, faithful Christians such as these had sought healing at the shrines and tombs of their beloved saints, who they knew were the special friends of God himself. They fervently believed that the God whose body was broken on the cross, and the martyrs who united their sufferings to his, knew well how to sympathize and aid their devotees in this “vale of tears.” **CH**

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“We have prayed three people on the brink of death back to life”

HEALING IN THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

Ronald K. Rittgers

In the spring of 1542, Martin Luther (1483–1546) remarked to his friends, “We have prayed three people on the brink of death back to life: me, my Katie, and also Philip, whose eyes had already become lifeless.” Two years previously in June of 1540, Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), Luther’s friend, colleague, and right-hand man, had lain deathly ill in Weimar, Germany, some 120 miles southwest of Wittenberg.

Melanchthon had departed Wittenberg for an important meeting in the distant Alsace region but halted well short of his destination, unable to travel further and too sick to return. The cause of his illness is unknown.

When Luther received word of his friend’s dire state, he rushed to be beside him. He simply could not believe that God would allow “Master Philip” to die, for simply too much divinely ordained work of reformation remained to be done. In Luther’s mind Melanchthon’s deep learning, eloquence, and strong evangelical faith were essential to the continuing spread of the gospel. He had to recover!

THIS DIVINE INSTRUMENT

As Luther entered the room where the lifeless Melanchthon lay, he cried out, “May God protect us! Look how the devil has mistreated this divine instrument.” Luther felt this diabolical mistreatment personally, taking it as an attack against him and his ministry, as well as against his friend.

He walked to the window and fervently prayed for Melanchthon’s healing, displaying striking boldness with the Almighty: “The Lord God had to stretch out his hand to me. For I threw the entire sack [of Scripture] in front of his door and rubbed his ears with all the promises to hear prayers that I was able to recall from the Holy Scripture, so that he had to hear me, were I to believe all those other promises.” He then took his friend’s hand and said, “Be of good comfort, Philip, you shall not die!”

Luther spoke biblical promises over Melanchthon, assuring him that God does not desire the death of the sinner but that he turn and live (Ezek. 18:23,32) and that



“YOU SHALL NOT DIE” Artist Gustav Koenig, c. 1850, imagines the scene of Melanchthon’s healing, with Luther praying by the window.

God works death but also life, wounding yet also healing (Deut. 32:39). When he had finished, Melanchthon began to revive.

Luther was overjoyed. In a letter to his wife, Katie, he exclaimed, “Master Philip truly had been dead, and really like Lazarus, has risen from death. God, the dear Father, listens to our prayer. This we [can] see and touch [with our hands], yet we still do not believe it.”

Other accounts also tell of Luther praying for healing and of the sick being restored to health. When he received word that fellow reformer Friedrich Myconius (1490–1546) lay on his deathbed, Luther wrote to him, commanding him to recover and assuring him that he was praying for the same. Myconius lived six more years!

Early Protestant guides for pastors urged them to pray for healing, and Protestant devotional



literature encouraged the laity to do the same. One of the most famous works of Protestant devotion, Johann Habermann's (1516–1590) *Prayer Booklet* (1565), even contains sample prayers for healing:

And if it is not contrary to your holy will and the salvation of their souls, please help the sick to recover, strengthening them and making them healthy in body and soul, for if you will it, you can certainly heal them completely.

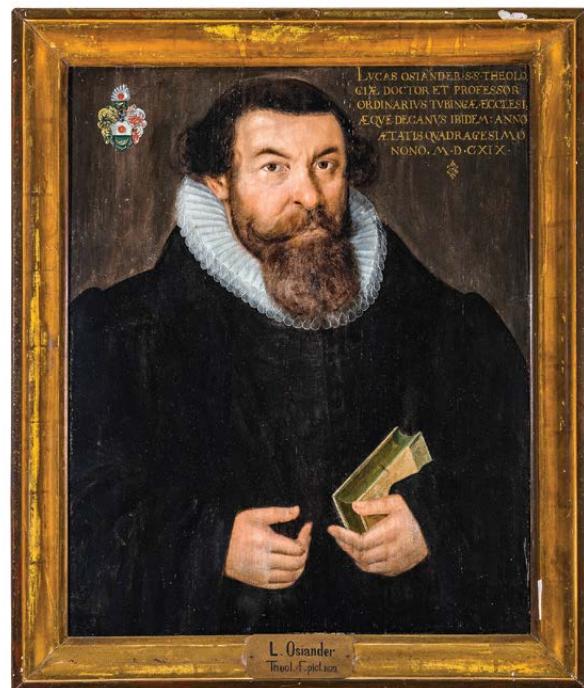
Lay Protestants sought (and appeared to have received) bodily healing from miraculous wells, including one at Bad Pyrmont in Germany, with their pastors' approval. The biblical precedent of healings at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1–15) helped to legitimate a practice that otherwise would have been deemed pagan.

Protestants believed the medieval church had veered away from Scripture, relying too much on human teaching and practices. Scripture contains numerous accounts of divine healing; faithfulness to the Word thus required Protestants to embrace such supernatural intervention, even if they disagreed with Catholics on how to understand and seek it.

THROWING OUT THE BABY

But the story of healing in the Reformation is not so simple. Notwithstanding the continued Protestant practice of praying for divine healing, many scholars argue that the Protestant assault on Catholic "superstition" effectively threw the baby out with the bathwater with respect to divine intervention.

As Protestants sought to reform traditional beliefs and practices, many of which promised divine healing, they fostered a kind of hesitancy—even skepticism—about healing miracles. In their zeal to refute claims of healing associated with saints and relics, for example, Protestants significantly restricted belief in supernatural intervention and miracles.



IF IT BE YOUR WILL Johann Habermann's *Prayer Booklet* (left) provided model healing prayers.

"UNCTION HAD TO CEASE" Lucas Osiander (above) argued that James 5 only applied to the early church.

A good case in point is Protestant exegesis of James 5:13–18. This classic passage serves as the foundation for the Catholic sacrament of unction (see pp. 8–11).

In the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), Luther argued that the Epistle of James was not apostolic (he elsewhere called it an "epistle of straw"); that the anointing in James 5 was for the sick and not the dying; and that experience shows that the promise of healing in James 5 is rarely fulfilled—which cannot be true of a sacrament, for the divine promise attached to sacraments must always hold true. Luther also maintained that the healing rite envisioned in James 5 was for the early church only; the church of the sixteenth century must welcome suffering.

Later in the century, Lutheran pastor Lucas Osiander (1534–1604) followed Luther's lead regarding anointing the sick with oil:

It was a custom in the primitive church that when Christians . . . still had the gift of healing, they would draw near to the sick and anoint them with oil, pray, and also thus restore them to health. This custom had begun with the apostles concerning which Mark writes, "And going forth they were preaching that people should repent, and they were casting out many demons, and they were anointing many sick people with oil, and they were being healed," Mark [6:12–13]. This custom of anointing was rightly observed in the church as long as

COUNSEL FOR REPENTANCE Gustav Koenig imagines Luther being consoled during illness during his monastic days (*right*), and an anonymous 19th-c. artist pictures Calvin on his deathbed (*below*).

it was gleaming with miracles. And with the cessation of miracles unction also had to cease.

According to Osiander, the sixteenth-century Lutheran Church was no longer “gleaming with miracles.” The father of Reformed Protestantism, John Calvin (1509–1564), also believed that the gift of healing was for the apostolic age only. In his commentary on James 5:14, Calvin maintained:

I will only say this, that this passage is wickedly and ignorantly perverted when extreme unction is established by it and is called a sacrament to be perpetually observed in the Church. I indeed allow that it was used as a sacrament by the disciples of Christ (for I cannot agree with those who think that it was medicine), but as the reality of this sign continued only for a time in the Church, the symbol also must have been only for a time....

Nothing is more absurd than to call that a sacrament which is void and does not really present to us that which it signifies. That the gift of healing was temporary, all are constrained to allow, and events clearly prove: then the sign of it ought not to be deemed perpetual....

APISSH AND ELFISH

A generation later English pastor Richard Turnbull (d. 1593) sounded a similar note. In his treatment of James 5, he argued that the age of miracles had ended with the close of the New Testament and did not extend to Elizabethan England:

Our adversaries the papists, by an apish [foolish] and elfish [superstitious] imitation of the apostles, contrary to their meaning, retain the sign, the thing that has ceased. And although healing was taken away from the church long ago, yet they still anoint, which they also make a sacrament, and call it extreme unction. They minister it to the sick, not in sign of health and recovery, as the apostle did, but when there is no hope of life in them....

[James] speaks accordingly as the gift of healing was in force in his time, and he binds men and women to this word for as long as this gift continued, not for all times, as the papists do....

When in the apostles’ time the gift of healing was in force, they were told to send for the elders of the church, that they might pray for the sick and anoint them with oil, so that they might recover; so now



(the gift being taken away) in our great and extreme sickness, we are to send for the elders of the church, the pastors, the ministers, the preachers of the word, with the faithful brothers, so that by them we may be taught that the cause of our sickness is our sin and so that they may inform us in the doctrine of unfeigned repentance and may comfort and counsel us in our extreme need, and finally may pour out prayers to God for the assistance of his grace and the increase of all needful spiritual virtues in us, as well as for the removal of our pains and sickness, as shall seem best to God’s heavenly wisdom.

Once we have done this, we may use all other lawful means of medicine or the like for our recovery in the fear of God.

But this Protestant cessationist narrative also requires nuance and qualification. Protestants believed that sickness and health were in God’s hands, and therefore,



“LITTLE MIRACLES” Caspar Huberinus (*left*) was one of many reformers who argued that the deeper meaning of Jesus’s miracles involves faith and forgiveness.

BETTER THAN GOLD Post-Reformation artists continued to be inspired by healing miracles; here Rembrandt sketches Peter and John healing a beggar (*below*, Acts 3:1–11).



anytime a person recovered from an illness God was always to be thanked for the healing he provided.

They believed in the reality of the spiritual realm, which includes angels and demons, and, as we saw in Luther’s response to Melancthon’s illness, they firmly held that the devil could be the cause of sickness and that God could thwart his diabolical designs. (Protestants did not attribute all sickness to sin, as Turnbull suggested.)

And Protestants held out the possibility that God responds to prayers for healing. Even as Luther opposed extreme unction, he maintained true faith could heal sickness, for faith can do anything. While reformers thought the New Testament gift of healing was confined to the apostolic age and not available in their own day, they still believed God heals the sick, although no longer with the frequency recorded in Scripture.

THE APOSTOLIC GOSPEL

Protestants also continued to believe in miracles. In their minds the recovery and spread of the gospel through the Reformation was the greatest miracle Christians had experienced in centuries. When Catholics accused them of not having miracles to confirm their allegedly biblical Christianity, Protestants responded that they did not need such miracles because they had simply recovered apostolic Christianity and the apostolic gospel.

The purpose of the New Testament miracles, they argued, is to confirm the gospel; as they already had the gospel, they did not need the confirming miracles. Calvin made this point explicitly in a prefatory address to his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536).

For Protestants the miraculous recovery of the gospel worked a further wonder: the healing of anguished souls. Only the gospel could provide peace and comfort for consciences deeply troubled by guilt for sin, for only it gives the assurance of divine forgiveness that such consciences require.

Caspar Huberinus (1500–1553), a Lutheran theologian and pastor, explained that when Jesus healed the Roman official’s son (John 4:47–54), this “little miracle” corresponded to the official’s weak faith; the real miracle occurred when the official believed in Jesus and experienced healing for his soul through forgiveness of his sin.

Protestantism sought to provide deliverance from the hell of a guilty conscience: this is the healing its leaders earnestly sought for themselves and their contemporaries. Reformers believed they had found this healing in the gospel, newly recovered through the ministries of Luther, Calvin, and others. They looked to the gospel to cure the most debilitating illness of their age—guilt—with a healing they saw as a wonder from heaven.

When assessing healing in Christianity through the centuries, it is important to understand what our brothers and sisters in the past saw as the most important affliction of their age. One can regret the way the reformers placed limits on the New Testament gift of healing—I regret it—but one should also not lose sight of the spiritual healing many experienced through the Protestant gospel, a healing they saw as nothing short of miraculous. **CH**

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Miracles of power and grace

HEALING IN THE GREAT AWAKENING

Thomas S. Kidd and Samuel L. Young

Mercy Wheeler (1718–1819) was confined to her bed from the age of eight to twenty-five after a childhood malarial fever. Though her body wasted away and she lost her voice entirely, in brief moments of strength, she called on others—especially young people—to learn from her suffering. She proclaimed through her writing that though life is fragile and short, God is faithful even through illness. Her story caused quite a stir as leaders of the Great Awakening debated the Holy Spirit's role in the church.

SOMETHING INCREDIBLE

In early 1743, when Wheeler was 25, her condition slowly began to improve. She could sit up in bed and move a bit with crutches, but was still too weak to walk unassisted. In May of that year, she asked a local Congregationalist minister, Hezekiah Lord (1698–1761), to preach at her family's house.

Wheeler became confident God would do something incredible, repeating the words of John 11:40—"If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God"—as she waited for Lord to arrive. When he came he preached on Isaiah 57:15—"to revive the spirit of the humble."

As she listened Wheeler believed God meant these words especially for her. Affected by this conviction, she began to shake involuntarily. Attendees carried her back to her bed, convinced that she needed rest. After a brief moment of doubt, Wheeler became even more confident that God was healing her.

She stood up. Her disconnected tendons and atrophied muscles filled with new strength, and she walked around the room several times. As astonished witnesses watched, Wheeler yelled, "Bless the Lord Jesus, who has healed me!" (She lived to the age of 100.)

Wheeler's dramatic healing occurred amid what historians call the Great Awakening, a series of religious revivals that began in the 1730s and continued throughout the century across North America, Britain, and continental Europe.

Ministers urged people to repent of their sins and devote their lives to righteous living and pious activities.



FAMILY MOURNING Prayer for divine healing seemed very relevant in an era when medicine had uncertain results and many people died young.

Revivalists described this process as conversion, the "new birth" that Jesus proclaimed in John 3, and preaching this gospel became the basis for a transdenominational evangelical movement.

All evangelicals acknowledged the Holy Spirit's role in conversion, but revivalists in North America disagreed about the extent of the Spirit's work. Should they expect the dramatic miracles and spiritual signs that marked the apostolic era? Two clear camps formed, the moderates and the radical evangelicals.

Moderates emphasized the spiritual healing of conversion as the Holy Spirit's chief work. God is sovereign and can bestow a "special providence" of physical healing whenever he wishes. But Christians ought not to expect instantaneous, miraculous healings.

Radicals, however, saw the revivals as a new kind of apostolic era. The Holy Spirit is instigating conversions, yes—but also dreams, visions, and powerful healings. The restoration of Wheeler (and others like her) brought

the disagreements between moderates and radicals about the Holy Spirit's work to the forefront.

Moderate evangelicals found it difficult to deny the connection they observed between spiritual renewal and physical health. In his congregation in Northampton, Massachusetts, Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) noted that during times of revival, “Satan . . . seemed unusually restrained.” Conversions appeared to improve mental and physical health within the community. As revival weakened, melancholy, depression, and sickness returned.

John Moorhead (1703–1773), a Scots-Irish Presbyterian minister in Boston, recorded several instances of individuals whose conversions led to dramatic physical recoveries. For Moorhead these healings validated the

revival as a “legitimate work of God.”

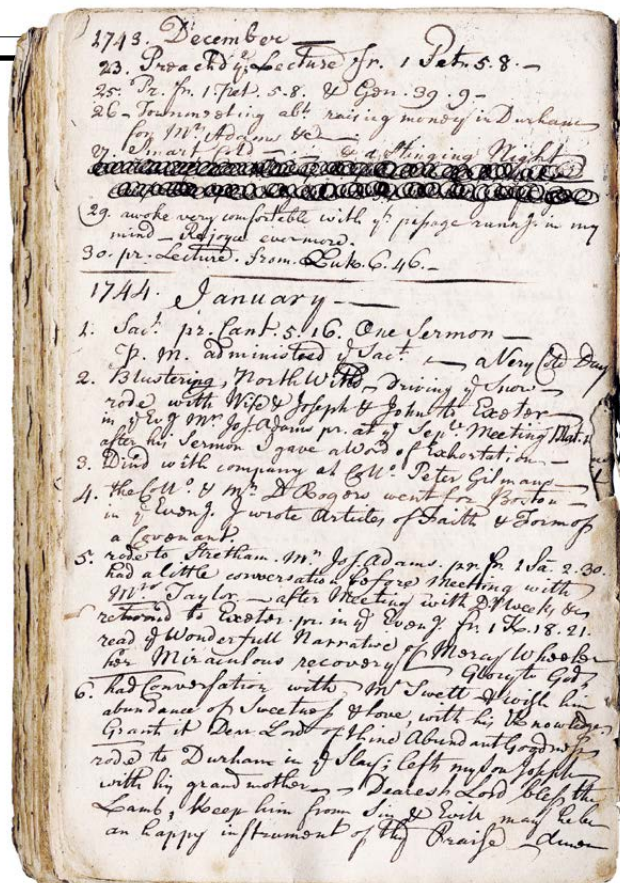
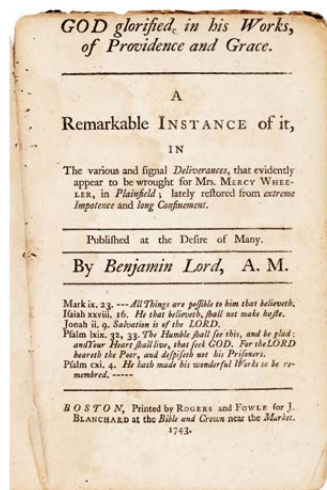
In addition to restoration of health, revivals even in the moderate-led churches often saw people experiencing trances as well as bodily fits and convulsions. Moderates consciously chose not to use the word “miracle” to describe these manifestations of the Spirit. For many Protestants of the time, instant healings were a phenomenon characteristic of Roman Catholic superstition.

George Whitefield (1714–1770), the most celebrated evangelist of the period, spent his entire career denying this kind of “enthusiasm.” Though he believed that miracles and healings had confirmed the legitimacy of Christianity during the apostolic era, he thought such workings of the Spirit were unnecessary now. Spiritual health for eternity is most important, and the miracle of conversion is the chief work of the Holy Spirit.

GOD GLORIFIED IN HIS WORKS

Wheeler's healing challenged the moderates' hesitancy to affirm miracles. Moderate Congregationalist pastor Benjamin Lord (1694–1784, cousin to Hezekiah) wrote the most popular account of Wheeler's healing from his firsthand perspective. In a sermon two weeks after the event, Lord refrained from calling the healing a miracle. In his published account of Wheeler's healing, *God Glorified in His Works* (1743), Lord reminded his readers of Jesus's healings, “when the Miracles of Power, in healing Men's Bodies, were attended with those of Grace, in the healing of their Souls.”

Rather than celebrating Wheeler's healing as a miracle, Lord understood it as an inspiration to the greater miracle: the conversion of unbelieving souls. Lord



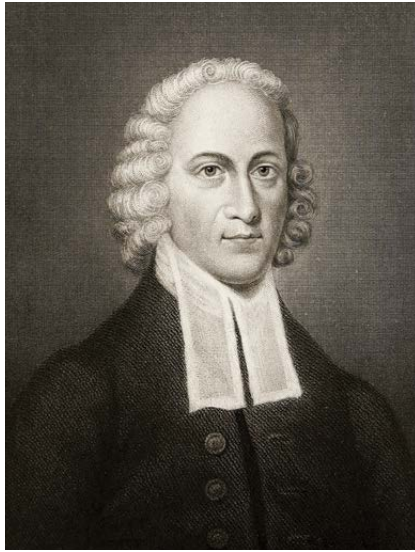
EVIDENCE Among the credible witnesses to Wheeler's healing were pastor Nicholas Gilman (who wrote about it in his diary, above) and preacher Benjamin Lord who published a book about it (left).

understood the mind of his eighteenth-century readers and their suspicion of miracle stories: a letter to the editor of the *Boston Evening-Post* soon cast doubt on the revivals and Wheeler's healing: “However such Miracles may go down in Popish Countries, I trust they will be but little regarded in this Land of Light.”

A revival supporter responded by pointing out the many examples of healing in Protestant churches throughout the centuries. The *Evening-Post* writer replied again, clarifying that he did not doubt Wheeler's healing. He only questioned whether it was accomplished by “miraculous Operation” rather than natural or providential means.

Eliphalet Adams (1677–1753), a friend of Benjamin Lord, wrote to him too, concerned about the effects of Wheeler's experience. Adams believed that pastors should expect spiritual healing, but was worried about radical awakeners who would read Lord's description of Wheeler and begin expecting similar physical signs and wonders in their churches.

Wheeler's experience was unusual in the level of publicity it generated, but it was not unique. The New England Baptist minister Isaac Backus (1724–1806) wrote about another bedridden woman, Mary Read, who also was instantly healed. On July 24, 1769, Read



AWAKENED Jonathan Edwards (left), Isaac Backus (middle), and John Wesley (right) observed instances of spiritual renewal and physical healing.

heard a voice say three times, “Daughter be of good Cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee, arise and walk,” and she did just that.

Indeed, reports of miraculous healings were so prevalent in the Great Awakening that even relatively moderate revivalist John Wesley (1703–1791), leader of the English Methodist movement, wondered if apostolic-era miracles were returning to churches. His missionaries reported diseases and maladies healed instantly through prayer, and his own brother Charles (1707–1788) experienced deliverance from lung inflammation during a Methodist prayer meeting.

WHEN HEALING BACKFIRED

Radical awakeners were more likely to embrace the possibility of miraculous healings in their ministries. Whereas moderates held to the traditional belief that God could use sickness to build godliness in suffering, radicals understood bodily weakness as demonic attacks or divine judgment. When James Davenport (1716–1757), the most notorious radical minister in New England, suffered from a leg infection in 1743, he blamed his poor health on Satan. Davenport concluded he had embraced a “false Spirit” and God was punishing him for it. After much prayer his leg was healed.

Radicals’ confidence in miraculous healing could backfire, however. In 1763 New England itinerant Charles-Jeffrey Smith (1740–1770) believed that the Lord would instantly heal his severely damaged eye. Devoting an entire day to prayer, he woke up the next morning still in pain. Though he still entertained the possibility of gradual healing, Smith never recovered and died by apparent suicide seven years later.

Moderate and radical evangelicals agreed that the Holy Spirit was working in their churches, but they disagreed about the expectation of dramatic healings.

Moderates saw Wheeler’s healing as a confirmation of her spiritual vitality. Radicals heralded it as a sign that the apostolic-era miracles were returning.

Benjamin Lord represented the moderate position in his assessment of Wheeler almost a decade after the healing. He noted that, though healed, Wheeler’s body was still marked by a “weakly Constitution.” More significant to Lord was her “unshaken constancy in Religion.” In his opinion her physical health was unrelated to her spiritual well-being. Most remarkable about her was not that she was healed, but rather that God used her example to encourage faith in others.

Radical evangelicals tried, unsuccessfully, to lure Wheeler away from her Congregationalist church. Though they failed, Wheeler still served as an inspiration for radicals decades after her healing.

Arguing that the sign of miracles was returning, radical New England minister Jacob Johnson pointed his readers to Wheeler: “See an impotent, whose feet and ancle [*sic*] bones were all disjoined, restored, by no other means but faith and prayer.” Early evangelicals agreed about the Holy Spirit’s power to heal suffering souls, but could not agree on whether to expect the Spirit to heal suffering bodies. **CH**

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Seeing what Jesus can do

THE BLUMHARDTS AND THE HEALING OF CREATION

Christian T. Collins Winn

Johann Christoph Blumhardt (1805–1880) did not much care for his parishioner Göttliebin Dittus (1815–1872). The woman was a bother, coming to him repeatedly with disturbing tales of nightly visions. Blumhardt, a Lutheran pastor in the quiet farming village of Möttlingen in southwestern Germany not far from Stuttgart, had more pressing matters to deal with. He even described Dittus as a repellent personality.

But the woman was persistent. When her relatives and the doctor got involved, Blumhardt had little choice but to take her seriously and try to help. In so doing he started something far greater than he had imagined.

Christian history is full of remarkable things happening in out-of-the-way places. The Protestant Reformation began in 1517 in Wittenberg, an inconsequential town in a remote province of the Holy Roman Empire (see *CH* issue #139). The Pentecostal movement was born in 1906 in an old, ramshackle building in a gritty part of Los Angeles (see pp. 34–37 and *CH* issue #58). And Christianity itself started in the Galilee region, the backwaters of Roman Palestine.

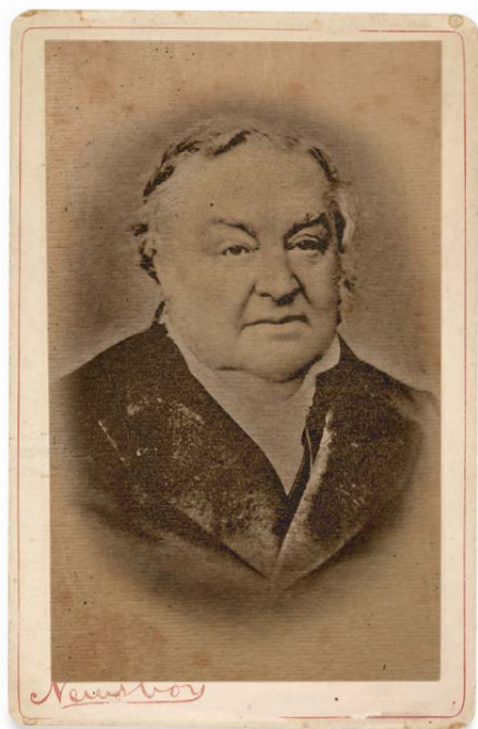
The healing ministry of Johann Christoph and his son Christoph Friedrich (1842–1919) began in just such an

MOUNTAIN RETREAT The Blumhardts began their ministry in Möttlingen (*bottom*, in a 17th-c. forest registry book) and later opened a retreat center at Bad Boll (*top*).

out-of-the-way place. But their unique understanding of the gospel of God's reign went on to influence the modern missionary movement, the ecumenical movement, Pentecostalism, the nineteenth-century healing movement, and even Swiss religious socialism. Great theologians such as Karl Barth (1886–1968), Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), and Jürgen Moltmann (b. 1926) all acknowledged the influence of the Blumhardts on their theology and public witness.

“WE HAVE SEEN ENOUGH”

The elder Blumhardt came to Möttlingen in 1838. His first years of ministry were relatively quiet, filled with the basic tasks of rural pastoral life in the nineteenth century. This state of affairs began to change in 1841, when Dittus came to him expressing alarm about her nocturnal spiritual experiences.



CARING PAIR Johann Christoph (*above*) and Christoph Friedrich (*above right*) were both concerned about how the healing of individuals relates to the wider creation.

HEALING SCENE Möttlingen today (*right*) looks little changed from the 19th c.—or the 17th.



After Blumhardt's initial visit to the Dittus apartment near the village square, accompanied by the mayor and other members of the village council, it became apparent to him that these experiences were of a most nefarious nature. Additional visits confirmed this impression:

It became clear to me that something demonic was at work here, and I was pained that no remedy had been found for the horrific affair. As I pondered this, indignation seized me—I believe it was an inspiration from above.

I walked purposefully over to Göttliebin and grasped her cramped hands. Then, trying to hold them together as best as possible (she was unconscious), I shouted into her ear, "Göttliebin, put your hands together and pray, 'Lord Jesus, help me!' We have seen enough of what the devil can do, now let us see what the Lord Jesus can do!"

From this point on, the battle was engaged. For the next 18 months, into Advent of 1843, Blumhardt consistently and tirelessly ministered to Dittus. He would eventually describe strange paranormal activities and phenomena when he reported on the event to his superiors—noting that his only tools for combating the forces holding the woman in bondage were prayer, fasting, and the reading of Scripture. Finally, like the breaking of a fever, on the

evening of December 28, 1843, the struggle came to a dramatic conclusion:

The most moving moment came, which no one can possibly imagine adequately who was not an eye or ear witness. At two o'clock in the morning the supposed angel of Satan roared, while [Dittus] bent her head and upper part of her back over the backrest of the chair, with a voice of which one could hardly have believed a human throat capable, "Jesus is Victor! Jesus is Victor!"—words that sounded so far and were understood at such a distance that they made an unforgettable impression on many people.

Now the power and strength of the demon seemed to be broken more with every moment. It became ever more quiet and calm, could only make a few motions and finally disappeared unnoticed like [when] the life-light of a dying person goes out, however not until eight o'clock in the morning.

JESUS IS VICTOR

The events connected with the case of Dittus led to a regional revival marked by physical, emotional, and spiritual healings. The town swelled as people came to experience the



BY THE HAND OF GOD This relief from a pulpit at Saint James the Greater, a parish church in Gottsdorff, Germany, dates from the late 18th c. and shows Jesus performing an exorcism.

revival firsthand and proclaim the same rallying cry as Dittus: "Jesus is Victor!" However, the revival caused controversy with Blumhardt's superiors, and eventually he left Möttlingen for the village of Bad Boll, where a wealthy benefactor purchased a small health spa for Blumhardt's ministry.

At Bad Boll, Blumhardt established and oversaw a spiritual retreat center, which his son took over after the elder Blumhardt's death in 1880. Bad Boll became almost synonymous with healing in the German-speaking world, and the ministry of both Blumhardts impacted other movements and individuals in France and the United Kingdom, and even the American healing movement of the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Though the elder Blumhardt has been more readily associated with stories of healing, both Johann Christoph and Christoph Friedrich reflected a great deal on the meaning of healing. Both are described as unpretentious and down-to-earth in their approach, choosing to combine spiritual practices with homeopathic techniques.

They did not develop or use elaborate rituals in their practice. Rather they most commonly employed prayer, fasting, the reading of Scripture, and the laying on of hands in faith. Neither Johann Christoph nor Christoph Friedrich believed that healing is guaranteed, and both stressed that healing is often the result of a process as opposed to a singular intervention.

NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

Three other aspects characterized the Blumhardts' theology of healing. The most obvious was their recognition that the

healing of the body signifies that God cares not only for the soul, but also for the wholeness of each person. The healing of the body, when such an event happens, signifies that God's concern is for the human person considered as a whole. Salvation includes both the forgiveness of sins and the restoration of our embodied existence.

The second unique aspect of the Blumhardts' reflections on healing was the conviction that both sickness and healing could be doorways to solidarity with the suffering. When the elder Blumhardt prayed for healing for a specific illness, it became a moment in which to pray for all who suffered from the same illness—indeed for all who suffered in general. Yet many who are sick cannot see past their own pain, much to the dismay of the Blumhardts. Christoph became disgusted by the attitudes of some visitors to Bad Boll in the late nineteenth century; he found them excessively focused on individual needs and desires.

Christoph viewed this myopia as short-circuiting the broader vision and context of healing. His inability to convince people to widen their vision actually led him to stop praying for healing in any sort of public fashion in the 1890s, though he would continue to pray for healing when asked privately.

The last point has to do with the broader context in which the Blumhardts understood the events of healing. For both of them, healing could only properly be understood in an eschatological context. Each event of healing is a provisional sign of what God intends to do for all of creation, when the new heaven and the new earth would finally be unveiled at the end of all things.

When the first events of healing happened in Möttlingen, and then later during the revival and at Bad Boll, they often took Blumhardt and others by surprise. This characteristic gave them an eschatological coloring—these events of healing were signs of the nearness of God's reign. Johann Christoph Blumhardt stated,

We will be consoled by his compassion because we already see signs of Jesus's approach: dawn breaks into our night. Many sick will be healed, many of the desolate will receive help, and many will be free who seem overpowered by the enemy! . . . Countless people will recognize that a healing Savior is close by.

As such, to pray for healing is also to pray for the coming of God's kingdom and the healing of all creation. This hope filled their approach to healing, allowing those who longed for wholeness to see that their desire is connected to the desire of all people, indeed of creation itself, to enter into God's shalom and experience a truly flourishing life. **CH**

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Marching to Zion

STORIES FROM A NINETEENTH-CENTURY TRANSATLANTIC FAITH-HEALING MOVEMENT

Joel Cabrita

Looking up the rickety stairs of the run-down building on Pitt Street in Melbourne, Australia, in 1886, Mrs. Spinks was deeply afraid. She had been suffering near-uncontrollable vaginal bleeding for months, accompanied by painful stomach cramps. She had consulted physicians—including the notorious Dr. James Beaney, who Melbourne society whispered had murdered a barmaid by operating upon her blind drunk—but none of these eminent male doctors had been able to help her.

They had only prodded her painfully with terrifying metal implements and recommended grisly sound-ing surgeries. She was left penniless and hopeless. Then she unexpectedly received a recommendation from her neighbor in the cramped building where she lived in Collingwood, one of Melbourne's new urban slums. Her neighbor swore by the marvelous new faith-healing doctor all of Collingwood was seeing.

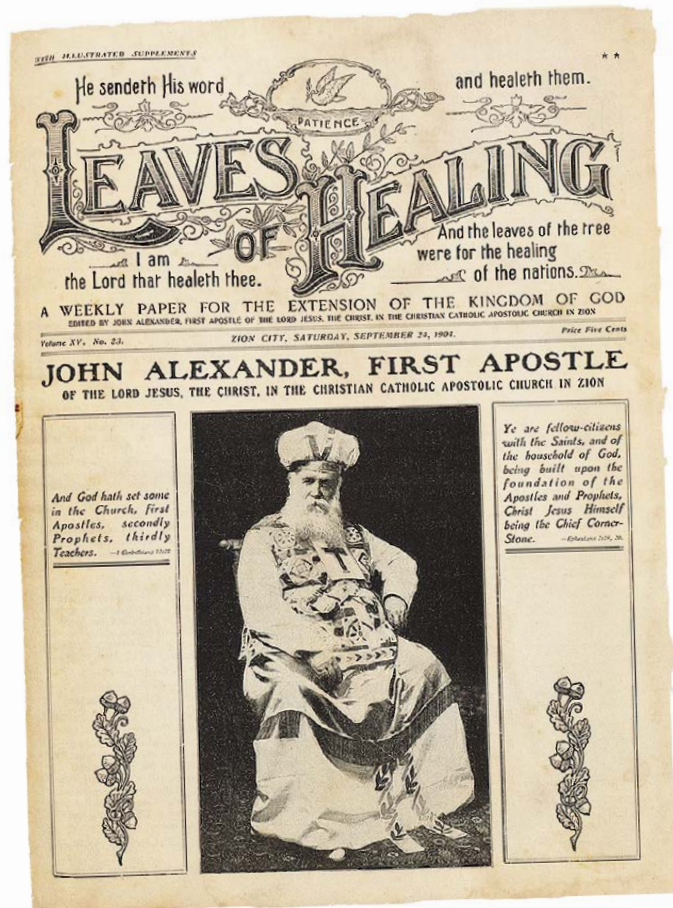
Dr. Alexander Dowie, a charismatic Scot, had left the Presbyterian Church to found his own Free Christian Tabernacle. Any Sunday, and several weekday evenings, shabbily dressed invalids could be seen pouring into the tabernacle on Pitt Street to undergo the electrifying experience of Alexander Dowie or his wife, Jane, laying hands on them and praying for their bodily healing in the name of "Zion"—the coming kingdom of God.

PHYSICAL CHRISTIANITY

Melbourne—only declared a city in 1847—had seen new slums sprout up almost overnight, overcrowded and with terrible sanitation. Disease and bodily suffering abounded; churches and philanthropic associations were vocal in sanctimonious poor-shaming, recommending abstention from drink and saloons, better hygiene, and, above all, increased church attendance. Dowie, however, offered Melbourne's working classes a different solution. Instead of moralizing and shaking fingers, his new church offered the promise of *bodily* healing to a community of broken-down and dispirited women and men.

Like the rambunctious Salvation Army and its belittled street processions, Zion was part of a broader interest in divine healing among late nineteenth-century Protestants who aimed at saving body as well as soul. Many advised true believers to steer clear of doctors and medicine and to rely on the therapeutic powers of faithful prayer.

Where more conventional evangelical churches bemoaned the urban poor as intemperate and morally



HEALING THE NATIONS "Catholic" in Dowie's church name signaled ecumenism; "Apostolic" hearkened back to the early church.

dissolute, Dowie taught them that full salvation—body and soul—was just within their grasp if they only trusted in God. They did not need to spend hard-earned money on expensive physicians whose cures were largely ineffectual before the wide acceptance of germ theory.

In 1888 Alexander, Jane, and their two children set sail from Melbourne for San Francisco. Like other Protestant healers, Dowie was inspired by missionary zeal. After all, what could convince the unconverted as powerfully as a healing miracle? After a brief sojourn in San Francisco where hostile established churches drove them away, the Dowies settled in Chicago in 1892, drawn by the impending huge world's fair along with hundreds of Protestant clergy who flocked to the city in search of souls.

Dowie decided the occasion offered an unmissable opportunity for divine healing to take root in the

BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE Though this 1850 painting (right) shows rural beauty in Melbourne, the area was quickly transforming into an urban hub.



tobacco were all banned. Zion City was proclaimed as a “home for all nations,” and over 70 nationalities lived there, including numerous African Americans with senior church positions. Dowie ultimately aimed to start a string of faith-healing Zion Cities throughout the world, sending missionaries to China, Japan, Mexico, India, Australia, New Zealand, and the South African Transvaal territory. There, in the 15-year-old gold mining metropolis of Johannesburg, Zion Church succeeded.

ANOTHER URBAN HUB

Johannesburg resembled Melbourne and Chicago. Silicosis from inhaling dust particles from the mines and devastating injuries due to rockfalls and other mishaps were common. The city was also a cosmopolitan labor hub, drawing workers from Cornwall to California to Australia to southern Africa, including Portuguese East Africa (today Mozambique) and Nyasaland (Malawi).

The new Zion Tabernacle in downtown Johannesburg became notorious for its racially mixed faith-healing services. In the wake of the South African War (1899–1902)—a devastating conflict between Boer and Briton for control of Johannesburg’s gold—Dowie’s cosmopolitan message of reconciliation between races had particular resonance. Zion’s healing services often hosted tearful statements of reconciliation between these two formerly warring White “races.”

But Zion’s greatest popularity lay with Johannesburg’s Black South Africans. The church’s promise to transcend race and ethnicity appealed to Black citizens faced with political disenfranchisement and dispossession by White colonial authorities. Over the decades Johannesburg’s place as a magnet for African laborers from across southern Africa helped transform Zionism into a church with continent-wide reach and millions of members. Today an estimated 15 million southern Africans belong to a Zionist church.

In Johannesburg another young working-class woman was drawn to Zion in the early 1900s, also suffering from what she delicately called “female trouble.” Meta Budulwako was a young South African woman in domestic service to a White employer, part of the small class of educated Christian Africans disenfranchised by racist legislation. She was astounded when her White employer—a Zionist—laid hands on her and fervently prayed for her healing, a move that exemplified the countercultural, multiracial ethos of Dowie’s church.

SAVED AND HEALED Meta Budulwako’s (right) testimony, published by Dowie, noted: “I am determined by the grace of God to be true to Zion, no matter what others may say or do.”



Budulwako’s family vigorously opposed her conversion, but so impressed was she by Zion—and especially its friendship between the races—that she persisted.

For two Zion women—Spinks and Budulwako—from two nineteenth-century imperial cities—Melbourne and Johannesburg, the promise of Zion was the same: uplift, dignity, and meaning amid social marginalization and rapid industrialization. In trauma, these women sought hope in the healing hands of Christ. **GH**

Joel Cabrita is assistant professor of history and director of the Center for African Studies at Stanford University and author of several books including The People’s Zion: South Africa, the United States and a Transatlantic Faith Healing Movement.

Testimony of Mrs. Bose Spinks Collingwood, Melbourne

“For 6 months I suffered from an internal tumour, which gave me much pain and bleeding, and grew at last to a great size. Doctors Danne and Singleton said it was no use me thinking of getting better without an operation. One Saturday night I made up my mind to seek the Lord for Healing. On Sunday, October 17, 1886, I was crying in the Tabernacle at an after-meeting with pain, Mr Dowie heard me and I told him about the tumour, which was so large in front of me I was ashamed. Then he called Mrs Dowie and asked her to take me into his room and pray with him. Mrs Dowie prayed and the pain went away, IN THREE DAYS EVERY PARTICLE OF THE TUMOUR WAS GONE ALTOGETHER. I am perfectly well tonight.”

—Record of the Fifth Annual Commemoration of the Rev. John Alexander Dowie and Mrs Dowie’s Ministry of Healing Through Faith in Jesus (1888), p. 31

The Gospel brings healing



Andrey Mironov, *Christ and the Pauper*, 2009

- **c. 30s** Healing is a prominent feature of Jesus's ministry.
- **c. 93–94** Josephus refers to Jesus in his *Antiquities* as a miracle-worker.
- **Early 100s** Quadratus, a bishop, writes that some of those whom Jesus healed had lived all the way into his own era.
- **c. 240** Gregory the Wonderworker becomes bishop of Neocaesarea; his many healing miracles help evangelize for the Christian faith.
- **c. 304** Lucy, a young Christian woman from Sicily, is martyred for her faith; her mother's healing had spurred her to ministry among the poor.
- **c. 320** Nino, a Roman woman, prays for healing of the queen of Iberia, who then converts to Christianity.
- **405** Jerome finishes his translation of the Bible, which uses the Latin term for "save"

rather than "heal" and influences many later translations.

- **415** The tomb of Stephen the Deacon is discovered and becomes a shrine where miraculous healings are reported. Many shrines will become the sites of reported healings in the Middle Ages, a few of which are mentioned below.
- **426** Augustine writes about Stephen's tomb in *City of God*, testifying to his own changing views on miraculous healing.
- **500s** Pope Gregory I writes the *Dialogues*, which reports on miraculous healings attributed to many Italian saints, most famously Benedict.
- **814** Pilgrimage begins to the Shrine of St. James at Santiago de Compostela, Spain.
- **687** Cuthbert, former prior of a monastery in Northumberland and bishop of Lindisfarne, dies. His tomb becomes one of the most visited medieval pilgrimage sites, and many healing miracles are reported.
- **1171** The shrine of the murdered Thomas à Becket is opened at Canterbury. Monks record 703 miracles at the shrine; stained glass windows are added to the shrine



Sandro Botticelli, *Three Miracles of St. Zenobius*, c. 1500



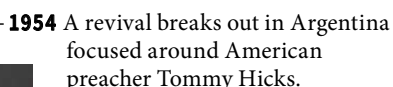
Altarpiece showing Peter of Verona, c. 1300–1350

depicting the most famous healing miracles.

- **1252** Peter of Verona, renowned as a miracle-worker, is killed by an assassin.
- **c. 1265–1274** Thomas Aquinas systematizes the church's theology of miracles in the *Summa Theologica*.
- **c. 1300s** The Roman Catholic Church begins to refer to the anointing of the sick as "extreme unction" and reserves it for those near to death.
- **c. 1374** Catherine of Siena prays for Matteo Cenni to recover from plague, which he does.
- **1520** Martin Luther writes against extreme unction in *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*.
- **1536** Teresa of Ávila falls ill and is healed after seeing visions of Christ.
- **1542** Luther prays successfully for his friend Philip Melancthon to be healed.
- **1565** Johann Habermann publishes *Prayer Booklet*.

Then he touched them and said to them, "Go and tell the brothers that I am coming to them in Galilee." They said to him, "Yes, LORD." Then he touched them and said to them, "See that no one knows about it."

- **1947** Agnes Sanford publishes *The Healing Light*.



- **1959** The Charismatic movement spreads to mainline churches.

- **1962** Kathryn Kuhlman publishes *I Believe in Miracles*.

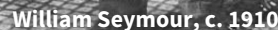
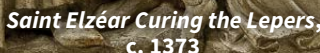
-1967 Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke undertakes his first mission in Africa. Charismatic revivals break out in the Catholic Church.

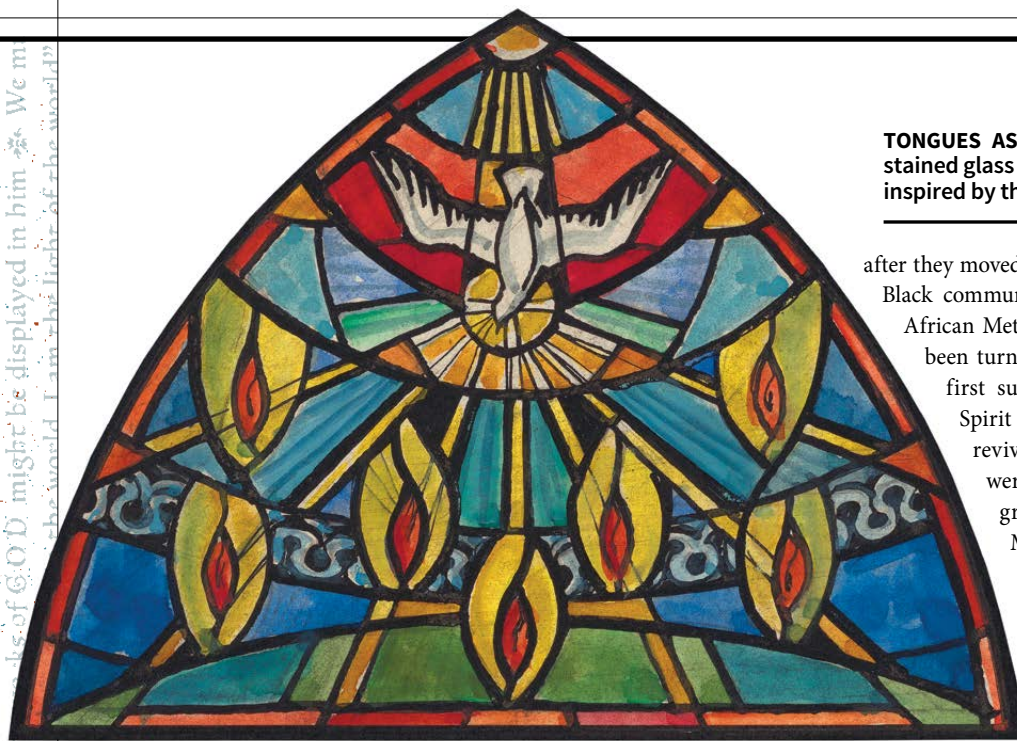
1972 After Vatican II, Roman Catholics officially revert to the older name “anointing of the sick” and emphasize that it is not only for the dying.

– **1994** Revival led by Randy Clark breaks out in Toronto. Sunday Adelaja founds the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations in Ukraine. Clark founds Global Awakening.

- **2000** Leif Hetland founds Global Mission Awareness in Georgia.

- **2011** The Global Medical Research Institute is founded to study healing prayer scientifically.





TONGUES AS OF FIRE This 20th-c. design for a stained glass window shows how artists have been inspired by the story of Pentecost.

after they moved to 312 Azusa Street, in the heart of the Black community. They met in the former Stevens African Methodist Episcopal Church that had since been turned into a barn and storage facility. The first supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit reportedly took place the day before the revival officially began. Three Black women were preparing the new mission for its grand opening and paused to pray for a Mexican day laborer. He was so moved by the Spirit that he dropped to his knees and broke down in tears.

Seymour and his followers created a theology of divine healing that seamlessly wove together the overcoming power of Jesus's atoning death and Resurrection with the Great Commission. They believed that Jesus's victory over the power of sin, sickness, and death through his death and Resurrection are connected to the commission to evangelize all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit—a commission that fell on Jesus's disciples gathered in unity from all over the world on the day of Pentecost.

For early Pentecostals the linchpin for divine healing was the atonement. The blood of Jesus on the cross breaks the power and fear of original sin, disease, and death over a believer asking in faith and with a sincere heart, because "[by] his stripes we are healed" (Isa 53). They loved to sing about the power of Jesus's atoning blood on the cross in the famous old hymn "Power in the Blood." They also taught that all of the spiritual gifts practiced in the New Testament church are available to all born-again, Spirit-filled believers—including "sign gifts" of divine healing, miracles, prophesy, and speaking in tongues (1 Cor 12; Mark 16:15–20). Early Pentecostals believed these gifts did not cease with the death of the apostles, but are available today to all who ask in faith.

Pentecostals based this belief on John 14:12 and on the Great Commission in Mark 16:15–20, where Jesus called on his followers to preach the gospel around the world with signs and wonders such as placing their hands on and healing the sick. They connected the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through gifts and healing with the fulfillment of the Great Commission to all nations and racial-ethnic groups using Joel 2:28–30, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:4, 4:12, and Hebrews 13:8.

This focus on racial unity as a necessary precondition for the practice of divine healing fostered a ministry of racial reconciliation, a huge contributor to the movement's rapid

Power in the blood

DIVINE HEALING AT THE AZUSA STREET REVIVAL AND IN EARLY PENTECOSTALISM

Gastón Espinosa

"Aleluya, Aleluya!" a Mexican immigrant exclaimed at the Azusa Street Revival in 1906 as he rapidly walked up and down the aisle, reporting with joy the healing of his club foot. He was one of thousands of visitors who flocked to the Azusa Street Mission from 1906 to 1931 in search of healing for their broken bodies, minds, and spirits.

The revival's leaders believed that if Christians could come together in racial unity across unbiblical social divisions (race, class, gender, nationality) the Holy Spirit would give them the power through Jesus's victorious atoning death on the cross to carry out signs and wonders via divine healings, miracles, and other supernatural manifestations that would in turn enable them to help bridge the racial divide and help usher in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

SIN, DEATH, UNITY, HEALING

William J. Seymour (1870–1922) not only led the revival, but created this powerful message and vision of healing. He was an African American holiness preacher, originally from Louisiana, who had lived and preached across the Midwest and in Texas (see CH 58). He arrived in Los Angeles to pastor a holiness church, but when the pastor discovered he believed in speaking in tongues, she padlocked the doors against him.

Seymour and some friends began a prayer meeting in a local home that quickly turned into a full-blown revival



OLD-TIME RELIGION William and Jenny Seymour pose with an open Bible, c. 1915 (above).

FAITH OF THE APOSTLES The Azusa Street Mission was little changed in this 1928 photo from the way it looked during the heart of the revival (above right).

growth across the United States (especially among racial-ethnic minorities) and around the world (especially in the Global South). Indeed Seymour's distinctive message was transported globally via thousands of visitors (including many pastors, evangelists, and seasoned missionaries) and the 405,000 copies of his *Apostolic Faith* newspaper circulating around the world.

Pentecostals justified their message of racial unity as a precursor to healing by invoking biblical precedent. They saw the intersection between healing, evangelism, and racial reconciliation in the stories of the Samaritan woman (John 4:4–26), the Roman centurion (Matt 8:5–13 and Luke 7:1–10), the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24–30), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–40), and in Paul's ministry to the Gentiles, especially his rebuke of Peter's Jewish ethnocentrism (Gal 2:11–20). They interpreted the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:4 as a prime example of how Jesus's followers from around the world had transcended divisions. They also saw how Jesus and his disciples interacted with and often laid hands on the sick and suffering across racial and social boundaries.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

Seymour taught that the Holy Spirit freely gives spiritual gifts to all



born-again believers who earnestly and sincerely desire them. Thus an economically impoverished Black woman might be called on at a revival meeting to use her gift of divine healing to lay hands on a White man to be healed of his affliction. Or, a working class Black or Mexican immigrant might be called on to lay hands on and pray for the healing of a White woman of wealth. This cross-racial interaction and physical contact scandalized Americans and many around the colonized world, and is also why Azusa Street and its daughter missions became such a curious and powerful magnet. This—perhaps as much as any other thing—was Azusa Street's healing miracle.

The threefold purpose of divine healing was to bring relief to the person suffering, to attract the lost and backslidden, and to demonstrate to the unbelieving world God's miraculous power to heal and overcome sickness, the devil, and this fallen world. Sin and sickness were not limited to physical ailments, but also included emotional, spiritual, and psycho-societal ones—including racial prejudice.

Seymour preached that race prejudice divides up Christ's church and separates people with human distinctions when no such distinctions exist in heaven. The health, salvation, and unity that divine healing brings to body, mind, spirit, and community has the power to transcend and transform this societal sin.

Seymour linked all of these things when he wrote in "The Way into the Holiest" that Jesus sanctified "spirit, soul, and

What got healed?

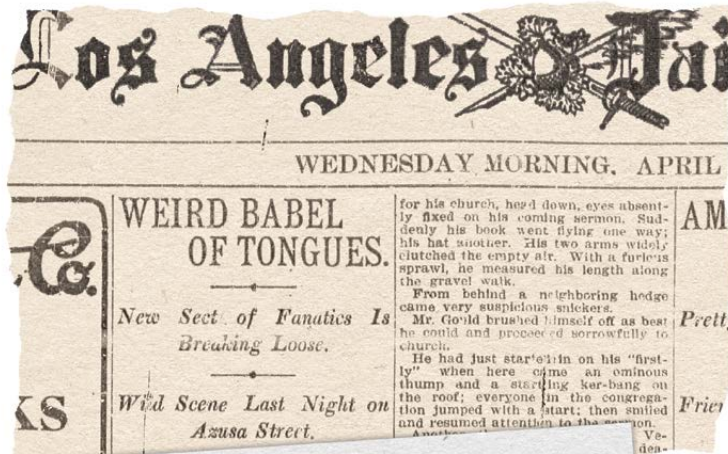
The *Apostolic Faith* newspaper reported many different types of healing and miracles either at the mission itself or its daughter missions around the world. Conditions reported as healed included abscesses; addictions to alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, including opium and morphine; asthma; cancer; chills; deafness;

demonic manifestations; eczema; epilepsy; eye problems, including blindness and cataracts; fever; hemorrhage; hernia; injury or malfunction of an ankle, foot, head, heart, leg, muscle, shoulder, spine, or wrist; mental illness; paralysis; pneumonia; poisoning; rheumatism; skin diseases; tuberculosis—and many others!



“ONE IN THE SPIRIT” Seymour’s ministry team, seen here in 1906, was intentionally interracial (left).

DUELING NEWS Seymour’s newspaper (bottom) reported a new Pentecost, while other newspapers (middle) mocked the revival.



gather together in integrated services to sing, worship, and testify. Eyewitness Frank Bartleman famously quipped that the “colorline was washed away in the blood” of Jesus. Seymour *also* crossed lines of gender, class, and nationality. He allowed men and women, poor and rich, and citizens and immigrants alike to worship freely together and lay hands on and pray for one another.

Seymour’s conviction that God disregards human distinctions and simply recognizes the willing and the obedient was shared by others such as attendee Mattie Cummings, who stated, “It didn’t matter if you were black, white, green or grizzly. There was a wonderful spirit. Germans and Jews, blacks and whites, ate together. . . . Nobody ever thought about color.”

The socially transgressive nature of the actions at Azusa Street was spotlighted and mercilessly mocked by established churches and the mainstream press and society, which often denigrated them as “darky camp meeting antics” where divine healing and miracles played a critical role.

On April 18, 1906, the *Los Angeles Times* described the revival as a “Weird Babel of Tongues” where Black women and men and a sprinkling of Whites had gathered together to speak in unknown tongues and pray for the sick, including a Rabbi Gold who claimed he was healed that night. The *Indianapolis Star* wrote that Seymour scandalously led a service during which one “white fellow kissed a negro.” Another newspaper later lamented that Seymour’s daughter missions in Africa had promoted “brand new American ideas” about “social equality between White people and the [Black] natives.”

ASKING IN FAITH

Pentecostals recognized divine healing and miracles as distinct but interrelated gifts of the Holy Spirit and almost always talked about them together, sometimes even interchangeably. They believed being healed was open to anyone who asked in faith and should be a normal part of the Christian life. In fact Seymour believed that one of the three key duties of a pastor, after preaching and meeting with members of the church for spiritual formation, is to visit the sick and, when the opportunity arises, to pray for healing.

He and his followers at first believed that Christians should avoid medicine and simply pray, although they modi-

body. . . . So we get healing, health, salvation, joy, life—everything in Jesus!” Seymour’s newspaper *Apostolic Faith* boldly declared at the height of Jim Crow America, “God makes no difference in nationality, Ethiopians [Blacks], Chinese, Indians, Mexicans, and other nationalities worship together” because “God recognizes no man-made creeds, doctrines, or classes of people, but ‘the willing and the obedient.’”

The newspaper affirmed that “no instrument [of God] is rejected on account of color. . . . One token of the Lord’s coming is that He is melting all races and nations together. . . . He is baptizing by one spirit into one body and making up a people that will be ready to meet Him when he comes.”

The revival encouraged biblically based interracial worship, friendships, relationships, and the laying on of hands to pray for divine healing. This profound belief in the power of prayer and the power of the atonement prompted people to

PENTECOST

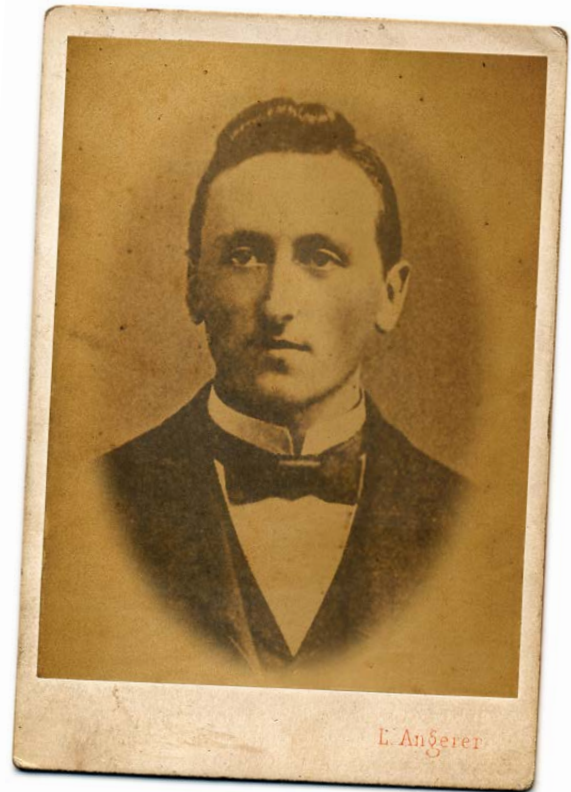
"Ask ye of Jehovah rain in the time of the latter rain." (ZECH. 10:1) A.V.



2. Thou on the earth hast been giving an earnest, Thousands have turned and Thou hast refreshed; So we are pressing right into the holiest; Truly earth's need is to be greatly blest.
3. Down on all flesh mighty floods Thou hast promised, We are reminding Thee, Lord, of Thy word; Thy people's lethargy must be abolished; Earnest prevailing prayer now shall be heard.

COPYRIGHT, 1949, BY PHILIP J. GRANT

"LETHARGY MUST BE ABOLISHED" This 1949 hymn (left) describes the early spread of the Pentecostal revival.



REPORTER OF WONDERS Frank Bartleman (above) authored a key 1925 book about the revival called *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles*.

fied this view very early in the movement, encouraging people to first anoint and pray for the sick person, and then take medicine if and as needed.

Divine healing could be a one-time act of faith whereby a person prays for someone to be healed or it could be a spiritual gift that the Holy Spirit imparts to someone to build up the body of Christ and pray for sick believers or nonbelievers. While anyone can be healed, Seymour and early Pentecostals emphasized that the spiritual gift of divine healing could only be effectual if the praying person is a born-again, Spirit-filled Christian living a holy and pure life—free from habitual unrepentant sin.

Most believed that the effectiveness of a person's prayers is directly tied to the praying person's personal faith, holiness, and theological and moral purity. They often cited James 5:16 in the King James Version: "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

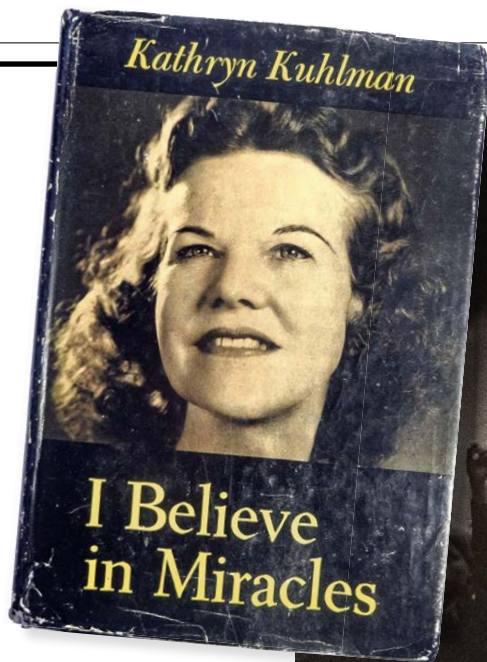
BACKSLIDERS RETURNING

Revivalists also taught that divine healing, miracles, and spiritual gifts are a sign of the latter-day prophesied outpouring of the Holy Spirit helping to usher in Jesus's Second Coming. Seymour wrote that: "When we get the power of the Holy Ghost, we will see... power over sickness, diseases and death... the Lord never revoked the commission he gave to his disciples: 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead.'" Jesus would perform this "if we can get a people in unity."

The movement brought people together around the world. Andrew Johnson wrote in Sweden that "many sick have been healed, sinners saved, and backsliders coming to the Lord," and in India others wrote how some missionaries were "much used in laying on of hands for the healing of the sick." In southern Africa, Black and Dutch Afrikaner evangelists reported healing and even raising Zulus from the dead at their revival services, which led to jam-packed meetings and scores of conversions.

Apostolic Faith described Azusa Street as the beginning of a worldwide revival. Indeed, people of 20 nationalities reportedly attended, and by 1914 it had spread across diverse cultures and societies on six continents. Today, divine healing remains one of the most important factors in the continuing growth of the movement as people worldwide continue to echo the cry of "power in the blood." **CH**

Gastón Espinosa is the Arthur V. Stoughton Professor of Religious Studies at Claremont McKenna College and the author of nine books, including Latino Pentecostals in America: Faith and Politics in Action and William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism.



Extraordinary becoming ordinary

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL AND HEALING PRAYER IN MAINLINE DENOMINATIONS

Amy Collier Artman

In 1968 popular healing evangelist Kathryn Kuhlman (1907–1976) welcomed Presbyterian minister Donald Shaw to her syndicated show. Kuhlman asked Shaw about his visit to one of her Miracle Services at Carnegie Hall in Pittsburgh. Shaw had attended after receiving a copy of Kuhlman's best-selling *I Believe in Miracles* (1962) from a lay preacher during a “dry period” and said that he had struggled with pride at the service. “What would my colleagues think of me?”

“BROTHER, YOU’RE NUTS”

Shaw had seen a concert hall filled with people streaming to the stage to testify to divine healings taking place right in front of his eyes. “I prayed, ‘Dear Lord, whatever it is, I want it.’ I received new faith, new hope, new life. I went down under the power of God at the Miracle Service.”

“Did you know it was the power of God?” Kuhlman asked. He responded, “It is hard to say. . . . It happened so quickly. But if anybody at that time had told me that I, Donald Shaw, a very proud Presbyterian and an intellectual, would be lying there on my back in Carnegie Hall, before all of those people . . . my self-consciousness gone, gloriously happy and for the first time in my life experiencing this kind of joy, I would have said, ‘Brother, you’re nuts.’”

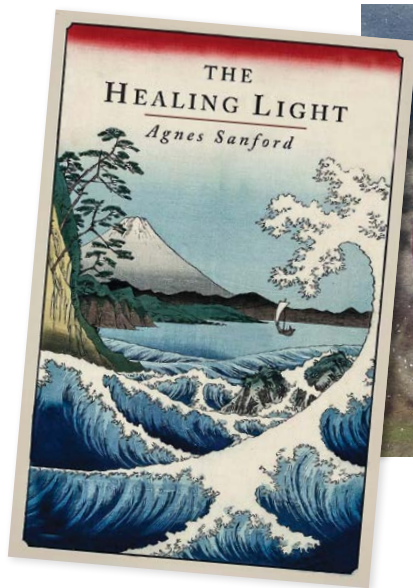
Kuhlman added happily, “A dead Presbyterian minister came alive in Christ!”

MIRACLE LADY Kathryn Kuhlman’s flamboyant style and intriguing personality made her a media darling.

Shaw would have called himself a member of the new “Charismatic” movement, which practiced a “softened” version of Pentecostal theology. Charismatics retained the emphasis on the present reality of the spiritual gifts mentioned in Acts, particularly healing, but did not insist on speaking in tongues to prove the presence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And they made every effort to move Charismatic Christianity from the marginalized Pentecostal realm into Hilton ballrooms and elite bastions of ecumenical Christianity.

Charismatics came from a multitude of backgrounds and remained members of their denominations even as they participated in the movement. Organizations such as the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International, founded by Demos Shakarian in 1951, provided meeting places and events for socially and financially successful Charismatic Christians.

In 1959 Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett reported to his congregation in Van Nuys, California, that he and his wife had experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit during a prayer meeting and had spoken in tongues. The resulting controversy caught the eye of *Time* and *Newsweek*, gaining national media attention for the movement. In some ways



HEALING LIGHTS Author Agnes Sanford (above) and Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett (right) both pioneered mainline emphasis on healing prayer.



ROTARY CLUB FOR CHARISMATICS Demos Shakarian (below) founded the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship in 1951; it grew from 3,000 members in 1961 to 300,000 by 1972.



These Catholic clergy and laity delighted in the movement's emphasis on a "unity of the Spirit," considering themselves the answer to the prayer of Pope John XXIII (1881–1963) at Vatican II for "a new Pentecost." They joined with Episcopal and Lutheran leaders who were reclaiming their churches' historic emphasis on prayer for healing. By the end of the 1970s, most major denominations in America had adopted "cautious openness" regarding the growth of Charismatic practices in their congregations. The adjective "Charismatic" now modified Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, American Baptists, Disciples of Christ, and Roman Catholics.

By the 1980s many Charismatics left behind their denominational or Roman Catholic associations to form independent churches and denominations of their own, making Charismatic Christianity a dominant form of Christianity in America. It spread through evangelical churches via music and worship style, and influenced

the movement was everywhere; in other ways, nowhere—with no designated leader, structure, or defining identity. Cells seeking spiritual renewal emerged simultaneously in many groups, affecting almost all denominations.

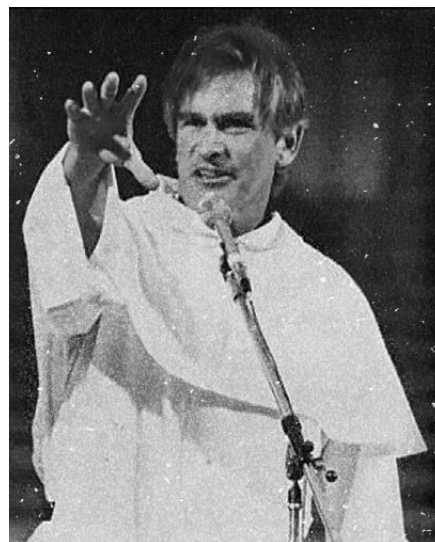
Kuhlman was one of the movement's most prominent evangelists. During a 55-year ministry, she preached to hundreds of thousands of people—in the last 10 years of her life at monthly services to capacity crowds in the 7,000-seat Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium. She also hosted radio and television shows, headed a successful nonprofit, and authored best sellers; *I Believe in Miracles*, a collection of healing testimonies, sold over a million copies. Gaining national exposure for Charismatic Christianity, she transformed it from overlooked, suspect, and fringe to a respectable practice accepted and even celebrated by mainstream Christianity and American culture.

In the early months of 1967, Catholic Charismatic revivals occurred on the campuses of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh and the University of Notre Dame. Strongly influenced by the Second Vatican Council, Catholic lay faculty and students began to organize prayer groups and sponsor retreats that encouraged and affirmed Charismatic experiences. When the press covered an April 1967 gathering at Notre Dame, the Catholic Charismatic renewal was officially underway.

Doctor for Christ

Kuhlman welcomed many medical doctors to witness to the reality of divine healing. In 1969 Dr. Kahn Uyeyama, associate clinical professor of medicine at the University of California Medical Center, said that prior to his own baptism in the Holy Spirit, he would have "laughed" about divine healing claims: "I was a humanist and an agnostic. I didn't really believe in God. I would have tried to explain [them] away." Based on his own evaluation of humanity and a study of Karl Marx's works, he had

believed "man was going to raise himself up by his own boot-straps to divinity." But then he became convicted of Christianity's truth: "The Lord wanted me to speak in tongues. . . . I thought tongues were gibberish. I had to be made a fool for Christ. I was allowed to sing in a strange language. I never sang—I couldn't carry a tune, I would never sing in public. . . . Many of my patients have been divinely healed since I was baptized in the Holy Ghost. I have seen many miracles."



ECUMENICAL LIFE Francis MacNutt (above) left the Catholic priesthood to marry psychologist Judith Sewell (b. 1948) in 1980, and he and Sewell shared in a healing ministry (left) until his death.

prosperity gospel teaching (see pp. 47–49), which focuses on the power of positive prayer for wealth and wellness. Most directly it moved into the Vineyard movement (see pp. 41–43), which now has over 500 congregations and a prodigiously successful worship music division.

In the early 1970s, Kuhlman interviewed David du Plessis (1905–1987), a South African affiliated with the American Assemblies of God, to discuss the Charismatic movement's growing ecumenism. They visually represented the movement's variety as they sat together on white wicker chairs in Kuhlman's faux-garden set, sharing their vision of a

soon-coming time when "every gift will be restored" and "miracles will happen all the time."

At the end of the episode, Kuhlman turned to the camera and proclaimed, "I am speaking to clergy: You can't stop it. Don't fight it. Come on in. If Jesus could trust the Holy Spirit, then surely you and I can. It makes no difference whether you're Catholic or Protestant." Sometimes, she might have said, the Spirit even brought dead Presbyterians to life. **CH**

Amy Collier Artman is on faculty in the religious studies department at Missouri State University and is the author of The Miracle Lady: Kathryn Kuhlman and the Transformation of Charismatic Christianity.

Catholic renewal

Catholic priest Francis MacNutt (1925–2020) was baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1967 through the influence of Agnes Sanford (1897–1982). She said that the enthusiastic, compassionate Dominican would take supernatural healing to the Catholic Church worldwide, a prediction rapidly proved accurate. Nuns, priests, bishops, and laypeople embraced his nontraditional teachings about healing, speaking in tongues, and deliverance from demons. MacNutt possessed a unique ability to bridge

the gap between Christian groups and became a beloved speaker in both Catholic and Protestant circles.

MacNutt first prayed for divine healing for a nun suffering the effects of shock treatment for depression. He reported that he had seen many healings "especially when I have prayed with a team or in a loving community."

Affirming medicine, he wrote, "In no way do I conceive prayer for healing as a negation for the need for doctors, nurses, counselors, psychiatrists, or pharmacists. God

works in all these ways to heal the sick; the ideal is a team effort to get the sick well by every possible means....

"I am convinced through my own experience that prayer for healing brings into play forces far beyond what our own unaided humanity contributes. The results of prayer have been extraordinary—so much so that what once would have astonished our retreat team we now take almost for granted. The extraordinary has become ordinary."



Healing power

HOW A PASTOR AND A PROFESSOR PRAYED FOR HEALING AND STARTED THE THIRD WAVE MOVEMENT

Caleb Maskell

Very early on a Monday morning in February 1978, pastor John Wimber (1934–1997) got a worried call from a church member. “My wife is sick with a fever,” the man explained. “I just got a brand new job, and I’ve got to go to work today. I can’t stay home and take care of the kids, and we can’t find a babysitter. Can you come and pray for her?”

One might think that Wimber, the 44-year-old pastor of a new Calvary Chapel in suburban Yorba Linda, California, would have been happy to get a call like this, encouraged by his parishioner’s faith that God might intervene in the midst of a difficult situation.

With the benefit of hindsight, knowing that Wimber would go on to become a globally famous healing evangelist inseparably associated with the movement known as “the Third Wave of the Holy Spirit,” one might think that he would have been entirely confident to minister healing to this man’s wife. But it was not so. In fact when Wimber received this call, his heart sank. He did not know how to heal anyone.

IMITATING JESUS

Since coming to Calvary Chapel Yorba Linda 10 months earlier, Wimber had preached exclusively about Jesus’s life and ministry as described in Luke. He intended to establish a foundational conviction in his growing young congregation that Christian discipleship is fundamentally about worshipping Jesus as God, learning Jesus’s word through studying the Bible, and, above all, imitating Jesus’s works.

Christians who highly value the Bible should, Wimber thought, understand themselves in the first place as apprentices of Jesus, people who choose to obediently and joyfully

SHOWERS OF BLESSING One Third Wave congregation in Toronto, today known as *Catch the Fire*, sparked a sometimes controversial but also enduring revival.

try to do the things that Jesus taught his disciples to do in the New Testament. As Carol Wimber, his wife and ministry partner, would later describe it, Christians should “read Scripture as learners and doers,” aiming not just to know the stories of the Bible but to enact them in the contemporary world. And that meant healing the sick.

Wimber had been praying for the sick in his church every week for the past 10 months, but no one had been healed. He had tried everything. He had preached about Jesus’s methods of healing. He had offered examples of healing events from church history. He had taught a practical biblical theology of healing prayer that placed the burden of outcomes on God’s sovereignty, rather than on any weakness in the person praying or the person receiving prayer. He had given altar calls at which he had personally prayed for scores of sick people, as well as inviting congregants to pray for the sick alongside him.

Over hours and weeks together, they had prayed lengthy, Bible-soaked petitions for God’s merciful intervention, as well as short, commanding prayers in Jesus’s authoritative style—“Be healed!,” “Stretch forth your hand!,” and so on. But absolutely nothing had worked. In fact some of the people who were praying for the sick actually caught the contagious sicknesses they were trying to heal!

As these months of failure wore on, Wimber began to experience desperate existential questioning. As a pastor



JUST LIKE JESUS In this 17th-c. Egyptian manuscript (left), Jesus heals a man with a withered hand—a story told by Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

ROOT OF THE VINE Calvary Chapel (below) became the center of an entire association of Vineyard churches.



rooted in the evangelical Quaker tradition, he had profound faith in the power of simple, worshipful obedience to the commands of Jesus as found in the text of Scripture. He knew that this way of life is what he wanted to teach his people. Furthermore, as a former traveling consultant with the Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary, he had seen firsthand that the most evangelistically effective churches around the world are the ones that claim signs and wonders like those seen in the New Testament (see pp. 44–46).

Finally, as a father, he had personally prayed some 15 years earlier for healing for his three-year-old son, Sean, who had been stung by bees all over his body, and had seen Sean's welts disappear in a matter of minutes. But none of this background conviction bore any weight for him if the practice of healing prayer did not result in actual healings in his present moment.

The night before Wimber received that Monday morning phone call, his frustration about all this failure had boiled over at the end of yet another long, fruitless, postservice prayer session. In a moment that he later narrated in his book *Power Healing* (1987), he began to yell at God right in the middle of the church auditorium before witnesses. "It's not fair!" he shouted. "You tell us to teach what your book says, but you don't back up our act. Here we are; we're doing the best we can do—and nothing happens. You tell us to believe in healing and pray for healing, but you're not doing anything. Oh, God, it's not fair!"

Next morning he went to pray for his parishioner's wife. Laying his hand on the feverish, miserable woman, he "mumbled a faithless prayer, then . . . turned around and began explaining to her husband why some people do not get healed." In the middle of Wimber's explanation, the husband began to stare over Wimber's shoulder. "I turned around to see his wife out of bed, looking like a new person," Wimber wrote. "I'm well," she said. "You healed me. Would you like to stay for some coffee?" Bewildered and overwhelmed, Wimber declined her offer and headed for his car. As he drove away, his bewilderment turned to joy and he shouted to himself, "We got one!"

At last Wimber had a contemporary experience to match his convictions about biblical discipleship. Furthermore his months of failure to heal reinforced his teaching that contemporary healing ministry has little to do with personal giftedness and everything to do with obedient discipleship and God's surprising mercy. The ministry of healing, he taught, is for every Christian.

POWER EVANGELISM

The floodgates opened. Parishioners regularly shared stories of physical and emotional healing at Wimber's church as they integrated practical supernaturalism into their discipleship. In 1982 the church separated from the Calvary Chapel Association and became the Anaheim Vineyard; that year Wimber publicly stated that the church was reporting more than 50 healings per week. The church also grew exponentially, gathering more than 3,000 people weekly only five years after the congregation formed.

Much of this growth resulted from what Wimber called "power evangelism"—new believers coming to faith as a result of encountering the power of the living God. On one occasion when Wimber invited hippie evangelist Lonnie

Frisbee (1949–1993) to preach, the congregation was so galvanized by encountering what felt like the tangible power of God in prayer that many took to the streets to evangelize the neighborhood.

Within three months the church had baptized over 700 people in backyard swimming pools around Yorba Linda. The combination of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus with a demonstration of the power of God was, Wimber believed, just as attractive and transformative in the 1980s as it was in biblical times.

The rapid growth of Anaheim Vineyard caught the attention of Wimber's former colleague at Fuller, Professor C. Peter Wagner (1930–2016). Equal parts evangelical futurist and puckish impresario, Wagner had for some time contended, based on global trends, that "pentecostalization" is the future of the American evangelical church. The flowering of Wimber's ministry at Anaheim Vineyard offered him an example he could sell.

Here was a church that integrated Pentecostal "signs and wonders" with a nondispensational evangelical theology of the Kingdom of God, drawn from the work of Fuller professor George Eldon Ladd (1911–1982), and a winsome come-as-you-are fallibility that made such ministry seem within reach of any Christian.

Wagner proposed that he and Wimber team-teach an experimental course, "MC510: Signs, Wonders, and Church Growth," in 1982 at Fuller's School of World Mission. They would demonstrate the healing practices that Wimber had discovered in a practical clinical environment, while also teaching the evangelical worldview undergirding them.

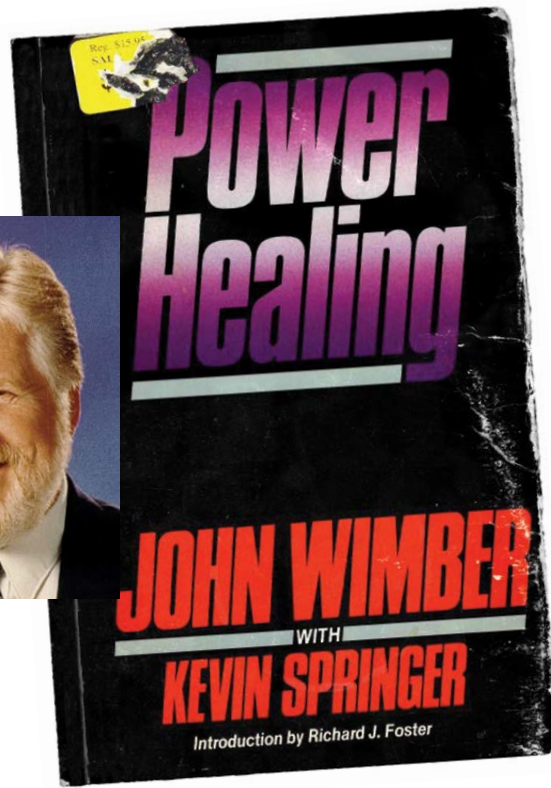
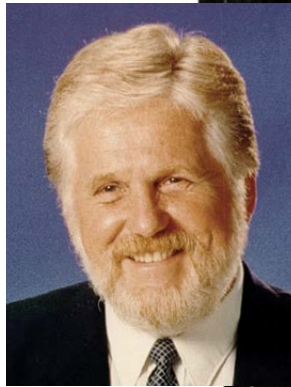
Wagner believed this would allow him to advocate for what he named "the Third Wave of the Holy Spirit" in the twentieth century, in which evangelical pastors—theologically and stylistically at odds with both classical Pentecostals (the "first wave") and mainline Charismatics (the "second wave")—could embrace supernatural power in their ministries.

"THIS NUMBER MAY CHANGE YOUR LIFE"

The course succeeded beyond Wagner's wildest imagination. Controversial from the first, every session involved an explanation of theological foundations, followed by a Wimber-led clinic in which students practiced praying for healing.

Most sessions involved testimonies of healings that had taken place in a prior session. Wagner himself professed healing from high blood pressure during the first class. By the end of 1982, there was enough national buzz about the course that *Christian Life*, a widely circulated magazine for pastors, published an entire issue on it, declaring on the cover: "MC510: This Number May Change Your Life."

Practically overnight Wimber's world was turned on its head. He went from being the pastor of a dynamic local church to becoming the public face of Wagner's Third Wave. He



POWER EVERYTHING Wimber (above left, with his most famous book) and Wagner (right) expected to transform students and churches. They ended up transforming an entire generation.



published best-selling books—most famously *Power Healing* and *Power Evangelism* (1986)—which contain all the MC510 material. He taught at hundreds of conferences, presided over the development of a groundbreaking worship music company, and, in 1985, became the leader of the newly formed Association of Vineyard Churches.

Until his premature death of a brain hemorrhage in 1997, Wimber continued to equip leaders in this Third Wave model of supernatural healing. Many prominent contemporary healing ministers in the United States and around the world count him as a forefather (see pp. 56–60), among them Randy Clark of Global Awakening, Heidi Baker of Iris Ministries, Bill Johnson of Bethel Church, Mathias Thelen of Encounter Ministries, and Mary Healy. Even more notable, perhaps, is the fact that Wimber and Wagner established a paradigm for laity-led healing prayer that continues to profoundly influence the practices of evangelical churches worldwide. **CH**

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God who can heal the sick

DIVINE HEALING AS A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Philip Jenkins

The healing revival in the Ugandan church was spinning out of control. When a woman testified to healing from a spinal complaint, a throng of joyous believers followed her, reporting physical and emotional healings. The event seemed destined to last for hours. Finally a church leader resorted to calling out general categories and asking people to raise their hands. This scene sounds like typical Charismatic movements the world over—except that it occurred in a Roman Catholic church, through the ministry of an Indian priest, during the prayer before the Eucharistic host called the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

The remarkable thing about this story, reported by Kristina Cooper writing in the *Tablet*, is how unsurprising it is to African Christians themselves, who normally expect healing and neglect Western denominational barriers. Why should the faithful not find healing in a Catholic church, or an Anglican, or Methodist, or independent one? So central is the expectation of healing that many African Christians look with suspicion on institutions that do not offer it. If they do not find healing in one place, they will look elsewhere.

Across Africa healing was critical to the church's break from European missionaries' control and the spectacular rise of independent churches over the past century. One key moment came in the 1918–1920 influenza pandemic; it devastated large parts of the continent, killing millions. Disastrously

SOCIAL GATHERING This painting by Robert Goodman shows Cape Town, South Africa, in 1917, shortly before the World War I-era flu pandemic.

for colonial prestige, advanced European medicine and science made little headway against the disease. Ordinary Africans blamed Whites for spreading it, alarming colonial administrators, and ultimately rejected their medicines (reasonably enough, as the quinine and aspirin that White doctors freely handed out were useless against this disease).

Across the continent independent and prophetic Christian movements boomed as a result: mass movements, religious risings, nationalist Christian restructuring, and visions of the Virgin Mary were all driven by hopes of healing. Religious outbreaks occurred across vast swaths of the continent with strikingly similar manifestations thousands of miles apart in utterly different settings.

PRAYING PEOPLE

Nigeria produced the very influential Aladura movement from the Yoruba word meaning “owners of prayer,” or “praying people.” Today, the Aladura label applies to a very diverse group of independent churches, united by their belief in healing and living prophecy, and flourishing wherever Nigerian migrants have spread around the world.

FOREST PRAYERS Afua Kuma (*below*) was a Ghanaian Christian with a ministry of prayer and healing, best known from an esteemed collection of her prayers, hymns, and praises, *Jesus of the Deep Forest* (1981).

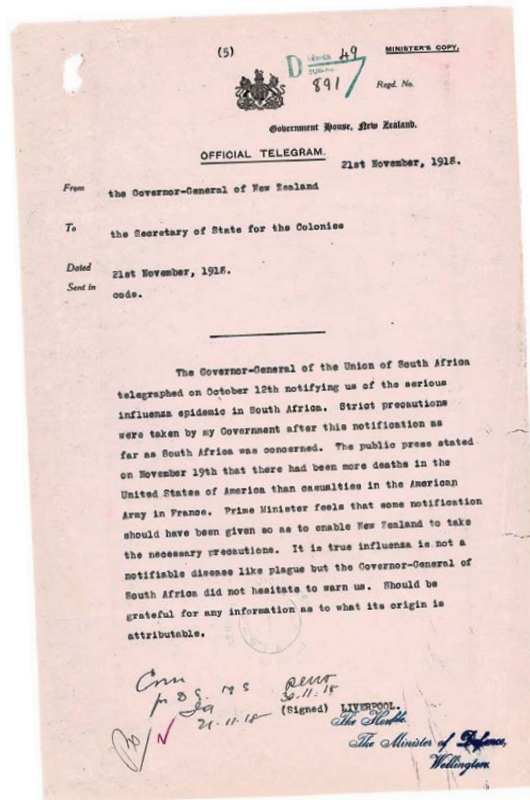


Because of the rapid growth of African Christianity, distinctively African ways of thinking and believing—including a healing emphasis—are becoming ever more significant to the global Christian story. Churches of this kind have exploded in Africa. They draw few distinctions between healing disease and expelling evil forces, turning in both cases to Scriptures about loosing, freeing, and release from the bondage of evil, sin, and disease.

Exorcism and healing are all but indistinguishable, and we can scarcely overstate their significance. A preacher in Ghana's Mosama Disco Christo Church made the forthright—and not unusual—assertion: “We are all here in this church because we have found healing here. But for this church, the great majority of us here assembled would not be alive today.”

Over time such independent healing churches have often adopted Pentecostal styles and beliefs, with a similar focus on rallies, revivals, and miracle crusades that attract crowds running into the hundreds of thousands or more and have healing and spiritual warfare at their heart. Many church websites include extensive healing testimonies.

Of course different parts of Africa differ enormously in culture and faith, making generalizations difficult, and it is even more dangerous to generalize across what we know as the Global South. But churches across Africa, Asia, and Latin America do share certain common features as against the example of much of the Christian West—especially the newness of the Christian faith and an openness to Charismatic and Pentecostal worship



NO MORE QUININE A healing revival was sparked in Africa when Christians rejected Western remedies (*above right*) for the 1918 flu pandemic (*above*).

styles. You can easily find miracle and healing crusades in Indonesia, India, and South Korea. Healing is commonly expected among ordinary house churches and congregations across India and China and a critical feature of surging evangelical and Pentecostal churches of Latin America—especially the Brazilian Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, which boasts eight million members worldwide.

Globally, healing frequently forms part of narratives of conversion and salvation. Wonsuk Ma reports that in one

Resurrected Rebekah

“A... mother... brought her small daughter, Rebekah, to Afua Kuma for prayer. The little girl had died, and the mother had already taken her to two different fetish priests. These priests each had declared her dead and said they could not do anything to help her. In desperation, she brought the little girl to Afua Kuma, who, together with her son Emmanuel, daughter Janet, and Emmanuel's wife Jane, all prayed over the child. Afua Kuma had a large sheep in her yard, and they suddenly heard a loud noise. They went outside to investigate and discovered that the sheep had fallen over dead, while in the same moment, the little girl was resurrected! They still call her ‘Resurrected Rebekah.’ I met her as we walked through the family's neighborhood.”

— Sara J. Fretheim, “Afua Kuma,” *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*



WIND OF THE SPIRIT Leaders such as Sunday Adelaja (*far left*) and Reinhard Bonnke (*near left*) and theologian Wonsuk Ma (*below*) have spread the healing movement across global boundaries.

tribal community in the Philippines, an evangelist told of a new convert:

A neighbor quietly asked him if this new God could heal his dying child. [He] laid his hand upon the motionless baby and prayed in the name of Jesus who had given life to her. The next Sunday, the entire family, with the now recovered baby, joined the church.... Villagers regularly asked him to pray for the sick, and most of them were healed miraculously. About 15 years later, everyone in Papasok serves this new God who can heal the sick.



Euro-American observers have sometimes argued that global Christian churches are borrowing too extensively from older pagan and primal healers. Or else, they say, belief in healing reflects a lack of education and will fade away as Christian congregations become more sophisticated. Yet at least some North American churches, especially independent congregations affiliated with the New Apostolic Reformation, make parallel claims with the same scriptural texts (such as John 10:10, James 4:2, Mal 3:10, and Jer 29:11) to declare that believing Christians are entitled to worldly prosperity, health, and well-being.

SOUTH TO NORTH TO SOUTH TO NORTH

Churches and leaders in the Global North and South have in fact learned from and influenced one another substantially. Superstar European evangelists like Reinhard Bonnke (1940–2019) have recently attracted huge audiences for crusades, especially in Africa; but that is a very long-standing pattern. The Zion Christian Church (ZCC), several million strong, owes its origins not to African primal religion, but to Christian ideas born in Scotland—the healing and prophetic movement formed in the late nineteenth century (see pp. 29–31) by John Alexander Dowie.

Influences also spread from South to North. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Nigerian-born Sunday Adelaja (b. 1967) founded one of Europe's largest congregations in Kiev, Ukraine. The church's website shows countless testimonies of healing, including from cancer

and AIDS; virtually all the believers involved are White and mainly Slavic, as are most of Adelaja's congregation.

Nor can anyone assume that a willingness to accept healings is due to the supposed primitivity of Global South nations. Skeptical African governments have tried to limit the spread of seemingly extravagant healing claims, and in doing so, they have raised challenging legal dilemmas. In 2004 Nigeria's National Broadcasting Commission tried to prohibit anyone showing "unverifiable" miracle healings on television. The problem was obvious enough, in that it required proof of miracles, and the regulation was withdrawn. Similar efforts have followed elsewhere, usually following a media exposé of some egregious piece of confidence trickery. In South Africa one small church was banned from making advertisements that showed discarded canes and crutches.

Claims that spiritual healing combats physical disease are much in evidence during pandemics such as SARS in 2003, Ebola in Africa in 2014, and of course the coronavirus pandemic. When COVID-19 first struck, enthusiasts for the traditional "plague psalm," Psalm 91, called 91 a sovereign antidote to 19. One Ghanaian cleric was encouraged by reversing COVID-19 to read "Psalm 91 Destroys Influenza Virus Outbreak Completely." That "providential palindrome" has surfaced with amazing regularity in healing-oriented churches worldwide. In Brazil COVID-19 spawned a national crisis as many evangelical and Charismatic churches staunchly opposed attempts to limit public gatherings, including of religious congregations. President Jair Bolsonaro (b. 1955) strongly supported those churches as a Catholic firmly allied with the most conservative and healing-oriented Protestant denominations.

While these very strong beliefs about healing and exorcism in Global South churches often strike Euro-American scholars as peculiar and difficult to understand, the believers in those churches see no mystery whatsoever. These ideas are a core component of the Scriptures, and especially the stories of Jesus himself (pp. 12–15). Why, they often ask, do so many Global North churches fail to grasp such a fundamental point? Have they never read the Gospels and the Book of Acts? **CH**

Philip Jenkins is professor of history at Baylor University and author of over 30 books including The Lost History of Christianity and The Next Christendom.

More powerful than ancestral spirits

PRAYER, MATERIAL BLESSING, AND HEALING

Wonsuk Ma

During the early 2000s, we traveled to the northern Philippines where we were to minister in a tiny mountain church. When we arrived it was already dark, but villagers packed the small church. After a long session of singing and preaching, the prayer time began. My ministry partner, Tito Inio, started laying his hands on people who came to the front for prayer. Most complained of illness and pain, often rooted in chronic poverty. When Inio approached one older woman, someone standing by her told him that she had been deaf for many years.

Inio rebuked the evil spirit and invited Jesus to come to heal her. By this time everyone was watching attentively. Inio moved to stand behind her and snapped his fingers near her ears, one at a time. When he asked if she could hear, she affirmed that she could, but also motioned that there were a lot of other noises. The flood of noises after many years of deafness must have been an incredible but delightful experience.

Inio repeated his prayer, placing his hands on her ears. When asked after the second prayer, she joyfully exclaimed that she could now hear clearly. Inio explained to her that Jesus healed her and died for her to have a good life, both in the world and afterward. People shouted their praise to God who loves his people and is also powerful to protect and bless them.

In this woman's context, the Igorot, a Philippine mountain tribal people, regularly offer sacrifices to ancestral spirits for healing, for good blessings, and to ward off evil spirits—a practice resulting in heavy debts for many families.

Praying for healing and blessing was not new, but asking Jesus contrasted starkly with asking their usual ancestral spirits. Many mountain churches have been founded as a result of miraculous demonstrations of God's love and power through healing. Pentecostal believers emphasize this extraordinary experience of healing and blessing as their "full gospel."

The mountain community we visited was hard to reach; after hours of driving on rugged roads, we had to walk for hours. These small villages have little or no essential services—electricity, roads, running water,



BE HEALED Tito Inio lays hands on an Igorot woman and prays for her healing during a mission trip in the early 2000s.

school, medical facilities. For generations people have turned mountain slopes into vegetable fields. Their small income is barely enough to survive. In this dire poverty, people are prone to sickness.

When someone is ill, options are few. Sometimes the family will bring the sick member to a town through hours of difficult walking and riding a bus. Often villagers turn to their traditional religion to call the ancestral spirits to heal the person—an expensive practice as the family will need to sacrifice animals to the ancestral spirits. Without money or the ability to travel, some are left to die.

SEEKING SHELTER

Illness and poverty are two prime causes of human suffering. More than a billion people live under the poverty line without enough for basic needs, such as food and shelter.



ALL DRESSED UP WITH NOWHERE TO GO Women from the Igorot tribe in the Philippines display their traditional dress for a photographer in 2017 (*above*); this image of an Igorot village (*left*) shows how the remote location makes access to health care difficult.

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown more people into poverty throughout the world. But poverty and illness do not only plague so-called underdeveloped countries. In the large cities of the “developed” West, we see thousands of homeless people and, from 2020 onward, hundreds of thousands of deaths from COVID-19. Many diseases still exist without effective cures. Around the world religions promise solutions to both poverty and illness, and Christianity is one of them. But does the gospel of Jesus Christ stand apart from the others?

POWER TO HEAL AND BLESS

Jesus’s ministry ranged from the proclamation of God’s kingdom to healing, feeding, and calming the storm. In his words, “The thief [Satan] comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have

it to the full” (John 10:10). The Bible explains that sickness and poverty came into human life because of sin; the origin of our suffering, including sickness and poverty, is from Satan. Thus “the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” (1 John 3:8). The climax of God’s love was the death of his Son, Christ, on the cross for our sins (for example, John 3:16).

In Jesus’s ministry healing was essential: “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people” (Matt 4:23). Healing was also proof that Jesus was the Messiah:

When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus replied, “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor” (Matt 11:2–5).

Jesus’s healing contrasts with many peoples’ experience of traditional gods and spirits. As with the Igorots in the Philippines, even good spirits demand expensive animal sacrifices and bring trouble when their demands are not met. When the elderly deaf lady was healed, her

BRING ME YOUR POOR AND SICK David Yonggi Cho (right), founder of the 850,000-member Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea (below), began his church among poor and sick people in postwar Korea.

family and many others in the village decided to follow Jesus. They believe that the Christian God is more powerful than ancestral spirits.

Preaching healing in combination with material prosperity in this way has led some people to valid doubts and a dismissal of a “prosperity gospel.” Indeed, this good news has been used and abused by some preachers and believers for wrong motives. But Christians have applied four tests (see sidebar below) to help discern messengers and their messages of God’s healing and prosperity. Many argue that responsible messengers preach prosperity as a state of wholeness—as much as one can be whole in a fallen world—as opposed to only material gain.

GOD IS GOOD

One of the most famous modern preachers of blessing, David Yonggi Cho, explains this concept of wholeness in this way: “God is good, and he is our father. Even though our life struggles today, if we welcome Jesus into our lives, and stand firm in faith, he will bless and transform our soul, body and our life. Have hope in Jesus. Hope that the sick will be healed and the poor have plenty.”

Ultimately, preachers should affirm the biblical teaching of God’s goodness and his power. We see goodness and power differently throughout Christian history; some experience miraculous intervention and many still endure illness and poverty and yet live a joyous and victorious life in the Lord.

In the case of the deaf mountain woman, her miraculous healing brought her and her entire family out of ancestral spirit worship and into the adoration of the one true God. But the most important thing in the Christian



life is not whether we are healed or blessed, but whether the Lord’s presence has filled our hearts and lives. **CH**

Wonsuk Ma is distinguished professor of global Christianity at Oral Roberts University and the author or editor of several books including David Yonggi Cho: A Close Look at His Theology and Ministry, Mission in the Spirit, and Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity.

Tests of prayer

Christians distinguish responsible preaching of prosperity from abuses of the doctrine in several ways:

1. Are people praying for healing and blessing because they need it or want it? If a father asks God for three daily meals for his family and the healing of his child, it is sound. To

ask for a luxury car is greed.

2. Does the prayer affirm that God is in charge and acknowledge God’s absolute will to heal and bless or not? Or is it an absolute declaration that claims to obligate him to bless or heal (especially through personal giving)?

3. What is the end desire: does the prayer ask for God’s healing and blessing to serve and expand God’s kingdom or to increase one’s level of comfort and riches?

4. What is the lifestyle of the preachers: do they live modestly, or do they own private jets while their parishioners struggle to survive?
—Wonsuk Ma



Hope, wholeness, healing

TWO DOCTORS DISCUSS PRAYER AND MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS WORKING TOGETHER TO PROMOTE HEALING

How do medical doctors who are also Christians think about prayer and medicine? We spoke to John R. Peteet, associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, and John R. Knight Jr., associate professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School (retired), to learn more. Both have also been practicing physicians at Boston-area hospitals.

CH: *What issues surround prayer and medicine today?*

John R. Peteet: Christians are sometimes unsure whether to turn to prayer or modern medicine for healing. They ask: Can medicine and prayer work together? Does reliance on medicine reflect a lack of faith? When medicine fails, how long should prayer for healing continue?

For example, the development of advanced medical technology has led to the increasing use of aggressive medical care near the end of life—such as prolonged ICU stays with ventilator support for patients who might otherwise have died naturally at home. Research has shown that patients who say they rely on their faith to cope receive such care more often, perhaps due to hopes for a miracle. Gloria White-Hammond, a colleague of ours who has been a

TOOLS OF THE TRADE This 18th-c. etching shows a doctor watching Christ raise Jairus's daughter, with medical tools in the foreground.

pediatrician and the pastor of an African American church, has suggested ways of praying with individuals diagnosed with life-threatening illness—for the care team, and for strength to accept a potentially unwelcome outcome, with gratitude for God's faithfulness.

On the other hand, some have interpreted Jesus's promises to heal as encouragement to choose prayer over medicine altogether. Christian Scientists have at times declined potentially life-saving treatments or measures including vaccinations to more fully rely on the power of prayer. COVID-19 vaccine resistance is more prevalent among evangelical Christians than among the general population. Neither example is representative of the historical orthodox Christian stance. Medical professionals active in the healing ministries of churches can help them develop collaborative models of care that incorporate both prayer and medicine.

BRINGING CHRIST Nuns care for patients in Van Gogh's 1884 *In the Hospital in Arles*.

CH: *What could that model look like?*

John R. Knight: Combining medical care with healing prayer has a long history. Biblical accounts of miraculous healings include actions by the healer intended to restore life and health (e.g., 1 Kings 17:17–24, 2 Kings 4:32–37, Mark 8:22–26) or instructions for the sufferer to take some type of restorative action (e.g., 2 Kings 5:10–14, Luke 6:6–10, Acts 3:2–11). During great plagues that ravaged the Roman Empire, early Christians nursed, fed, and comforted not only their own sick, but at great personal peril cared for dying pagans whose own priests would not. Twentieth-century evangelists ministering to the sick encouraged those who needed healing to continue seeing doctors and whenever possible to seek medical documentation of God's healing power.

Today we live in a world of medical and surgical wonders ancients could not have imagined. Antibiotics and vaccinations have overcome many deadly infections. Radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and targeted immunotherapies have revolutionized cancer treatment. The unraveling of the human genome and the discovery of gene-editing technologies (e.g., CRISPR) hold promise to cure inherited disorders.

Scientific discoveries are gifts from the omniscient Creator; they demonstrate his power, love, and mercy toward the sick, suffering, and dying. We should thank God for their availability and seek God's guidance to use them



wisely. I find no biblical foundation for abandoning medical treatment as a presumed test of faith.

When Satan tempted Jesus to recklessly risk his own life, he refused by saying we should not put God to the test (Matt 4:7). For those who believe they have been completely healed, consulting with treating doctors is the best way to demonstrate God's power and mercy and astonish unbelievers.

CH: *What about miracle cures versus gradual healing?*

JRK: The gifts of faith, healing, and miracles represent an intertwined bundle that all come through prayer. God has the power to miraculously restore full health

Grace's story

"Based on her MRI," said her mother, "they suspect something called metabolic leukodystrophy (MLD)."

My stomach tightened. Grace was 20 months old. She had been treated for conjunctivitis and a fever that lasted a week, but soon stopped running, had trouble walking, and began losing speech. Her parents brought her to the emergency department of a large children's hospital. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of her brain showed symptoms consistent with MLD or another neurodegenerative disorder. The doctors said they were 90 percent certain Grace had one of these disorders, which would mean she had only three to five years to live. If

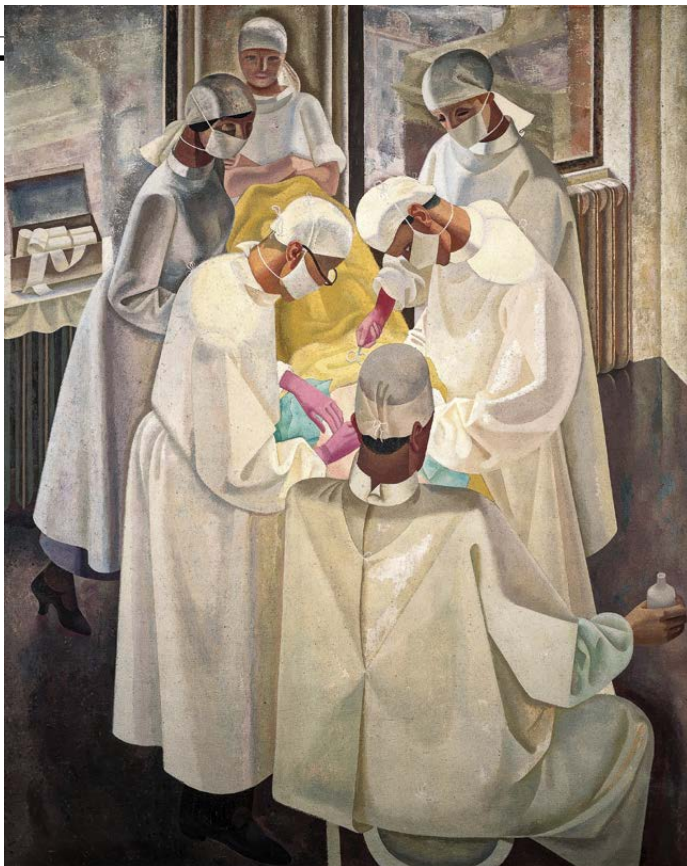
genetic testing confirmed the diagnosis of MLD, each of Grace's three older brothers would have a 25 percent risk of developing the disorder.

Grace's father was a minister at our church. We were in the same small group and lived in the same town. Her parents sought the best available medical care *and* the prayers of faithful family and friends. Right away small group members prayed. The following Sunday they brought Grace to church for group prayer that included anointing her with oil in the name of the Lord. Her father posted prayer requests on Facebook which were soon shared all over the world.

Grace's parents were told the next day that she did not have MLD or any other inherited metabolic or mitochondrial disorder. From that day

forward, Grace turned a corner and began to slowly recover her lost developmental milestones. Two years later her neurologist treated her for a retrospective diagnosis of *Baylisascaris procyonis*, a very rare parasitic infection transmitted by raccoon feces. Even if correct her recovery without any antibiotic treatment defies explanation. Over the ensuing years, Grace was fitted for glasses and treated with anticonvulsant medication, as well as receiving other interventions and therapies. People continued to pray.

Her journey of faith and healing continues, but she is a joyful and adorable five-year-old girl who recently assisted at an outdoor Communion service in a miraculous display of God's great faithfulness, love, and healing power.—*John R. Knight Jr.*



HEALING HANDS In this c. 1934 painting by Reginald Brill, surgeons carefully operate.

We pray for assurance that our Lord will never leave us nor forsake us—that he walks with us each step of the most harrowing journey and will never test us beyond our ability to endure, whether our journey leads to a cure, becomes a valiant long-term struggle, or ends in death and eternity with God.

Several months ago I had the privilege of praying at the bedsides of two saintly women and anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. One was in cardiac intensive care after a massive coronary event, while the other was receiving hospice care in a skilled nursing facility. At their bedsides we prayed for miracles of healing, but also anointed their foreheads and prayed for God's peace to calm any fears; their ears to hear words of comfort and assurance, and their eyes to see a vision of heaven opening and the Lord Jesus welcoming them home. We prayed for the Lord to send his angels to comfort and protect them, and if it was his will, to usher them gently and swiftly home to heaven. Both passed away a short time later.

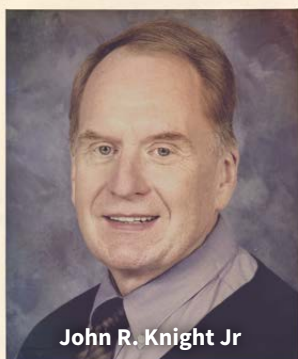
CH: How do you offer prayer in your own practice?

JRK: The apostle Paul described nine gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:8–11). When asked to pray for healing, we may begin by asking for a Holy Spirit anointing on the individual and family for the gifts of wisdom and knowledge; our bodies were created to heal themselves, and we can take steps to boost our own immune systems. Likewise we pray for the Spirit's wisdom and knowledge to guide the health-care team. We pray for restoration of wholeness in four interconnected domains: biological, psychological, social, and spiritual. No matter which is identified as the primary problem, all four are affected.

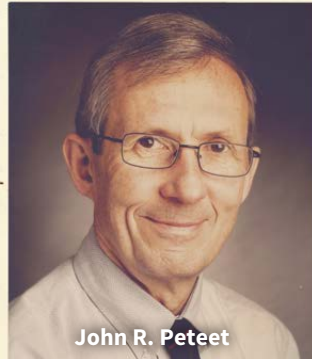
We live in a metropolitan area blessed by the availability of world-class teaching hospitals and a network of Christian health-care professionals. When someone has a medical need, we try to help them find the best available care (with a Christian provider if possible), provide information and support, and offer to coordinate healing prayer.

The recent pandemic posed new challenges in following the biblical practices of anointing with oil or even laying on of hands. However, we sought guidance from the Lord to develop virtual and hybrid models. Like medical discoveries, electronic communications technology is a gift from the Lord that can be used to build and shepherd his church during crises.

We have repeatedly witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit's gifts. However we believe that no one really possesses any of these gifts. They belong in their entirety to the Holy Spirit who uses broken vessels like you and me to display God's awesome power. They are granted to us a day at a time to bring hope, wholeness, and healing to the suffering. **CH**



John R. Knight Jr



John R. Peteet

instantaneously, such as the healing miracles of Jesus. These all meet the criteria for a miracle developed by physician Paolo Zacchia (1584–1659): the diagnosis is indisputable; the prognosis is incurable; the cure is immediate, complete, and sustained; and there is no suggestion that nature or medical treatment could be responsible. These healing miracles are very uncommon; they tend to occur around people of faith (but do not depend on the afflicted's faith); and their purpose is to demonstrate God's power to unbelievers.

We may always pray for miraculous healing, but then must yield to the Lord, "Not my will but Thine be done." Healing often occurs more gradually and may or may not be a complete "cure." Often a lengthy journey of repeated prayers for healing and the best medical treatments that science has to offer bring us to the gift of faith. Like the man whom Jesus told, "All things are possible for one who believes," we cry out, "I believe! Help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:23–24).

Testing the power of prayer

SCIENTIFIC STUDIES OF PRAYER FOR HEALING

Can the power of healing through prayer be proven empirically? Joshua W. Brown, professor of psychological and brain sciences at Indiana University and chair of the Global Medical Research Institute, and Clarissa C. Romez, research assistant at GMRI, shed light on the history of scientific studies on the power of prayer in healing and how Christian scientists study healing prayer today.

CH: How did the scientific study of prayer develop?

GMRI: In the late nineteenth century, an antimicrobial and an antiscientific stance pervaded healing movements. Alexander Dowie (pp. 27–29), for example, recommended that people stop taking their medications to receive prayer and was arrested on the charge of “practicing medicine without a license.” Over the following decades, this stance gradually softened to the point that healing evangelist Oral Roberts (1918–2009) built both a hospital and a medical school starting in the late 1970s (see p. 1). This broader harmonization paved the way for recent medical and scientific studies on prayer.

In the early 1970s, doctor Richard Casdorph investigated miracles associated with Kathryn Kuhlman’s ministry (see pp. 38–40). He reasoned that if God is really healing people, that would stand up to scientific scrutiny, and he documented 10 accounts of miraculous healing of severe, disabling, or potentially fatal diseases. He established a protocol for research based on criteria from the famed shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France: a medical authority had to verify that the individual had the disease and also verify the healing through physical examination and, where necessary, laboratory studies.

In the following decade, doctor Rex Gardner also investigated miraculous healing of organic diseases that could not be explained medically and that were preceded by prayer in the name of Jesus. (In his opinion medical doctors are harder to convince of a miracle, as miracles go against the profession’s foundational assumption of scientific naturalism—but he also noted that medical practice is always changing as research produces new data.)

By the 2000s research on healing prayer began to include carefully designed studies on whole groups. Dale Matthews, a doctor, and Francis MacNutt (see p. 40) studied effects on groups of in-person healing prayer



WE BESEECH YOU A mother prays for healing of her dying son in this 1862 painting.

for arthritis and found remarkable improvements. More controlled studies of prayer for cardiac patients followed, with mixed results.

In one study the patients were prayed for, but not in person, so they were not necessarily aware of the prayers. This distant intercessory prayer was associated with lower coronary unit scores suggesting that prayer could be a beneficial addition to medical care. Another similar study with distant intercessory prayer—specifically for an uncomplicated recovery after surgery—showed no effects, but certainty of receiving prayer was associated with a higher incidence of complications.

This latter study may lack validity, as the intercessors themselves did not believe in healing, but it led to a renewed skepticism regarding the benefits of prayer, such that the gold-standard Cochrane review (a systematic assessment of high-quality scientific research) discouraged further research.

In 2012 Candy Gunther Brown published *Testing Prayer*, a comprehensive analysis of medical and sociological effects of healing prayer, as well as the theological and practical issues involved. She included original studies of prayer for healing of vision and hearing impairment after prayer by Heidi Baker in Mozambique (see p. 59), showing



ON MY DEATHBED? In *Visit the Sick* (1831), grieving women visit with a praying patient.

dramatic improvements in both, as well as a number of individual cases of dramatic healing with accompanying medical records.

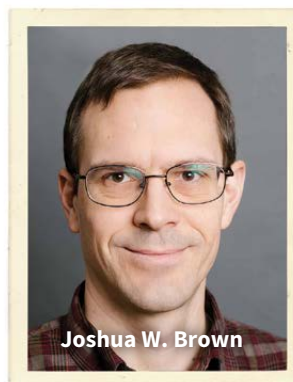
CH: Could you explain the work you do at GMRI?

GMRI: In 2011, in part inspired by the research culminating in *Testing Prayer*, we as a group of scientists and doctors formed **GMRI** as a nonprofit research institute with the aim of applying careful scientific and medical research to healing testimonies from Christian ministries around the world. It includes scientists and medical doctors with a range of specialties who find no theological or philosophical conflict between science and faith.

On the philosophical front, claims of miraculous healing are empirically testable—it is simply a question of whether a disease was cured immediately following prayer despite no medical hope of a cure. This question



Clarissa C. Romez



Joshua W. Brown

can be answered without prior assumptions for or against a naturalistic (i.e., nonsupernatural) worldview.

On the theological front, we find a precedent in Luke 17:14 where Jesus tells the lepers to show themselves to the priests. We understand this as a theological endorsement of providing evidence of healing to the cultural authorities. In the first century, that was the priest; today the cultural authority to verify healings

rests with doctors and scientists. In our view scientific and medical research can and should identify cases where remarkable, medically unexplainable healings have occurred through prayer.

GMRI focuses on publishing evidence regarding healings, and we leave it to the reader to interpret the philosophical and theological significance of our findings. We mostly focus on retrospective studies of individual healings, though we are also pursuing clinical trials of prayer effects (see sidebars). We also periodically collaborate with filmmakers, as we did for the documentary *Send Proof*.

A young man could not eat or drink for the first 16 years of his life

At birth a baby's parents grew concerned that he could not keep any food down. Diagnosed with a paralyzed stomach, he depended on feeding tubes for the first 16 years of his life. In 2011 the family went to a service at a Pentecostal church led by a healing evangelist who shared testimonies and prayed for the teenager. As he did, the boy felt an electrical shock in his right arm going through his stomach (as if, he

said, God was "jump-starting" his stomach.) He was able to eat the first full meal of his life without any complications.

Doctors removed the tubes after three months of his tolerating food, and he remains healed. The findings were published in *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*. Prior to the healing, the teen and his family believed that miracles happened in biblical times, but not in the present.



By researching case reports, we illuminate healing experiences that have already happened; looking at them collectively, we can better understand scenarios in which proximal (nearby in time or place) intercessory prayer is associated with healings. We can ask questions regarding whether intercessors who have professed being “born again” or “spirit-filled” Christians, or have faith in healing, are more likely to experience better outcomes.

CH: How do you research cases?

GMRI: Researching case reports of miraculous healing is lengthy, daunting, and exciting. It requires collaboration among a team of researchers, medical doctors, physical therapists, philosophers, theologians, and the patients themselves. We face many challenges. First, many claims of healing lack sufficient medical documentation. This does not mean that a healing did not occur, but rather that we cannot document it with the highest standards of medical evidence.

Second, those healed are often reluctant to give us access to their medical records. We do our best to protect and respect our research subjects and maintain confidentiality. Still, we have had to stop investigating a number of promising cases simply because subjects would rather not revisit a darker chapter in their lives, or are concerned about unwanted

BY HIS STRIPES Caravaggio's *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas* (c. 1601) shows Thomas inspecting Jesus's wounds.

publicity, or do not want to stop receiving disability benefits because of their healing.

Third, physicians are often reluctant due to liability issues; doctors may be open to charges of misdiagnosis or malpractice if follow-up tests disprove a former diagnosis of an incurable disease. We may review thousands of cases to publish a single article. However, we and others continue to investigate claims of miraculous healings through prayer, and we anticipate that a steady stream of peer-reviewed case reports and clinical trial results will continue to provide the basis for fruitful discussion. **CH**

A woman blind for 12 years was able to see again after prayer

A young woman went blind at 18 years of age from juvenile macular degeneration, which does not heal on its own. She attended a school for the blind, learned to read braille, walked with a cane, and remained blind for over 12 years. One night before going to bed, her husband prayed for her, saying, “Oh, God! You can restore [X's] eyesight tonight, Lord. I know You can do it! And I pray You will do it tonight.” After the prayer his wife

opened her eyes and was able to see her husband kneeling in front of her. Medical records after the prayer show an uncorrected visual acuity of 20/100 in each eye and corrected VAs of 20/30 to 20/40. Images of the back of her retina showed the original damage to her eyes no longer present. To date her eyesight has remained intact for 47 years. These findings have been published in *Explore: The Journal of Science & Healing*.

Healing on the frontlines

SOME GLOBAL HEALING MINISTRIES TODAY

Randy Clark

Randy Clark (p. 43) spoke with a number of his colleagues in the Third Wave movement to discuss how they put their biblical and theological understanding of healing into practice.

Throughout the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, people are coming to Jesus as they hear the gospel and see healing, deliverances, signs, and wonders. Hundreds of them have since been martyred. Future church historians will write about the great explosion of Christianity in the Global South during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These interviews show forth that future. I am privileged to call these pastors and apostolic leaders my friends, and I have personally witnessed their ministries. All have seen God's miraculous power up close, have trained people in their churches to pray for healing, and have provided ways for people who need healing to receive prayer.

A SPIRITUAL MILESTONE

Carlito Paes pastors the Igreja da Cidade (City Church) in São José dos Campos, Brazil, with an attendance of 22,000. He leads a network of 700 churches with 50 other apostolic leaders helping him; each leader has 1,500 to 7,000 in attendance. Almost all are members of Brazil's traditional Baptist Convention. He testified,

The prophetic healing ministry at Igreja da Cidade has been a spiritual milestone in the church's life and a great move of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The church grew on the movement of the Spirit and on the search for more of God in an organic way, throughout all age groups. We have seen healings of all kinds of diseases, and unbelief gave way to faith and an expectation of being healed.

Our healing rooms have grown and served people not only from the church, but from all over Brazil and even from other countries. We believe that there



"I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT" El Greco's famous painting *The Pentecost* (c. 1600) shows Acts 2 as relevant to his time—and ours.

is no way for a healthy growth if healing doesn't become a way of life for all our spiritual children and families.

Paes credits healing as the main catalyst of growth of the churches in the network he leads, though systems for administratively handling the growth are also important.

MESSAGE OF VICTORY Carlito Paes (*near right*) preaches at Igreja da Cidade; Henry Madava speaks at Champions of the Kingdom Conference in 2019 (*far right*).

GREAT COMMISSION Pastor and professor Pablo Deiros (*below right*) roots church growth from healing in scriptural testimony.

THE COMMAND OF JESUS

Pablo Deiros, a historian of world Christianity, was for many years the copastor of the oldest and second-largest Baptist church in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Iglesia Del Centro. He was ordained as an apostle and has taught at Princeton, Fuller, and the International Baptist Seminary in Argentina.

Deiros noted that Tommy Hicks's 1954 crusade, focused on healing, brought about a huge change in Argentina. Hundreds of thousands came to the meeting; the crusade changed the perception of Protestants in Argentina. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Carlos Annacondia (b. 1944), like Hicks, focused on healing and deliverance. Spectacular growth resulted as people accepted Christ and came back to Christ. In some cities the total number of Protestants doubled:

On every occasion that believers fulfilled the mission of the church represented by Jesus's command to the 12, to the 70/72, and in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20) by announcing the good news of the kingdom—with healing and deliverance accompanying this proclamation—more people came to salvation. This results in a marvelous manifestation of the Kingdom of God, the increase of the Kingdom, and the testimony of the Kingdom in the world.

“PLEASE BRING THE SICK”

Henry Madava is the founder and senior pastor of Victory Christian Fellowship in Kiev, the second-largest non-Orthodox church in Ukraine. He leads the apostolic network of Victory Christian Churches and Christ for All Cities Ministries. Madava has conducted Jesus Festival events that

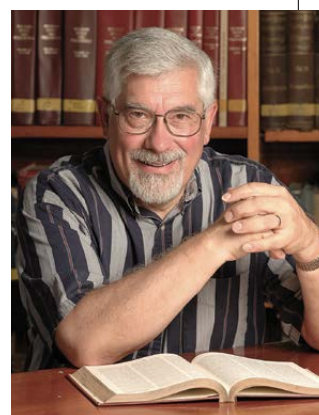


focus on healing and has preached in 46 countries, seeing well over a million people come to Jesus. This growth in evangelism exploded after his church offered a school of healing and impartation. There, many of his members were activated in the gifts of the Spirit and received a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit:

When the miraculous happens, we can change history. Sodom and Gomorrah could have been spared if somebody had brought the miraculous to them. But nobody did, and I think today that change of history is still happening as long as we bring the miraculous to the people.

Madava first became involved in deliverance and healing in Zimbabwe when a preacher didn't show up. After preaching his first sermon for five minutes, he had nothing more to say. He began to pray; with his eyes closed, he heard “thuds” as bodies hit the floor.

When he opened his eyes, he saw four or five young people lying on the floor. He had no reference point for this phenomenon, having never seen anyone fall under the power of God. He went to a teenage girl and asked her what was happening; she responded with a male voice and a demon manifested. After this event healing came into his ministry.



Some terms often used by modern healing ministries

activation: fanning into flame gifts of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 1:6, 1 Cor 12:8–10)

anointing: power of God on a person to give or receive a work of the Holy Spirit, sometimes experienced as a tingling, heat, or strong awareness of God's presence (Acts 10:38, 1 John 2:20)

apostle: one commissioned by Jesus, as confirmed by signs, wonders, and miracles, to break new ground for

the gospel (Luke 6:12–13, Eph 4:11, 2 Cor 12:12)

deliverance: liberation from torment by demons or evil spirits by commanding their departure in Jesus's name and authority, often after closing “doors” that allowed the spirit(s) in (Matt 12:44; 17:18, Eph 4:27)

falling (under the power): phenomenon of falling to the ground, as one is overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Chron 5:13–14, Acts 9:4)

impartation: transference of anointing from God for spiritual gifts, infilling with power, and/or baptism of the Holy Spirit, through laying on of hands and/or prayer (Acts 19:2–6, 2 Tim 1:6)

prophetic word: message spoken under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, confirming scriptural guidance and encouraging faith to follow God's direction (1 Tim 4:14, Acts 19:6)

—Candy Gunther Brown and Randy Clark



“HEAR HIM, YE DEAF” Heidi Baker prays for believers in Mozambique (above).

CONSTRUCTION ZONE Leif Hetland (far left) tells of receiving a prophetic word in 1995 that described him as a “bulldozer” making a way for healing.

CATCH THE FIRE Randy Clark (left) came to worldwide attention through his ministry at the Toronto Airport Church revival (see p. 41).

In Ukraine Madava met people who helped him grow in healing ministry: Charles (1916–2009) and Francis (1920–2010) Hunter, Benny Hinn (b. 1952), and me. Now he looks for young men and women called into healing ministry:

When I see that, I put extra emphasis on them . . . because that’s who I was. . . . So I told the church, “please bring the sick. The Lord says we should do a healing meeting.” And the people were so disobedient. They didn’t bring the sick; they brought the dying.

In his first healing service at the church, a woman died in the balcony. Members of his church prayed for her, and she was raised. Now, he says,

they have maybe 12 people who have been raised from the dead by people from the church. But I never raised any of them. . . . That’s how our church began to grow from twenty people. . . . We began to open new churches and every one of our pastors, I try to help them to move in the anointing for healing before

they go. . . . [Healing] is like the mantra. It is the victory. Healing and church planting go together. . . . Now we have churches in Ukraine and in Poland. . . . [In Russia] we have about 300 churches all over the country. . . . I try to show the whole church

miracles every Sunday; I personally pray for people. The ministry team prays as well, and the church also sends people—including doctors—to minister healing in the hospitals. . . .

The power of God is moving. People are getting healed. We are not trying to convince anybody who is in our church. They are willfully convinced. And that’s an atmosphere that will help to see miracles.

LITTLE PEOPLE

Heidi Baker is cofounder with her husband, Rolland Baker, of Iris Global Ministries. Based in Pemba, Mozambique, they have planted thousands of churches in that nation and seen over a million people come to Christ. At first they had planted four churches—only one in Mozambique. Then Baker experienced a powerful impartation in Toronto that lasted seven days and included a prophetic word from me that God was going to give her the nation of Mozambique:



“YE BLIND, BEHOLD” Around the world today, Christians still claim Jesus as healer just as in 16th-c. Bohemia (above, Jesus heals the woman with the discharge in a relief on the Edlmann Palace) and 6th-c. Syria (right, Jesus heals a blind man in a Syrian manuscript).



the blind would see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, and the dead be raised.

For the first 18 months after that, few healings or miracles took place. Baker persevered in praying until three blind women were healed in three days. Nearly all the deaf in Mozambique she prays for receive their hearing (see p. 54). Hundreds have been raised from the dead. She says,

We're just little people. Little laid-down lovers following Jesus, and we never use the titles [apostles]. . . . We've given our lives to bring the lost to him and to encourage the church and just to be his lovers. . . .

You just can't separate healing from church growth. It would be like [an eagle] flying with one wing. We're about a holistic gospel; healing, deliverance, drilling water wells, providing 35,000 meals a day for the hungry, taking care of orphans and widows, and education. We're working in 39 nations with over 80 bases. All the church growth has everything to do with intimacy with Jesus, first of all. Out of that intimacy comes the signs and wonders. Out of that face-to-face love with Jesus comes the healing.

In Toronto Baker responded to a sermon calling her to spend herself for the salvation of souls. Since that experience she has been thrown in jail, beaten, stoned, slandered, walked through crocodile-infested waters, and shipwrecked:

I'm telling you, it's not a problem compared to the glory, the beauty of Jesus and being able to serve Him, to love the poor and to see people running to him.

KNOWING GOD IS REAL

Bill Johnson is the senior leader of Bethel Church in Redding,

California, a congregation of over 11,000. He impacts a network of churches around the world. He reflects:

Healing reveals God's nature that he cares about what we care about. It's not just about eternity. It's His love for us right now when He relieves pain, when He causes a tumor to dissolve, or mends a broken bone. It reinforces how practical the love of God is for us.

Healing is God's ultimate calling card, as when people realize it is real, that He cares, that He can be encountered, and He can be known. . . . Healing automatically attracts people. You don't have to hype it to build a crowd. People in their heart of hearts want to know that He's real, that He's genuine, and that He's a father. . . .

Healing is a lifestyle, not a program at Bethel. We have people getting healed as they are waiting in line to get into the building. . . . I remember years ago . . . walking through the offices and over to the sanctuary . . . we had secretaries praying for this group, and the janitor was praying for another guy.

Our people look for opportunities to pray for the sick and to prophesy to someone. For our church healing is huge, and it is powerfully related to our growth. We have people who come to our Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry from all over the world, nearly 2,600 of them this year.



LEIF HETLAND

Leif Hetland is an apostolic evangelist who leads a network of churches around the world. Like Baker and Madava, he has led over a million people to salvation in Jesus. In June 1995 he received a prophecy from me and an activation of gifts, especially healing, through the Holy Spirit's impartation, hearing,

I see you in a dark place, all around you is darkness, but God is going to make you light in the darkness. He is going to make you a bulldozer, you will make a way where there has been no way. And I see you leading a multitude of people out of the darkness into the light.

Immediately following those words, God knocked Hetland to the ground where he shook under the power of God for almost three hours. For six months Hetland didn't understand the significance of what had happened. Then while he was in the Middle East, some Muslims had carried their quadriplegic friend on top of a bus for seven hours to get to the meeting and receive healing prayer:

That was the night I realized everything changed. I thought they were attacking us. . . . But I realized they were not angry; they were not there to kill us. . . . [Their friend] had broken his neck about 12 years earlier, fell down and now he was quadriplegic. When he was healed in the meeting all of them surrendered their lives to Jesus. Because of the testimony of the quadriplegic's

PRAYER AND FAITH Jesse Trevino's *Spirit of Healing* graces the outer wall of the Christus Santa Rosa Hospital in San Antonio.

healing, the news spread. We started with a small group. . . . Before the few nights of healing meetings were over, 22,400 people had given their lives to Jesus. . . . A demonstration of the gospel led to people hearing a proclamation of the gospel. Over 26 years we have ministered in 101 countries with ongoing ministry in 22 countries [including 16 non-Christian ones] and close to 1,000 churches. . . . I can look around the world, I see my spiritual sons and daughters. Healing is so much part of our DNA.

Hetland told me how a radical imam who had opposed him for five years witnessed a powerful healing of his broken arm when Hetland touched him and prayed. This healing did what five years of verbal witnessing had not done; he went from hating Hetland to hugging him:

I have never led someone to Christ through apologetics or theological argument. They accept the gospel when they see a demonstration of the gospel in power; in healing, words of knowledge, miracles, and deliverances. . . . I've seen Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and atheists turn in repentance and faith to Jesus after they see the miraculous healings and hear the gospel. . . . When I minister, I tell them that I can't heal anyone, it is Jesus who is alive who is doing the healing. Jesus is living in me, and it is Jesus who is the healer. It is Jesus who is the savior. He's not dead. He's alive!

Hetland is known in Pakistan as the "ambassador of love." He holds peace and reconciliation meetings among top religious leaders in Pakistan and is the only westerner who has spoken at their top university. He also conducts large celebrations of healing through which many thousands have come to Jesus.

HEALING TO EVANGELIZE

Each of these ministries strongly embraces the importance of healing for evangelism. We have seen explosive growth in many new apostolic networks and in older denominations that have opened to the miraculous. I believe the way to reach the post-Christian world of the twenty-first century is the same way the early church reached the pre-Christian world. Church history is presently being written in the lives of people who received a powerful experience of impartation and surrendered to the call to "spend and be spent" by laying down their lives for Christ. **CH**

Randy Clark is overseer of the Apostolic Network of Global Awakening, president of the Global Awakening Theological Seminary of Family of Faith Christian University, and author of 40 books including There is More and Intimacy with God.



IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WALK Albrecht Dürer's 1513 woodcut (above) depicts Peter and John healing a beggar at the temple gate, a story told in Acts 3:1–10.

Christian traditions have approached divine healing in a number of ways, and this issue gives every believer history to consider. Either on your own or in a group, think more deeply about divine healing with the questions below.

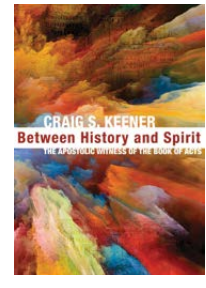
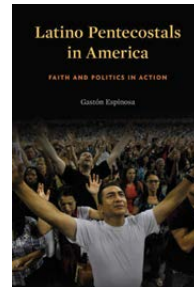
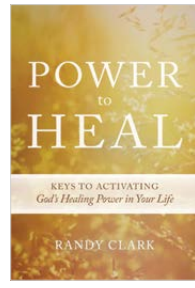
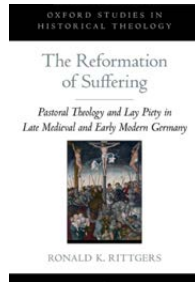
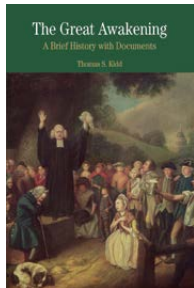
1. Which of the many stories of divine healing shared in this issue most resonates with you? Why? Which stories felt most foreign to you?
2. What Scriptures are your favorites when thinking about divine healing, and why? If your church regularly talks about divine healing, what Scriptures does your church most often turn to when discussing it?
3. In what ways is the ministry of healing practiced in your church or denomination?
4. What is one surprising fact you learned from our lead article (pp. 8–11)?
5. What were some characteristics of Jesus's healing ministry (pp. 12–15)? How can we show these characteristics in our ministries today?

Questions for reflection: Divine healing

6. Why did medieval Christians focus on the saints in their theology of healing (pp. 16–18)? Are there saints in your own life that you connect to stories of healing?
7. Why were some Protestant Reformers skeptical of medieval approaches to healing (pp. 19–22)? Which of their questions do you share? What other questions do you have about healing that they did not raise?
8. The article about the Great Awakening (pp. 23–25) names “moderates” and “radicals” with respect to healing miracles. Where would you place yourself and your church on this spectrum?
9. The Blumhardts connected healing miracles to prayer for all those suffering and care for the wider creation (pp. 26–28). How can you learn from these approaches in your own spiritual life?
10. How was Dowie's healing ministry different from some that had come before (pp. 29–31)? Where do you agree and disagree with his approach?
11. What emphases characterized early Pentecostalism (pp. 34–37)? Why? What about the Charismatic movement (pp. 38–40) and the Third Wave (pp. 41–43)? Did anything surprise you about these movements' early days?
12. What commonalities do you see in the many stories of global healing on pp. 44–46 and 56–60? What in these stories encourages you, and what do you want to know more about?
13. What guidelines would you put in place when praying for God to fulfill material needs? How do they compare to those discussed on pp. 47–49?
14. Name one new thing you learned from our interviews with medical professionals and scientists (pp. 50–52 and 53–55). Where have you seen prayer used in a medical setting? What issues (scriptural, theological, psychological, medical) surround the idea of scientific testing of prayer?

Recommended resources

LEARN MORE ABOUT HEALING THROUGHOUT CHRISTIAN HISTORY WITH THESE RESOURCES SELECTED BY THIS ISSUE'S AUTHORS AND EDITORS.



BOOKS

A good **survey** of the history of healing prayer in the church is Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (2005). For the **Bible and early church**, look at Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100–400)* (1984); R. J. S. Barrett-Lennard, *Christian Healing After the New Testament* (1994); Harold Remus, *Jesus as Healer* (1997); Andrew Dauntton-Fear, *Healing in the Early Church* (2009); Lee Jefferson, *Christ the Miracle Worker in Early Christian Art* (2014); and Craig Keener, *Miracles* (2011) and *Between History and Spirit* (2020).

Some stories of healing in the **Middle Ages** appear in Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (1981); Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims* (1977); and Donald Prudlo, *The Martyred Inquisitor: The Life and Cult of Peter of Verona* (2008). To read about approaches to healing in the Protestant and Catholic **Reformations**, look at Craig Harline, *Miracles at the Jesus Oak* (2003) and Ronald K. Rittgers, *The Reformation of Suffering* (2012).

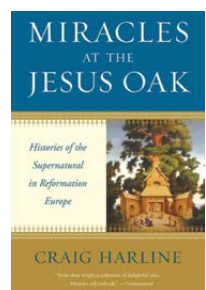
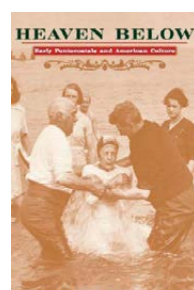
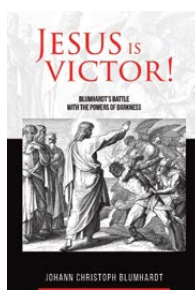
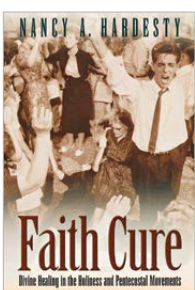
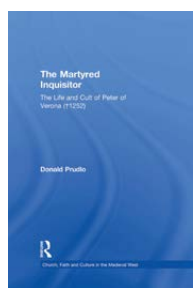
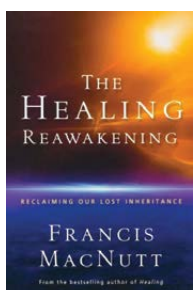
For some healing stories from the **First Great Awakening** through the nineteenth century, consult Robert Bruce Mullin, *Miracles and the Modern Religious Imagination* (1996); Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions* (1999); Rick Ostrander, *The Life of Prayer in a World of Science* (2000); Nancy Hardesty, *Faith Cure* (2003); James

Opp, *The Lord for the Body* (2005); Heather Curtis, *Faith in the Great Physician* (2007); Sam Storms, *Signs of the Spirit* (2007); and Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening* (2007). You can read J. C. Blumhardt's own testimony in *Blumhardt's Battle* (translated 1970) and *Gospel Sermons* (translated 2017).

For more on **Pentecostalism**, read Vincent Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition* (1997) and *The Century of the Holy Spirit* (2001); Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below* (2001); and Gastón Espinosa, *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism* (2014) and *Latino Pentecostals in America* (2016).

To begin to understand the **Charismatic movement**, look at Francis MacNutt, *The Healing Reawakening* (2006) and Amy Collier Artman, *The Miracle Lady: Kathryn Kuhlman and the Transformation of Charismatic Christianity* (2019).

To read more about the **Third Wave**, check out Peter Wagner, *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit* (1988); Bill Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle* (1999); Carol Wimber, *John Wimber* (1999); Tanya Luhmann, *When God Talks Back* (2012); and Wonsuk Ma, Hyeon-sung Bae, and William Menzies, eds., *David Yonggi Cho* (2016).





For the **global** spread of healing, consult Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity* (2006); Candy Gunther Brown, ed., *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* (2011); Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Karkkainen, and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyaduand, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity* (2014); and Craig Keener, *Miracles Today* (2021).

Much literature about healing and prayer in the context of **medicine** and **science** has been published in scientific journals; you may want to look at *Christianity and Psychiatry* and *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* as well as some of our web links. Also check out Richard Casdorph, *The Miracles* (1976); Rex Gardner, *A Doctor Investigates Healing Miracles* (1986); Harold Koenig, *The Healing Power of Faith* (1999); and Candy Gunther Brown, *Testing Prayer: Science and Healing* (2012).

Some primary sources for understanding **today's** various divine healing movements include Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light* (1947); Kathryn Kuhlman, *I Believe in Miracles* (1962); Morton Kelsey, *Healing and Christianity* (1973); Francis MacNutt, *Healing* (1974); John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Healing* (1987); Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (1993); Julie Ma and Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit* (2010); Jon Mark Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata* (2011); Randy Clark, *Power to Heal* (2016); and Lee Strobel, *The Case for Miracles* (2018).

CHRISTIAN HISTORY ISSUES



Read these past issues on our website—some are still available for purchase:

- 23: *Spiritual Awakenings in North America*
- 49: *Everyday Faith in the Middle Ages*
- 58: *The Rise of Pentecostalism*
- 82: *Phoebe Palmer and the Holiness Movement*
- 101: *Healthcare and Hospitals*
- 134: *Science and Technology*
- 135: *Plagues and Epidemics*



VIDEOS FROM VISION VIDEO

Videos relevant to this issue's topic include *About Miracles*; *Angel Miracles*; *Great Awakening*; *It's a Miracle*; *Logan's Story*; *Miracle Matt*; *Miracles from Heaven*; and *Outpouring of the Holy Spirit*.

WEBSITES



As always, you can read many of the pre-twentieth-century figures we've discussed in their own words at the [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#) and the [Post-Reformation Digital Library](#) (which actually has many Reformation sources), as well as the [Internet Medieval Sourcebook](#) and the [Internet Modern History Sourcebook](#).

The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center and the Consortium of Pentecostal Archives have a number of resources on Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity including a full run of Seymour's *Apostolic Faith* newspaper. Regent College Library also has an excellent set of links to resources.

The Global Medical Research Institute maintains a list of sources related to scientific testing of healing prayer in their online library.

Finally, most of the modern ministries discussed in our final interview have websites, which are linked in the online version of the article. **CH**



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If you're a pastor, missionary, or itinerant minister, community is vital. It can be difficult to find like-minded believers who are theologically conservative and scripturally sound who believe that all the gifts of the Spirit are active today. The Global Awakening Network is that community. Find your tribe at globalawakening.com/network.



/ EVENTS



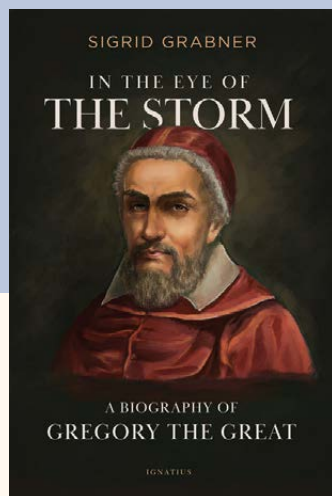
/ TRIPS



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HOW SAINTS LIVED AND DIED



◆ IN THE EYE OF THE STORM: A Biography of Gregory the Great

Sigrid Grabner

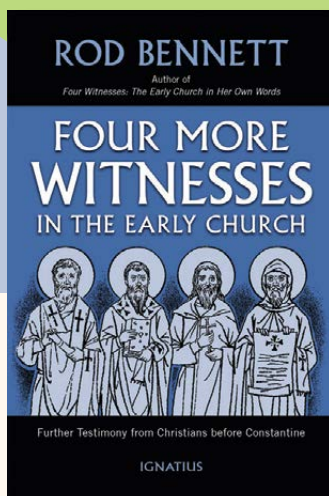
Rome in 590. A plague is tearing through the city. Pope Pelagius II is dead. Outside the walls Lombard soldiers are raising their swords. What can save the Eternal City? All eyes are on the next Pope. This tells the dramatic story of St. Gregory the Great, raised against his will to the papacy, "in the eye of a storm", at the helm of an "old and rotten ship".

Gregory's political savvy, holiness, generosity, and peacemaking steered Rome clear of a shipwreck and laid the foundations for the future of Europe. He instituted sweeping financial reforms, ensured legal protection for the poor, developed a system of musical notation, wrote influential works of theology, quieted the Byzantines and the warring Lombards, and led a pilgrimage that helped end the plague.

IESP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$17.95

"With a deeply travailed modern Church, this book offers a fine blueprint for renewal—and reasons for hope. It reads like a page-turning suspense novel. Grabner's research captures all of the tumult, and inspires us to live more saintly and courageous lives."

—Kevin Wells, Author, *Priest and Beggar*



◆ FOUR MORE WITNESSES IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Rod Bennett

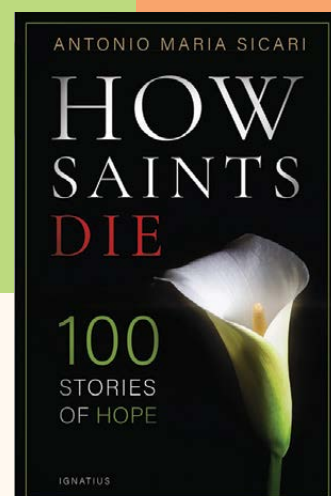
This sequel to Bennett's best-selling *Four Witnesses: The Early Church in Her Own Words* invites readers to enter again the world of the early, influential Christian writers, meeting Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Hermas, and Origen.

Learn what these witnesses had to say on the necessity of baptism, on "eternal security" and confessions to Church elders, about Mary and her role in salvation history, and much more. Christian writers addressed these questions, and many others, in the decades following the Apostles—an era when even the Creed was still a work in progress.

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"This book is a time machine taking you right back to early Christianity. It is breezy, exciting, and even gripping. Read it, and witness the faith of our fathers."

—Brandon Vogt
Editor, ChurchFathers.org



◆ HOW SAINTS DIE

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Antonio Maria Sicari

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