

Francis MacNutt: Healing

USA 1974

Notes by Alison Morgan July 2000

Preface

Estimates about half those prayed for are healed/notably improved of physical sickness, and about 3/4 prayed for are healed of emotional/spiritual problems.

PART ONE: THE HEALING MINISTRY - ITS UNDERLYING MEANING AND IMPORTANCE

1. Does healing happen?

People now hungering and thirsting to know God in a direct, experiential way. Bolivia - experience suggests 80% of the sick who ask for prayer in the poorest areas are healed.

HS is moving to: transform individuals, heal relationships and build community, transform society. Need to transform individuals (conversion, inner healing, physical healing) first - 'justice cannot be brought to a society until there are just men; and men cannot be just until they are healed of the hurts and wounds of the past' 19. At the heart of the problem of social injustice is the need of a change of heart of the people themselves; this comes about through a personal rediscovery of Jesus Christ.

Proof for healing prayer - a chemist got 156 people praying in 700 experiments for over 27,000 seeds involving 100,000 measurements. The prayed for ones had 53% growth advantage...

Various testimonies to healing.

2. Our prejudices against healing

Beginnings of charismatic movt in early 70s.

Misunderstandings:

- ✘ prayer for healing is 'faith healing'
- ✘ God himself sends the suffering as a cross - but nowhere in the gospels do we see Jesus encouraging the sick to live with their illness; rather the reverse, he treats sickness as a manifestation of the kingdom of Satan which he has come to destroy.
- ✘ arrogant to pray for healing
- ✘ we no longer need signs and wonders, only faith. This is an overemphasis on doctrine; healing takes place because the Father is compassionate and wants to heal broken humanity, not because he wants to make a point. Point of healing isn't just to act as proof factor for man's intellect; it is God's mercy reaching out to the sick
- ✘ miracles don't happen; they are a primitive way of expressing reality. But people who have known God's healing love and power sense the presence of God within themselves, not out there; immanent, not transcendent. To insist he doesn't heal puts him firmly out there.

3. The basic message of Christianity: Jesus saves

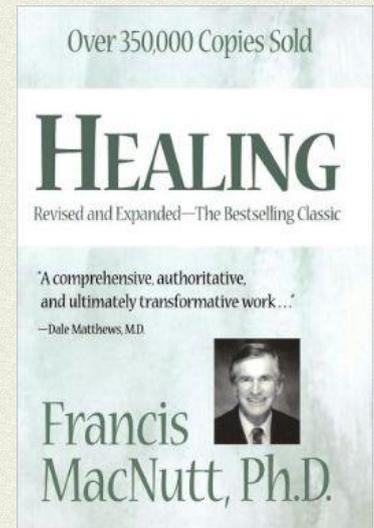
What from?

Jesus came to do 2 basic things:

- positive: to give us a new life, loving relationship of union with his Father and with himself, through HS
- in relation to the obstacles to new life: to heal and free us from all those sick elements in the human personality that need to be transformed so that the new life may freely enter in

'Jesus' (Yeshua) = 'Yahweh is salvation'

'The healing acts of Jesus were themselves the message that he had come to set men free; they were not just to prove that his message was true' - 43. He called them 'works', not 'miracles'; 'acts of power' (dynameis) - no implication of sth extraordinary and rare.



4. Wholeness is holiness

Every time Jesus met with evil, spiritual or physical, he treated it as an enemy. He did not divide man into a soul to be saved and healed, and a body to suffer and remain unhealed. Christ didn't come to save souls, he came to save people. Early church carried on this way - cp James 5.

Early Fathers moved gradually from wholehearted belief in healing to a view that the body's suffering is preferable for the sake of the soul - influence of Platonic, Stoic and Manichean thought. Ascetics. Gregory on sex - allowed within marriage only to produce children, and then only as long as pleasure excluded.

Sacrament of anointing of sick became extreme unction.

Common people resisted all this - worship of saints and shrines.

Today, psychology has returned to a Hebrew view of man; as person not separated into body and soul, but whole.

Soul not imprisoned in the body but at home in the body.

5. Let him carry his cross daily

God can't play on a broken violin. Sickness not to be seen as cross, enabling sufferer to enter into suffering of Christ, thus to be accepted. The suffering Jesus did not himself endure, and which he took away from those who approached him in faith, was sickness, the suffering that tears man apart from within. The cross he carried was the cross of persecution; different.

Meaning of suffering

1. God's desire is that we be healthy rather than sick; and since he has power to do all things, he will respond to prayer for healing unless there is some obstacle, or unless the sickness is sent or permitted for some greater reason.

2. Sickness is itself an evil, though good may come from it

3. Everyone dies

4. Some sickness may have a higher purpose

Roman Ritual: God of heavenly power, by your word you drive away all weakness and sickness from the bodies of men. In your mercy, be with your servant now, so that his/her infirmity may depart, his/her full strength and health may return, and he/she may bless your holy name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

6. Miracles: a proof?

How do we account for fact that everywhere in the gospel Jesus treated sickness as an enemy; and shdn't we say to C20th lepers that he wants to heal them too? In general, his cures have been seen as signs of the *truth* of his message, carried on in early church to show it was carrying out work of Christ, repeated intermittently (eg Lourdes) to show a sceptical world that Christ still with the church, and worked otherwise only by certain holy persons.

Jesus's motivation not just to prove his messianic mission. Healed on sabbath; told people to not tell anyone.

1 Cor 4.20-21 the kingdom of God depends not on talk but on power. What would you prefer? Am I to come to you with a stick, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

Christianity is more than doctrine; it is power to transform our lives.

7. God is love

Pamela Carswell: *despite all the formal instruction we received on the Fatherhood of God, the lesson we really learnt was that our relation to God is as little like the normal relation of a child to its father as can be imagined. Picture your own child jumping nervously when it hears your voice; unwilling to play with others in case it gets dirty; always a little anxious because, even though you say nothing, you may be inwardly critical and disapproving; fearful of getting on your wrong side; uncertain of asking you for anything it wants because it thinks you will say it is too much trouble or too expensive or not good for it or too God for it - anything but a simple, affectionate 'yes'; obscurely convinced that the root of the trouble is that you don't like children, and its only chance of approval is to be as little like a child as possible... We know he loves us...; we feel that his love is the dubious kind that used to result for us in spinach and the thwarting of natural impulse. We daren't formulate these feelings, because we know obscurely that if we did, we should have another set of concepts framed something like this: God is horrid... God is always trying to trip you up - and so on. These feelings are kept well out of sight and are only consciously present in the form of certain implicit expectations.* 87

Real human love - if I am in pain or sick, my friends will do everything they can to get me well. We go to the doctor to ask to be made better, but not to God. Yet Isaiah 49.15: 'can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.' If we really have confidence that God loves us, we will have confidence that he wants to heal us.

Hospitals. Why is it that those who give spiritual advice usually counsel patients to accept their suffering as God's will for them, while everyone else in the hospital labours to restore the person to health?

Healing works of Jesus were so important to Peter that when he gave the household of Cornelius a sketch of the life of Jesus, he said nothing about his preaching, but only reported that he went about doing good works and healing all who were in the grip of the devil (Acts 10).

PART TWO: FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY AS THEY TOUCH UPON THE HEALING MINISTRY

8. The faith to be healed

Mk 11 and moving mountains. Ask, and believe that you have already received. But what kind of faith?

4 basic faith attitudes towards healing:

- ✘ healing is man's responsibility
- ✘ healing is possible but extraordinary - shouldn't ask for it, should do your best to keep going, like injured member of football team. 'Blessed are those who expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed!
- ✘ *Healing is normal, but does not always take place
- ✘ healing always takes place if there is faith.

So what kind of faith?

1. My faith is in God, not in my faith. To pray in faith is: to turn to God in trust that he loves us; to accept our doubts about our own adequacy; to see that the faith action we need to take is to pray for the sick; to leave the results up to God.
2. The gift of faith is not the same as the virtue of faith; every Christian has the latter. Praying in the name of Jesus - means to pray as he would pray, to see people and situations as he does, then speak with his power and authority. Only then can we pray a prayer of command. Otherwise we pray a prayer of petition.
3. The faith needed can be in the praying person, the sick person, or even in no one. Our faith lies in the obedience of praying for the sick.

9. The mystery of faith

Prayer for healing more often associated with tents than seminaries, often done naively; our responsibility to not shirk it.

2 basic principles:

- ✘ do not expand any one method or experience into a universal method
- ✘ ask God to meet your needs with confidence, but do not tell him when/how

10. But the greatest of these is charity

Faith is a requisite for healing, but primary disposition needed by the minister of healing is love. When love is present, he has never seen a person hurt in any way by healing ministry, even if not healed. In healing, you can concentrate either on the power of God or on the love of God; both OK. Power prayers are authoritative and accompanied by laying on of hands. Love prayers cast out everything in person opposed to God's love, and leave the answer to him. So how you think about healing will determine how you pray for it. Emphasis on power, authority and claiming of promises fine for evangelists mature in the healing ministry; way of love better for simple persons, and it brings peace to the sick person. 'If I have faith in all its fulness, to move mountains, but am without love, then I am nothing at all' - 1 Cor 13.23.

PART THREE: THE FOUR BASIC KINDS OF HEALING AND HOW TO PRAY FOR EACH

11. The four basic kinds of healing

There are 4 different kinds of basic healing, differentiated by the kinds of sickness that afflict us and the basic causes of those sicknesses. Unless we know these differences, we will not be able to help most people, and may even harm them.

4 kinds of sickness:

- ✘ sickness of spirit, caused by personal sin
- ✘ emotional sickness and problems caused by the emotional hurts of our past
- ✘ physical sickness in our bodies, caused by disease/accidents
- ✘ demonic oppression, which may cause any of the above, and requires deliverance

4 corresponding prayer methods:

- ✘ prayer for repentance
- ✘ prayer for inner healing

✚ prayer for physical healing

✚ prayer for deliverance

Different people may be confident in different methods; advantage of team.

Medicine - God works through doctors too

So the basic questions we should ask first are:

- what is the basic sickness
- what is its cause
- what kind of prayer should we use

12. Forgiveness of sin

1 Cor 11.29-32 'a person who eat and drinks (bread and wine) without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.'

Illness is a punishment. Sin and sickness are connected. Sometimes good to consider a prayer for repentance or a prayer for inner healing before a prayer for physical healing.

Lack of forgiveness is the biggest block to God's healing power.

Physical sickness, far from being redemptive, is often a sign that we are not redeemed, not whole at a spiritual level.

Physical healing often requires first a forgiveness of sin or an inner healing

Most important repentance is of bitterness/resentment

Love is the best remedy to break through the coldness, hurt and bitterness that block God's healing power from flowing into us.

13. The inner healing of our emotional problems

Depression prevents a person from experiencing many basic aspects of the Christian life - peace, joy, God's love, community, work, peace.

Our deepest need is for love, and if we are denied it as children or anywhere else along the line, it may affect our lives at a later date and rob us of our peace, our own ability to love, and our ability to trust.

Prayer for inner healing is usually answered; if not, it's because you haven't got to the bottom of the matter (need for repentance, presence of deeper hurt, or need for deliverance). Prayer for inner healing indicated whenever we become aware that we are held down in any way by the hurts of the past; we all suffer from this kind of bondage to some degree. Takes form of asking Jesus to walk back to the time when we were hurt and free us from the effects of that wound in the present. Two phases: bring to light the hurts; praying for healing.

Questions: when did this begin; any idea why.

Prayer for healing of the hurt

Prayer for Jesus to fill up in a positive way whatever was missing in the person's life.

14. Praying for physical healing

1. Listening

First discernment we need is whether we are meant to pray for this person at this time.

Second is what to pray for.

2. Laying on of hands

Does seem to be a current of healing power that often seems to flow from the minister of healing to the sick person (Lk 8 who touched me?). Other benefit is that it communicates concern and love.

3. The actual prayer

Usually involves: presence of God, actual petition. Recommended that we actually visualise in a concrete way the desired effect of the prayer.

4. With confidence

Gift of faith is to know that the person will be healed at this time. But we can all have the faith that God will hear and in some way answer the prayer.

5. With thanksgiving

1 Jn 5.14-15 'we are quite confident that if we ask him for anything, and it is in accordance with his will, he will hear us; and knowing that whatever we may ask, he hears us, we know that we have already been granted what we asked of him.'

6. Pray in the Spirit

15. Deliverance and exorcism

Exorcism - formal ecclesiastical prayer to free person from possession

Deliverance - process mainly through prayer of freeing person oppressed by evil spirits

Tradition of belief in possession/oppression; cites Paul VI's statement.

Own experience. Before prayer, symptoms may seem demonic in origin. During prayer, unusual phenomena may occur. After prayer, there is often a transforming change that takes place in persons who have not been helped by any other means.

Indications that deliverance is needed:

- element of compulsion
- person may tell you the problem is demonic
- prayer for inner healing hasn't worked

Prayer for deliverance is different from prayer for healing:

- addressed to demons, not God
- takes form of command, not petition

Before prayer for deliverance:

- discernment, time available, follow-up available
- in private
- in teams

The actual prayer for deliverance:

- pray for protection
- pray that the force/power of any demons be bound (command in name of Jesus)
- find out identity of the demon (person may know, discernment may tell, may need to command demons to identify themselves).
- any connected sin to be renounced (eg for demon of hatred, forgiveness); demon itself can also be renounced; any occult activities likewise.
- person to cast out demon by prayer of command
- if it's still there, pray yourself for deliverance (in name of Jesus, I command you, spirit of, to depart, without harming, and to go to Jesus.
- person knows when demon has gone

After deliverance:

- prayer to fill up the person with God's love and grace
- person to break the habitual behaviour patterns that led to the infestation
- person to be taught how to resist
- person to adopt regular schedule of prayer, Bible reading, (sacraments)
- person to become part of Christian community

16. A case history: Flor's story

PART FOUR: SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

17. Discernment of the root sickness

God is a mystery, and so is the human person!

18. Eleven reasons why people are not healed

1. Lack of faith
2. Belief in redemptive suffering; a higher purpose than healing
3. False value attached to suffering - good for you
4. Sin
5. Not praying specifically
6. Faulty diagnosis
7. Refusal to see medicine as a way God heals
8. Not using the natural means of preserving health
9. Now is not the time
10. A different person is to be the instrument of healing
11. The social environment prevents healing from taking place - bad relationships

19. Medicine and healing

20. Sacraments and healing

Anointing: 'through this holy anointing and his great love for you, may the Lord help you by the power of his HS'; or, 'may the Lord who freed you from sin heal you and extend his saving grace to you'.

Lord God, all comforting Father, you brought healing to the sick through your Son Jesus Christ. Hear us as we pray to you in faith, and send the HS, the Comforter, from heaven upon this oil, which nature has provided to serve the needs of men.

May your blessing come upon all who are anointed with this oil, that they may be freed from pain, illness and disease and made well again in body, mind and soul. Father, may this oil, which you have blessed for our use, produce its healing effect, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

History of anointing.

Sacrament of penance (reconciliation). General questions better than specific ones:

- what do you feel about your relationship with God
- what do you feel about yourself?
- how are you doing in your relationships with people, esp at home, in your community, and at work?

Sins represent the past, but healing is often needed to change the penitent's life in the future.

Because we are human, we hurt in many ways and therefore desperately need the encouragement and prayer of others. In other words, we all need healing.

Eucharist and healing.

21. Questions most often asked

Soaking, often repeated prayer, seems to be best for deep-seated ailments.

Psychic healers: there is a natural force of healing, based on love, given to some people; no reason to fear it.

Demonic forces can also work for healing - at a cost!

Tommy Tyson: healing and the incarnation

'Our healing ministry should come out of a conviction that we have been sent by God to lay his claims on people, and God's claim is, "you are mine!"

Epilogue: the story of the 3 Indians.