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Power Healing

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9. An Integrated Model of Healing: Principles, Values, and Practices

The most effective way to train and equip people for any skill is by providing effective models and opportunities to practice the skill itself. This method is behind most evangelism training programs. So, shortly after I saw my first healing, I asked myself, "Is it possible to develop a model for healing from which large numbers of Christians may be trained to heal the sick?" I thought the answer was yes and became committed to developing that model.

Jesus used a show, tell, deploy, and supervise method of training. After calling the disciples he took them along with him, teaching and healing the sick as he went. Then, after he thought the disciples had seen and learned enough to try for themselves, he commissioned, empowered, instructed, and sent them out to do the same things (Matt. 10:1, 5-8).

The results of Jesus' training of the disciples are seen clearly in the book of Acts. The Twelve preached with great power and effectiveness, and they healed the lame and blind and cast out demons from the demonized. The Eleven also trained a second generation of disciples, people like Philip and Stephen, to preach and demonstrate the kingdom of God.

A HEALING MODEL

I had to learn myself before training others. I did this in three steps. First, I began praying for the sick even though I knew little about divine healing. Second, I studied theologies and practices of leaders from different schools of divine

healing.¹ Third, I applied what I learned from these models to our situation in the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, asking specifically how it would help Christians learn to pray for the sick.

Throughout this process I developed teaching to explain the theology and methodology of divine healing. What emerged was what I call an "integrated model of healing," a model from which any Christian may learn to pray for the sick. I call this an "integrated model of healing," because it describes how God heals the whole person: body, soul, and spirit. After testing and adapting this model for several years in my congregation and at a course I helped teach at a local seminary, I developed a healing seminar in which people are trained to pray for the sick. Over the past few years thousands of Christians from Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions have been trained through these seminars, which are now conducted by me and about twenty of my associates.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A good analogy for the different elements of a learning model are the parts of a building—foundation, supporting walls, plumbing, electricity, and heating and air-conditioning systems. The first task a builder performs is to excavate and lay a foundation. The length and width of the excavation determine the length and width of the building. The deeper and surer the foundation, the higher one can build. Principles are to a healing model as the foundation is to a building. I have mentioned most of these principles in other parts of this book, but they are worth summarizing together once more.

The first guiding principle is that *God wants to heal the sick today*. It is God's nature to heal people, and he has called us to reflect his nature. "He called his twelve disciples to him," Matthew writes about Jesus, "and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness" (Matt. 10:1). Many Christians have never heard that God wants to

heal today! I have observed that once people's skepticism about divine healing is removed, they are quite open to learning how to pray for the sick.

Another principle is *the importance of corporate ministry* (see 1 Cor. 14:26; Gal. 6:2; James 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:9; 4:10). Most people attend my healing seminars to learn how to pray for the sick, not for their own healing. When I do call forward the sick for prayer, it is to demonstrate healing and by example to teach others about divine healing. I rarely personally pray over the sick at my seminars. Instead, trained individuals pray while I describe to the seminar participants what they are doing and why they are doing it. So I do not hold healing services so much as equipping seminars, where everyone learns how to exercise the power God makes available to us.

Third, *our trust in God is demonstrated by action*. Jackie Pullinger in her book *Chasing the Dragon*² writes about her ministry to Chinese prostitutes. As a young girl she answered God's call to take the gospel to the most decadent in Hong Kong's ghettos. Jackie has told me that many times Christians ask her, "How can you do it?" She responds, "How can you not do it?" How can we not pray for the sick? I am not implying that everyone we pray over will be healed—surely they are not! But I am asserting that Scripture never qualifies who will be healed. Our task is to pray; God is the one who heals. We cannot do or teach less than what is in the Bible.

The reason all Christians can effectively pray for the sick is because *we are empowered by the Holy Spirit*, which is the fourth principle for the healing ministry. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you," Jesus told the disciples shortly before Pentecost (Acts 1:8). And Paul writes that we are given "gifts of healing by [the] . . . Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:9). God's power, not human power, is the source of all divine healing. Our responsibility is to open our lives to the Spirit, to trust and honor him, and receive his power in our midst.

The fifth principle for divine healing is *the importance of loving*

relationships with our brothers and sisters. Paul writes, "Love must be sincere. . . . Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves" (Rom. 12:9-10; see also 13:8). Healthy, supportive relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ are both a goal of healing and an effective environment for healing. The preparation, ministry, and follow-up necessary for divine healing can take place most often where there is sufficient commitment, responsibility, authority, and accountability among Christians. In other words, one of the primary benefits of our union with Christ is a life together with brothers and sisters.

The last principle is that *God wants to heal the whole person, not just specific conditions*. In John 7:23 Jesus asked the Jews who had just accused him of being demonized, "Why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath?" The Greek word translated "healing" (*hugiēs*) reflects a much more comprehensive understanding of health than that of modern popular thought. Commenting on this and other Greek words used in the New Testament for health, John Wilkinson writes:

Health is thought of in terms of wholeness, well-being, life, strength and salvation. . . . What modern man confines to the body, the Bible extends to the whole of man's being and relationships. It is only when man's being is whole and his relationships right that he can be truly described as healthy.³

I once heard someone say that it's more important to know what kind of person has the bug than what kind of bug has the person. By that he meant it is more important that we have information about a person's relationship with God and other people than that we have technical details about his or her illness. Keeping in mind that we pray for *persons* and not simply *conditions* ensures the protection of people's dignity. When I pray for a person's healing my goal is to leave him or her feeling more loved by God than before we prayed. One of the ways I express God's love is by showing interest in every aspect of a person's life. Often this means that praying for the

sick takes a great deal of time, both in initial and follow-up sessions.

VALUES

Values are to principles as supporting walls are to a foundation; they are visible extensions of our basic principles. Supporting walls hold the building together. Values determine the direction and flow of our limited resources of time, energy, and money. In other words, values determine what one does. The following four values flow from the guiding principles I described above and contribute to a vibrant healing ministry:

1. *A healing environment*. When the Holy Spirit is present and when people are full of faith in God for healing, healing often happens.

Jesus understood the importance of a healing environment. Mark 5:35-42 describes him raising Jairus's daughter from the dead. Jesus was on his way to pray for the girl when he was informed that she had died. Those who told him the girl was dead discouraged Jesus from going to the house. They had no faith that he could heal the little girl. But instead of giving up, Jesus insisted on going to Jairus's house, though he did not allow anyone other than Peter, James, and John to go with him. By excluding those who were full of unbelief, he created a healing environment.

He arrived at a home full of "commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly" (v. 38). When he told them to stop their wailing because the girl was asleep, they laughed at him. So "he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was" (v. 40). For a second time he excluded those with little or no faith, and then he went into the room and, through a word of command ("Little girl, I say to you, get up!" v. 41), raised the girl from the dead.

Whenever I pray for the sick I look for a healing environment, an atmosphere full of faith and hope. I consciously look

for faith in three places: first, in myself and others who are praying for the sick; second, in the person being prayed for; and third, in witnesses.

Usually I ask the person for whom I am praying, "Do you believe Jesus can heal?" If he or she answers positively, I then ask, "Do you believe Jesus will do it now?" If the answer is yes or if a witness or I have a strong sense that God wants to heal, I go forward with healing prayer. The point is that I always look for faith and gather people with faith for healing. If no one has that sense, I ask God for the faith. (I never blame the sick person for lack of faith if healing does not occur.) "Now faith," writes the writer of Hebrews, "is being sure [of the substance] of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Heb. 11:1). I am rarely successful when that substance, that confidence of faith, is absent.

I have been in many healing situations where, like Jesus, I have asked those who are struggling with unbelief, fear, or anxiety to leave, while I ask others who I know have faith for healing to join us. I have also observed that frequently one healing is a springboard to many others. When a group sees someone healed, their faith increases greatly, resulting in a healing environment.

During the time of prayer for healing I encourage people to "dial down," that is, to relax and resist becoming worked up emotionally. Stirred up emotions rarely aid the healing process, and usually impede learning about how to pray for the sick. So I try to create an atmosphere that is clinical and rational (at my seminars the time of prayer is called a "clinic"), while at the same time it is powerful and spiritually sensitive. Of course, emotional expression is a natural by-product of divine healing and not a bad response. My point is that artificially creating an emotionally charged atmosphere militates against divine healing and especially undermines training others to pray for the sick.

One of the most significant ways to increase faith for healing is worship. As we draw close to God his Spirit works in us.

Because church gatherings include open, corporate worship, they can be powerful environments for healing. Most church meetings are for worship, the sacraments, and the proclamation of God's word—all three of which, incidentally, may lead to healing and other works of God. Here are some elements of how we approach worship:

- At the Vineyard Christian Fellowship we begin most church gatherings with at least thirty minutes of worship, and as we worship God our hearts open to God and faith for healing increases. We do not worship God so he will heal; we worship God because he is God and we are his people. We give God's love back to him in worship, and he sheds his light on us through the word and sacrament.
- We invite the Holy Spirit to come and minister to us. The Holy Spirit makes us more spiritually sensitive and we sense his powerful presence.
- If we believe in healing, then we must allow a place for it to occur when we gather together. I leave a place in the schedule of most church gatherings for divine healing, especially Sunday worship and small-group meetings. Most people know when they participate in Vineyard Christian Fellowship activities that there will be opportunity to receive prayer for healing or to pray for others.

When we are out in the marketplace we cannot worship aloud; nevertheless, God hears praise and thanksgiving in our hearts and sends his Spirit. Back in 1982 a friend of mine from Arizona wrote me a note in which he described his experience of the relationship between worship and effective healing prayer. Only a few weeks earlier he had written to ask why he was experiencing no success when he prayed for the sick. Since that time he had discovered his mistake:

It's happening, John! Six out of the seven things I've prayed for in the past five days for my family in the way of healing have occurred within two minutes! The only thing that hasn't been answered yet is

B's crossed eyes. I'm building up faith to see that healed, though. I now realize what my mistake was: by just jumping in and praying for healing without worshiping God first, I was actually taking him for granted. God showed me this while listening to one of your healing seminar tapes. After I repented in tears, I went upstairs and healed my daughter of a rash that covered eighty percent of her body. Jesus is so wonderful.

2. *Ministry time.* Learning to pray for the sick is like learning to ride a bicycle. At first the parent runs alongside the wobbly child to prevent serious injury. But in time the child is ready to go out on his own; inevitably he returns from his early solo rides with skinned knees and elbows. Most parents do not become overly concerned about these accidents. Instead, they encourage their child to get back on his bicycle and try again, because soon he will ride smoothly and safely. Learning to pray for the sick is a similar process: the first solo experiences are usually messy, but in time they become quite enjoyable. I am more interested in ministry than neatness, so I provide a place in which people know they are accepted and helped even when they fail. I do this by allowing time and space at my healing seminars and in other church gatherings for people to pray for the sick.

Each session at my healing seminar is divided into three parts: worship, instruction, and a clinic. In the clinic participants observe trained members of a healing team pray for the sick while I describe what is happening and why certain things are done. Then all the participants divide into ministry teams and do "hands-on" prayer themselves. (There are always people present who need healing.) Using this method, the majority of people pray for the sick even during the *first* session. I always make sure that trained people are on hand to help the novices, encouraging dialogue among group members for the purpose of understanding why we pray as we do.

I encourage people to pray for the sick in teams for several reasons:

- Spiritual power is multiplied when more people are praying (Matt. 18:19).
- Greater insights usually come by working with others, especially when an impasse is met.
- Teams provide a good healing and learning environment.
- Teams discourage individuals who experience success from thinking too highly of themselves.
- With team ministry, the person being prayed for is more likely to become dependent on Jesus than on the person who is praying for him or her.
- In teams there is always a witness to what takes place, which is a protection for the person praying (Matt. 18:16).
- In cases involving the casting out of demons, it is always best to have several people present (Lev. 26:8; Deut. 32:30).

Another excellent place for people to learn how to pray for the sick is in small home groups that are overseen by trained leaders. At the Vineyard Christian Fellowship we have many of these groups. We call them kinship groups. Of course, they are much more than healing meetings—they encompass worship, fellowship, Scripture study, and other activities that support successful Christian living—but they are a place where prayer for healing regularly occurs. This environment also provides excellent follow-up and support for those who are healed, thus decreasing the possibility of their condition returning.

In the seminars, healing teams, and small groups I encourage a climate of acceptance for those who pray, one in which they may succeed or fail as they learn this new skill. I tell them, "We are all learning about God's healing power together. Don't worry about failing—I fail every day! But the more I try, the more successful I am."

3. *Training.* I believe that training Christians to do God's works is one of the most important and least fulfilled jobs of leaders in the body of Christ. If leaders are properly trained, they will in turn train others. In Ephesians 4:11–13, Paul says,

"It was he [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." The Greek word translated "to prepare" in the New International Version, *katartismos*, comes from the verb *katartizein*. The word was used in medicine for setting a broken bone or putting a joint back in place. In politics it was used to bring together opposing groups so a government could function normally. In Mark 1:19 it refers to mending nets and in Galatians 6:1 to disciplining a rebellious member of the body until he or she returns to unity and peace in the church. In other words, Paul is talking about equipping Christians fully, so that the body of Christ can be all that it ought to be. Leaders are not to do all the work for the people but are to train the people to do the work themselves. As the leaders equip the people, the body is built up in unity. I believe that I would be negligent if I were not training others to heal the sick.

Several obstacles prevent leaders from equipping others to heal the sick. One obstacle is a sense of personal unworthiness, a feeling that they are not mature enough, not successful enough. It is important for leaders to attempt to live free of sin, but I have discovered most healers are themselves wounded in some way. If leaders wait until they are perfect, they will have very little to offer this side of the return of Christ.

Some leaders have a fear that if they train others they will lose their ministry. (In many instances these leaders have healing ministries that attract large crowds, either in local churches or at healing conferences.) These leaders need to be reminded of a basic kingdom principle that always works in equipping: the more one gives away—whether gifts, skills, material possessions, or time—the more one receives from God. Jesus taught, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38). The more people I train to heal the sick, the more people God gives us to heal.

4. *A life-style of healing.* Through a life-style of healing we give God's healing to the world. Healing is a way of life for me. When I am at home, in meetings, walking down the streets, in the markets or my workplace—under any and all circumstances—I am open to God using me to pray for the sick. While I am open to being used for divine healing any place and at any time, I do not automatically assume that healing is all God wants me to do. Divine healing is not the only action we take to advance the kingdom of God.

I have confidence about taking divine healing into the world. Because God is trustworthy, I assume that he leads and designs circumstances in our lives. When I feel led to do actions that contradict Christ's nature, I assume these feelings are not from God. (Of course, there are always situations that do not fall neatly under one of these two categories, but these are more the exceptions.) I am always asking myself the question, "Is this characteristic of how God works?"

For example, occasionally I sense that I should talk to someone, perhaps a stranger, about Christ. When I receive these inklings, I neither shrug them off as indigestion nor spend a great deal of time asking myself, "Is it really the will of God that I talk to these persons?" I always talk with them. Usually they respond positively to my words (many place their faith in Christ); sometimes they respond negatively. But I never question if I should have talked with them. Why? Because I know that God wants the gospel preached to every person in the world (Matt. 28:18–20).

The same thinking applies to helping the poor or meeting a need of a brother or sister in Christ. I think, "This is what Christ died for, that he may raise up a people to do his works on earth. His works include helping the poor and needy. Of course I will help."

I respond the same way when asked to pray for someone's healing or if I sense God telling me to pray for someone unsolicited. Frequently they are healed; occasionally they are not. But I never question if I should have prayed for them, because I am confident that my job is to obey and God's job is

to heal. If, when I pray, God does not heal, I believe that it is still God's will that I prayed. I do not respond to the instances when there is no healing by thinking I am a failure or that I am not spiritual. How can I be a failure when God is the one who heals? Or, how can I take credit if someone is healed when God is the one who heals? So, because Christ is the healer, I have a life-style of healing.

The effects of a life-style of healing are physically and spiritually healthy churches, with many people won into the kingdom of God.⁴

PRACTICES

Practices are like the plumbing, heating and air-conditioning systems, and electrical wiring in a building. We enjoy their benefits—running water, climate control, and electricity—though we rarely think about the complex support systems built throughout the structure that make them possible. Healing practices are the skills, attitudes, and activities that keep divine healing a growing and vital ministry in the church. They are what we do when praying for the sick.

The following are practices that must be mastered for an effective healing ministry. They flow out of the principles and values that I have listed above. I compare these practices to the physical senses of hearing, seeing, speaking, and touching:

1. *Hearing*. The most fundamental skill required for healing is openness to the Holy Spirit, emptying oneself and receiving his leading and power. Frequently I encounter people who want a method for healing, a formula they can follow that guarantees them automatic healings. But divine healing is neither automatic nor dependent on our right actions; it is rooted in a relationship with God and the power of his Spirit.

Divine healing is a gift from God, an act of his mercy and grace. Our part is to listen to him and carry out his word. "He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant," Paul writes, "not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter

kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). There are many ways in which we practice being open to God's presence and grow in hearing his word—Scripture study, worship, prayer, and meditation being foremost.

When I speak of listening to God's voice, I mean developing a practice of communion with the Father in which we are constantly asking, "Lord, what do you want to do now? How do you want to use me? How should I pray? Whom do you want me to evangelize? Is there someone that you want to heal?" Sometimes he gives me specific insights about people for whom I am praying. These come as impressions: specific words, pictures in my mind's eye, physical sensations in my body that correspond to problems in their bodies. These impressions help me know who and what to pray for and how to pray.

I do not imply that I have an infallible "hotline" to God, that I always hear his voice and follow his leading. But my point is that I am open to God, listening to him, and confident that he wants to lead us (John 14:26; 16:13–15).

2. *Seeing*. Spiritual eyesight enables us to recognize and work with God in the healing process. As we hear God's voice and pray for people, the Holy Spirit comes on them. When this happens there are emotional and physical phenomena in the person being prayed for that indicate to us the Spirit is present.

Some of these phenomena are obvious: weeping, cries, prolonged and exuberant expressions of praise, shaking, trembling, calmness, bodily writhing and distortions, falling over (sometimes referred to as "being slain in the Spirit"), laughter, or jumping. Other phenomena are more subtle: slight trembling, fluttering of the eyelids, faint perspiring, a sheen on the face, ripples on the skin, or deep breathing. I offer more insights into these phenomena in chapter 12. My point here is that often they indicate the Holy Spirit is manifesting his presence on someone, and that we can learn to recognize what they mean.

3. *Speaking*. It takes time and practice to learn how to pray

and offer words of love, understanding, and assurance to people in need of healing. The best way to learn how to pray for healing is by being around those who know how to pray effectively.

Learning to speak words of love and encouragement is difficult for people who come from families in which verbal love and physical affection were not communicated appropriately. Usually they need practical training in how to honor and respect others, with particular emphasis on developing Christian speech patterns.

In the Bible many people are healed through a command. For example, Jesus rebuked Peter's mother-in-law's fever, and it went away (Luke 4:38-39); after Jesus had put his fingers in the deaf and dumb man's ears and spit on his tongue he looked to heaven and said, "Be opened!" (Mark 7:32-35); and Jesus commanded the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk" (John 5:8). Shortly after Pentecost Peter healed a crippled beggar by saying, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3:6), and he raised Tabitha from the dead when he said, "Tabitha, get up" (Acts 9:40). This is frequently referred to in Christian literature as a "word of command," a word spoken with the authority of the kingdom of God and through which great power for healing is released.

I have witnessed or heard about many instances in which God led someone to command a disease to leave and the person was instantly healed. This happened to my wife, Carol, before she knew about words of command. In 1982 a woman approached her after one of our Sunday morning services, asking her to pray for a skin condition (eczema) that covered most of her body. Through the spiritual gift of the discernment of spirits, Carol sensed the condition was caused by an evil spirit. As Carol talked, anger rose up inside of her, culminating in her yelling loudly at the evil spirit, "Knock it off!" The woman's itching stopped immediately, and she was healed at that moment. She has not suffered from eczema since that day.

Sometimes Jesus spoke a simple declaration and the person was healed. In John 4:46-50, a nobleman twice begged Jesus to come and heal his son. Finally Jesus said, "You may go. Your son will live." In Acts 9:32-35, Peter said to Aeneas the paralytic, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." After Paul had gone to the dead man Eutychus and thrown his arms around him, he said, "Don't be alarmed. He's alive!" (Acts 20:7-12).

There are also prayers of petition. In Mark 7:32-35, the healing of the deaf and dumb man, Jesus "looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh he said to him, 'Ephphatha!' (which means, 'Be opened!')." The fact that Jesus looked up to heaven indicates some kind of petition. In Acts 9:36-43, Peter got on his knees beside the dead woman Tabitha and prayed. Only after he had prayed did he say, full of faith, "Tabitha, get up!"

Finally, sometimes healing comes after someone receives instruction to do a specific act and he or she obeys. In John 9:1-7, Jesus placed mud that he had made with his spit on the eyes of a man, then told him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam." The man obeyed and was healed.

Another important speaking skill is learning how to offer a healing apologetic, one that raises faith in those being prayed for. Frequently people say to me, "I want to be healed, but I have difficulty believing that God will heal me." I usually respond by informally teaching them about divine healing. For example, I tell them about the Syrophenician woman to whom Jesus told that healing was the "children's bread" (Mark 7:27). I ask them, "Are you a child of God?"

"Oh, I have never heard it that way before."

"Well, if you are a child of God, Jesus has prepared healing for you."

I then explain about how the Syrophenician woman kept pressing Jesus for her daughter's healing, and eventually Jesus recognized her faith and healed her daughter. So, though the Syrophenician woman was not an Israelite, Jesus still healed her daughter. How much more is he ready to give healing to

children of the new covenant. Explanations like this help people to understand healing and raise their faith for healing.

We also need to explain to people why we are praying as we are and why they are experiencing phenomena such as those I described above in the second point (shaking, falling, and so on). This reassures them that God is working, and through this understanding their faith increases.

Another important practice is knowing how to offer words of compassion and comfort when someone is not healed. Many people, when not immediately healed, suffer from frustration and rejection. Divine healing is concerned about the person and not just the condition. Because of this, if we pray for them appropriately we have a basis for a loving and ongoing relationship. I say, "I love you and God loves you very much, and I feel very badly that you were not healed instantly. Maybe you will be healed when prayed for next time. Allow me to pray for you again, okay?" I also encourage them with God's admonition that we ask again and again, that we persevere in seeking him and his kingdom. When they say they have been seeking God again and again, I tell them that is the way the Lord works sometimes before he heals.

Finally, follow-up instructions are very important for those who are healed. If they are seeing a physician or psychologist, I encourage them to tell him or her about their healing. Sometimes their healing is partial, and they still need medical care. Another type of advice is more pastoral in nature. They should be encouraged to have regular involvement in a Christian body in which people receive pastoral care and support. Some people's problems have complex spiritual, psychological, and physical causes, so they need follow-up counseling by a pastor or trained counselor. Many of these people receive healing only to see their condition return again within a few days or weeks, because they did not change their life-styles.

4. *Touching.* A woman who had been bleeding for twelve years was healed instantly when she touched Jesus' cloak. What is remarkable about this healing is that Jesus did not see

her touch his cloak (they were in a crowd), but he sensed "power had gone out from him" (Mark 5:30). In Gennesaret the people "brought all their sick to him [Jesus] and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed" (Matt. 14:35-36).

In the New Testament the laying on of hands was observed in healing the sick (Mark 1:41; 6:5; 16:18; Luke 4:40; Acts 28:8), blessing (Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 10:16), ordaining or commissioning (Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Tim. 5:22), and the imparting of spiritual gifts (Acts 8:17; 19:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). When praying for the sick, Jesus usually both touched them and commanded the illness to leave (Matt. 8:1-3; Mark 7:32-35; Luke 4:38-39; 7:12-15; see also Acts 3:1-5; 20:7-12).

In 1983 I had an experience in Göteborg, Sweden, that illustrates the power of touch. I was speaking (with the aid of an interpreter) at a four-day healing conference in a Baptist church. There were three hundred people in attendance, and for the first two days they were quite reserved, not demonstrating much of a response to my teaching. On the third day of the conference I sensed God wanted to heal a woman in the audience who had cancer in her left breast. I said, "I believe God wants to heal a woman who has cancer in the left breast."

Immediately a lady in the balcony stood up and said that she had been interceding and fasting several days for a woman in San Francisco who had cancer in her left breast. Her appeal was eloquent and compelling, but I sensed that the woman for whom I had the word of knowledge was in the audience. So I said, "This is not what the Lord is doing at this moment." I then said, "This woman is in the room now. Only this morning she was released from the hospital. She is sixty years old [I cannot remember her exact age today], and she is seated directly in front of me and slightly to the right."

In response, a woman in a dark, full-length wool coat stood up and said in Swedish, "It's me, it's me." I asked her to come forward for prayer, and as she did I asked for volunteers to pray for her.

Three men from the first row came forward, two standing behind the woman and one in front of her. I asked the woman if she would mind folding her hands over her breast and allow one of the men to put his hands on her hands. She agreed to do it. (I ask permission to lay hands on people to show respect for their personhood.) The men behind her placed their hands on her shoulders. Then I stepped back and told them to wait for me to pray.

But before the interpreter could give them my instructions, I felt a faith command welling up in me and I yelled in English, "Be healed in the name of Jesus." Hardly had the words left my mouth when the power of God came down on all four people; they began shaking and were knocked off their feet to the floor! It was as though the healing power of God went into the woman and out into the three men, or vice versa. The interpreter was so overwhelmed that she began speaking to me in Swedish and to the audience in English! All four rose weeping and praising God. The woman later reported her healing.

In this chapter I have described the guiding principles, values, and practices of an integrated model of healing. In the next chapter I describe programs, personnel, and spiritual gifts.

10. An Integrated Model of Healing: Programs and Personnel

Programs are like the rooms and corridors in a building. Each room is designed with a specific purpose in mind—a dining room for eating, a bedroom for sleeping, a bathroom for personal hygiene, and so on. A room's usefulness is always determined by how it contributes to fulfilling the purpose of the building. Programs serve the same purpose in the integrated healing model.

Programs by themselves can be misleading. I frequently receive letters and phone calls from pastoral leaders who say, "Last year I visited your church for a week and returned home and started doing all the things that you do—healing seminars, time for prayer for the sick in all of our meetings, prayer teams, and midweek kinship meetings. But I have not gotten the results that you get. Why?" In part the answer is that they have instituted programs without building a solid base of principles, values, and practices. Usually these leaders themselves have not fully understood our healing values and priorities.

There are several ways in which people may receive healing prayer at the Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship. I have already mentioned that at every general gathering room is left for healing prayer, and a key element in our midweek kinship meetings is prayer for healing. Also, some of the kinship groups send their people out door-to-door to pray for the sick and share the gospel. Each member of our pastoral staff is available at least one day a week for counseling appointments that often

include healing prayer. Also, if a need arises for someone at a local hospital, a pastor will go. Trained healing teams are available at the church five days per week. People phone and make appointments to meet with a team. This program is quite successful. During 1986 thirty-two percent of all people prayed for were completely healed, while overall eighty-six percent showed evidence of some significant healing. (We keep detailed histories of people who enter this program.) Our goal is to have healing teams available morning, noon, and night throughout the week. Training programs are the key for raising up healing teams. People are trained through special healing seminars or courses that we offer in a weekly training center. Over three thousand people are enrolled in our weekly training center, which offers dozens of courses covering many themes and topics.

I could write much more about our programs, but they may change tomorrow, depending on the needs of people around us. Principles and values remain constant; programs change. In fact, most cultures are quite different from southern California, which means that most programs for divine healing should probably be different from ours. That is why copying our programs may produce disappointing results. Our principles and values are transferrable—not our programs.

PERSONNEL

Personnel include people who minister healing (practitioners) and those who train others. Two qualifications must be met by any believers who would practice healing. First, they must have faith for healing. This faith need not be great or perfect; God will use the little that they have, causing it to grow over time. The second qualification is receptivity, an openness to God's healing power.

Notice I did not mention spiritual maturity as a qualification. The spiritual gifts are not given only to mature people; they

are given to willing people. In fact, some of the most dramatic healings I have seen came at the hands of new Christians. I do not imply that character is irrelevant to divine healing. The influence of a person's character acts as a multiplying factor in his or her ministry—increasing or decreasing the effects of healing gifts, depending on the practitioner's faithfulness. Still, any Christian—young or old, mature or immature—may be used by God to heal the sick.

Sometimes the spiritual gift of healing is confused with a natural talent for healing. Some people have the ability to encourage and build up others. They have warm temperaments; they are affable and kind toward others. Usually they are sensitive and understanding in such a way that healing, especially healing of broken relationships, seems to flow from them. A warm personality is something the Lord can use in reconciliation and other types of inner healing, but the key element in divine healing is the gift of the Spirit. No single personality type is better than another for practicing divine healing. Practitioners of divine healing may be kind and sensitive, but these natural talents are less important than depending entirely on the gifts of the Spirit, trusting God for healing, and learning how to pray for the sick.

Practitioners of divine healing do not see themselves as the source of healing. The primary source of divine healing is the Holy Spirit and his gifts (1 Cor. 12:11; Heb. 2:4). The recipients of the gifts are the people of God, the body of Christ. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we gain access to all the gifts that we need to advance the kingdom of God (Acts 1:5; 2:4; 11:15–16). The gifts are manifestations of God's grace: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Pet. 4:10).

There is a difference between possessing the gift of healing and being used by God at a special time and occasion to heal someone. Many people teach that each person has one or two

gifts in his or her possession. Christians are encouraged to "discover their gift," with the implication that only a few are called to ministries like divine healing.¹ I believe this teaching—that all Christians possess only one or two gifts and are limited to functioning only in those gifts—is erroneous, for reasons that I discuss below.

In 1 Corinthians 12:4–7 Paul writes about this topic. He says:

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

The Greek word translated "different kinds," *diakrisis*, suggests two dimensions of distribution of the spiritual gifts. There are both a variety of spiritual gifts and a diversity of their assignments in the body of Christ.

A key to interpretation is understanding that the general distribution of the gifts is to the church *corporately*. That is, the gifts are not primarily given to the individual but to the whole body and for the building up of the whole body. This is also a key for understanding the entire section of 1 Corinthians 11:17–14:40, which is perhaps the most definitive teaching on the gifts in the New Testament. Twelve times in this section Paul, by emphasizing the corporate nature and activity of the church, reminds the readers that the spiritual gifts are given *to the body* (11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34; 14:4, 5, 19, 23, 26, 28, 33–34).

Understanding that Paul is speaking of gifts functioning when the body meets resolves what appears to be contradictory advice. For example, in passages like 1 Corinthians 12:30 Paul asks, "Do all speak in tongues?"—implying that all do not. Yet in the next verse he says, "But eagerly desire the greater gifts"—implying the reader should be dissatisfied with only one or two gifts. Later in 1 Corinthians 14:5 Paul says, "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues."

The key is that when the body meets not all should practice the gifts at the same time; that would create chaos. All may at different times experience any of the gifts during general gatherings.

Thus there is a specific distribution of the gifts to individuals that comes on occasions of specific need. That is, the gifts are given in a specific situation for use of the individual for the blessing of others. This means any individual Christian may pray for the sick, but in the congregation he or she should exercise prayer in good order and for the common good.

Most Christians usually exercise one or two gifts—teaching, administration, hospitality, prayer, and so on—but every now and again they exercise a gift they do not usually have. I call that a specific distribution, an anointing for that moment to do a task. In 1 Corinthians 12:7, where Paul says that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good," the Greek term *phanerosis*, translated "manifestation," means appearances. That is, the spiritual gifts are appearances of the Spirit, they are the times and ways in which he appears among men and women. The Holy Spirit appears among people, anointing Christians with gifts to meet specific needs. The gifts of healing often come to Christians like that.

Spiritual gifts are given for the common good and in order to glorify God, and they are received in order to be given away. I never speak about "my gift"; instead I talk about the gift God has given me to give away. In fact, through the process of giving away gifts, the gifts are enriched and strengthened.

I remember the first time God gave me the spiritual gift of words of knowledge—facts and information that could only be known supernaturally concerning specific occasions, persons, or things. I could name the secrets of people's hearts. It was an enjoyable gift to have, and since no one else in the church had it, feelings of pride swelled up in me.

Then God told me that I needed to give the gift away; that

is, I needed to lay hands on others and pray that they too receive the gift. I would simply pray, "Lord, please give these persons words of knowledge," and most people received words of knowledge. But Satan began whispering to me, telling me that if I continued to give the gift away I would lose it. So I stopped praying for others to receive the gift, and for the next four months I did not receive one word of knowledge. Finally I went to some friends and asked them to pray for me, and I received words of knowledge again. The next day I realized how the devil had deceived me, and so I redoubled my efforts to pray for others to receive the gift.

Everyone is called to pray for the sick, and a few are given special gifts for it. Some who have the gift are also effective trainers of others to pray for the sick. The gift of healing—and related gifts—develop in individuals according to the following process.

1. *Task.* An analogy may be drawn between praying for the sick and evangelism. Everybody in the body of Christ is called to the task of telling others about the kingdom of God, but some people have the gift of evangelism. Evangelists are very effective: they evangelize with great skill and ability, and they reap bountiful harvests. Some people who are not evangelists are called to do the work of an evangelist, as was true of Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5).

Divine healing works in a similar way: we all are called to the task of praying for the sick, though we acknowledge that there are a few people with special, prolonged anointings for healing (1 Cor. 12:9). For those who do not have an ongoing ministry of healing, there are occasional anointings. This is especially true for parents or church elders, who are given special authority and power to pray for their children and parishioners.

In 1 Corinthians 12:8–9, 11 it says,

To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to

another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit. . . . All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Here is another key to divine healing: God may choose to work through us unexpectedly, even though we do not normally have the healing gift. So we should be open to his anointing us at any time. When faith is exercised and God anoints, divine healing follows.

The Greek noun translated "gifts" (*charismata*) in 1 Corinthians 12:9 has been translated as "gracelets" by Dr. Russell Spittler, professor of theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. "Gracelets" imply occasional manifestations or anointings of gifts for specific purposes and for the good of the congregation. The 1 Corinthians 12:9 passage says that God gives "gifts of healing." In the Greek both "gifts" and "healing" are plural. There are many kinds of illnesses, so there are many healing gracelets.

There are other gracelets besides healing that are commonly used in divine healing. I call one group the gracelets of discernment: a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, and the discerning of spirits (1 Cor. 12:8, 10). These are gifts of supernatural insights; one "sees" things as God sees them.

A word of wisdom is God revealing his wisdom or insight into a specific situation. Words of wisdom are especially helpful in counseling situations, and they are often given with a Scripture passage.

A word of knowledge is God revealing facts about a situation concerning which the person had no previous knowledge.² An example of this is God giving someone exact details of a person's life, to reveal sin, warn and provide safety, reveal thoughts, provide healing, or provide instructions.

The discerning of spirits is the supernatural capacity to judge whether the motivating factor in a person is human, divine, or demonic. It is the supernatural insight into the source of spiritual activity. This last gift is especially

important for knowing how to pray accurately for a person's healing.

The gracelets of discernment are experienced through a variety of means:

- Inspirations—floods of thoughts, with specific facts, describing situations;
- Dreams and visions—pictures in the mind's eye; these pictures may include faces, words, situations;
- Impressions—a deep knowing in one's spirit; sometimes a word at the beginning of a sentence triggers a cluster of impressions;
- Scripture verses—passages that trigger insight for a particular situation; and
- Pains in the body—pains or sensations that may correspond to the illness in the person being prayed for.

Another group is called gracelets of power: faith, miracles, and gifts of healing.

The gift of faith is a mysterious surge of confidence in God that arises within a person faced with an insurmountable situation or need. It provides supernatural certainty and assurance that God is about to act through a word or action. The wonderful thing about the gift of faith is that it wells up in me when I least expect it and when I most need it.

Miracles are events in which people and things are visibly and beneficially affected by God's power. The Greek word from which we translate "miracles" is *dunamis*, which means "power." The greatest miracle, that which took the most power, was Christ's resurrection (1 Cor. 15:43-44).

The gracelets of power are experienced in these ways:

- Anointing—a sudden infusion of power, usually felt as a tingling, heat, or a supernatural confidence;
- Detachment—a sensation that something beyond oneself is happening, an awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence and working;

- Words of faith—words that come to people unexpectedly before they say them;
- Dreams and visions—a picture of a miracle or healing may come to one's mind, and then when the circumstance arises, the person prays with boldness; and
- Impressions—these thoughts come as a calm and confident knowing that God will heal or work a miracle; usually I receive these impressions in prayer before I am about to minister.

Sometimes several spiritual gifts work together in healing clusters. The following letter illustrates how a word of knowledge, discernment of spirits, and word of command were instrumental in healing a woman:

June 12, 1986

Dear John:

Here's an account of a sister in our community, Mary [not her real name], who was healed at our healing clinic. During a healing clinic we were having words of knowledge given by different people who were there. One of the women in the community stood up and said that she believed that there was a woman with dark hair that had lupus, and that the Lord wanted to heal her. To my surprise one of the women who I knew in the community, with dark hair, stood up and said that she had it. The woman who had received the word of knowledge, Kay, went and prayed with her, along with a few other people. During the time that she prayed over Mary, Kay sensed the Lord tell her that she should tell the "stinking dog" to get out of Mary. At this time, Kay exercised her authority and commanded the "stinking dog" to leave Mary in the name of Jesus. She then saw the image of a wolf slinking down along the aisles of the chairs that were set up nearby, and it left Mary. A few weeks later Mary went to her doctor who had been treating her over the past twelve years for lupus, and to his surprise he found no traces of the lupus. In fact, he couldn't understand it and thought that he had perhaps misdiagnosed the whole thing, based on the fact that there were no traces left in her body. He said it wasn't a matter of

remission because there would still be some kind of trace within her. Mary asked if she was healed and he said, "Yeah, you're healed." It was interesting also to find out from Kay that, when she called the disease a "stinking dog" and saw a wolf leaving, she had no idea that lupus is commonly known as the "wolf disease." Well, praise God! . . .

Your brother in Christ,
Dave Nodar
The Lamb of God
Baltimore, Maryland

2. *Ministry.* When divine healing became a regular part of church life in the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, I noticed a few people who over a period of time were especially effective in praying for the sick. They had the gift of healing and, because they were part of a church that regularly prayed for the sick, they had a ministry of healing (see 1 Cor. 12:27-31). Some with a healing ministry were effective in praying for those with physical problems, while others were effective in praying for the demonized or people suffering from the effects of past hurts. For example, C. Peter Wagner (who is a member of another church) is very effective in lengthening legs. Frequently people ask him to pray for their short legs and related back problems. He is almost a hundred percent successful in his prayers.

Some people who have a ministry of healing train others to pray for the sick. The most effective trainers or equippers of the saints are pastors, though not all who are trainers necessarily hold an office in the local church. Recently I went to England and taught about healing. Over three hundred men and women who have a ministry of healing from the United States accompanied me. At the end of each session these "team" members, as I called them, went out into the crowds to pray. Others watched them, learning how to pray from their example. Trainers must be analytical enough to communicate to others a model of divine healing. Of course, they should also

be able to pray effectively for the sick, which means having a ministry of healing. This is because the best way for someone to learn how to pray for the sick is by watching another do it. Trainers are also empowered to pass on divine healing to others. Frequently God uses the prayers and laying on of hands of trainers to anoint others for healing. Not everyone is empowered to pray over others and see them anointed for healing.

The most effective way to train people to pray for the sick is through a logical, step-by-step procedure. The method I have developed is the topic of the last two chapters.

11. A Healing Procedure: Interview, Diagnosis, and Prayer Selection

Several biblical healing methods can aid Christians in praying for the sick. I developed a procedure through trial and error that I call "five steps to healing prayer." Each element of the five steps is based on Jesus' method of praying for the sick, though in Scripture these steps are not presented in a systematic and chronological fashion. So the application of scriptural truth, not merely the pattern of my personal experience, is the basis for this method.

Each step attempts to answer a question about the sick person's condition: what is the condition? What is its cause? How should I pray for it? When should I stop praying? What should the person do to stay healed? These steps are quite practical and simple to follow. In one conference session most people learn enough to start praying for the sick *immediately*. In other words, this method helps people to know where to start and when to stop in praying for the sick.

The five-step procedure may be used any time and in any place: in hotels, at neighbor's homes, on airplanes, at the office, and, of course, in church gatherings. I have been in casual conversations with people, even with complete strangers, who mention some physical condition, and I ask, "May I pray for you?" Rarely do they decline healing prayer, even if they are not Christians. I then confidently pray for them by following the five-step method.

I usually try to find a quiet and private place to pray for people. This not only protects people from potential

embarrassment but also helps them to be more open and honest about their needs, especially when the cause of their condition is serious sin. In large gatherings this means going off to a corner, a separate prayer room, or a private office.

The five steps are:

Step One: the interview

Step Two: the diagnostic decision

Step Three: the prayer selection

Step Four: the prayer engagement

Step Five: post-prayer directions

In this chapter and the next I describe each of these steps.

STEP ONE: THE INTERVIEW

The first step in healing prayer is the interview. *The interview answers the question, "Where does it hurt?"* I ask, "What do you want me to pray for?" Then I listen to the answer on two levels: the natural and the supernatural. On a natural level I evaluate the answer in light of my biblical knowledge, what I know about the person, and my past experience in praying for similar problems in other people. This is not a medical interview in which we probe for a technical, medical history. A medical history is important for medical treatments, but not for praying for people's healing. The Holy Spirit is the doctor and the cure; he does not need our technical knowledge to heal. Besides, detailed medical discussions usually only delay healing prayer.

STEP TWO: THE DIAGNOSTIC DECISION

The second step in the healing procedure is making a diagnostic decision, that is, identifying and clarifying the root of the person's problem. *The diagnostic decision answers the question, "Why does this person have this condition?"* This is a crucial

step in the healing procedure, because it determines the type of prayer needed to bring healing.

In fact, this procedure overlaps with the first step. While I am interviewing the person, on a supernatural level I ask God for insight into the ultimate cause of the condition. These insights usually come to me through words of knowledge, words of wisdom, and distinguishing of spirits. Only infrequently do people know the true root of their problem. When they do, the Holy Spirit confirms in my heart that their analysis is correct.

I always have the attitude that it is easier to ask questions than think I must receive words of knowledge. But sometimes God reveals that what the person for whom I am praying thinks his or her need is is not correct.

For example, two years ago Kevin Springer prayed for a woman who had severe back pain. During the interview Jane (not her real name) said that her injury was caused by a physical mishap several years before. But from her response Kevin suspected that something other than physical damage was the source of her back pain. After a short and fruitless time of prayer, Jane turned to return to her seat, discouraged because her back still hurt—this was yet another failed attempt at divine healing for her.

As she turned, Kevin received a specific insight from God into her back problem: that it was related to a poor relationship with her mother. This came to him as a thought: "Her mother. Her mother. There is a problem between Jane and her mother." Because of this insight, he called her back for further prayer.

When the woman returned, Kevin asked her if she were having problems relating to her mother. He said, "Even though you said that you had injured your back in an accident, I believe the Lord is saying that somehow your back problem is also related to a problem that you are having with your mother. What do you think about that?" She confirmed problems that went back to her childhood, though at first she did not make any connection between her back and her mother.

At that point Kevin decided that in fact the healing of Jane's back was related to the healing of her relationship with her mother, and that inner healing was needed before physical healing could happen. After helping her to extend forgiveness to her mother and to receive forgiveness for her sin, Kevin again prayed for her back. This time she was healed instantly. A year later Jane wrote Kevin to confirm that her back remained healed.

Root causes may be quite complex, as Jane's story illustrates. Symptoms in one area of our lives may be caused by problems in several other areas. The following examples illustrate the complex interrelationships among the physical, spiritual, emotional, and social parts of our lives.

Once I was asked to pray for a woman with arthritis. I asked her, "How is your marriage?" She answered, "I am estranged from my husband. Three years ago he left me with six children." I said, "Well, there is a possibility that your feelings about all of that have been buried in resentment and bitterness and that is what is causing this condition. How do you feel about that?" She said, "I don't think so." So I said, "Well, let's just pray about that and see what God does, okay?"

As I began to pray the Holy Spirit came on the woman and penetrated to the deepest part of her heart. She was able to see her bitterness and resentment toward her husband. She forgave him and then received healing prayer for her arthritis. She said she was healed. Several months later she confirmed that she remained healed. In this instance, physical sickness was caused by harboring resentment.

I have also prayed for men and women who are unable to sustain healthy relationships because they have been hurt by a marriage partner. They are incapable of receiving or giving love, even with fellow Christians. This is an example of social problems caused by emotional hurt that came from sin, sin either done by them or against them.

I frequently encounter demons that cause fear and as a result create emotional problems that result in physical problems. An

example of this was a woman whose fear—caused by a demon—made her insecure with her husband, which contributed to her problem of feeling like a failure as a wife. These factors in turn caused barrenness. Once the demon was cast out of her life, she was able to love her husband more freely and conceive a child. In this instance, an emotional problem was caused by demonic influence and resulted in a physical problem.

Sometimes I pray for people who, as a result of events surrounding an accident or a serious operation, have suffered from pain or paralysis for years. In some instances there are no longer physical causes for their conditions, although in other instances the physical causes remain.

Accidents and operations affect people emotionally, spiritually, and, of course, physically. These people are vulnerable to suggestions that may become self-fulfilling prophecies, with disastrous effects for their health. Usually around the time of an operation or accident a well-intentioned doctor says, "Your problems are such and such, and you could suffer in such and such a way for the rest of your life." The doctor is convinced the patient cannot get better, which becomes an obstacle to the patient's healing. This happens in two ways.

First, the doctor points out the situation in a way that convinces the patient that he or she will not get better. Doctors need to be candid with their patients; I do not fault them for this. But sometimes their diagnosis results in a word that holds people back from experiencing full health. Doctors wield great authority and influence over their patients; their words have the spiritual power to bless or curse. Folks suffering under these burdens tell me, "The doctor said I probably would never walk again, and that was ten years ago, so it must be true." I tell them, "Well, let's see if Jesus wants to change your condition anyway." I then pray to break the power of the doctor's words.

A second way that doctors may unintentionally create obstacles to healing is by informing patients of their odds for recovery.

They say something like, "Based on statistical studies of cases similar to yours, you have a fifty percent chance that you will again suffer the effects of the disease within one year." This causes people to think of themselves as an impersonal number in a universal game of Russian roulette—not as children of God, living under his grace. In these instances, doctors eliminate God, though they do not tell patients directly that they will not be healed.

So well-intended words from doctors may create formidable obstacles to healing. In many instances the Holy Spirit heals the physical damage only after the power of the doctor's words is broken.

I have prayed for wife beaters who, I discovered through the interview process, were themselves beaten by a father, uncle, or mother. In almost every instance an evil spirit came on them as children. More than once, when I went to cast the evil spirit out of them, the spirit said, "This one is mine! I've had him since he was a young boy." Frequently the men will remember specific boyhood experiences that changed their lives for the worse. (Demons are liars, so they cannot be trusted. But they have said this in so many instances that I believe they probably do gain access to boys and girls who are victims of abuse.) I am not implying that all wife beaters or child abusers are demonized, but I am saying that some are, and there is a relationship between demonization and this type of abusive behavior. In this instance, psychological problems are caused by social conditions and demonic influence.

I could add many other examples to this list, but these are sufficient to illustrate the need to correctly diagnose the cause of a person's condition before actually praying for him or her.

When I first describe the range of causes for illnesses (the list is almost limitless), most people think they are unable to discern these causes. They look at me and say, "It is easy for you. Look at all your experience. It has taken you years to learn how to understand these things." I admit that I have grown in my ability to diagnose these problems over the years,

but I have grown mostly in sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leading and insights, not in an academic understanding of human psychology or medicine. This is not to imply that growing in psychological or medical understanding works against divine healing. The Holy Spirit is the one who leads us through the diagnostic step. He walks with us, accompanying us through the process. But in the end, the burden for healing is on him, not us.

STEP THREE: THE PRAYER SELECTION

The third step of the healing procedure is prayer selection. *This step answers the question, "What kind of prayer is needed to help this person?"* What lies behind this question is an even more fundamental question: what does God want to do at this particular time for this person? While I assume that God wants to heal, I do not assume that God wants to heal at the exact instant in which I am praying for someone. So I ask, "Lord, do you want to heal right now?"

A secret to healing prayer is that it comes from God having already touched our spirits; it is agreement with God about his will. This is in part what it means to receive an anointing for healing prayer in a specific situation.

An anointing is a knowing in the deepest part of our hearts that God wants to heal someone. "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: *that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us,*" the apostle John writes. "And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him" (1 John 5:14–15). The agent of our confidence is the Holy Spirit. He not only comes on us and shows us the will of the Father, but he also comes on the person for whom we are praying and brings healing.

James Robison received the following letter, dated March 17, 1984, from a Texas woman:

Dear Brother James:

For the past few days I have been compelled by the Lord to write and share with you what the Lord did for me at the Bible conference in January. I must be obedient.

Last August, after ten years of marriage and one precious adopted son, the Lord began to renew in me the desire to bear a child. First, he confirmed to me by his word that this was his will in 1 Timothy 5:14. Then the Lord told me to go to my pastor for prayer and his blessing through 1 Samuel 1:17: "Eli answered [Hannah], 'Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.'"

At this point, faith began to grow within me, even though several months passed before my faith was answered.

In January of this year, we went to Dallas for the Bible conference. We were unable to attend every session; in fact, we did not even attend the last two days because of our vacation schedule. We were present, however, when John Wimber ministered the word in healing on Thursday. As he was calling out physical conditions for which the body was to pray, I literally felt the energizing power of God enter my body and I knew I was healed of barrenness, even though Brother Wimber had not called out my condition for prayer.

In the next few days, God graciously gave me evidence of the change which had taken place in my body. The Lord began to fill me afresh with confidence in his promise and in himself. I was able to confess with boldness what God had done and was doing in my life in a way that was totally new to me.

Then, faith became sight. On March 8, 1984, two days before my thirtieth birthday, we learned that I was indeed pregnant for the first time in my life. Needless to say, the "hallelujahs" have not stopped yet, for our God is truly a great God, and only he has the power to create life in a barren womb.

In the Name of Jesus,
Mrs. P.

Mrs. P. had heard the Lord speak, so she had confidence for her healing. She simply cooperated in faith with what God said was true about her. But there was more to her story. One week after mailing this letter to James Robison, Mrs. P. began

running a fever of between 102 and 105 degrees every day for a week. Her fever was soon joined by excruciating neck and shoulder pain. She was seven weeks pregnant. After she was hospitalized, the doctors diagnosed her as having two viruses, one of which usually caused multiple birth defects, including heart disease, blindness, and microcephaly. She wrote me a letter describing what happened next:

Dear Brother Wimber:

. . . Needless to say, I was devastated. I sought God relentlessly for the next several months, begging him to tell me that my baby was all right. But all he said was, "Do you trust me?" So, I held on to "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him," and my place was in him rather than the assurance of my baby's well-being. (By the way, the Lord said, "no" to all tests, including a routine ultrasound, until I was eight months pregnant.)

Early in October, about three weeks before my due date, the Lord spoke to me during my morning quiet time. By then, I had stopped asking for a "sign" about the baby, so I was surprised when he said, "If you ask me for bread, will I give you a stone?" He confirmed that word through my husband, and from that moment on I knew the baby was fine.

Two weeks later, I began bleeding in the doctor's office during a vaginal exam. The doctor suspected placenta previa, so back to the hospital we went for an emergency ultrasound. Everything was fine in the placenta, however, and my doctor was greatly relieved to learn from the ultrasound that the baby's head size was normal.

Five days later [our baby] was born: nine pounds of health and an astonishment to all the doctors involved.

Praise Him!
Mrs. P.

There are many ways in which we may pray for healing. I have already mentioned several different kinds of prayers used in divine healing—prayers of petition and intercession, words of command, and so on. These different types of healing prayers fall into two categories, petitions directed toward God and

words that we receive from God and speak to a condition or demon.

Prayer directed toward God. I always ask God about how I should intercede for a sick person. Remember, the key to answered prayer is praying according to God's will. If we believe that he hears us and cares about our needs, we may with confidence approach him and ask how we should pray. Sometimes, even when I have a clear understanding of the cause of a condition, I am not sure about how to pray specifically. In these instances I pray in my mind, "Lord, I know you want to heal this person. Please show me how to pray for him." I then pray quietly in tongues, during which time frequently (though not always) God indicates how he wants me to pray for the person.

Why do I pray in tongues? Praying in tongues for me is like putting up my spiritual antenna: my spiritual receptivity increases. In 1 Corinthians 14:4 it says, "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself." That describes my experience. As I speak in tongues I edify myself; I build up my faith and spiritual sensitivity.

This practice raises another question: can a person who does not speak in tongues pray effectively for the sick? I do not know why not. Certainly there is no place in Scripture that links effective prayer for the sick with speaking in tongues. Yet, though I acknowledge this, everyone I have met who is effective in healing prayer speaks in tongues.

Usually God directs me to pray for the sick with intercessory prayers. The Latin word from which we get our English word "intercession" is *intercedo*, which means "to go (or pass) between." When we intercede for people's healing, we have a deep concern for them. We stand between them and God, making request for their healing. The most effective intercessory prayers are simple and straightforward: "Lord, please heal Robert of his condition."

Sometimes I ask the persons for whom I am praying to pray for their own healing. I do this for two reasons. First, if they

have faith for healing, they may be healed as a result of their own prayers. This is the best kind of healing, because they know that God—not me or any other human—healed them! Second, if they pray without faith (for example, “God, I don’t know if you want to heal me, but . . .”), then I know I need to bring instruction about faith and prayer for divine healing. On many occasions Jesus asked people about their faith. He would ask them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” He was seeking to elicit from them a response of faith. It pleased him to have them ask for healing. The classic example of this is found in Mark 9:14–32, where Jesus heals a boy with an evil spirit. After Jesus taught the crowd about faith for healing, the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (v. 24). Jesus then cast out the demon.

Words from God. Sometimes I sense God telling me to speak a word of command when praying for divine healing. The words—usually a very short sentence—come out before I consciously form them. Words of command come with a burst of faith. I feel the confidence and power of God rise in my heart and release it through my speech. Typically I will lay hands near the afflicted area and say, “I break the power of this condition in the name of Jesus,” or, “Stop it!” These prayers are very short and very effective.

I do not understand how the word of command works, but I can describe what my experience has been. In some instances I speak directly to evil spirits, commanding them to leave. In other instances I seem to be speaking to the condition itself. My hands usually tingle and are warm, and I feel something like electricity come out of them when I speak a word of command. I have come to associate feelings like tingling and heat with an anointing of the Holy Spirit on me for healing. Other examples of sensations associated with an anointing for healing include pain or heat in my body in an area that corresponds to where the person I am praying for hurts. When I pray for the person my pain disappears.

Recently I received a letter from two Swedes in which they described their experiences with words of command:

We have experienced visions functioning in divine healing. We now sometimes see [spiritually] where in a person’s body the sickness is located. At other times we see a dark shadow outside of the body at the spot of the sickness. We sometimes are seeing insects, or larger animals like birds of prey, crocodiles, snakes, etc., being located either inside or outside of the body. . . . After having prayed [a word of command] we sometimes see a kind of light over the person . . . just as the evil animal has disappeared. Several times we have seen something like a bright hand touching the sick spot.

Despite my lack of clarity about what actually takes place through a word of command, it is certainly biblical, for Jesus frequently healed through it.

The word of pronouncement is similar to a word of command, only instead of speaking to the condition I announce that a healing is done. With a word of command there is a buildup of power and sensations of tingling and heat accompanied by a sense of encounter; with the word of pronouncement there is an accompanying feeling of supernatural peace, a sense that the battle is over. I usually say, “The Lord has healed you,” then offer some follow-up instructions to help ensure the person maintains his or her healing.

Occasionally a word of pronouncement is linked with a prophetic insight. In these instances I suddenly know that the condition will be healed not at that time but sometime in the near future, say, within six days. I tell the person, “I sense that your condition will be healed completely within six days.” I then pray that God will fulfill his word.

A third type of authoritative word involves what Scripture calls a prayer of rebuke in which demons are cast out or their power is broken. In a prayer of rebuke we break demons’ hold on a person, contain their power, and eliminate their presence.

Rebuking an evil spirit is similar to a word of command. In Mark 9:25, it says; “When Jesus saw that a crowd was running

to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. 'You deaf and mute spirit,' he said, 'I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.'" Here the simple command is directed toward the evil spirit. I usually say, "In the name of Jesus, I rebuke you, evil spirit. You have no part in Jane's life."

Prayers of agreement are quite effective. In Matthew 18:19-20, Jesus taught, "I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." The key phrase in this passage is "where two or three come together *in my name*." The prayer of agreement has been improperly interpreted as meaning we may agree on anything and it will be done. Instead, it is agreement and belief with other Christians about what the Father has already determined his will to be (see John 5:19). In other words, it is watching for what the Father is doing, then believing him to fulfill it. Another aspect of the prayer of agreement is agreeing with others to actually do what he directs.

The prayer selection is a critical step in the healing procedure. But even if we are not confident about the correct way to pray when we begin, when we actually pray the Holy Spirit frequently confirms or gives new direction. That is what makes the next step, the prayer engagement, the most complex and exciting part of divine healing.

12. A Healing Procedure: Prayer Engagement, Phenomena, and Post- Prayer Direction

STEP FOUR: THE PRAYER ENGAGEMENT

The fourth step of the healing procedure is prayer engagement. *This step answers the question, "How effective are our prayers?"* The prayer engagement consists of prayer, laying on of hands, and, when needed, further interviewing. The way we pray is determined by our diagnostic decision and prayer selection. This step, the most complex in the healing procedure, requires most of this chapter to describe.

I usually lay hands on people when I pray for them. When someone suffers from a physical affliction I try to put my hand near the location of their hurt or suffering. (In the case of a woman with a more intimate malady like breast cancer or an ovarian cyst, I ask her husband or another woman to place his or her hands near the area in need; I then place my hands on theirs. Or, if I am alone with a woman, I ask her to cross her hands over the afflicted area and I place my hands on hers. It is important to treat people with respect so they may maintain their dignity.)

People have asked me about why many Vineyard Christian Fellowship healing team members extend their hands without actually touching the person they are praying for. My answer is that sometimes circumstances create strange customs, and here is the history of this one.

The Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship met in a high-school gymnasium without air-conditioning until 1983. During

the summers (and on occasion, the winters), temperatures outside were in the 90s, even rising above 100 degrees Fahrenheit; inside the packed gymnasium it was warmer. Under these hot and sticky conditions, only one member of the team would touch the person who needed healing prayer, while other team members put their hands close without actually touching. In 1983 we moved into a building with central air-conditioning, but I noticed people continued putting their hands close without touching when praying for others' healing! People from other denominations and other parts of the world who have attended our healing seminars have also picked up this way of praying.

I do not think there is anything wrong with praying with extended hands not touching the person, especially if one team member does lay hands on the sick person. Still, it is humorous that thousands of people all over the world have learned to pray this way just because years ago we met in a hot and humid gymnasium.

After laying on hands, I pray aloud that the Holy Spirit come and minister to the person. My prayers are quite simple: "Holy Spirit, I invite you to come on this person and release your healing power," or "Holy Spirit, come and show us how to pray," or, more succinctly, "Holy Spirit, come."

People respond to the power of the Holy Spirit in ways that are not always predictable. These "manifestations," or phenomena that occur among people in response to God's power and truth, vary in form: falling over, shaking, sobbing, laughing, screaming out—the list of unusual emotional and physical phenomena is quite long. Some of these phenomena represent horror and aversion to personal sin or sin done against the person. Other manifestations—extreme to be sure—are demonic; they are power encounters in the person between the kingdom of God (the Holy Spirit) and the kingdom of Satan (evil spirits). In many instances people are experiencing the joy and grace of God in a new way and their emotions reflect this newfound peace in relationship with God.

These sorts of spiritual phenomena have frequently been associated with revivals, and they have always raised questions in some Christians' minds. During the Great Awakening of 1726–56, men like Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, and George Whitefield all witnessed manifestations of excessive emotional and unusual physical states in people for whom they prayed, and these leaders also suffered criticism from other Christians for it.

Sometimes the critics came too close to God's action and suffered the consequences. John Wesley described the bewilderment of an indignant Quaker in his journal entry dated May 1, 1769:

A Quaker, who stood by, was not a little displeased at the dissimulation of these creatures, and was biting his lips and knitting his brows, when he dropped down as thunderstruck. The agony he was in was even terrible to behold. We besought God not to lay folly to his charge. And he soon lifted up his head and cried aloud, "Now I know thou art a prophet of the Lord."¹

Nonetheless, these responses raise many questions in the minds of sincerely inquiring people. Are the manifestations required in order to get healed? Or, are these responses merely psychologically induced? Could these responses be coming from evil spirits? Don't some people react this way to attract attention to themselves?

I do not question the fact that Satan can and does counterfeit genuine Christian experience, and that psychological suggestion can change people's behavior. Jonathan Edwards acknowledges this possibility: "But as the influences of the true Spirit abounded, so counterfeits did also abound: the devil was abundant in mimicking, both the ordinary and the extraordinary influences of the Spirit."² Yet I have seen too many people who had no prior knowledge or experience of these phenomena begin to shake, cry, or fall over when the power of the Holy Spirit came on them. Later they claimed it was one of the most significant and encouraging experiences of their lives!

There were no explanations for their unusual responses other than that God's power or truth touched them. Of course, I have also seen groups where the expected behavior of the ones being prayed for was that they fall over. This was nothing more than learned behavior, religion at its worst.

Perhaps the reason for concern lies behind a misunderstanding about how God works, specifically the idea that emotional and physical reactions, especially where people appear to lose self-control, are contrary to peace and good order. This is an old complaint: commenting on the eighteenth-century New England revival, Jonathan Edwards says, "Some object to it as great confusion, when there is a number together . . . making a noise; and say, God cannot be the author of it, because he is the God of order, not of confusion."³

My response to this concern is that Jesus *is* the God of peace and order, but the process of gaining that sometimes means disorder. C. S. Lewis, in his *Chronicles of Narnia*, alludes to this characteristic of God when describing his imaginary Christ figure: "Aslan is not a tame lion." God, Lewis seems to say, is neither predictable nor controllable.

I am not claiming that these physical manifestations are a necessary means or necessary accompaniment of the Holy Spirit's action. Rather I am saying that often they do in fact accompany what the Holy Spirit is doing. However, it should not be surprising that such physical phenomena accompany the healing of deep inner turmoil, reception of forgiveness for grievous sin, and the remembrance of painful experiences. Divine healing involves a process of profound and fundamental change in people. Is it not reasonable that physical reactions should accompany these changes? If our culture were less restrained than it is, these sorts of phenomena would draw far less attention and concern. In fact, this appears to be the case in many Third World countries.

Also notice that these physical phenomena accompany profound healings or spiritual renewals; they are not normally associated with healthy Christians' every day lives. People

who have these manifestations and continue in the power of the Holy Spirit should not expect to experience more and more bizarre forms of behavior. The purpose of healing is to produce healthy people who can live life wholly for God.

When I travel I am frequently asked if the weekly meetings of the Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship are a cacophony of bizarre physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit. My answer is "No, though there is some of this from time to time, as we have visitors in need of healing." In fact, far more physical manifestations occur at healing seminars because many of the people are there because they are in need of healing.

Scripture is full of examples of people who, in response to the power of the Holy Spirit, fall over, shake, act drunk, and laugh or sob. I list below the more common types of manifestations and indicate where similar responses are found in Scripture.⁴

Shaking and trembling, which may or may not be associated with fear. This may be of varying severity and involve only a part (for example, an arm or leg) or the whole body. Perspiration, deeper breathing, and an increased pulse rate may accompany it. Commonly it is a gentle trembling associated with a quiet sense of joy and peace, and as such it differs from the type of hyperventilation associated with anxiety. But trembling can also be a shaking of extreme violence. I have seen people thrown to the floor and their shaking continue for several hours; they may then have periodic episodes of shaking for days afterwards. The more peaceful type of shaking is usually associated with the empowering of the Holy Spirit for renewal and ministry. The more violent shaking is sometimes the Holy Spirit encountering an evil spirit or unearthing some serious, unrepented sin or hurt.

Scriptural examples of trembling and shaking are numerous. Trembling frequently accompanied the fear of God (Gen. 42:28; Exod. 19:16; Ezra 9:4; Pss. 2:11; 119:120). The prophets usually trembled when they came into God's presence (Isa. 66:5; Jer.

5:22; 23:9; Dan. 10:10–11). In the New Testament, trembling was a common phenomenon (Matt. 28:4; Mark 5:33; Luke 8:47; Acts 7:32; 16:29; 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:15; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 12:21).

Falling over (or “being slain in the Spirit,” as it is referred to by Pentecostals). Church history and contemporary experience contain many examples of people falling over and lying supine or prone for several hours. Most people are aware of a sense of calm and feel a sublime indifference to their circumstances. Commonly, no aftereffects are noted, either good or bad. Occasionally this state continues for twelve to forty-eight hours, in which case profound spiritual changes have been said to follow.

The most dramatic falls are those sustained by pastors and ministers, some of whom appear to be thrown by the Spirit on their faces, left prone, and sometimes seen to bang their heads rhythmically on the ground for an hour or so. (Curiously no physical damage or headaches seem to follow the head banging.) The changes following this experience may also be profound. Their ministry is infused with new power and effectiveness.

I received the following letter from a Friends pastor in Idaho in August 1984:

Dear Pastor John,

I have wanted to write to you concerning the Signs and Wonders conference. I found the conference to be the most significant experience of my Christian life apart from my initial acceptance of Christ.

Monday night of the conference I received the gift of tongues [and] was slain in the Spirit (an experience which I had dismissed as theologically impossible). . . . Tuesday and Wednesday proved to be as much, if not more, of a blessing. Thursday was a day of reckoning as God dealt with me. In a vision that was at first terrifying and depressing, God showed me the fruits of my labor as a church planting pastor. As I had operated almost entirely in the energy of my soul, the picture was very bleak. The fact that I had no previous experience of the working of the Spirit was a very lame excuse to the Lord. God, in his mercy, showed me in the same vision what could happen. . . . [He then describes the vision.]

I spent most of Thursday in desolation. I wept harder than I ever have, was terribly depressed (a totally alien response to my personality), and despaired for my life. That night, the Lord tested my faith. Would I worship him in spite of my condition? I did, and as we sang the words, “Oh Lord, have mercy on me, and heal me,” our loving Father did just that. Praise his beautiful name! As I lay on the floor weeping, this time with joy, he healed me of some longstanding emotional and spiritual disfigurements.

All day Friday was a powerful day of anointing as God began to use me. The joy of my salvation returned and the visions of ministry here in northern Idaho came. . . .

Since coming home, God has proven himself strong, and our body has undergone a radical transformation. Gifts, blessings, anointings, and ministries are multiplying. We have also been greatly humbled and there has been an incredible amount of repentance, forgiveness and healing of relationships. . . .

Had you not been willing to spell faith “r-i-s-k” I would be herding a flock of dead sheep. Operating in this realm hasn’t been easy, nor is it always fun, but it is beautiful and it is right and I praise God I’m part of it.

God’s fullest blessings upon you,
Pastor K.T.

On the other hand, far from trying to produce falling, I encourage people who feel like they are going to fall over to sit down, because I want to talk with them during the prayer time. Falling over in itself is of no value if not accompanied by a deeper understanding of God’s holiness and grace.

Scriptural examples of people falling over under the power of God include Daniel (twice—Dan. 8:17, 10:8–9), Paul at his conversion (Acts 9:4), the soldiers at Jesus’ arrest (John 18:6), the guards at the tomb (Matt. 28:4), and John on the island of Patmos (Rev. 1:17). Twice when Ezekiel saw the glory of God he fell on his face (Ezek. 1:28, 3:23). There are also instances of people being thrown to the ground by demons when they came into the presence of Christ (Mark 9:20).

Drunkenness. Often a state of mind and body resembling intoxication occurs. People may be euphoric, usually following

a new appreciation of God's grace, a new sense of the wonder of his pardon. They feel "heavy," may not be able to rise, need assistance in walking, or else they are uncoordinated in their gait, stumbling awkwardly, and slurred in their speech. Paul's words contrasting drunkenness with being filled with the Spirit may have more significance than might at first appear (Eph. 5:18). Usually such a state is associated with a fresh allegiance to the Lord. Scriptural examples of "drunkenness" with the Holy Spirit include Hannah (1 Sam. 1:12-17) and Pentecost (Acts 2:13, 15).

Fr. John Bertolucci, a powerful Catholic evangelist from the University of Steubenville, Steubenville, Ohio, told my coauthor a remarkable story of praying for a young man at the latter's ordination. Actually, the story began a day earlier:

On a Sunday in March of 1985 I attended a meeting in which Doug Gavrillides, a lay evangelist who ministers mostly in Central and South America, explained how the Holy Spirit had come on him when John Wimber prayed over him. I had known Doug for many years, and it was obvious to me that his life had been radically affected; God's power and anointing were on him in a new way. What I found interesting about what he said was that John had prayed, "May the Holy Spirit and the kingdom of God come on you and consume you." In Catholic teaching, the prayers "May the Holy Spirit come and purify us" and "Thy Kingdom come" are used interchangeably. I was touched by what Doug said, but even more moved by the power of God that was in his life.

The next day I attended a Day of Recollection at a seminary. I spent the day with students and faculty, and, coming off of my experience with Doug, I felt the presence of God on me in a special way. The day culminated in the ordination of a deacon. The local bishop presided over the liturgy. I had preached the homily at the service, and was participating with other priests in the ordination. The liturgy called for the candidate to lie prostrate in the middle of the assembly, with those present praying the litany of the saints, which is petition for global intercession. While we were praying I harkened back to Doug's sharing the previous day and felt God was telling me to pray for the candidate. In the Catholic tradition we feel silent prayers

without touching a person can be effective. That was the only appropriate way for me to pray at that time. So I fixed my gaze on him and prayed, "Lord, let your kingdom come on him." To my amazement he began shaking! This was quite unusual in an ordination setting.

Later, following a celebration dinner, the young deacon asked to speak with me. He said that while he was lying prostrate on the floor he had one of the most profound spiritual experiences of his life. He said that for years he had suffered from migraine headaches—they were so serious that his superiors had considered withholding ordination until they were healed. Because of the excitement and anticipation of the ordination, he was suffering from headaches. But during the litany of the saints, something remarkable happened. He said, "I felt a tremendous power come over me. Then something left me, followed by something coming into me. I felt drunk through the rest of the service. And all of my migraine symptoms left me. I was healed! I feel better than I have ever felt in my life."

Several weeks later Doug Gavrillides and Fr. Michael Scanlan returned from a John Wimber healing seminar to the Holy Spirit Monastery in Steubenville (I am a member of this monastery). On a Saturday night they told 12 or 13 of us about how the Holy Spirit had worked in healing and renewing people during the seminar. So our Superior asked them, "Well, why don't you pray for us?" When they invited the Holy Spirit to come, one brother immediately broke into laughter, and soon we were all laughing. Then I came under what I can describe only as the glory of God—I was knocked to the floor and felt drunk. When I tried to stand up, I couldn't. I cried out, "Lord, I'm an intelligent man, but I can't get up!" Since this happened to me I have experienced a greater awareness of God's presence and a new anointing of his power.

Bodily writhing and distortions. These come in many forms, including jumping up and down (I call this "pogo-sticking"), contracting arms and hands and making them clawlike, contorting the face, stiffening the body, and so on. I believe that some of these movements indicate conflict over a particular sin, sometimes a sexual sin. Violent convulsing movements, especially when associated with hissing, indicate demonization. Scriptural examples include the demonized man in the Capernaum synagogue (Mark 1:21-26), the healing of a boy

with an evil spirit (Mark 9:26), and the Gerasene demoniac (Luke 8:28).

Laughing and sobbing. Some people erupt into giggling and laughter, which may continue for hours and episodically for days. Sobbing comes the same way—I know of one man, Blaine Cook, who sobbed episodically for three months. Usually laughter and sobbing indicate the need for emotional healing. In some instances they are the emotional response to experiencing God's holiness (sobbing) or grace (laughter) in a new way.

Scriptural examples of laughing and sobbing include Abraham (Gen. 17:17), Sarah (Gen. 21:6), and Israel's weeping at Ezra's reading of the Law (Neh. 8:9). Proverbs 14:13 says, "Even in laughter the heart may ache. . . ."

Prolonged and exuberant expressions of praise. Many times people will begin praising God and not stop for hours. Their personal prayer practices are altered for the better. In many instances this is associated with receiving the gift of tongues and indicates a fresh anointing with the power of the Holy Spirit.

I would need several pages to list all of the scriptural examples of prolonged praise. Instead, I will only list a few of the New Testament examples: the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55), Zechariah's song (Luke 1:64, 68–79), the healed paralytic (Luke 5:25), the Samaritan healed of leprosy (Luke 17:15), and the crippled beggar (Acts 3:8–10).

I expect skepticism regarding such extreme emotional and physical responses, even from Christians. But for those who experience God's healing power, these experiences are life-changing.

Tom Rabaut, from Ann Arbor, Michigan, describes how his skepticism was overcome during one of my healing conferences:

When I started hearing about the new ways in which the Holy Spirit is working among us, I was very skeptical. My attitude was, "Why do we have to have such an emphasis on physical manifestations?" I also suspected that those people who were responding in a physical

way to the presence of the Holy Spirit (by trembling or falling or laughing, for example) were people who were predisposed to being somewhat weird. So I wasn't very enthusiastic when I walked into the arena where the healing conference was to be held. "I really don't want to be here," I told my wife. I own a business and considered myself too busy to sit and listen to talks for three days.

As soon as the conference began though, my heart was being moved; I was seeing attitudes I needed to change, sins I needed to repent of. In one of the first sessions, I began to tremble as I experienced the presence of God, and then I started shaking and sobbing. At that point, everyone who was experiencing an anointing was asked to come up front so that the whole assembly could see many different types of physical manifestations. That's the last thing in the world I wanted to do! Yet I knew that, for me, stepping forward would be an important step, a sign that I wanted to "let go and let God." So I joined the group of "weird" people up front and stood there shaking for half an hour.

"Oh, that was easy for you, Tom," someone said to me later. "You've been in the community drama group and are accustomed to audiences." Well, I *am* confident on stage, but only when I have control. Letting God take over and deal with me while six-thousand people look on isn't something I'm predisposed to!

Yet I didn't care about that, because what God was doing with me was a true renewal and revitalization. He was reaching deep, deep down and healing wounds from past experiences. He was loving me—regardless of who I was, what I had done, where I came from. In a way I don't fully understand, that physical manifestation opened me up to a whole new dimension of God's love. I was so refreshed by the conference that I wouldn't leave the arena each day till it was time to go home to bed—not even for meals. I was spending my time praying with other people and getting prayed with. And as I did that, God seemed to be infusing in me his heart for wounded individuals.

Because of what God did with me at the conference, I've become more spiritually aware of the wounds that others have experienced and have tried to minister God's love to them, as God ministered it to me. I've fallen in love with the Lord and with his word in a way I'd never experienced before. Sometimes while I go about my business, doing the most ordinary tasks, I have to stop and wipe away the tears: what I'm experiencing is God's tender mercy.

Perhaps there are many of us who are skeptical, like I was. But I

think that God means to “zap” all of us. And once we let God take over, we’ll never be the same!¹⁵

These phenomena are obvious, but other phenomena of the Holy Spirit are more subtle. Often the Holy Spirit comes on people and they do not recognize it. They might experience slight trembling, fluttering of the eyelids, deep breathing, or faint perspiring, much like slight nervousness or the result of too much coffee. Sometimes they feel a weight on their chest or a “heaviness” in the air. Usually this indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit, the first signs of his coming to minister. I have learned to recognize these traits and ask the people if they are experiencing them. If they are feeling these things, I encourage them to open their hearts more fully to God. And I ask the Holy Spirit to continue to pour his life out on the person. I pray, “More of your power, Lord. More!”

One final caveat: the work of the Holy Spirit is more internal than external, more concerned with heart attitudes than outer actions. In many instances when I pray for someone *nothing* external appears to happen to them, and yet the healing power of God is at work in them.

This was brought home to me recently when I heard of an Episcopal priest from the Midwest United States who invited the Holy Spirit to come on his congregation during a Eucharist liturgy. (From a fellow priest he had heard wonderful stories of God’s shaking people at the core of their beings, resulting in many healings and renewal.) So he explained the healing power of God to the people, then asked that God pour out his Spirit.

He waited—five minutes, ten minutes—and the congregation sat stony-faced and impassive. He was embarrassed and felt foolish. Finally he finished the liturgy and released the people. He could not leave the church fast enough.

But something had happened. Over the next two months people streamed into his office telling him of God’s work in their lives. Some were healed, many more renewed. Eventually

he tried inviting the Holy Spirit again, this time with dramatic manifestations—people fell over, shook, and were healed. But who is to say that this was any more significant than the first time he prayed?

Several conclusions may be drawn from this brief survey. First, we should not be surprised by how the Holy Spirit manifests himself to people. Second, unusual emotional and physical phenomena are common in Scripture, church history, and today. Third, these experiences do not ensure healing; healing is an internal work of the Holy Spirit. Finally, we do not pray over people for these experiences; we pray for God’s power to come and heal them.

I have described in detail many of the physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit to help people recognize the presence and power of the Holy Spirit when we pray for healing. Why? Because when we recognize God’s healing power is on the person for whom we are praying, we are able to bless his presence and pray for more power. This is a fundamental principle for effective healing prayer: honor what the Lord is doing, and usually he will do more.

Also, when we recognize the Holy Spirit is on people, we can help them to understand and cooperate with his work in their lives. Some people do not realize that God may manifest himself in these ways, so they become passive or frightened, unable to receive their healing. When I am unsure about what the Holy Spirit is doing I ask questions. “Do you feel anything now? A warmth or tingling?” “Is God speaking to you?” Some people have so little faith for healing that even when the Holy Spirit manifests himself powerfully, they do not believe that he is healing. I encourage them not to be afraid and to open their hearts to God and receive his healing power. I pray for a while, then talk with them, then pray again. Usually this goes on for over an hour, in some instances even longer.

Many people are insensitive to their own bodies. They fail to understand that certain phenomena are caused by the Holy Spirit.

Several years ago I talked about divine healing with a group of about ten theology students from Germany. When we had finished our discussion they expressed serious doubts about everything I had said. So I suggested that we try an experiment: we would invite the Holy Spirit to come right then and minister healing and renewal. They chuckled and said, "Sure, why not?" Much to their surprise, most of them experienced the power of God.

During the prayer time I could tell that the Holy Spirit was particularly strong on one young man who was tall and stood erect. I asked him, "Do you feel anything?" He answered, "No, nothing." So I said, "That's strange, because I believe the Holy Spirit is on you. Why don't you sit down?" He answered, "I can't sit down. I can't move. I don't feel anything, and I can't move." He was confused about what was going on—he believed that God does not work that way. I continued to pray for him, stopping occasionally to explain what God was doing. As he understood what the Holy Spirit was doing, he opened his heart fully to God's power and was healed of inner hurts.

Taking time to ask questions during the prayer engagement step may also indicate the root cause is different from what was initially thought. For example, it is not unusual to determine during the diagnostic step that a person needs inner healing, then during the prayer engagement discover they also need deliverance from an evil spirit.

As I wrote in Part II, there are four areas that divine healing may be applied to: the spirit, the effects of past hurts, the body, and demonization. Each of these requires a different application of healing prayer. (Below I describe in greater detail the prayer engagement—the fourth—step for each of these areas.) It is important to note that most people have problems in at least two of them. For example, sometimes I start praying for people's past hurts, which opens up the need to pray for a physical problem, and then suddenly, I discover a demon! I used to think, "How complex can this get?" Then the Lord

reminded me that human beings *are* complex—after all, we have been made in God's image—but the Holy Spirit is capable of sorting out all of our problems.

The spirit. Most spiritual problems are caused by unconfessed sin and unbelief. When the need for healing of the spirit is diagnosed I take the following steps.

First, I ask the persons to agree with God about their sin. I ask, "Do you agree that this is sin? Do you agree that you need to deal with it before God? Will you pray and tell God that? I will agree with you about it." If the individuals do not know how to pray, I help them. If they are unwilling to pray, I talk with them about what sin is and how it kills people. (If they still refuse to pray, I tell them that I have nothing to offer them.)

Then I help the persons experience God's forgiveness through the ministry of proclaiming them forgiven. I base this practice on authority given in John 20:23: "If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." I say, "In the name of Jesus Christ I forgive your sins." When I pray this prayer I also ask the Holy Spirit to apply his forgiveness to the deepest part of their hearts: "Lord, help this person to receive the experience of forgiveness." Then I stand back and pray for them quietly. Only the Holy Spirit can apply forgiveness at the deepest level of their beings, where they have been held captive to guilt and shame. This experience, described by many as an overwhelming sense of forgiveness, is usually associated with what looks like ripples of energy and heat coming over their bodies.

After this I ask them, "How do you feel?" My goal is that they acknowledge their forgiveness and confirm and secure God's victory. After this I pray again, giving thanks to God for setting the captives free. In some cases, such as with stealing or some other form of personal harm against another, restitution or apology is called for. For this I give specific counsel and emphasize their need to talk with their pastor about any further actions that may be required.

I also teach them about the process of renewing their forgiveness, in which forgiveness penetrates to a deeper level of their lives. Satan will attempt to rob them of their newly experienced forgiveness by sending feelings of unforgiveness that they may mistake for actual unforgiveness. They will be tempted to once again take on the guilt of their sin, especially if they have not fully accepted Christ's forgiveness. I tell them, "When those feelings come it is like a bird coming to roost. Just shrug it off in the name of Jesus. It doesn't belong to you. Over a period of time your emotional reactions will conform to Christ's truth."

The effects of past hurts. People who suffer from the effects of bad memories, either from personal sin or being sinned against, need to receive and extend God's forgiveness and receive God's healing power to free them from bondage to their past hurts. Most people need help to understand how their past hurts affect them. The following, a composite sketch taken from several similar incidents, is a typical interaction with a man who as a child was abused by his mother and now suffers from cancer:

I ask, "How do you feel about your mother now? I think that a natural feeling would be bitterness and anger."

He responds, "I don't feel that way because I am a Christian."

Now I am sure that this is the root of his emotional and spiritual problems, so I say, "Are you sure? I sense that you do feel that way, though you cannot describe these feelings very well." On rare occasions I get tough and say, "You are lying to yourself when you say you don't feel that way. You are angry toward your mother for what she did, and that is why you are sick."

"How do you know that I am angry toward my mother?"

"You are still hurting every time the subject comes up. If you were free there would be no pain. But the pain is still there, so let's get rid of it."

My goal in confronting him is to get him to acknowledge and be willing to deal with his anger and bitterness. My second goal is for him to be released from bondage to his

anger and bitterness. I do this by getting him to forgive his mother.

Extending forgiveness to those who have sinned against us is difficult for many people, because they also have been unforgiving toward God for allowing the circumstances in the first place. Typically a person asks, "Why did Jesus let that happen to me? Why did he put me in such a horrible family?"

After waiting a while for his anger to subside, I say, "I want you to understand that the hurt happened to Jesus when it happened to you. He was there with you, so he knows the pain." Most people do not realize that Jesus is a victim too, that at the cross he suffered every sinful deed that has ever been committed.

"Oh, you mean he was with me, and he felt bad about it too?"

"Yes," I say, "so let's give it up to God. Let's let him wash you free from the contamination of this sin—both that you committed and that was committed against you—so you'll never have to feel hurt about it again." Then I lead him through a prayer in which he extends forgiveness to his mother and repents and receives forgiveness for his own sinful attitudes.

Sometimes when I invite the Holy Spirit on the persons, they remember things that happened years before and that they had forgotten. In some instances the hurt involved in these memories contributes to bizarre phenomena. (I remember praying for one man who as a boy had been deeply hurt by his father. When I invited the Holy Spirit to come and minister to him, he was thrown to the ground and started howling like a dog. His pain was palpable.) As these kinds of painful memories arise, I encourage the persons to understand that Jesus was with them through it all and that now they may extend forgiveness. In other words, I reinterpret their experience in the light of God's purpose.

In many instances I have to take authority over problems that have been passed on to children from their parents. Exodus 20:5 says, "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third

and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments" (see also Exod. 34:7). Alcoholism is a good example of this type of problem. Children of alcoholics have a seventy percent chance of becoming alcoholics themselves. When I encounter adult children of alcoholics (even if they are not practicing alcoholics), I pray to break the power of influence of alcoholism that comes from being raised in an alcoholic home. I say, "I break the power of alcoholism in the name of Jesus, and I release you from the sins of your parents." That is a powerful prayer. Through it I have seen people who struggled with alcoholism and other compulsions like pornography and homosexuality freed from their bondage.

For those who suffered from compulsive sexual sin that had its roots in the sins of their parents, I speak healing to that area. For example, if a person has struggled with a sexual sin, I say, "Lord, I ask that you bring healing and wholeness to this person's genital organs. Cleanse the organs with the power of your blood." On several occasions they reported later that almost all remembrance of or desire for that sin was wiped away, and their sexual orientation became right and appropriate.

Some people are in bondage to certain sins because they have practiced them for so long. They are out of control and compulsive, doing the very things that they hate. Usually they do not understand why they commit them and are frustrated and depressed about their lack of self-control. For example, I have prayed for many men and women who cannot resist getting involved in affairs, even though they know they are wrong, self-destructive, and destructive to others.

I believe God has given us the power to break these bondages. In Matthew 16:19 Jesus told the disciples, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." This authority that Christ has given us is not authority to determine, but to announce, guilt or innocence. That is what I do, announce God's truth, when

I pray over someone who is held captive to the desire to commit fornication or adultery.

The principle of dedicating parts of the body to the Lord also applies to breaking bondages. Sometimes a residue of the effects of a person's wrongdoing remains in the parts of his or her body that were used in the service of evil. This residue must be dealt with for complete healing. I have seen people who had been promiscuous have their sexual organs prayed over, that they might be cleansed and set aside for holiness. While we prayed their bodies flinched and trembled, as though the Holy Spirit was cleansing them. The result was complete freedom from past sins and a joy and confidence about their sexuality.

Occasionally I must break emotional ties people have with other people. For example, former lovers frequently exert emotional influence in people's lives for years after the affairs have ended. I have also observed people who once were involved in cult groups or under abusive leaders struggle for years with fear and anger. In many of these cases they are released from their fear and anger when I break the soul tie with their former partner, group, or leader.

The body. I always lay hands on or near the afflicted area of the body as I pray. The prayers, as I have already noted, may vary greatly: intercession, words of command, words of pronouncement, even getting the person himself or herself to pray.

Frequently I speak to the condition itself. For example, several years ago I prayed for a young woman with a scoliosis of the spine. She was wearing a T-shirt, so when I looked at her back I could see that it was severely deformed, with a two-inch variance from the middle to the top. I stood behind her and spoke to the spine: "In the name of Jesus, I command you to straighten." Then I went up the spine, placing my hand on each vertebra and watching them move back in place. I said, "That one, Lord, straighten that one!" and another vertebra would move. As I prayed the woman felt heat all over her body (she began to perspire), and she experienced what she later

described as a state of ecstasy. She looked drunk. By the end of our prayer time, her back had only a half-inch variance.

I watch closely for manifestations of the Holy Spirit on the person for whom I am praying. For this reason I do not close my eyes when I pray. When I see the different types of spiritual phenomena I described early in this chapter, I point out to the person what I see, and I ask him or her about what is being experienced. "How are you feeling? What is going on?" Occasionally I will see nothing happening, but when I ask if they are experiencing anything they say, "Yes. I have never experienced God in this way before." Then I find out they have been healed.

In some cases I offer an explanation for what is happening to them. Once I was praying for someone and nothing appeared to be happening. The man looked strained. So I asked him, "What is wrong?" He said, "My head irritates me. It is tingling over the top." We had been praying for his stomach, yet his head was tingling. I thought, "Lord, you blew it. You sent healing to the wrong place." But then I decided, "Well, Lord, if that is what you are doing, I will bless it." So I laid hands on his head and began blessing God for his healing work, and the man's stomach was healed.

Demonization. Of all the different types of healing, prayer for the demonized is best done in a private setting. It may require hours of prayer and several follow-up sessions to cast demons out of severely demonized people.

Prayer for the severely demonized is best accomplished in teams of two to five people. There should be a clearly defined leader; the others should lend prayer support and provide some counsel. I usually place people to either side of the demonized person and tell them to pray. On occasion I have asked someone to record what happens, to write down the demons' functions and relationships so that we have a basis for later evaluating whether all the demons are gone or not. If the session goes on for a long time, I find it helpful to change the team members' positions to keep their concentration sharp.

Frequently Christians misdiagnose psychological disorders as severe demonization. I never call anything a demon until I have actually talked with it. I use several criteria to assess whether I am talking with a demon. For example, demonized persons undergo major personality changes when the demon speaks through them (Mark 5:1-5). Their eyes also indicate the presence of a demon. They may roll back and flutter, or the whole pupil may disappear so that all I can see is the white part of the eyes. Sometimes the eyes operate independently of one another or become very still and covered by what appears to be a film. They may also dilate to such an extent that all I can see is the pupil.

Other common physical manifestations suggest the presence of a demon. I have seen nostrils flair, lips purse, teeth appear to grow (though they were not actually growing), the throat enlarge, and the body puff up. I have seen persons fall to the floor and slither and hiss like snakes. I have heard all kinds of animal noises—barking, bellowing, roaring. I have witnessed people excreting foul-smelling fluids out of openings in their bodies. Many of these manifestations happen only in the severely demonized, but when they happen there is no question about the presence of a demon.

When I know that I am dealing with a demon, I command its attention by looking straight into the demonized person's eyes and saying, "Look at me!" I then command the demons to tell me their names (see Mark 9:25). I say, "In the name of Jesus, I command you, spirit, tell me your name."

Evil spirits do not want to tell their names, because sometimes their names reveal what they do to people. They will say, "Why do I have to tell you my name?" or, "I don't want to tell you my name," or, "I don't have a name." They will say anything to avoid telling who they are. When they begin speaking like this, I say, "Stop that! Now, tell me your name."

A special word of caution is in order here: I only command demons to identify themselves when a person is out of control, when it seems obvious to me that an evil spirit is speaking

through the person I am praying for. At no time do I encourage the person I am praying for to give up control to the evil spirit.

When they do tell me a name, it is usually in a language that I cannot understand. For example, recently one told me its name was Kimutu. I then asked, "What does it mean?" Again, it resisted but finally said, "Pain." This made sense; I was praying for a man who had pain in his neck and head. I immediately commanded the demon to leave: "In the name of Jesus, I command you to leave this person." The man was healed.

Sometimes I ask a demon for more details about what it does. For example, if one says that its name is "Fear," I might ask, "What do you make this person afraid of?" When I ask the person later if that particular fear was a problem, usually he or she says that it is one of the biggest obstacles to living a full Christian life.

Demons enjoy talking to distract me from casting them out. My response is always the same: I silence them (Mark 1:34). Sometimes they try to bargain with me, saying, "Let's do such and such." I respond, "Be silent. I don't bargain. You must go!" They may be very religious, very "spiritual." For example, they may prophesy, speak in tongues, even quote Scripture. They will argue, sometimes quite persuasively. They will pretend not to be demons. Sometimes they shriek to draw attention to themselves. Again, in all these instances I silence them and cast them out.

In most instances, the demonized persons are not aware they have demons until I pray with them. Then they appear to become frightened, and the demons threaten them. "When I get you away from here," the demons say, "I am going to kill you." When I suspect this is happening, I silence the demon and then gain the attention of the person for whom I am praying. When I am sure that I am talking with the person and not the demon, I explain that they have nothing to fear because Christ is stronger than any demon. I then ask them, to the best of their ability, to cooperate with Jesus in the casting out of the demon.

The expulsion of demons is a form of power encounter in which the kingdom of Satan is driven out by the kingdom of God.⁶ It is never easy. It is a test of faith that requires concentration, perseverance, and God's anointing. The expulsion comes through commanding the demon to go: "I command you in the name of Jesus to come out." But saying these words does not automatically ensure that the demon will leave. Jesus indicated that some demons are more difficult to expel than others (Mark 9:29). They require greater faith and prayer.

The evil spirit's leaving is frequently accompanied by some reaction in the severely demonized person: falling down, crying out, moaning, deep exhaling, foul odors—all of which are then followed by an unusual peace (Mark 9:26). But demons have many hiding tactics to lead me to believe they have left when they haven't. For example, just because someone is thrown to the ground and shrieks when I command a spirit to leave does not mean the spirit has left. I usually get down on my knees and look into the person's eyes, then say, "If there is a spirit in there, I command you to manifest."

Another method for identifying evil spirits is to pray for various parts of the body, asking that the Holy Spirit consecrate them (see Rom. 12:1-2). I pray, "In the name of Jesus I consecrate the feet, ankles, [and so on, through the entire body] to the Lord. I consecrate these parts according to Romans 12:1-2." Sometimes I will get to a certain part of the body and the person will react in some way. For example, his or her eyes may open and roll back. When this happens I stop what I am doing and begin the process of demon expulsion again: identify, silence, and cast out.

Occasionally I encounter an obstinate demon, one that will not respond to my commands. For these I have found it helpful to step back and say, "Jesus, here is a demon of hell that is standing against you and your church. You take care of it." Then shrieking will usually follow, for they are afraid of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

After I expulse demons my goal is to see the person be fully restored so the demons will not return (Matt. 9:25; see also

12:43–45). Only Jesus can fill a void created by the departing spirits, so I interview the person to make sure that he or she has a sincere relationship with Christ. If the individual does not, I preach the gospel and then invite him or her to pray with me to receive Christ. In most instances I must lead persons in prayers in which they renounce the occult or some other form of spiritualistic involvement. In many instances inner healing and the giving up of sin will also be called for. Then I pray that the Holy Spirit will come and fill them completely.

Instances of mild demonization are far more common than those of severe demonization—and far easier to pray for. By “mildly demonized” I mean people who are prone to periodic attack from evil spirits in certain areas of their lives, like sexual temptations or temptations to steal or lie. Usually I ask if they have problems in these areas, and if they say that they do I will cast the demon away with a simple word of command: “In the name of Jesus, I command you evil spirit to leave.” Then I minister to the need for forgiveness, repentance, and filling of the Holy Spirit.

Because divine healing is a process, knowing when to stop praying is very important. When I first began praying for the sick, I thought that in each session I should pray for someone until he or she was healed. In some instances the sessions went on for hours, and even then the person was rarely healed. I soon began to ask the question, “When should I stop praying?”

I use several criteria for knowing when to end the time of prayer in Step Four. The most common way is when the Holy Spirit indicates that it is over, usually by withdrawing his power. I see that the person for whom I am praying is not responding to my prayers and I notice the senses associated with healing prayer that I experience—tingling in the hands, warmth, a supernatural peace—are withdrawn. Sometimes the persons who are being prayed for indicate that the prayer time is over, that they have received what they came for. Also, when I cannot think of anything else to pray for or when I

have prayed for everything and it seems that I have not gained any ground, I stop. In this last instance, I encourage the person to come back at a later time for more prayer.

STEP FIVE

The last step in the healing procedure is the post-prayer directions. *The post-prayer directions answer the questions, “What should this person do to remain healed?” and “What should this person do if he or she was not healed?”* When people are not healed I reassure them that God loves them and encourage them to seek more prayer. Usually this means directing them to a prayer team or kinship group in which they may receive longer-term prayer.

I instruct those who are healed to sin no more and no longer follow the ways of the flesh (see John 8:11). This involves a variety of practical advice, determined by the problem, that includes advice about Scripture reading and study, prayer, and works of righteousness. The key to maintaining these spiritual disciplines and living free of sin, though, is living within the context of overall pastoral care. The preparation, ministry, and follow-up necessary for divine healing can take place only where there is sufficient commitment, responsibility, and accountability among Christians. This means involvement in a church congregation and usually involvement in some form of small group in which relationships of support and challenge nurture faith and righteousness.