

A Proposal Introducing Holistic Healing Ministry into Local Church

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**Introduction:**

This Proposal introducing the Holistic Healing Ministry (HHM) will attempt to lay a foundation for biblical theology on healing as well as to suggest some practical methods for starting a HHM in a local church.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “health is a dynamic state of complete physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, **holistic healing** is defined as the practice of healing to address the whole person who is a triune being consisting of a body, mind, and spirit according to the biblical notion.<sup>2</sup>

#### **The Goal of the HHM Is To:**

- Minister to people who are hurting physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Help people recover from past hurts and wounds and find freedom through the gospel.
- Support people in experiencing Jesus as the Healer and practice, making healing choices that will honor God and become more Christ-like in characters.
- Create a community where people can support each other in the journey of healing.
- Ultimately, it helps the church to experience God’s kingdom on earth and expand God’s kingdom.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard J. Healey, Robert S. Zimmerman Jr., *The New World of Health Promotion* (Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2010)

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:23: “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## **Biblical Theology on Healing**

There are many reasons why churches are not practicing Holistic Healing. A lack of biblical understanding in healing theology is probably one of the biggest reasons. Most churches believe in intercessory prayers for the sick, and that is about as far as the teaching on healing goes. The primary focus for most pastors and church leaders is on helping the congregants with spiritual growth through preaching, prayers, and study of God's word. When people who are hurting and the issue cannot be resolved by spiritual advice, they will have to turn to doctors, counselors, and social workers because there is no HHM readily available to support them. And, this is not how early church had operated.

### **Healing as A Command:**

Jesus always moved with compassion for people who were suffering from spiritual oppression and diseases, and he healed every disease and sickness. (Matt. 8:16, 9:35). Through the atonement, he took upon himself all the diseases and infirmities of the world, broke the curses of sin and restored our relationship with God. (Isaiah 53: 4-5). He then gave his disciples power and authority to heal the sick and preach the kingdom (Luke 9:1-6). And he entrusted the healing ministry to the church and ordered them to pray for the sick. (James 5: 14- 15). If we were to be faithful to follow Jesus, we found no excuses not to be actively involved in healing for the sick. Our Lord healed the sick and cast out demons by the Holy Spirit as a sign that the kingdom of God was at hand, and stated that "whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters" (Matthew 12:30). We are either to follow Jesus and do what he commanded us to do, or we are held responsible for disobeying him. There is nothing in between in the kingdom of God. The Lord taught us to pray for the Kingdom of God on earth as it's in

heaven. Sign of the kingdom is embodied in “healing of the whole person—forgiveness for the guilt-laden, health for the diseased, hope for the despairing, restored relations for the alienated—which is the sign of the kingdom’s arrival.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, HHM is not optional but essential for any church who truly understands healing is an integral part of the Gospel.

### **Problems with the Local Church:**

The church often oversimplifies all problems - physical, emotional, and social as spiritual issues and attempt to fix them with confession and repentance of sin. When that doesn't work, people who are hurting either to doubt whether Christianity is of any practical value, or to conclude that God doesn't really care about their suffering. David Seamands recognized the problem of those suffering from emotional wounds and states:

*We preachers have often given people the mistaken idea that the new birth and being “filled with the Spirit” are going to automatically take care of emotional hang-ups. A great crisis experience of Jesus Christ, as important and eternally valuable as this is, is not a shortcut to emotional health. It is not a quickie cure for personality problems.*<sup>4</sup>

The church is the body of Christ. Instead of focusing on membership growth, which will come when every member of the body is healthy, it’s time for the church to consider the core value of having church. Apostle Paul teaches us, “if one part suffers, every part suffers with it” (Corinthian 12:26). Again, He said, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15). Rick Warren insists that “the key issue for churches in the twenty-first century should be church health, not church growth.”<sup>5</sup> Once the church captures the vision and

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<sup>3</sup> World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Your Kingdom Come (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1980)

<sup>4</sup> David Seamands, Wounds That Heal (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003)

<sup>5</sup> Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995)

begins to realize that the healing ministry is a must-have for church health, the next step is to address some somewhat controversial issues that often arise from errors of biblical understanding and false teaching before launching a HHM.

## **Healing Theology**

### **1) Prayer and Medicine**

Is it alright to use medicine and seek God's healing at the same time?

I believe the answer is yes. Medicine is part of God's grace given to humankind for healing.

Wayne Grudem, who believes in miracle and healing put it this way :

*“Certainly we should use medicine if it is available, because God has also created substances in the earth that can be made into medicine with healing properties. Medicines thus should be considered part of the whole creation that God considered ‘very good’ (Gen. 1:31). We should willingly use medicine with thankfulness to the Lord, for ‘The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof’ (Ps. 24:1).<sup>6</sup>*

He further states that refusing to use medicine when it's available, it is likened to Satan tempting Jesus to jump from the temple, “forcing a test” on God and demanding that he perform a miracle at that exact moment when the natural means of steps are available. “To refuse the use of effective medicine, insisting that God perform a miracle of healing instead of healing through the medicine, is very similar to this” <sup>7</sup> However, we must remember God can certainly heal where medicine and doctors cannot heal and that is why every church should have a healing ministry readily available to people who are afflicted with various diseases.

### **2) God's Sovereignty about Healing**

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<sup>6</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, page 1064.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1064-1065.

We must understand that not all who are prayed for will receive healing. Sometimes active faith is not present, or may not have been given in the situation where healing needs to occur. Sometimes healing is progressive and does not manifest immediately. Sometimes other roadblocks must be removed first for healing to take place. At times when all means are exhausted, and healing does not happen, we must remember that God promises to “work all things together for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose. (Rom. 8:28). This includes enduring suffering and illness and giving him thanks in all circumstances when we don’t have the immediate answers. (1 Thess. 5:18; cf. Jas. 1:2-4).

### **3) God’s love and mercy are evidenced in the incarnation of His Son.**

God is not just the creator of the universe, as some claim, “after the original act, God virtually withdrew and refrained from interfering in the processes of nature and the ways of man.”<sup>8</sup> Rather, God enters the scene through the incarnation of his Son Jesus, sharing and bearing the suffering of humankind, including every disease and every sorrow and every consequence of every sin. Jesus cares for every dimension of God’s people - physical, emotional, and spiritual, and social. And all aspects are interconnected, affecting one another when one part is not well.

### **Methods of Implementation**

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Deism>

## **1) Education**

Since Holistic healing is often an unfamiliar subject that often leads to arguments that cause divisions, church leadership must make special efforts to teach healing to the congregation with correct theology, including the practical matters such as the laying on of hands, four basic types of prayers as outlined in Healing written by Francis MacNutt,<sup>9</sup> exercising of spiritual gifts and the waiting for the leading of the Holy Spirit. Since most Christians are very limited in their understanding of the church's role in Holistic healing, let alone knowing how to do it, people are recommended to read and study books written on the topic of healing in the process.<sup>10</sup> Many Christians hold the belief that miracles are for the early church only, and they have never experienced the supernatural work of the holy spirit; therefore, be patient in the study and in waiting must be necessary, without imposing any school of doctrines prematurely. HHM does not advocate instant healing from God on demand. We are called to minister to the sick faithfully, trusting that God will do it according to His schedule, sometimes quietly, and sometimes quite miraculously in the display. The key is education with which door will be opened, for it is in the heart of God to heal. The senior pastor plays a critical role in the decision-making. He must first embrace the core value of the HHM in the church he leads, and must be willing to support the effort with resources and commitment so HHM will be fruitful and sustainable.

## **2) Team Approach**

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<sup>9</sup> Francis MacNutt, Healing. Page 129.

<sup>10</sup> A list of text on healing are listed at the resource pages.

As mentioned, HHM does not exclude God from using the medicine and medical professionals to facilitate nature's healing process. In fact, a balanced diet, regular exercise, proper rest, stress management, and a healthy attitude towards work and relationships all contribute to one's well-being. "Medicine and prayers are not opposed, but the doctor, the nurse, the pharmacist, and the person with the gift of healing all together form God's healing team."<sup>11</sup> As a matter of fact, appropriately conducted, HHM will bring heightened awareness to the community of faith and beyond, teaching people to make good healing choices, and thus, can serve as a preventive.

### **3) Support Groups**

HHM believes healing often takes place in a small/support group setting during teaching, sharing, bible study, and ministry time when the presence of God and the moving of the Holy Spirit bring healing to the soul and body in a marvelous way. And the people who are in need can find love, support, accountability and feedback until he/she becomes strong and healthy and is ready to serve in church and engage in society for the glory of the Lord.

## **Conclusion**

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<sup>11</sup> Francis MacNutt, Healing. Page 206.

Healing is not the whole gospel but is an integral part of the gospel. The biggest miracle is the new birth in which man comes to understand his depravity in sin and accepts Jesus as his Lord and savior. Behind all sicknesses and diseases is sin. Man lives in the bondage of sin and is under the curse of the law. He has no power to overcome this condition. But here is the good news. The bible says, "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship" (Galatians 4:5). And that is why Jesus came in the flesh: "For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). We become a new creation in Christ when we are born again in the spirit. Our relationship is restored with God, and we call him Abba father. (Romans 8:15). In the meanwhile, we still live in this fallen world where Satan is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). We are looking forward to the resurrection of our bodies and the day when "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54). But until then, we must take responsibility to care for our health holistically, and teach the body of Christ - the local church- to practice in holistic living. Jesus has already fulfilled the messianic prophecy regarding his ministry: to preach the good news, to heal the broken-hearted, and to set the captive free (Isaiah 61:1). The baton has been handed over to the church to do the same, to do everything that the Lord has taught us to do. Thus, we need to embrace the whole gospel to fulfill the great commission. That is why HHM is such an essential ministry that every local church should have. Paul exhorts the believers in the Thessalonian church to have their "whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:24). It is my prayer and wish for every believer in the local church to experience the full benefit of holistic health with the help of HHM.

## **Resources and Recommend Readings For HHM:**

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