

## **Healing - by Francis MacNutt**

### **Preface**

Dr. MacNutt (PhD) who is a catholic priest ordained in 1956 did not believe healing ministry. In 1960 an Episcopalian founder of the Order of St. Luke introduced him in the healing ministry but nobody encouraged him praying for the sick. In 1966 Mrs. Jo Kimmel, a speech professor at Manchester College presented the successful healings by prayer. In 1967 Dr. MacNutt attended a conference in Schools of Pastoral Care which promote healing ministries to ministers. He was the first Roman Catholic priest to attend the conference on teachings on healing. He started the biblical theory of healing the sick by prayer to put into practice. He observed half of those he prayed for with a team were healed and about three-fourths of those are healed of emotional or spiritual problems.

He does not deny our need for health care professionals including physicians, nurses, and pharmacists. He believes God works through every possible means. Nevertheless he experienced prayer for healings became ordinary from extraordinary phenomena. Consequently he considers that the healing ministry should be an ordinary part of our Christian lives.

He questions and challenges us that Jesus is still in the healing business:

“In an age when ministers study psychology and counseling as part of their seminary training, how many learn to pray with clients who have severe emotional problems to be set free? How many are taught to pray for drug addicts to be freed of their addictions?”

## **Part One. The healing Ministry – Its underlying meaning and importance**

### **Chapter 1. Does healing happen?**

He argues that healing by prayer happens in modern society despite of theologians and educated men's doubts. The Holy spirit works in all levels; 1) to transform individual into a real personal relationship, 2) to heal relationships and to build community, 3) to transform society by healing relationships of injustice and oppression. The scientific community is more open to the prayer's healing than before. He quoted some testimonial letters from patients who were healed by prayer and a doctor of the patient. He urges us to believe the gospel of Mark 16:18; "will lay hands on the sick, who will recover."

### **Chapter 2. Out prejudices against healing.**

### **Chapter 3: The Basic Message of Christianity: Jesus Saves**

This chapter starts off by depicting the phrase "**Jesus Saves**". The author goes on to say how familiar phrases like this have lost their meaning over the years. Two of the following questions are asked, "What does this mean and how does it affect my life". I realized that this is a powerful phrase that many might take for granted. We are saved and loved by God no matter what.

This chapter shows the reader that Jesus came to do **two basic things: 1) give new life and 2) to heal and save us**. Chapter three illustrates Jesus' mission of disciples, his name and the calls of the church. It emphasizes what Jesus did. Many questions are revealed to challenge the reader; one that stuck out in my mind was, "What might it mean to have eternal life of Jesus Christ". And this is how chapter three ends.

### **Chapter 4. Wholeness is holiness**

### **Chapter 5 Let Him Carry His Cross Daily**

Many Christians are so broken that they are unable to love their neighbors or God. They think it's God's will that they are in this state and so they do not ask for release. Until recently, many thought that in order to fulfill our call to carry our cross daily we must endure all the hardships that we are faced and that asking for healing would be cowardice. However, Jesus says that external suffering, which is inflicted by others, is what we must endure, and internal suffering that is caused by illness, God may heal. Jesus sent out His disciples to heal sick people through prayer and not by their own means. We are cautioned against being hasty to pray for the healing of those who are severely sick or the elderly who are approaching death because the prolongment of their life might just bring about labor and sorrow.

### **Chapter 6. Miracles – a Proof?**

Chapter 6 discusses about how Jesus uses the power of faith to heal, anoint and to set people free by a simple sign. He also uses the miracle of judgment, the miracle of the Holy Spirit, Paul's experience of healing as well as Our Savior's experience of Physical life.

The chapter explains that by faith the; the woman who had bled all her life got healed by touching the garment of Jesus Christ. He raised Jairus' daughter from death and also He treated a dreaded one. A.B Simpson indicated that the power of faith has connected in "one striking lessons, and two finely illustrated principles.' They are "One was the fact of God's absolute power even to work where there is nothing but death. The other is faith's absolute power to take everything from God.' Faith has challenged physicians and has stressed to the believers that With God all things are possible, however one has to believe it, before one can receive it.

The author uses the gospel of Mark 9: 14-29 to explain that Christ healed a child who was challenged by a demon despite the efforts of His disciples. They were unsuccessful because of their shaky faith. He continues that when some are in doubt they "throw themselves on God to sustain them and carry them through. Like the father of the possessed child indicated 'Lord, help my unbelief without first saying 'lord, I believe.'" And by saying that, A.B. Simpson stressed the father "put forth his will, and then he depended on Christ for the strength." This indicates faith and Christ casted his entire demons and the demons left the child forever.

Simpson indicates that Jesus does His work methodically for example, when Jesus healed the blind man at Bethsaida. He uses the power of faith first then continued to heal the blind "by a simple anointing, as a sign.' But the man was not fully healed. The author made an analogy that "many never get beyond the first stage, and the second stage is for the man to "look up." Jesus continues with the third stage the perfect sight. But the perfect sight comes only with one price and the price is to "look at Jesus." One the man raised his eye to 'look up 'to Jesus, he was able to see clearly. Jesus uses faith as well as a simple sign to heal the blind of Man at Jerusalem and the blind Bartimaeus.

Simply put, the author explains (Mark 11: 14, 20-20) the cursing of the Fig Tree was a miracle of Judgment but not healing. He continues that "the sanctification of the soul is the withering up of the natural life." As Jesus said to his disciples if you have an unweaving faith you can move mountains. The following holds true in Acts 3:1-10) when the apostles exercised their faith by using Jesus name to heal the crippled. That was the first recorded miracle of the Holy Spirit after Christ ascension.

Again, the author exerts by faith, Paul did not die after he was stoned and dragged him out of the city and left him to death by the angry mob. But with his faith in God he stood up and went back into the city and continued his work. This explains Paul's own experience of healing. Simpson explains Our Savior's experience of physical life by using the parallel of Jesus Christ first temptation in the wilderness which was addressing His body (Matthew 4:3-4). "Jesus did not pay attention to His body when He was weakened by fasting but rather indicated that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

In conclusion the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter affirms Christian's faith in God. Our trust in God will never be in vain. As He heels the sick, cast out the demons, etc. Also by faith His disciples heeled the lame at the Gate beautiful, and Apostle Paul was able to walk and continued his work after he was stoned. These accounts are lessons for every Christian believer

## **Chapter 7 God is Love**

Christians believe that suffering is sent by God, they are likely to feel guilty if they ask for healing; to feel cowardly if they ask for alleviation. Healing is essential to the gospel message and carries us all the way back to our very idea of God. If we truly believe that God is love, then it should be easy to believe that healing is an ordinary, not an extraordinary sign of his compassion.

C.S. Lewis, a writer famously known as an intellectual defender of Christianity, is known to have questioned God's goodness and mercy when he wrote under the pseudonym C.N. Clerk after the death of his wife.

In Peru, the most popular Christian feast of the year is that of *El Señor de los Milagros* or the Feast of Miracles. This feast, established by the people, is more popular than Easter or Christmas in spite of all official teaching, for the people look to God for help, for healing, for miracles. Many Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, seek healing.

The revelation of God in Jesus Christ is that we have a merciful Lord who saves and heals. Part of the present crisis of faith is, I think, related to a basic lack of confidence in prayer.

Jesus' healings are not merely "signs and wonders" outside the teachings ... they are part of the very gospel message itself! In short, Jesus did not heal people to prove that he was God; he healed them because he was God.

## **Part Two. Faith, Hope, and Charity as They Touch Upon the Healing Ministry**

### **Chapter 8. The faith To be healed.**

*Healing*, by Francis MacNutt, is a book illustrated to describe how to handle life situations as a Christian. To be healed, one must have faith. It is about repenting our sins and using the fruits given to us by God in our lives. We need utmost faith in God for becoming healed.

There are a couple things to consider when healing as a Christian. We need to recognize that healing is our own responsibility. Due to the sciences with medicine and surgery, it has interrupted the idea of God having any part of the miracle. We need to realize that God heals us, not the medicine given to us.

Healing is an extraordinary process. When it comes to the end of someone's time, they should not be afraid. They should pray to be closer with God spiritually and raise their sufferings to the cross like Jesus did. Because the person is suffering, they shouldn't ask for the sickness to go away with redemption, but to accept it for what has come.

Putting our faith in God is hard for many because of doubt and hesitation. We understand that Jesus put all his faith in God though out his life and he displays the ideal Christian. We live in a world of sin and need to discover ways to fight temptations and follow the way of God.

Being able to use God's gifts are blessings. Through our weaknesses, God can work through us to accomplish his goals. He can use his works to those who aren't even believers. Searching of personal praying styles is important as an individual to help fit our own healing ministry. By this, we need to learn more about ourselves and figure out ways to exert this spirituality.

According to John Wimber, faith is a risk. It is being unsure of what pathway one is going. It is to be obedient and wanting to risk the uncertain journey. With our own weaknesses, God is always there and will work his goodness thru people for what he chooses, sometimes beyond what we think we can't reach. We need to take God more seriously and give him our complete trust. By having unlimited faith in God, he will bless us tremendously.

### **Chapter 9. The Mystery of Faith**

This chapter is all about the mysteries involved in healing. The author states that there are no simple answers for those want them. That they will never experience what he experiences everyday with those who are healed by God's merciful love. A significant thing that the author states is that more people are healed if we spend time with them. Another thing that this chapter says is that people who are not healed feel like they have a weak faith. There are those who chose one side to every question and they succeeded because they don't split hairs and have bounding confidence. Others just tend to see how complicated everything is and so there powers of persuasion.

The author then states a little later on that Christian faith is the best precondition for the accomplishment of this miracle (Healing) because it gives both profound understanding and simplicity of heart. The author gives two points that have to do with

understanding the mysteries of healing. The first point is: 1) Do not expand any method into a universal method. It states that we try to control what God does by finding the right formula and method for every task and or prayer. We need to realize that God is beyond our limit and we cannot box him into what we want. There are people who believe that if we just need to lay claim to God's promises in Faith. There was a bible story talked about and in it people stated that the little boy got sick people somebody him or his parents sinned. Jesus said that people get sick so that we may see God displayed in them. That people don't get sick for sinning. 2 examples to show how people may be sick and then healed were explained in this chapter in detail. One example was evil spirits and that an exorcism and the other is proclaiming you are healed after praying to be healed. Though some people may be healed if they proclaim it, it doesn't always happen.

The second point he makes is: 2) Ask God to meet your needs with confidence; but do not tell him when or how to do it. One example the author gives that is the wrong way to pray was: Dear God, help my rich cousin help me in some way. We need to let God know we need help and let him take care of how it will be done. We need to pray and believe it will happen as the author states. At the end he says we need to be open to healing however God chooses to do it. Finally the author states that over and over again we see the complexity of healing and are forced to seek God's wisdom on how to proceed.

## **Chapter 10. But the greatest of These is Charity.**

The name of this chapter in Healing is "But the greatest of these is Charity". This phrase was taken from the Holy Bible in 1Corinthians 13:13. Paul speaks of the many gifts of God emphasizing the greatest gift being charity, which is love. By expressing love to others, we allow Jesus' light in us to shine brightly. Francis MacNutt PhD stresses the power of love and knowledge of the right way to pray. The dimension of healing we get from human love is also mentioned.

A major part of Jesus' ministry was geared to the sick and broken hearted. As children of God we are given the opportunity to invoke the power of God through faith and prayer. Faith is not measured by the tone of voice or increased anxiety in our prayers. We must believe in God who has assured us that what we ask, will or have already, come to pass.

Jesus being omniscient decides what is best for His children. We need to trust in God's will for our lives. Not everyone will be healed but everyone has the choice to accept the love of God. In praying for the sick it is important to focus on Jesus' love, more than just healing for the individual.

Caring for the sick goes beyond a career, it is a ministry. We are used as vessels by God to affect the lives of others. Praying for healing should increase the awareness of the power of God's Holy Spirit. God in His sovereignty heals whom He wills, giving the sick a sense of peace.

God commands us to love the Lord with all of our heart, also to love one another. Humans were made to love. When we hold on to hatred for others we can become spiritually and physically sick. Those who obey the Lord's command live longer, healthier lives. Healing takes place when you love and accept love from others. Fellowship will bring joy and peace to our lives, not only with God but our brethren.

Healing is holistic. Those of us who are called to the ministry of healing need to be mindful of our attitude regarding God and prayer. The surgeon performs the surgery but God is the one who heals bodies. Without Him there would be no healing. Demonstrating love along with medicine is vital for the healing of sick bodies.

## **Part Three. The Four Basic Kinds of Healing and How to Pray for Each**

### **Chapter 11: The Four Basic Kinds of Healing**

Years ago, priests and ministers would treat all problems, every situation, as though it was as moral issue that could be solved through willpower, with the help of God's grace. For example, the alcoholic was asked to repent and take a pledge of not drinking. We saw that for most it took a community of support, for example AA, for alcoholics to wake up. One would have to admit their powerlessness and submit to God.

There are four different kinds of basic healing that is differentiated by the kinds of sickness and basic causes of the sickness.

The three kinds of sicknesses are:

1. Sickness of our spirit, caused by our own personal sin.
2. Emotional sickness caused by the emotional hurts of our past
3. Physical sickness in our bodies, caused by disease or accidents.

There are four basic prayer methods we must understand in order to exercise a complete healing ministry:

1. Prayer for repentance (for personal sin)
2. Prayer for inner healing (for emotional problems)
3. Prayer for physical healing (for physical sickness)
4. Prayer for deliverance (exorcism)

All of us need to develop the discernment to diagnose what is wrong and choose the appropriate type of prayer to use.

Sacramental healing:

1. Repentance takes place sacramentally in the sacrament of reconciliation or penance.
2. Inner healing can also take place in the sacrament of reconciliation.
3. Physical healing is meant to take place in the anointing of the sick.
4. Deliverance from demonic oppression or possession takes place in the rite of exorcism.

God works through the doctor to heal as well as through prayer for healing – the doctor, counselor, nurse, are all ministers of healing, making up God's healing team.

Harmful divisions:

1. Faith healers who tell the sick they don't need to see a doctor.
2. Doctors who disparage the ministry of healing as a non-scientific appeal to the credulous.
3. Evangelists who disparage church sacraments as dead rites.
4. Ministers of sacraments who have little concept of how much of God's healing power can flow through the anointing of the sick and reconciliation.
5. Persons who believe in healing but prefer to ignore the ministry of exorcism.
6. Exorcists who disparage the ministry of inner healing – relying too much on psychology.

We need to work together as a team, not as competitors, to bring God's healing power to the entire Christian body. Look forward to a time when there will be collaboration between doctors, nurses, inner & physical healers, priests and ministers. That will be the time of the renewal of Christianity.

The most basic questions we should ask before praying for healing are:

1. What is the basic sickness, the basic problem?
2. What is its basic cause?
3. What kind of prayer, or what kind of natural remedy should we use?

## **Chapter 12- Forgiveness of Sin**

Forgiveness of sins is the first and deepest kind of healing. It is salvation and healing at the deepest level and is connected with the healing of the body and emotions. Physical sickness, a sign not of God's blessing, is a sign that we are not in the right place with God or our neighbors. Sickness is more of a punishment, rather than a blessing. "Physical sickness can symbolize a deeper sickness in our emotional and spiritual life" (MacNutt, 136). Dr. Paul Tournier, a physician, learned of the role sickness has on our emotional and spiritual life and decided to stop physically treating patients. Instead, he "deepened his prayer life" and studied psychology so that he can help healing the sick. Because of this, it is better to pray for forgiveness/ inner healing before asking for physical healing. MacNutt experienced the power of forgiveness through the testimony of a man and a woman during a retreat. The man, who despised his boss and considered him unfair, was reluctant to forgive him. He entered a prayer of forgiveness, and moments later, he was healed of the painful effects of a open-heart surgery he previously had. The woman, who repented for her "long-standing grudge," was healed from a pylonidal cyst. Forgiveness of our enemies is the key form of repenting.

"If you forgive, you will be forgiven; if you are willing to heal everyone else, including your enemies, you will be healed. The first condition for seeking healing is to cast our sin, especially the roots of bitterness." Bitterness is considered as one of the worst sins. Being bitter and spiritually cold is a product of physical coldness. When praying for healing, sensations of heat overcome us, which correlates with human love and the warmth of a friendship.

In conclusion, physical sickness is a sign of not being redeemed; physical healing requires forgiving sins or inner healing; bitterness and resentment are the most important repentances; and, the best remedy to breaks through coldness, hurt and bitterness is **love**. Repenting of sins requires willpower and praying for God's help and healing in "breaking whatever bondage there is which keeps us falling back into habitual patterns of sin." Prayer for healing helps us break free. And remember, love is a sign that you are forgiven by God.

## **Chapter 13: The Inner healing of Our Emotional Problems**

I am pretty sure everyone has had ONE rough day in which they do not want to be bothered by others and simply want to be left alone. I am also pretty sure, on this rough day everything that occurs throughout the day irks you even if it has nothing to do with you. To top it all off, you have that one person who comes up to you after you have stated

that you would like to be left alone, says, "Cheer up and smile, God loves you". Nobody can understand your true feelings except for you and God. Going through rough days or rough periods of time can last up to months or even years can easily encourage an individual on losing faith in God.

As children, our deepest need is love. If we do not receive the love that we are looking for as infants or children, it can have a great affect on our views on trusting others or simply trusting God.

It is just remarkable to know what Jesus is able to do with our memories; heal us from the inner wounds that still remain in our memories as well as fill us with his love of all places in us that have remained empty.

Inner healing is a general term, which can be used to refer to a broad range of healing paradigms. Inner healing means we become more like Jesus Christ or as Jesus Christ to walk back to the time we were hurt and to free us from the effects of that wound in the present. If we are carrying around all of our baggage (old hurts and fears), we cannot follow the footsteps of Christ. Our spirits are wounded and Jesus wants to heal our spirits. He wants to bring us to the realization that we can have a life filled with the peace that passes all understanding.

#### **Chapter 14. Praying for Physical healing**

#### **Chapter 15. Deliverance and Exorcism**

## **Part Four. Special Considerations**

### **Chapter 16: Discernment of the Root Sickness**

This chapter is about how spiritual and physical sickness may be related and that we must ask God for discernment when it comes to healing. According to the chapter, the body undergoes the same suffering that the soul goes through. Many of the physical illnesses may be healed or avoided by ridding the body of stress and allowing the love of God to flow freely.

Many doctors believe that 80% of sickness is stress related and that an individual must deal with the underlying problem in order to heal and get well. According to research done at Harvard University Medical School, meditation and daily prayer is a remedy to numerous physical medical conditions, such as high blood pressure. This research demonstrates that anger, hostility, bitterness, and depression leads to heart disease, narrowing of the arteries and ultimately to a heart attack.

According to chapter 16, in order to avoid unnecessary stresses and illnesses, a person should strengthen close family and societal bonds. One's main focus should be to promote love, hope, and service for one another. "In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

### **Chapter 17. "Twelve Reasons Why People Are Not Healed,"**

Approaches to healing we should be aware of the reasons people are not healed...:

1) Lack of faith....I believe that this is still the reason we do not have more healings taking place in our churches today; there is a general skepticism about healing as being anything more than a natural psychological process.

2) Redemptive suffering. Physical healing is not in itself the highest value in the world. At times God uses sickness for a higher purpose....

"It makes me happy to suffer for you, as I am suffering now, and in my own body to do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church" (Col 1:24).

3) A false value attached to suffering...sometimes there is a strong subconscious resistance that may block healing.

4) Sin. If there is sin connected with the physical ailment (especially resentment), no healing is likely to take place unless the sin is dealt with first.

5) Not praying specifically. Especially in praying for inner healing, it seems important to get to the root cause of emotional suffering, the initial harmful memory.

6) Faulty diagnosis. ...To be specific, the most common failures I have found are:

- \* praying for physical healing, when inner healing is the basic need
- \* praying for deliverance from evil spirits, when inner healing is the real need
- \* praying for inner healing when deliverance is the real need

7) Refusal to see medicine as a way God heals

8) Not using the natural means of preserving health

9) "Now is not the time..."

10) A different person is to be the instrument of healing

11) Demonic Interference. To the modern mind this may sound strange, but we have found that one reason physical and inner healing are blocked is because of demonic interference, especially if the person has been involved in the occult....two special blocks to healing: curses and generational bondage.

Once in my experience a woman was freed of severe emotional problems when we prayed to free her of the influence of a druidic priest in her family's ancient past. In another woman the blockage to the healing of her problems went back to a Black Mass performed by an ancestor in seventeenth-century England.

12) The social environment prevents healing from taking place....

Much sickness in our society is caused by wounded relationships and will only be healed when the larger relationships are healed, and until we have Christian churches and communities where people can be loved into wholeness.

The healing ministry is perhaps the most dramatic, and one of the most beautiful demonstrations of God's love for us. There is no need to overstate the case or to lead the scientific community to disparage it. If we think we have all the answers we are shut off from God's light....You should be open to being used for healing, or for not being used....Wait upon God's wisdom in all simplicity, like a child.

## **Chapter 18. Medicine and Healing**

This chapter discussed the relationship between healing and medical science. One important quote which put the entire chapter into perspective is on page 210 "Sometimes God cures directly through prayer; at other times through nature, assisted by doctors who have learned how the body can be assisted to throw off the sickness that oppresses it".

MacNutt believes that science and religion should work together. Previously he experienced greater resistance from the medical world when trying to build a bridge

between the two concentrations, however recently he has seen more progress towards a healthy fusion. During the Middle Ages, science and the bible were seen as part of God's creation, however a disconnect occurred when Galileo contracted the belief that the sun circled around the earth, and it continued beyond controversies about evolution. Today progress has included courses about spirituality, at medical schools. The topic of spirituality is also very popular on television, and bookstores. Major reoccurring themes include; religion is good for our health, meditation and prayer decreases stress, love and community and prayer can heal.

MacNutt, advises caution for those on far sides of the spectrum. He believes that some people receive a word from the Lord "to stop taking their medication and act like they have been cured" and they should be obedient. However he has a problem when religious convictions force believers to make a choice between God and medicine. They relying soiling on prayer and a direct healing from God, rather than using the medical community as vessels the Lord uses for healing. This point of view discredits the entire ministry because they drive away people who have devoted their lives to healing as a profession. Other Christians do not possess any faith in prayer for healing. Their faith has as not matured enough to recognize that the Lord is in control, and they may be shocked to discover that some medical professionals frequently pray for their patients and ask the Lord to guide them when they have exhaust all traditional treatment options.

The section labeled prayer and psychiatry links the relationship between religion and mental health. Unfortunately many still believe those with psychiatric problems need deliverance (exorcism) opposed to professional medical help. They do not understand how psychology can help us to understand human emotional problems, and that some mental illness such as depression may be a result of a chemical imbalance which needs to be treated with medication.

"The art of medicine, counseling and psychiatry are the ordinary, natural ways in which God words to heal us, but we are on the verge of a truly new era in which we are discovering how God desires so deeply to heal our brokenness if only we give him a chance" p217

## **19. Sacraments and Healing**