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“Healing”

Daniel D. Isgrigg, Guest Editor

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EDITORIAL: THE HEALING ISSUE

DANIEL D. ISGRIGG, GUEST EDITOR

This issue is dedicated to exploring the subject of healing within the global Spirit-empowered tradition. As a practice of Christianity, healing weaves in and out of the narrative of historic Christianity from the early church to modern days. Yet, healing truly came to prominence in the Christian tradition during the mid-nineteenth century with the emphasis on divine healing in the various streams of evangelicalism in the United States and Great Britain. The four-fold pillars of evangelical theology—salvation, sanctification, healing, second coming—eventually became the basis for Pentecostal theology, which was expanded to include the baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues.¹ Yet, the doctrine that was held in common by both the proto-Pentecostal and emerging Pentecostal tradition was the belief in the power of God to heal. This was demonstrated in the way early Pentecostals drew from the healing theologies of A. B. Simpson, A. J. Gordon, William Boardman, Charles Cullis, and Carrie Judd Montgomery, all who rooted their healing theology within their pneumatology. In fact, as Donald Dayton pointed out, it could be that healing, rather than tongues, has proved to be the universally accepted distinctive across all Spirit-filled pneumatology over the past nearly two centuries.² Even today, as some Pentecostal denominations are relaxing their views on tongues, healing has overtaken the baptism in the Holy Spirit as the most notable characteristic of Spirit-empowered spirituality.³

It is noteworthy that a renewal of emphasis on the Holy Spirit in the church came on the heels of healing revivals both in the case of the mid-nineteenth-century evangelicalism and the mid-twentieth-century Charismatic Renewal. The Healing Movement of the 1950s set the stage for the Charismatic Renewal. This was no more apparent than in the healing ministry of Oral Roberts on prime-time television in the 1950s, which

opened up the once hidden secrets of Pentecostal spirituality to mainline Protestant Christianity. The hope of healing demonstrated in Roberts' ministry created a hunger in these other traditions for the power of God. As David Harrell comments, "No individual more acutely discerned that hunger, or more effectively fed it, than Oral Roberts."⁴ While the Holy Spirit was certainly center in the ethos of the Charismatic Renewal, it was often ministered in the contexts of healing masses and services that were central to the renewal in Catholic and Protestant circles.⁵

Oral Roberts University (ORU) was birthed out of Oral Roberts' commission to take God's healing to "every person's world." ORU was designed to be more than a Bible training institution for pastors and evangelists. Roberts believed that the primary mission was to raise up well-educated students who could become an avenue for healing humanity through every profession. As this concept matured, it blossomed into the establishment of graduate schools not only in theology, but in law, medicine, and business. The idea of "cross pollination" meant that Roberts' theology of healing could be lived out within various professional disciplines. No effort exemplified this more than the ORU School of Medicine and the City of Faith Medical and Research Complex. Here Roberts cast a vision of bringing together two streams of divine healing: prayer and medicine. This idea is exemplified in the giant "Healing Hands" included on the cover of this issue that once sat in front of the City of Faith. The idea was that healing brings together the one hand of prayer with the other hand of medicine. While the experiment of the City of Faith ultimately ended in controversy, the idea of healing through various other professions has persevered and has been implemented in various sectors of Christian higher education and ministry. That statue now sits at the entrance of ORU, showcasing that healing can extend to every person's world through Spirit-empowered higher education.

This volume was birthed with a desire to draw attention to this legacy. Included in this volume is a mixed collection of narrative-based contributions with their own unique and theological values, which the editorial team considered of special significance to the issue of healing in the

Spirit-empowered movement. In this way, they serve to highlight how healing transcends simply physical healing into other disciplines. Although this issue is not intended to focus specifically on Oral Roberts, it seeks to reflect the ethos of his multi-disciplinary vision to take healing into “every person’s world.” It begins with two reflections from individuals who experienced first-hand the vision of healing through medicine in the ORU Medical School. Dr. John Crouch begins the issue by sharing about the origins of the idea of merging healing and medicine and his role in the beginnings of the School of Medicine. As a founding faculty member, he charts the untold story of not only Roberts’ vision, but the passion of a group of doctors who themselves had been seeking a place to live out this vision. To add to that, Dr. Clay Powell offers another layer to the story as he offers his experience as a graduate of the School of Medicine just a few years before it closed in 1989. Powell shares about how he as a student embraced this vision and has practiced the principles of healing and medicine in his own medical practice. This portion was designed to create a space that honors that legacy and welcomes those who helped pioneer and shape that vision. Although the ORU School of Medicine no longer exists, the faculty and graduates are still part of our legacy and should be remembered.

The second part of this volume explores ways in which this vision was implemented in other areas. Hayoung A. Lim offers a study of the way in which music has become a vehicle to bring healing to individuals with physical, emotional, and social needs. As a health care profession, music therapy has become a whole-person approach to healing for people with psychological and behavioral issues. From a historical perspective, the guest editor follows this by a study of the way in which Oral Roberts’ vision of healing was lived out through his efforts of racial inclusion and integration, particularly at ORU. During the height of conversations in America about race and equality, Oral Roberts made bold steps not only to include people of color at ORU, but also became an advocate for racial justice. From a biblical perspective, Lian Mung offers a study of the significance of healing in the well known and loved promise from 2 Chron 7:13–16 that God will “heal their land.” Mung’s study seeks to go beyond the somewhat shallow

and popular understandings of this verse to explore the intertextual nature of God's holistic promise of healing that extends to the physical land, bodily health, spiritual restoration, and true wholeness of right relationship with God for Israel.

The final section includes two studies about the integration of healing and missional engagement. The first comes from missiologist Julie Ma, who demonstrates the way in which healing has been particularly important in the growth and expansion of Christianity in Asia. Through documented stories of healing, she surveys the landscape of how healing has expanded the effect of evangelism in Asia. Secondly, Evangelist Daniel King offers a history of the uniquely Pentecostal evangelistic paradigm of "healing *en masse*." King identifies pivotal turning points in the story of how this uniquely Spirit-filled methodology developed and offers a case study that demonstrates how healing can be an effective tool in reaching the lost, particularly in the global South.

This volume is dedicated to the centrality of healing as a unifying theological concept that orients the Spirit-empowered movement and gives breadth to its theological, missiological, and ecclesiological expressions. We pray that it will draw attention to the legacy of healing inspired by Oral Roberts and will be a catalyst for more conversations within the movement about how Spirit-empowered people can live out a theology of healing in "every person's world."

Daniel D. Isgrigg (disgrigg@oru.edu) is Associate Editor of *Spiritus* and Director of the Holy Spirit Research Center at Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.

Notes

¹ Bernie A. Van De Walle, *The Heart of the Gospel: A. B. Simpson, the Fourfold Gospel, and Late Nineteenth Century Evangelical Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publishing, 2009), 221–22.

² Donald W. Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 115.

³ John C. Green, “Appendix Two: Pentecostal Growth and Impact on Latin America, Africa, and Asia,” in *Spirit and Power: The Growth and Global Impact of Pentecostalism*, eds. Donald E. Miller, Kimon H. Sargeant, and Richard Flory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 335–37. The Pew Forum survey revealed that more Spirit-empowered communities around the globe experienced healing personally than speaking in tongues.

⁴ David E. Harrell, *Oral Roberts: An American Life* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 292.

⁵ Susan A. Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm: A History of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2010), 67–69. See also Alan Schreck, *A Mighty Current of Grace: The Story of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal* (Fredrick, MD: The Word Among Us Press, 2017).

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HEALING THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDICINE

HOW ORAL ROBERTS' HEALING VISION WAS—
AND CONTINUES TO BE—FULFILLED

JOHN R. CROUCH, JR., MD.

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Keywords *healing, prayer, medicine, City of Faith, Family Medical Residency, Oral Roberts University*

Abstract

This article is a personal reflection on the legacy of integration of divine healing with medical practice through the vision of the Oral Roberts University School of Medicine. It charts the origins of the School of Medicine, the implementation of the philosophy of prayer and medicine, and the legacy that followed the theology and faculty after the school closed in 1989.

Introduction

In February 1976, Oral Roberts announced to the faculty and students of Oral Roberts University (ORU), “God has spoken to me again.”¹ These were familiar words to those who had been with Roberts through every significant point in his ministry. In 1935, God had supernaturally healed Oral Roberts of tuberculosis and gave him the commission to build a university. In 1947, God spoke to him to take his healing power to his generation through the revelation in 3 John 2 that salvation is for the spirit,

soul, and body. In 1961, God spoke again and told Roberts to “[b]uild me a university on the Holy Spirit” in order to raise up students to continue and exceed his work of bringing healing to the uttermost bounds of the earth. But on this day in 1976, Roberts announced that God was saying that it was time to merge healing prayer with medicine. God said,

Build me a medical school at Oral Roberts University. I want a stream of my healing power to constantly flow out of ORU through prayer and medical science as well. I want you to raise up Christian doctors who will accept my healing power in its fullness. They will do all they can through prayer, and they will do all they can through medicine.²

The idea of merging divine healing with medical healing was something that was on Roberts’ heart for many years. During his crusade ministry, Roberts reminded attendees of his healing campaigns regularly that he fully believed in the medical profession and encouraged those who were healed to visit their doctors to confirm their healing. Later, when preparing to build the university in 1962, Roberts had become friends with a medical doctor named William Standish Reed. Reed, a former chief surgeon in Michigan, was an Anglican believer who had been filled with the Holy Spirit and had founded an association of Christian doctors (Christian Medical Foundation) that promoted the holistic concept of medicine to include healing in body, mind, and spirit.³ Reed recognized that for too long the church and the medical profession had been at odds. He believed that the outpouring of the Spirit was not only for the healing of the church, but to heal the divorce between physical healing and medical healing. Reed remarks,

Let us find a few people in the practice of medicine who believe in the Holy Spirit—people who will pray along in their own operating rooms, “Make me thy intern, O Lord Jesus!” knowing that God Almighty is there working with them. And when nurses come to care for their patients, let there be nothing but Christ’s

love manifesting itself in the treatment of each and every individual patient.⁴

Reed's interest in salvation as a whole person experience resonated with Roberts' belief that salvation was just as much physical as it was spiritual. Reed's influence stirred in Roberts the desire one day to use the university to raise up doctors as vessels of divine healing through prayer and medicine. Unlike some in Pentecostal circles who believed that prayer and medicine were in conflict with one another, Roberts believed medicine and prayer were simply two different delivery systems for God's healing.⁵ Roberts comments, "God's different delivery systems—prayer, medicine, rest, exercise, love and understanding—are combined as a part of God's good which he uses for healing."⁶

An Idea Is Born

My journey to Oral Roberts University began when I had heard that Oral Roberts had intended to start a school of medicine. In the early 1970s, I seemed to be on a "fast track" towards a successful career in medicine. I was the residency director of one of the original and largest family medicine programs in the U.S. I had an academic appointment with UCLA School of Medicine. I was being offered increased salary, advancement in my academic appointment, and promised additional positions. But, as it turned out, one of the students in my Sunday School class put me on the mailing list of Oral Roberts' *Abundant Life Magazine* as a joke. I was not a fan of Oral Roberts and threw away each issue. Finally, a particular issue arrived announcing that Oral Roberts was going to begin a medical school at ORU.

My first response was, "He is crazy!" I must admit, I agonized over this. I knew that if Roberts and his medical leadership team were going to do it right, they would need to develop a family medicine residency program as well. I wrote a rather obnoxious letter to Oral Roberts and said, "If you are serious about starting a medical school and with an emphasis on medical missions, you need to know that family medicine will be an

important future emphasis!” But I wanted also to make it clear I was not interested in joining them. I closed the letter with, “I don’t care for the Oral Roberts Ministry and hope I never hear any more from you. Good bye and good luck!” Feeling as if I had done my part, I immediately hoped God would leave me alone. But, it was not long before the pull towards joining ORU would not go away and the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and said, “This is where you are going!” Over the next few months, I had several communications with Dr. James Winslow, the acting Dean of the medical school, about ORU’s Family Medicine Department. This began my consideration of coming to ORU to see if the idea of merging faith and medicine was possible.

The dream of a Christian family medical residency program that integrated faith and medicine started to come into focus at a Family Medicine Education Conference in Kansas City in 1978. One of the attendees was Sydney Garrett, the newly appointed chairman of Family Medicine at the New ORU School of Medicine (SOM)! At dinner one night with Sydney Garrett, Warren Heffron, and George Sims we discussed for three hours the potential of ORU SOM to realize the dream of a medical school and a family medicine residency program inspired by Oral Roberts’ vision of integrating faith and medicine. During that time we wrestled with four questions that would change the story of my life:

- Could whole person medicine include the spiritual dimension?
- Could one integrate Christian faith in the practice of medicine in an ethical manner?
- Could one teach that to medical students/residents who are of a similar persuasion?
- Could that prompt and empower outreach to underserved populations in the US and around the world?

These orienting questions were radical for the medical profession in the 1960s and 1970s, which focused on the bio-psychosocial model of

clinical care. This model takes into account the mental, physical, and socio-cultural factors that affect diagnosis and care of patients, but ignored the spiritual factors that affect a person's health. Oral Roberts recognized this gap and believed that doctors who were filled with the Spirit could be equipped by God to address the spiritual side of health care. This resonated with doctors like me who recognized that the current approach tended not only to dismiss the spirituality of the patient, but also forced doctors like me to ignore my own faith in how I practiced medicine. The vision of ORU to merge healing and medicine meant that doctors could not only practice medicine in a Christian environment, but that doctors and patients could integrate their faith into diagnosis, treatment, and medical outcomes. This idea was the dominate idea that attracted some of us, who were trying to figure this out, to consider joining ORU. By the end of the meeting we realized we had stumbled on an opportunity to do something that no other medical school had done: integrate medicine and faith that recognized the whole person that Oral Roberts was emphasizing at ORU.

Meanwhile, in 1977, construction on the campus of ORU began to add an additional 440,000 square feet to the Graduate Center to house the graduate programs spurred on by the medical, nursing, and other graduate schools. Oral Roberts announced that the SOM would not just be educating Christian doctors; it would be advancing medical breakthroughs including the effort to fund research to cure cancer. He announced, "While I will always pray for the sick, which includes the healing of people with cancer, I believe with all my being that God intends for there to be medical breakthroughs in cancer research."⁷ But it was the announcement in November of 1978 that shocked the medical community when he unveiled his plan to build a three-tower hospital called the City of Faith Medical Center and Research Complex. In front of the City of Faith would be a giant statue of "healing hands" in which the one hand of medicine is merged with the hand of healing prayer.

The momentum for the dream of a Christian family medical residency began to be realized when I joined the faculty of ORU SOM in the fall of

1978. The school was set to open in December of 1978. Many other basic science faculty were already in place, such as professors of biology and anatomy, but I was about the first of the clinical faculty hired and purposed to establish the residency program. The Holy Spirit called many faculty who were drawn to Oral Roberts' dream of merging prayer and medicine, as I was, to come to ORU. We all had one thing in common: we wanted to make a difference, to bring into the medical profession the dimension of faith that we were unable to do in a secular environment. But more than that, we wanted the university to be a place where we could replicate the vision of faith and medicine in medical students and residents who could go into "every person's world." The family medicine residency program began in 1980 and soon after that, the City of Faith Medical and Research Center was opened in 1981.

The ORU SOM was established on the highest of academic principles. But unlike secular programs, our approach was very different. The professors were some of the best in their fields, but all of them shared the mission to help students learn the best and latest techniques in an environment of encouragement rather than the cutthroat environment of most programs. Our medical students and residents fared very well when they would do rotations away from the City of Faith. Often we would get evaluation reports where the hospitals indicated that they did not know what to expect from ORU students, but were surprised to find out how skilled and excellent ORU medical students and residents were.

Beyond the academic rigor, the SOM also had several unique missional characteristics modeled after Roberts' vision for the university. First, Roberts introduced the idea that doctors should be instruments of world evangelization and healing. Roberts believed that "healing teams" should consist of more than simply evangelists, but there should be a team of professionals from various disciplines—such as medicine, education, business, law, and theology—to minister to the needs of the whole person.⁸

Roberts' vision was that the ORU SOM would be a medical missionary training school that would provide scholarships for medical

students so they would go to the nations. He knew that the cost of medical school prohibited doctors from engaging in missions. He said,

God's instructions were for me to raise the \$8 million it will take to give full scholarships to each of our young physicians-in-training, including their room and board. This way, when they finish their residencies they will not have to go into practice here in America, where there is already a surplus of doctors, to pay off heavy educational debts before they can go to the mission field.⁹

The decision to fund fully the medical students came at a cost of \$45,000 per year per student, which was about \$8,000,000 per year. Roberts would endeavor to raise this massive investment of capital through his partners. However, this idea proved to be too big of a financial commitment.

From 1985–1989, the financial situation worsened and controversy began to surface over Roberts' attempts to raise needed funds to sustain the program and the City of Faith. In July 1986, Roberts' financial problems came to a head and he announced that God was displeased with him for failing to send out healing teams to touch the world with God's healing power.¹⁰ Roberts felt his pleas for donations were necessary because of the drop in donations due to the scandals by several popular televangelists. By March 1987, Roberts' financial needs for the SOM and City of Faith had reached a crisis. He announced that he needed \$1.5 million dollars by the end of the month or he would have to close the school. He also uttered the infamous promise that if he was not obedient to fulfill God's plan to raise up missionary doctors, that God would "call him home."¹¹ That announcement proved to be the death knell of the dream to merge prayer and medicine through the ORU SOM and the City of Faith. Two years later, in 1989, the SOM and City of Faith were closed. Students and residents already enrolled were forced to transfer to other medical schools and residency programs and faculty had to pursue other employment. Despite the extreme disappointment and enormous difficulties this action

caused for many of the students, residents, and faculty, many students were able to transfer to other medical schools and programs, performing very well, with many achieving honors in those places.

The Legacy Lives On

When the announcement came that the school and hospital would be closing, I was the Acting Chairman of the Family Medicine Department. We were then faced with a choice. Would we give up on the dream of a Christian family medical residency program? Or was the idea bigger than the ORU SOM and the City of Faith? I called together our faculty and current residents in Family Medicine and asked them if they believed the idea was bigger than ORU and the City of Faith. I asked them to take the weekend to pray about continuing the residency program on our own. I suggested that they consult with their spouses, their spiritual elders, and if they felt they should, to fast and come Monday morning ready to give their answer. To a person, every faculty member said yes, they believed in this vision of combining faith and medicine and believed we should find a way to continue. It was in that moment that we decided that the vision to bring healing through medicine should outlast the ORU SOM and City of Faith. Continually inspired by Oral Roberts' vision of merging prayer and medicine, we determined to move forward.

We were advised by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, the accreditation body for medical residency programs, that we would need to find a new "parent hospital" and a new sponsoring institution (and for us, one that was amenable with the Christian spiritual integration). Surprisingly, the local hospital that was most receptive and interested was perhaps the most secular one in town. To place such a family medicine program in a public domain non-profit hospital required that we form a religious and educational non-profit organization so that we could contract with the hospital to run such a program. That would give them (a secular non-profit hospital) a contract "arms-length relationship" from the spiritual aims and methods of our program!

Therefore In His Image, Inc., (IHI) was founded to “improve health and meet spiritual needs” based on the following charter goals:

1. Training Christian physicians in our family medicine residency program;
2. Participating in worldwide medical missions and medical education, particularly through the graduates and faculty of our program;
3. Serving the local underserved populations in the greater Tulsa area.

With that accomplished, within just a few weeks we were able to secure a relationship with Hillcrest Hospital for the residency program. What began as the death of a dream turned around and is now a fully accredited and reputed high quality family medical residency that is leading the way in merging faith and medicine.

The main goal of IHI was and is to produce physicians who thoroughly integrate their spiritual faith in the practice of medicine and medical education. We turn to God for answers, rely on his strength, when sorting out difficult medical problems and when delivering difficult news, and we thank him openly for miracles he performs in our patients. We, as residents, graduates, and physicians, do that unashamedly and use it to evangelize our patients and/or our colleagues where we can do it ethically and appropriately. IHI takes medical care and the love of God to the far reaches of our hurting world. In His Image, International, (IHII) short-term overseas outreaches include free clinics, disaster and crisis response, orphanage ministry, evangelistic retreats, and a special emphasis on medical education through medical conferences and consultations in the development of family medicine residencies and primary care health systems. So all of these are means by which we are intentional in training medical missionaries like Oral Roberts envisioned! Currently more than twenty-five of our IHI graduates are full time medical missionaries around the world, and more than half are in the 1040 Window! IHI never intended

to develop a “sending agency,” but a number of our graduates wanted to do medical education missions and often could not find a sending agency that would encourage them to do that full time. So now we have fourteen families for whom IHII is the sending agency and more come on board regularly.

The ministry to the underserved in our own community is now under a separate 501-C-3 non-profit, Good Samaritan Health Services, a mobile medical van outreach to those in the greater Tulsa area who have almost no access to health care except the emergency room. God has provided (with some very generous Christian donors and the support of our hospital, St. John Medical Center’s foundation) three mobile medical vans that provide thousands of patient care visits per year at approximately fourteen different sites and with approximately fifty clinics per month, and it is growing!

I believe we can say that God is faithful in fulfilling Oral Roberts’ healing vision, at least in part, through this remnant of the ORU SOM and the City of Faith.

Where Are They Now?

The graduates of ORU SOM and the IHI family medicine residency have also continued to live out the vision of healing through medicine. There are way too many to start naming them and we would leave out some very significant contributors. Just recently I was able to attend the workshop at a medical mission conference where Dr. Allen Sawyer, an Ob-Gyn doctor from the ORU SOM days, was teaching how to be effective in short term medical missions. He has done multiple mission trips through the years and now is winding down his practice to do even more! Dr. Bill McCoy, the very first graduate of the ORU Family Medicine Residency, became the quintessential medical missionary who lived out this vision, serving overseas for thirty-five years!

Dr. Mark Babo, an ORU SOM graduate and a graduate of the ORU Family Medicine Residency, and his wife Dr. Doreen Babo, a PhD expert in

administration of medical mission hospitals, have started and nationalized several medical mission hospitals in Nigeria and now in other places.

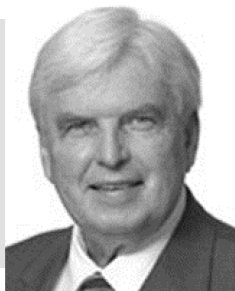
As we have mentioned, a number of our graduates and some of the ORU SOM graduates have chosen to go to the 1040 Window, often to the “closed” or “creative access” countries, places where ordinary missionaries are not allowed to go. And they are having an impact in those places. We have graduates in challenging places like the Middle East, Central Asia, East Asia, Africa, and South America.

Some of the ORU faculty and graduates moved on to become some of the leading doctors in their fields. Dr. Milton Olsen, who was the primary recruiter for the SOM, went to University of Oklahoma-Tulsa School of Medicine where he became recognized for his wholeness approach to medicine. He was honored to have named after him the Milt Olsen Award for outstanding students who excelled in treating the whole person. Dr. Sydney Garrett, former Chairman of the Department of Family Medicine and then subsequently Dean of the ORU SOM, went on to become a medical education missionary to the Middle East. George Sims, Chairman of the Family Medicine Department, went on to study medical ethics at Harvard and taught and did administration in the Department of Family Medicine at Penn State University. Warren Heffron, who has been Chairman of the Family Medicine Department at the University of New Mexico and President of the Christian Medical and Dental Associations, has joined with us at IHI as adjunct faculty and now serves as the Chairman of the Board of our IHII international outreach program. Dr. Heffron has been the President of the American Board of Family Practice, which certifies all family physicians. He was the North American representative to the world conference of family practice doctors.

Conclusion

So where are we with this dream of “healing through faith and medicine,” a vision that President Oral Roberts cast so long ago? Perhaps the ORU SOM and City of Faith are gone in a temporal sense, but the principles upon

which they were founded live on in our hearts and dreams and in the vision and accomplishments of so many graduates from the ORU SOM and the family medicine residency. The loss of those temporal manifestations of Oral Roberts' vision does not diminish the incredible idea that the hand of medicine and the hand of prayer/faith can come together to produce true whole person medicine and healing for the whole person. For our part at In His Image, we honor Oral Roberts for hearing from God and casting that vision that continues to inspire and motivate us to take the Gospel around our community, around the U.S., and around the world, where God's voice is heard small.



John R. Crouch, Jr., MD, (jrcrouch@inhisimage.org) is Founder and Executive Director Emeritus of In His Image Family Medicine Residency, Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.

Note

¹ I am grateful to the issue editor, Daniel Isgrigg, for his assistance with transforming this talk delivered at the 2015 Healing Gospel Conference at Oral Roberts University and for the historical details for this section.

² *Abundant Life*, February 1976, 7.

³ William S. Reed, "We Must Save the Sick to Save Souls," *Abundant Life*, February 1961, 8.

⁴ Reed, "We Must Save the Sick to Save Souls," 9.

⁵ Vinson Synan, "The Pentecostal Roots of Oral Roberts' Healing Ministry," *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology* 3:2 (2018), 287–302.

⁶ *Abundant Life*, February 1976, 3.

⁷ Oral Roberts, “I Believe the Cure for Cancer Has a Spiritual Origin,” *Abundant Life*, January 1977, 3.

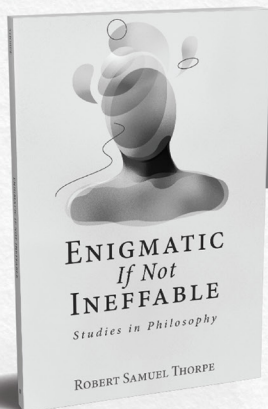
⁸ Kevin Schneider, “A History of ORU Healing Teams,” *Spiritus* 3:2 (2018), 221–38.

⁹ Oral Roberts, “God Says: It’s Action Time,” *Abundant Life*, March-April 1987, 2–5.

¹⁰ Oral Roberts, “God’s Mandate for Change in Healing and Missions . . . Now!” *Abundant Life*, July 1986, 3–7.

¹¹ Roberts, “God Says: It’s Action Time,” 3.

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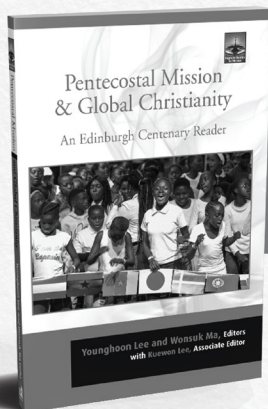
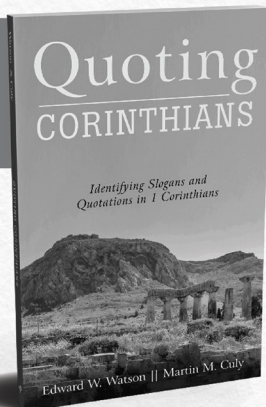
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BECOMING A WHOLE PERSON MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL

REFLECTIONS FROM AN ORU
MEDICAL STUDENT

CLAY POWELL, MD

Spiritus 4.2 (2019) 205–211

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Keywords *healing, prayer, medicine, City of Faith, Family Medical Residency, Oral Roberts University*

Abstract

This article is a reflection about the legacy of whole person medicine by a graduate of Oral Roberts University School of Medicine.

My name is Dr. Clay Powell. I serve as Associate Director of Residency at In His Image in Tulsa, Oklahoma. As a 1985 graduate of the Oral Roberts University School of Medicine, this is my story of how the vision of combining healing and medicine impacted my journey as a medical professional.

I grew up in Florida in the Methodist home of parents who took us to church regularly. When I was twelve years old I gave my life to Jesus and many of my family were born again during that time as well. My parents were invited to join a prayer group that introduced us to the reality of relationship with Jesus Christ and the experience of the fullness of the Holy Spirit and by the time I graduated high school, most of my family were living out the Spirit-filled life. As I prepared for graduation in 1977, my

parents became interested in Oral Roberts University after watching Oral Roberts on TV talking about his vision to build a medical school. Inside I was always interested in becoming a doctor, but because I was shy I was thinking I would pursue a degree in engineering. I decided to enter junior college in Florida and during my sophomore year, through some encouragement from a mentor, I started to embrace the calling to pursue a career in medicine. On a trip to visit various schools where I could finish my undergraduate degree, we visited the campus of Oral Roberts University (ORU). I was very impressed by what I saw on campus. It was beautiful and modern. But more than that, I was excited about the idea of a place where I could receive my education in a vibrant spiritual environment. I knew this was where I wanted to go. When we came home from the trip, I was determined to prepare myself for coming to ORU in the fall. I even purchased the *Miracle of Seed Faith* so I could learn all about Oral Roberts and his teachings.

When I arrived at ORU in the fall of 1979, the medical school had already begun and the building of the City of Faith was underway. It was a very exciting time to be a student. We heard Oral Roberts share about his vision of merging the two streams of healing and medicine through whole person medicine in the ORU School of Medicine. He was committed to raising up doctors who would be not only excellent physicians, but would be empowered by the Spirit to minister to people's spiritual needs. Roberts believed that when a doctor correctly diagnoses and treats a patient, it is the same result as praying for someone for a miracle. Both were a form of ministry and both were from God for the healing of his people. He emphasized the naturally supernatural as well as the supernatural being natural. I loved the vision and thought to myself, "That is the kind of doctor I want to be!" But what impressed me most was how academically rigorous the education was at ORU. I really had to study to get good grades.

After graduating with my pre-med undergraduate degree, I had to decide which medical school I was going to attend. ORU was one of several dream schools I had on my list. In December, Dr. Milton Olsen, the Dean

of the ORU School of Medicine, phoned me and offered me a spot at ORU. I was thrilled to be accepted and notified the other schools I was no longer available.

The ORU program was a four-year program that was not unlike most programs consisting of two years of basic sciences such as anatomy, physiology, histology, pathology, pharmacology, etc. After, we were required to do two years of clinical rotations. What was unique was the educational philosophy that sought to integrate prayer and medicine. This meant that they emphasized the highest level of medical excellence by equipping doctors to come to the best diagnosis and treatment of patients. But we were also trained to provide spiritual care by offering to pray for our patients and pay attention to the spiritual needs as much as the physical needs. Although many of my classmates came from diverse backgrounds and Christian traditions, we were all united in the desire to practice medicine as a form of ministry. ORU was the only place that saw medicine in that way and we had the sense that we were part of something unique in the field of medical education.

One of the greatest strengths of the medical school program was the way each of the faculty modeled and mentored the vision for spiritual care of patients. We watched as they would assess the patients' physical and spiritual needs in an effort to treat the whole person. It was not uncommon for patients in the City of Faith to receive spiritual care by the attending physicians, then later by the faculty and residents, and by the chaplains and prayer partners. The spiritual component of the patient was well attended to in this model. While medical professionals are now recognizing the importance of the spiritual needs in the practice of medicine, this approach was radical in those days. And we knew we were on the cutting edge of this holistic approach to health care.

The City of Faith was representative of the excitement we felt as students in seeing ourselves as pioneers in providing whole person care. People came from all over the United States to be treated at the City of Faith. And all of them came "expecting a miracle." There were some who

got gloriously healed, both medically and supernaturally. But there were some people whom we walked with through their diseases. And, of course, some people died in the “City of Faith.” The tension of that reality was not lost on us. We as a medical community knew God was a healer but we also knew that Christians suffer and die from the same diseases from which others die. In the same way that not everyone was healed in Oral Roberts’ tent meetings, not everyone who came to the City of Faith was healed or cured. Roberts would tell us, “All people who believe in God and trust him get healed. Some get healed immediately, some get healed eventually. But all get healed ultimately.” That was important for us as doctors because it freed us from the expectation that the only accepted outcome was that people would be instantly healed in the hospital. That was just simply not the case. We wrestled not only with that tension within ourselves; we also had to help the patients walk through those tensions as well.

The vision of healing through medicine did a great deal to help us navigate the pressure to emphasize healing over medicine. We were taught that if someone got healed of pneumonia through correct diagnosis and treatment, it was the same as miraculous healing but through other means created by God. It was instilled in us that we were to be excellent in medicine or we were not glorifying God as doctors. I remember the dean telling us, “If you pray for everybody but practice bad medicine, that is a bad testimony. That is not what this medical school is about.” We believed that God is the one who heals and that our responsibility was to do the best we can medically and spiritually to minister to the needs of our patients. We truly believed that God was raising us up to provide whole person care and to be the type of doctors that did not relegate the spiritual care to someone else, but who incorporated it into our own practice.

Following my graduation, I returned to Florida to do my family medical residency. At that point I had to decide what to do with this training. When I was accepted to the ORU School of Medicine I signed a paper that said I would dedicate my life to medical missions as God leads me, whether at home or around the world. But this was only possible

because Oral Roberts had a vision to raise the money to subsidize the costs of School of Medicine students. It was his hope that if graduates finished medical school without debt, it would free them up to be able to use their medical training in global medical missions. For the first few years of my medical career my wife and I and our little one-year-old son went to Guatemala, Central America, and served as medical missionaries for two years. We did clinics and we hosted medical teams from the United States. We helped with nutrition centers because Guatemala had just been through a civil war and a lot of people were displaced and malnutrition and disease were big issues. For two years in Guatemala we were asking, “God, is this what you're calling us to full time?” At the end of that period of two years of serving him on the foreign mission field we felt God released us to come back to United States.

While we were in Guatemala in September 1989, we were staying in a missionary house that had cable and on the ABC evening news, Peter Jennings announced, “Today Oral Roberts announces the closing of the ORU Medical School.” I was just stunned. My heart was sad because I thought, “This was a good thing! Students are graduating and doing medical missions around the world. Students were being great doctors in the United States and some had joined faculties of medical schools in the U.S.” I found myself in disbelief. “How could his pioneering effort, this great adventure into whole person medicine, suddenly come to an end?” It was a sad moment for not only the graduates, but for those who were still students. Fourth-year students were allowed to finish and graduate, but the first-, second-, and third-year students in 1989–1990 were faced with the difficult situation of trying to transfer mid-year into other programs.

The dream of a medical school that merged prayer and medicine was over, but the effort to live out whole person medical care did not end in September 1989. It has lived on through many of us students. When we returned to the U.S., I joined the faculty at the program where I did my residency in Orlando, Florida, and there I exposed the medical students to the idea of whole person medicine. A few years later I was invited to join the

faculty at In His Image with Dr. John Crouch and we have continued to train doctors to excel in the best of medical care with the added aspect of spiritual care. By this time, the concept that ORU medical students had been implementing was being adopted by the broader medical community. Rigorous academic studies in medical journals were being published that show that spiritual care is good for patients and having people pray for patients is good for patients. The world was watching as this healing evangelist from Tulsa, Oklahoma, was building a medical school and a hospital. They may have thought he was crazy, but I think that what ORU helped do was bring spiritual care to the forefront of the conversation about whole person medical care.

The legacy of the ORU medical school is one that has proved to the world that Christians could be medically excellent and yet recognize the role of prayer in medicine. As our graduates went into residency programs around the U.S., ORU graduates brought with them the reputation as well trained. But, beyond the academics, graduates were people of good character who could be counted on to show up, to work hard, and to treat people with kindness and respect. The qualities instilled in us to be the best at whatever God wanted us to be carried with us into our various medical communities. That was a testimony to the world that ORU School of Medicine was a legitimate force for good in the medical field.

ORU instilled in me, as a doctor, a dependency on the Holy Spirit in how I practice medicine today. For one, the Holy Spirit prepares me for ministry because of his work in developing the fruit of the Spirit in my own life. Ultimately, patients do not care how much I know as a doctor until they know how much I care. The compassion needed to listen, empathize, and care about patients is ultimately an outflow of the Spirit. But I also depend upon the Spirit to take the excellent medical training I have received and use it in a way that helps people. When I approach a medical challenge, I ask, “God, what do I need to know that will help me be the best doctor for this person?” With their permission, I am able to pray with them or provide spiritual counsel in the midst of providing quality medical care.

Many times, God will help me with words of knowledge or wisdom or discernment to help me treat my patients. Sometimes God may give me the gift of faith to believe with that person that God will do something supernatural for their situation.

This is the legacy of my time as a graduate of Oral Roberts University and the vision God gave Oral Roberts to “raise up students to hear his voice, to go where the light was dim and his voice heard small.” I was challenged to live the Holy Spirit-empowered life in order to be God’s witness into the realm he called me: the field of medicine. This is the legacy of the ORU School of Medicine that has been lived out in the lives of the over 200 graduates that were students from 1977–1989. I feel very blessed to have been one of the few who got to experience this unique pioneering journey to bring whole person medicine into every person’s world.

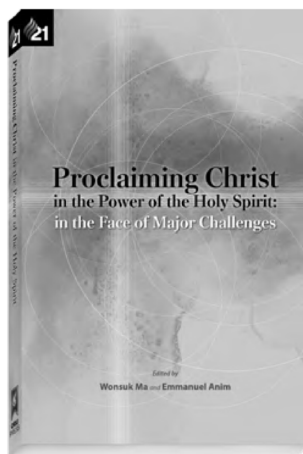
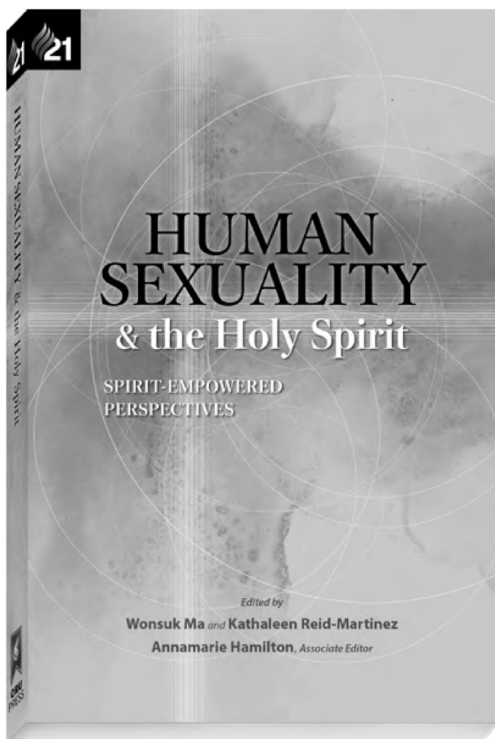
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HEALING THROUGH MUSIC THERAPY

HAYOUNG A. LIM

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Keywords *healing, music therapy, health care, Holy Spirit*

Abstract

This article explores the field of music therapy as a healthcare profession to benefit various clinical populations and the way in which music therapy is a whole-person approach to healing for people with cognitive, physical, and social needs.

Introduction

Music has always been central to the Christian faith. Throughout history, Christian believers have been comforted and inspired in their faith through the music of ancient hymns, sacred classical, Reformation hymns, gospel music, or modern worship. Music is not just an auditory phenomenon; it is a powerful tool that speaks to the human person and affects us emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Music is composed of many separate yet interconnected components such as pitch, melody, rhythm, tempo, harmony, form, timbre, dynamics, and instruments. These elements, woven together, profoundly affect the mental, physical, and spiritual person. As Peter Althouse and Michael Wilkinson have pointed out, music has a phenomenological effect on people and can stimulate religious experiences, embodied movements, and relational connections with others.¹ Music can raise our spirits as well as express our sadness. It can calm us down or it can energize us. Music truly has a powerful effect on the human person.

The universal recognition of the potential of music to help people has led to the creation of the healthcare profession called music therapy. Music has been a therapeutic tool for centuries; and music therapy is an established healthcare profession that uses music to address physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and social needs of individuals of all ages. As a Board-Certified Music Therapist (MT-BC), Licensed Professional Music Therapist (LPMT), and professor of music therapy, it has been my true joy to find what, within the music, changes one's life physically, emotionally, cognitively, and socially. Determining how to use music to achieve therapeutic goals and facilitating the best musical experience for individuals might be the utmost part of my job as a music therapist. In this article, I will explore the field of music therapy as a healthcare profession to benefit various clinical populations and the way in which music therapy is a whole-person approach to healing for people with cognitive, physical, and social needs.

According to the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), music therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program.² It involves the systematic application of musical experiences to bring desirable changes in human behavior. After assessing the strengths and needs of each client, the qualified music therapist provides the indicated treatment including creating, performing, singing, moving to, and/or listening to music. Through musical involvement in the therapeutic context, clients' abilities are strengthened and transferred to other areas of their lives. Music therapy also provides avenues for communication that can be helpful to those who find it difficult to express themselves in words. Research in music therapy supports its effectiveness in many areas such as: overall physical rehabilitation and facilitating movement; improving cognitive functions of attention, memory, and language; increasing people's motivation to become engaged in their treatment; providing emotional

support for clients and their families; and providing an outlet for expression of feelings.³

Music therapy has been recognized as an organized profession since the formation of the National Association for Music Therapy in 1950. Therapists use music as a therapeutic tool, but its optimal benefit in therapy depends on the appropriate use by the therapist; therefore, the music therapist is necessary for music therapy. A music therapist designs and provides the optimal musical experience that meets the need of individuals with disability throughout music therapy treatment. Music therapy is not about prescribing a certain kind of music to individuals with disease or disabilities. The music therapist determines the kinds of music based on each client/patient's needs, preference, and musical background; this particular therapeutic parameter should be determined by a carefully designed music therapy assessment. A large body of research studies has agreed that patient preferred music results in the best therapeutic outcome in music therapy sessions.

Today, music therapists work with many different populations in various settings. Some of the various settings in which music therapists work include: special education programs and schools; nursing homes; medical hospitals; rehabilitation centers; hospice and palliative care programs; psychiatric hospitals; churches; private practices; and/or music therapy agencies. In each of these settings, music is used as a tool to reach nonmusical goals, whether physical, cognitive, emotional, social, or spiritual. Among many possible goals addressed by music therapists are: increasing memory recall, improving motor coordination, increasing attention to task, improving steadiness of gait, developing bonds between mother and newborn child, improving speech and communication; increasing reality-based thinking; decreasing anxiety; decreasing pain; adjusting mood; increasing coping skills; and enhancing learning.

History of Music Therapy

The earliest references to the relationship between music and medicine are found in ancient preliterate cultures, and one of the oldest literary references that mentioned the relationship between music and healing can be found in the 1 Sam 16:23 (930 BCE). “So it came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.” By the sixth century BCE, rational medicine had almost completely replaced magical and religious treatment in Greece. For the first time in history, the study of health and disease was based on empirical evidence. In medieval times, priests or monks in churches took the primary role of healer and they used music as the healing tool for people with physical or mental illness. Music was often used in combination with medicine and art to treat medical conditions and also as a preventive measure against mental and physical disorders during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, which marked the beginning of the scientific approach to medicine. Music in the treatment of disease became popular and music played an increasing role in the treatment of physical ailments and the amelioration of mental disorders during the last few decades of the eighteenth century. Music was mainly used as a remedy for depression, madness, or various emotional/mental problems; physicians recommended the use of music for enhancing emotional/mental health. Many scholars discussed and documented the integration of music, health, medicine, and art. Music has been regarded as a treatment from a holistic medicine approach.⁴

Accounts of music therapy in the U.S. first appeared during the late eighteenth century, as various physicians, musicians, and psychiatrists supported its beneficial use in the treatment of mental and physical disorders. Music therapy was used regularly in hospitals and other institutions for individuals with disorders, but mostly in conjunction with other forms of treatments and therapies. World Wars I and II were the

most important occasions for the development of music therapy. A few medical personnel promoted music therapy programs in the veterans' hospitals to reduce wounded soldiers' anxiety, physical pain, depression, insomnia, postwar trauma, and other ailments. Furthermore, music therapy helped in the rehabilitation of physical (sensori-motor), cognitive, communicative and emotional functions, leisure skills, socialization, and coping skills.⁵

Music Therapy as a Health Care Profession

In order for music therapy to be considered a health care profession or a human science, the therapeutic outcomes of music therapy must be agreed to by major streams of other health-related professions. To fulfill this ultimate goal, the music therapy profession has adopted the general scientific research method, including theory development, theory examination, and clinical application. Theory formation and clinical application using the scientific research method are the processes that almost every health-related or human science profession has adopted, since the processes are the most likely to produce reliable knowledge regarding therapeutic outcomes or treatment effects. The scientific method involves testing ideas or answering questions through logical thinking, systematic data collection, and scientific analysis. The subjective and anecdotal reports of magical changes in patients due to the power of music are very different from the scientific method, and therefore they are not supported by the general scientific community. These kinds of informal reports cannot justify the use of music in clinical practice nor validate the music therapy profession. It has been strongly suggested to change the way therapeutic outcomes are reported and to step away from the comfort zone of just sharing magical moments with others who want to believe in the power of music.

Music has its own rationale, its own function, and its own meaning. Music has always been a culturally-based art form or an aesthetic stimulus, and thus has not been commonly considered a scientific medium. As a

result, applying the scientific method to music therapy research or justifying the use of music in clinical practice becomes a very challenging task. However, if there are some common factors in music and in scientifically-examined phenomena, it is possible to apply the scientific research method in music therapy. Furthermore, finding similarities between music and other stimuli that have been scientifically examined might be the initial step for the music therapy research process to become legitimized and recognized by other health professions as scientifically sound.

Healing through Music

Music therapy uses music as a tool to help people of various ages regain or develop important life skills, such as communication, physical movement, pain management, attention and memory, emotional growth, or social skills. One of the clinical populations that benefits most from music therapy is children with developmental disorders (e.g., autism spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, ADHD, and other developmental disorders). Music therapy with children with developmental disorders utilizes various musical activities such as singing, playing instruments, movement with music, composing and improvising music, and musical games for the entire development of the children. In particular, these musical activities are used to enhance the children's speech and language development, social and interpersonal skills, and cognitive skills (i.e., attention, perception, memory, and executive functioning).

One of the advanced music therapy techniques, called Developmental Speech-Language Training through Music (DSLTM), demonstrates how to connect music to various speech-language acquisition principles that can actually help low-functioning children with autism and other speech/language impairments, those who have the most difficulties following verbal commands, reading body languages, and have deficits in social understanding. Utilizing the Gestalt perceptual principle, children with autism have the same impulse trigger as people without autism to "fill in the blank" of a pattern.⁶ The mechanism of DSLTM can be observed

when a music therapist sings to a child with autism, “You are my . . . ,” and the child fills in “sunshine” naturally. Because we cannot suppress the urge to fill out the incomplete form or pattern, even before the child actually perceives this as “you are my sunshine,” he/she also wants to complete the incomplete part. While most children learn language analytically (adding words segment by segment) and through guess-talk (i.e., intra-verbal behavior that is an imitation and memorization of the words), children with autism acquire language largely by guess-talk. Research has shown that children with autism do a lot of echolalia, which means if someone asks, “Would you like to have a glass of milk?” they would just repeat, “Would you like to have a glass of milk?” instead of analyzing the question to give a response. Eighty-to-85 percent of children with autism who do some kind of speech do these echolalia responses; the echolalia can be developed for the functional communicative language.⁷ Because music is based on the guess-talk principle (i.e., Gestalt principles of musical pattern perception), music therapists have been able to devise a series of songs and other musical patterns that can help train children with autism and speech/language disorders to begin acquiring language.⁸

Children are not the only ones who can benefit from the healing powers of music. This type of therapy is effective with individuals with mental illness/emotional and behavioral disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, and substance-related disorders), patients with neurologic disorders (e.g., strokes, Parkinson’s disease, traumatic brain injuries, and dementia), and patients in medical settings. Music therapists work with a variety of patient groups in a variety of medical settings, including surgical procedures, chemotherapy, labor/delivery, neonatal units, pediatric units, intensive care units, chronic pain care units, physical rehabilitation, and hospice programs.⁹

Music therapy in gerontology, called “geriatric music therapy,” mainly serves elderly populations with the following therapeutic goals: (1) maintaining physical, cognitive, emotional, and social abilities; (2)

preventing their mental and physical deterioration; and (3) enhancing the overall quality of life. Music therapy has been actively used in neurologic rehabilitation settings to treat patients with strokes, Parkinson's disease, traumatic brain injury, and Alzheimer's disease with the advanced rehabilitation treatment techniques called neurologic music therapy (NMT), which is based on the study of music's influence on brain function. NMT is based on how music perception and music production engage the brain in ways that can be meaningfully translated and generalized to non-musical therapeutic learning and training. Rhythmic auditory stimulation, one of the sensori-motor NMT techniques established on the mechanism of rhythmic entrainment (i.e., synchronized movement parameters with the simultaneously perceived rhythm), is used in gait training for patients with strokes, Parkinson's disease, and traumatic brain injury.

Music Therapy Education

Many people who want to enter the field of music therapy have a common orientation: they love music and they love to help others. This is a very good reason to start studying music therapy; however, music therapy is a serious health care profession. Music therapists work with individuals of all ages who require treatment due to deficits in physical, cognitive, or social/emotional functioning. Therefore, music therapy can be a rewarding career for the student who has not only a strong musical background but is also interested in pursuing scientific knowledge for treating people in various clinical conditions.

Music therapists are both accomplished musicians and competent therapists. A career in music therapy requires a high degree of musical performance and musical flexibility, as therapists effectively utilize music that is familiar to and preferred by their clients. Skills in piano, guitar, voice, music improvisation, song writing, conducting, and music theory are but a few of those possessed by the music therapist. The music therapist must be a compassionate person dedicated to improving the lives of others in specific and individualized ways. Music therapists are caring, nurturing professionals

interested in using music as a tool to meet non-musical, health-related needs. Therapists must be emotionally stable and must demonstrate mature, professional behavior both within and outside the classroom/therapy room environment.

Many students who pursue music therapy have interests both in music-related fields and in psychology, neurology and medicine, or special education. Students must complete a Bachelor of Music—Music Therapy degree or a post-baccalaureate equivalency program at a university that has met all competency requirements set by AMTA. Music therapists must also take the Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT) national board exam to become certified and to practice music therapy. Therefore, a university student must realize the seriousness of his/her commitment to the development of the competencies required of a professional music therapist. The music therapy program is a competency-based program, meaning that students must be able to demonstrate competency in various skills areas in order to obtain the degree. Competencies require knowledge in a variety of areas such as psychology, special education, neurology/biology/anatomy, and music therapy principles as well as the ability to apply this knowledge in clinical settings. Successful application of knowledge requires additional abilities including music skills, scientific/analytical skills, interpersonal skills, professional work skills and behaviors, and good mental, spiritual, and physical health.

Christian Music Therapy

The fundamental responsibility of being a Christian music therapist is to provide the best possible music therapy treatment services for every client/patient for whom God deeply cares and loves. They must utilize the basic process of a well-rounded background in music (music theory, music literature, and performance), music perception and production, understanding of human musical and non-musical behavior, the basics of scientific decision making, humanities, and social sciences, as well as courses

and practical experiences in music therapy. In this, we hope that through music, individuals can find healing.

But is there a Spirit-empowered way of doing music therapy? Oral Roberts founded Oral Roberts University (ORU) with the premise that God's healing could be applied to every person's world. He particularly had a vision for blending the streams of divine healing and healthcare. This certainly can be said of music therapy. When music therapy is infused with the power of the Spirit, the natural effects of music can be enhanced to improve the lives and health of hurting people. But even for those who are not in this tradition or of no faith at all, we believe that music has inherent, God-given healing effects that bring powerful changes in people's lives. Christian music therapists are tapping into the scientific mechanisms of music therapy that utilize this special gift from God, music, and to serve their patients and clients, for whom Jesus Christ died and was resurrected, with an increased understanding of why this particular musical experience treats a specific disorder or problem.

The many functions of music in our human body and mind appear to be parallel with the roles of the Holy Spirit. In the same way that John 16:13–14 tells us that the Holy Spirit was sent to “guide us into all truth,” music helps us to express the true and genuine self. Also, just as the Holy Spirit is our “Comforter,” music can help people establish a very safe and comforting perceptual environment for the listeners as the temporal auditory stimuli. Finally, as the Spirit empowers us and gives us strength, music can energize individuals to perform many important tasks with improved functioning levels and to do things that they could not previously do. Through the therapeutic power of music, individuals reach their therapeutic goals, such as physical/motor goals with increased energy/endurance level, cognitive goals with increased attention and memory capacity, and social/emotional goals with increased self-esteem/self-expression and interpersonal skills.

ORU Music Therapy Program and Clinic

The ORU Christian music therapy program was established in 2015. This academic program views music therapy as an established healthcare profession that uses music to address physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and social needs of individuals of all ages, and advocates that music therapy improves the quality of life for persons who are healthy as well as children and adults with disabilities or illnesses. The program also operates a professional music therapy clinic housed on the first floor of ORU's CityPlex Tower, the very building that Oral Roberts built to be the City of Faith Medical Center in order to merge Jesus' healing power and other related disciplines. The music therapy program at ORU is effective because it is rooted in excellence in the practice of music therapy. This philosophical inquiry of good music therapy practice aligns with ORU's foundational vision for Whole Person Education, which emphasizes the entire domains of a person, establishing therapeutic goals in all aspects of the person, including physical, cognitive, language (communication), social, emotional, and spiritual domains. This emphasis is rooted in Oral Roberts' philosophy of bringing healing "into every person's world" through a solid theoretical orientation and the clinical practice standards of music therapy.

In the ORU Music Therapy Clinic, music is used as a therapeutic tool to reach nonmusical goals, whether physical, cognitive, speech/language, emotional, social, or spiritual for various clients. Some of the clients include: children with autism spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, ADHD, intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, and other developmental disorders; individuals with strokes, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease (dementia), and traumatic brain injury; and individuals with anxiety disorders, depression, and emotional and behavioral disorders. The techniques used in each treatment session are based on research and extended collegiate studies. Therefore, students receive the advanced clinical training from music therapy faculty and clinicians, and develop their therapeutic skills and clinical competence

through professional music therapy. In the ORU Music Therapy Clinic, music and musical experiences have been used to change people and their lives, and we cannot hide those “good” changes. Oral Roberts’ heart-felt vision for his students to go where the Spirit leads to be a vessel of Jesus’ healing power is being lived out through the music therapy program and clinic at ORU.



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Notes

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⁹ AMTA, “Music Therapy and Medicine,” 2006, 2, https://www.musictherapy.org/assets/1/7/MT_Medicine_2006.pdf (1 June 2019).

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HEALING FOR ALL RACES

ORAL ROBERTS' LEGACY OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION IN A DIVIDED CITY

DANIEL D. ISGRIGG

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Keywords *Oral Roberts, racial integration, civil rights, Pentecostalism, Charismatic Renewal, Jesse Jackson, Tulsa Race Massacre*

Abstract

This article explores Oral Roberts' legacy of racial reconciliation in the backdrop of the racial history of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Oral Roberts was a pioneer of racial integration of his meetings during the Healing Revival of the 1950s. But his racial vision came to maturity as Oral Roberts University became a center for social uplift for African Americans in the Spirit-empowered movement. Today, that legacy continues to shape Oral Roberts University as a shining example of racial diversity among Christian universities in America.

Introduction

On February 7, 2018, Oral Roberts University (ORU) President, Dr. William M. Wilson, announced that the Spirit-empowered university in South Tulsa had reached a milestone. He declared proudly, "For the first time in ORU history, white students are in the minority." This announcement may be surprising to those outside the ORU community, but it came as no surprise to those on campus who have watched ORU become a bright spot of diversity

in Tulsa, a city that has struggled to overcome its legacy stemming from the infamous 1921 Race Massacre. This article will explore the legacy of racial inclusion and integration in the ministry of Oral Roberts and ORU against the backdrop of Tulsa's racial history.

It Happened in Tulsa

Tulsa is a beautiful city with a dark history. In its earliest days as an Indian territory, Tulsa was the home of the Creek Council Oak Tree that marked the end of the Trail of Tears for the Creek Nation prior to Oklahoma's statehood. Members of the Five Civilized Tribes, uprooted by American expansion, were moved to the area and named the settlement *Tallasi* or Tulsa (which meant "old town"). Some of the Civilized Tribes adopted European values and owned black slaves, who were emancipated as "freedmen" following the Civil War and settled in the Tulsa area.¹ Because of the new opportunities for freedmen settlements, African Americans from other parts of the South migrated to Oklahoma to establish all black towns where "Negros could find freedom from lynching, burning at the stake and other lawlessness."² But that vision was short lived when the government opened the lands to white settlers. The first whites came to Tulsa in the 1880s. In 1907, Oklahoma applied for statehood and Tulsa was blossoming as an oil boomtown. Despite its diversity, the new whites in Oklahoma were anything but tolerant of Native Americans or African Americans. The constitutional convention, led by the racial extremist president William H. Murray, set out to "out-Jim Crow the other southern states."³ In a short time, Oklahoma went from a haven of racial diversity to one of the most segregated states in the union.

The oil boom in Tulsa in the early 1900s brought a new prosperity to the young city of Tulsa. The economic opportunities also benefited black citizens who were building their own "colored town" on the north side of the railroad tracks. Black entrepreneurs were building churches, hotels, entertainment establishments, and businesses in Black Tulsa. By 1920, the Greenwood District was one of the most successful black commercial

districts in the U.S.—known to the whites as “Little Africa” and by its citizens as “Black Wall Street.”⁴ But the prosperity of Black Tulsa drew criticism and even jealousy from some white citizens of Tulsa. Tensions between blacks and whites in Tulsa came to a head on June 1, 1921, when a young black man was accused of assaulting a young white woman in a Tulsa hotel elevator. Incited by a headline in the *Tulsa Tribune*, a large group of whites in Tulsa demanded authorities to deliver the young man to a lynch mob.⁵ Fearing that the Tulsa authorities would not protect the young man, a mob of young armed black men raced from Black Tulsa to defend him. Then “all Hell broke loose,” as what started as a skirmish at the courthouse turned into a race riot that moved from White Tulsa to Black Tulsa.⁶

Over the next twenty-four hours, the riot turned into a massacre as Tulsa became the site for the worst acts of racial violence in American history. Mobs of whites and blacks exchanged fire in the streets. Firebombs were dropped from planes on businesses and homes while bullets rained down on black citizens from machine gun installments on top of Standpipe Hill. For their safety, authorities forcibly removed blacks from their homes and businesses as white mobs looted and torched the black community. By the end of the day, an estimated 200–250 people were killed (with an estimated 80% being black), 10,000 black Tulsans were left homeless, over 2,000 businesses were destroyed, and virtually the whole thirty blocks of Black Tulsa was burnt to the ground.⁷ James Hirsh comments, “The ruins of Greenwood were a grim display of racial hatred The riot was not only an expression of hostility between two groups but also a reflection of the isolation and mistrust each community felt for each other.”⁸

Until recently, the memory of this tragic event had all but receded from the minds of the Tulsa community, being virtually ignored for over fifty years by the city and the press. But the effects of this horrific event have persisted in the minds of African Americans in Tulsa. Even with the recent recognition by the city and state of the Tulsa Race Massacre as one of the nation’s greatest tragedies and the movements toward reconciliation by the

city, Tulsa is still a divided town, with the north side of downtown still being predominantly black and the south predominately white.

There is little information on how aware Oral Roberts was about Tulsa's race riot history. But we do know that from the very first days of Roberts' presence in Tulsa, he would become part of the story of Tulsa's racial history. One of Roberts' first crusades in 1947 was held in Tulsa in a tent set up by a Pentecostal Holiness minister named Steve Pringle located in Greenwood on a vacant lot at 601 N. Main upon the ashes of an upper class neighborhood that once was home to the elites of Black Wall Street. Just one block south of Pringle's tent was a large white building called Beno Hall where 3,000 members of Tulsa's KKK kalvern had terrorized blacks in Greenwood until it closed in 1929.⁹ Enthusiasm over Roberts' popular miracle ministry had succeeded in adding new members to the fledgling church, so much so that Pringle decided to purchase Beno Hall to house the hundreds of new Pentecostal believers. Pringle named the church *Evangelistic Temple* and it became the Roberts family's home church.¹⁰ Little did Roberts know that this would be the beginning of a lifetime of ministry that would reclaim spaces of racial segregation within the Christian community.

Oral Roberts' Racial Vision

Like most white Pentecostals in his era, Roberts' ministry began primarily among the white members of his own denomination, the Pentecostal Holiness Church.¹¹ Yet, Pentecostalism began as a multi-racial movement when William Seymour, the son of former slaves, started a world-wide movement in Los Angeles, California, in 1906.¹² But years of separation between blacks and whites in Pentecostal circles had left the movement segregated on Sunday mornings. Despite the racial climate in his era, Roberts was able to escape racial biases and throughout his ministry shared the same inclusive vision as early Pentecostals who believed "the color line was washed away in the blood."

Oral Roberts' racial vision can be traced back to several formative experiences from his childhood in Oklahoma that insulated him from the prejudice that surrounded him. The first was Roberts' awareness that he himself was not white. Oral Roberts' father was white, but his mother was part Cherokee.¹³ The fact that he was non-white was essential to his origin story because, like many Native Americans, he contracted tuberculosis as a teenager.¹⁴ As Tim Hatcher has pointed out, Roberts incorporated his Native American ancestry as a ministry tool to minister to disadvantaged people throughout his ministry.¹⁵ Roberts notes, "I am part Cherokee Indian myself. I am neither white nor black. I often say, I am in between."¹⁶ Roberts' appropriation of his Native American identity helped him develop what he believed was a biblical theology of race. He says, "God has made only two things different about all the people of the world: (1) They are of different colors; (2) and they live in different places."¹⁷ In his mind, biological differences between races did not separate humanity, for "all nations of the earth were made of one blood." For Roberts, race was little more than simply the color of one's skin, but underneath humanity is the same.

The second formative experience came from his early exposure to black Pentecostal churches through his father's ministry.¹⁸ Roberts recalls living "across the street from colored town" as a child in Southwest Oklahoma, where his father, the pastor of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, often exchanged pulpits with the pastor of the black Church of God in Christ in Ada.¹⁹ He recalls, "My father loved black people. And black people loved my father." Oral loved attending these services with his father and these experiences fostered a deep love and appreciation for African American spirituality. Worshiping with black believers exposed him to the way their journey as an oppressed people was expressed in their spiritual ethos. For example, when one African American ORU student sang "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" at a crusade, Roberts reflected that she "sang her songs with the feeling of a race that felt the last of bitterness of the white man, yet with the hope of Jesus in her soul."²⁰

Roberts' connection to his own racial identity not only helped him to identify with minorities, but also created in him empathy for the experience of minorities in America. As Tim Hatcher has noted, "His navigation of these different ethnicities reveals a hybridized identity that sprang up from his early experiences and his family's approaches to these issues."²¹ During the 1950s, his heritage compelled him to draw attention to Native Americans and their suffering. He considered himself to be a missionary to the "Forgotten Peoples."²² Roberts was ashamed of the history of the white man's behavior of neglect, broken promises, and genocide of Native Americans.²³ His compassion for Native Americans led him to conduct special Native American crusades to meet the needs of this community. His advocacy on behalf of this neglected community resulted in his being awarded as the "Outstanding Native American of the Year" in 1963.

Perhaps the most formative experience came from touching human needs as a healing evangelist. The healing ministry changed him because he saw firsthand how suffering was not limited to race or color; it was a human condition that a loving God wanted to heal. The ministry of healing embodied the compassion of Jesus who sees people through God's love and is not afraid to touch the hurting. He said, "I don't have the kind of love that makes me suddenly love all the Negroes and hate the Whites, or love all the Whites and hate all the Negroes. I just love people. Jesus put that in me. I love people because the Lover is inside of me."²⁴ Furthermore, Roberts believed the Gospel did not discriminate according to race. He said, "Jesus sees people as they are and not as some bigots or racists say they are."²⁵ He was once asked if he would pray for a Jewish man for healing. He responded, "Is he a human being? Then I will pray for him."²⁶

Challenging the Boundaries of Race

David Harrell, Roberts' notable biographer, questions how committed Roberts was to racial justice. He quips that Roberts, like other southern evangelical evangelists, openly "courted black followers," but comments that Roberts was "no social crusader."²⁷ While Roberts' approach to racial

integration was modest in the beginning, Harrell's analysis fails to recognize the gradual development of Roberts' increasingly public challenge to America's racial boundaries.

In the first years of his crusade ministry, Roberts was sympathetic to the plight of "colored people" who in several locations "were forbidden to enter for my prayer" or were confined to "a certain section reserved for them."²⁸ Despite these restrictions, Roberts did his best to minister to black attendees and several were healed. Where laws allowed, Roberts had open seating and integrated altar calls.²⁹ A report from his 1949 crusade boasted, "Negro, Mexican, Indian, and White all sat together. So did the rich with the poor and the cultured with the unlearned."³⁰ Another report in the same year in Tacoma, Washington, recorded that when Roberts gave the altar call, "they came, old and young, white and colored, from all portions of the tent."³¹

During these early years Roberts preferred quietly to integrate his own meetings rather than making a public statement on the political side of the issue. Later he recalled, "We didn't talk about it. We just did it."³² However, his reputation of integration was beginning to draw criticism by some in Christian circles. Roberts noted, "In many places, misguided Christians picketed and paraded outside our tent because I refused to segregate the altar of God."³³ In 1953, Roberts was informed during a crusade that a group of whites was going to kill him if he desegregated seating in his meetings.³⁴ After discussing the threats with his team, he decided he would not allow racists to determine who could receive ministry in his meetings. In spite of the threats, he announced to the crowd, "Anyone who comes to our tent can sit where you want to sit." After he made the announcement, the rest of the crusade meetings proceeded without incident.

As his popularity increased by the mid-1950s, Roberts became more vocal about the integration of his meetings. For example, in 1956, a reader questioned Roberts, "How do you stand on the question of segregation or integration of races?" He replied, "I am a minister of the gospel, not a politician. . . . My ministry is for all people of all churches and all races."³⁵

By 1959, Roberts' meetings and altar calls were fully integrated and he made it clear that "all races are welcome at our Crusades."³⁶

A Healing University

Beginning in 1965 with the opening of ORU, Oral Roberts' efforts to work for racial justice began to blossom. The early 1960s was a time of tremendous social upheaval in American culture and the university campuses became ground zero for conversations and conflicts about race in America. Roberts was deeply distressed at what he perceived as anarchy that other universities experienced. His strict standard to the school's honor code earned ORU the label "The School for Squares" in the local paper.³⁷ But Roberts wanted more from his university than to simply produce good Christian men and women. He dreamed of a university where students, regardless of color or background, were truly equal and had equal opportunities to succeed. In fact, a governmental official in charge of federal funding called him to ask his policy on black people and integration. Roberts replied, his three priorities for ORU were that it would be international, interdenominational, and interracial.³⁸ Roberts' interracial admissions policy was long before the days of affirmative action and the 1978 Supreme Court decision that permitted race to be a factor in college admissions.³⁹ When it came to integration, ORU was ahead of the curve for conservative evangelical campuses.⁴⁰

In recruiting black students, he became aware that many students did not have the same academic opportunities as white students. Whereas white students at ORU "achieved a certain position because of their parents or the culture of America," he recognized that black students did not have the same educational opportunities because "for three hundred years the white man had decided that black people would have to stay at a certain point in history."⁴¹ To address the academic inequality, Roberts told the faculty that ORU had an obligation to be a place where black students could receive support and encouragement for the disadvantages created by the inequitable American educational system. Roberts believed part of ORU's mission

would be to prove to America that “no black person is inferior.”⁴² Over the next few years, he saw struggling black students become 4.0 students as faculty helped to give them equal opportunities to succeed. He declared, “We have demonstrated to our constituency and our city what is so obvious all along if you had eyes to see. We are the same people, all we need is the same opportunity. Give us the same opportunity, folks and I am telling you, there is no color.”⁴³ It should be noted that despite his inclusive attitudes towards his students, Roberts was much slower in integrating African Americans into the leadership of ORU. When the university started, the entire faculty and board of regents were white.⁴⁴

The realization that true racial justice was related to opportunity was further reinforced when it came to black students being treated with equality in South Tulsa. In the 1970s, whites in Tulsa were still discriminating against blacks, particularly in housing. When his black students needed housing outside the campus Roberts found out that the surrounding apartment complex owners would not rent to blacks.⁴⁵ Troubled by this reality, he decided to do what Roberts does best. He went out and raised money to buy one of the apartment complexes for his graduate students so black students could have equal access. To further make his point, he appointed Clifton Taulbert, a notable black alumnus who had also been rejected for an apartment because of his race, to be one of the administrators of ORU’s housing complexes.⁴⁶

An Agent of Racial Healing

Roberts’ ministry career was paralleled by the development of the Civil Rights Movement. During the mid-1960s, the Civil Rights Movement was entering a stage where black Americans were actively confronting the systems of racial injustice in America. The civil unrest and riots around the United States in 1967 earned the famous branding, “The Long Hot Summer of 1967.”⁴⁷ As leaders confronted racism in America, Roberts began openly to confront racial attitudes in his crusades. Just a week before the Detroit riot in July of 1967, Roberts held a crusade at the Detroit

Convention Center. The convention hall was packed as “white sat beside Negro and Negro beside white” and were only separated by “different needs.” The crusade team could already sense that there was “unrest in the city and foreboding of the riots to come.” Prophetically, Roberts focused his message on the racial unrest, particularly focusing on “the second worst riot in the history of the nation” that had just taken place in Newark, New Jersey.⁴⁸ Roberts told the Detroit audience, “Why is the white man manipulating the black man? To cover up his sin of enslaving that man, of violating his human rights, his dignity and the image of God upon his soul.”⁴⁹ Roberts focused his meeting on calling America to repentance and led the attendees in prayer for God to heal the nation from bitterness and hatred between races.

A few months later, Roberts was again calling for racial healing in a crusade that took place just days before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated. With racial tensions growing and hope for unity in question, Roberts addressed the problem of “racial bias” in America. Roberts declared, “[Negros] have been the victims of more mistreatment and racial bias than any other peoples in modern history.”⁵⁰ He reminded supporters that the hateful rhetoric in America was affecting “dear black people who suffer, have needs and are human beings with God-given rights.” Roberts pleaded with the Christian community that harboring hate and fear toward race was no longer an option. “God wants you to do something about this!” he exclaimed. He encouraged Christians to face the darkness in their own hearts, which was just as sinful as the violence against blacks. He comments, “There are other ways to kill people than with guns. You can do it with prejudice, hate, ridicule, name calling, or separating yourself from them.”⁵¹ In Roberts’ understanding, those who refused to accept black people refused Jesus himself.⁵² He was convinced that the Gospel was the antidote to the problem of hate and true healing for America would only occur “when we come face-to-face with Christ.”⁵³

Another important moment that shaped Roberts’ stance was when he was invited to meet with a group of African American pastors in Harlem in

1968. As he listened to these leaders of the black community share their experiences he began to understand better the “militant” rhetoric of movement.⁵⁴ Although he did not agree with all of it, he came out of that meeting more committed to listening to the black community and their needs for justice and equality. Roberts believed that the answer for racial strife was not militancy in pursuit of gaining equality; it was the “touch of compassion” that was needed on both sides of the racial issues. For whites, compassion is needed in order for blacks to be seen as human beings who have real needs that Jesus died to heal. For blacks, compassion is needed to look upon their oppressors with compassion and forgiveness, which was the ultimate act of healing.

For this famous healing evangelist, the move from healing evangelist to advocate for racial healing was a natural one since racial healing and physical healing are rooted in the same principle.

If you think of sickness as disharmony, as I think of it, then everybody is sick. The only difference is in degree, because everybody is in disharmony. He may be in disharmony with himself, he may be in disharmony with people . . . Jesus saw people in disharmony with themselves, with society, and with God; and He touched them at their point of need.⁵⁵

Just as physical healing was provided for in Christ, so too healing was part of the ministry of Jesus, even for racial strife. He declared, “Yes! There’s a healing for our nation. . . . A healing for bitter people, the frustrated, the violent. There is a healing in Christ for the nations.”⁵⁶ The key was that both blacks and whites needed to see people as people, and like Jesus, be willing to touch people with compassion.

Racial Healing in Prime Time

Oral Roberts was a pioneer and perhaps the father of what we know today as Christian television.⁵⁷ In the 1950s, Roberts used television to

mainstream the healing ministry as God performed miracles of physical healing in prime time. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Roberts once again turned to television ministry to expose the American public to his increasing emphasis on racial healing and reconciliation. Roberts knew the power television had to shape the narrative of his generation and was not afraid to feature African Americans in his TV programs. His first primetime show in 1969 featured gospel legend Mahalia Jackson.⁵⁸ Roberts' inclusion of black religious icons like Jackson was novel in a time when blacks were "invisible" in American religious broadcasting.⁵⁹ The special featured a powerfully subversive moment in which Roberts and Jackson joined hand-in-hand in prayer for God to heal the nation. By featuring images of reconciliation in prime time, Roberts was strategically trying to show the American public that Jesus was the answer to the problems of race.⁶⁰

Oral Roberts' popularity on television in the 1970s meant he also became an important religious figure for politicians to associate with. As a lifelong Democrat, Roberts had an open invitation to consort with many of the political voices in America.⁶¹ But his most visible overture toward the civil rights movement was in 1978 when Oral Roberts invited Rev. Jesse Jackson to receive an honorary doctorate from ORU for his "untiring endeavors for the understanding and cooperation among all races of this country."⁶² Jackson admired Roberts for his stand on integration because he "would not allow the cross to be beneath the flag or the culture." Jackson was impressed by the number of black students that were in the graduating class.⁶³ Jackson commented during his commencement address that ORU embodied the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr., and had "overcome the tension of race."⁶⁴ He encouraged,

If ORU accepts this challenge of equity and parity for itself, it will then have earned the moral authority to challenge others to get like us. ORU has the opportunity to be the *first* University in America to establish an educational community where people from around the world can come here and say that you will be

judged totally by the content of your character rather than the color of your skin.⁶⁵

Jackson's words of encouragement about ORU's racial reputation attest to the way in which Roberts' rhetoric of inclusion had reached an institutional level and set out ORU as a model among universities in the nation. While it would be easy to suspect that his efforts to feature black celebrities at ORU was simply "good business," Roberts' track record of racial justice certainly had the potential to alienate more white supporters than he could gain from the black community.⁶⁶

Listening to the Black Voices in Tulsa

Jesse Jackson's presence on campus in 1978 was not an isolated phenomenon; it was the culmination of a decade of ORU evolving from a welcoming place for African Americans to a space for racial understanding and dialog. The racial division in Tulsa was apparent to anyone who came to the city. Roberts recognized this reality and took a bold step in 1969 when he held a special "Racial Brotherhood" chapel for featuring women from the Tulsa community discussing their experiences of prejudice as members of the black, Jewish, and Catholic communities.⁶⁷ One of the black speakers, Katherine Copeland, recalled what it was like to grow up in Tulsa on "notorious Greenwood Street." She told the student body, "Tulsa has always been one of the most segregated cities in the United States and in my youth all of the Negroes lived in one area, except for those living in servant quarters, and many of us had very little contact with the white world." She told of how when she was born, her mother had to give birth to her in a room "between the emergency entrance and the boiler room" because she was not allowed with the whites. The students got to ask questions of the panel about issues of prejudice in Tulsa and how these women had responded. Even with Roberts' efforts to encourage inclusion, ORU students recognized that racial issues still existed on the campus, such as interracial dating.⁶⁸

Roberts' initial racial conversations on race in 1968 eventually became an annual emphasis called "Black Awareness Week," which was established to "help ORU understand" the black experience. Through a series of services, several speakers addressed the ORU community on matters of racism, equality, and social justice. In 1971, Roberts preached a message on racial equality using Simon the Cyrene, the African man who helped Jesus carry his cross, as an example of the African American's place in God's kingdom.⁶⁹ Roberts also shared how members of the North Tulsa black community had gone to New York to solicit help from black businessmen to establish a new business in North Tulsa. The New York powerbrokers told them, "Call Oral Roberts. He is the one man in Tulsa who can help you."

In 1972, Mayor James Evers, who was at the time one of only four black mayors in America, gave a talk called "Racism is Wrong" and thanked God for Oral Roberts who "came along and represents all of us." He told the students they needed to be proud to tell people, "I went to Oral Roberts, a school where a man believed in change—not talk—who believed in doing something."⁷⁰

In another chapel session, Campus Chaplain Bob Stamps led a forum where black students were allowed to share about how they felt about the racial climate of ORU and America. Some students admitted that ORU is not exempt from racial prejudice. One student commented, "I feel that this campus probably has less than any other campus in America, but I feel as Christian young people, we've really got to work hard."⁷¹ Another student who grew up in Tulsa commented that he was proud to be black because it represented self-determination and human dignity. He said, "For the black man to respond to God's love in faith means that the black man has accepted the truth of the image of himself, which is revealed in Jesus Christ."⁷² The evening was capped off with a "Soul Festival," which was a celebration of black culture put on by a student committee.⁷³

The most radical event of "Black Awareness Week" in 1972 was a panel discussion in which students were encouraged to engage with several

black Tulsans about racism, poverty, and black-white relations.⁷⁴ One of the leaders was Don Ross, one of the most outspoken advocates for North Tulsa and who later served as the North Tulsa representative in the Oklahoma House from 1983–2000. During the 1960s, Ross sought to bring attention to the forgotten history of the Tulsa Race Massacre by publishing several articles in the *Oklahoma Eagle*.⁷⁵ His advocacy for blacks in Tulsa led him to be the lead lobbyist for the establishment of the commission to investigate the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Riot historian, James Hirsch, commented, “No one played a more crucial role in this endeavor than Don Ross, a black journalist-turned-politician who spent more than four decades trying to summon the event from history.”⁷⁶

Known for his unapologetic and often cutting opinions about black equality and the need for white restitution in Tulsa, Ross introduced himself to the students by warning the students that his views were militant and declared, “I’m a racist.”⁷⁷ However, Ross was impressed that the university would allow him to share his controversial ideas and that the students were so willing to engage in these hard conversations. He commented, “It’s a symbol that maybe it’s not too late for you at least. I think it’s important that you understand some of the pressures and problems that we face just because we are black.”⁷⁸ Ross’ presence in this forum demonstrated that Oral Roberts did not just give lip service to support of his African American students; Roberts was willing to listen and learn from the experience of leaders of his own city. The emphasis on racial issues in these forums cemented ORU as one of the few places outside of North Tulsa where the experiences of African Americans could be expressed and heard.

The same year, Roberts showed his willingness speak out on issues involving racial issues in Tulsa. Although in 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* paved the way for the integration of public schools, it was not until 1973 that a first attempt at integration took place in Tulsa at Booker T. Washington High School. In response to this momentous move, Roberts issued a press release of support.

We here at Oral Roberts University are very interested about the future of Washington High School and about the voluntary efforts to integrate and to have students from various families in our entire city. We are trying to practice brotherhood here. We have both white and black and in fact, the students of many colors and races here at the university. We are getting along beautifully and we think that this thing at Washington High School has a great future and I just hope and pray, in fact, we all hope and pray that we can get together and that this will be more than an experiment, it will be something living in the midst of all of us that demonstrates our real sincere feelings of brotherhood.⁷⁹

The fact that Roberts saw continuity between racial integration in Tulsa and the vision he had tried to implement at ORU once again demonstrated that Roberts was ahead of his time.

Several years later, another important voice from the Tulsa African American community took center stage for “Black Awareness Week.” This time it was Tulsa icon, Robert Goodwin, who was a recognized African American leader in Tulsa. Unlike the outside voices of previous years, Goodwin was a member of the first graduating class of ORU who, after earning his Ph.D. from the University of California-Berkeley, became editor of his father’s historic black Tulsa newspaper *The Oklahoma Eagle*.⁸⁰ While a student at ORU, Goodwin served as student body president and was a member of the World Action Team on several global crusades.⁸¹ Goodwin was recognized in the Tulsa black community for bringing the story of Tulsa’s racial history to the forefront of the Tulsa memory. Goodwin talked to the ORU students about the history of America and the legacy that disenfranchisement has had on the black community. He explained, “The blacks of this country weren’t allowed any identity with his mother Africa, and at the same time he was prohibited from adopting the cultural values of this land, so he became literally a man without a country.”⁸² Goodwin pointed out even in their day, racial bigotry is still present because black Americans were succeeding and were no longer “in their place.”⁸³ He told

the audience that true freedom was the human ability to be mobile in society, a luxury that whites enjoyed and black citizens were still trying to achieve. Goodwin's emphasis on "opportunity" was similar to Roberts' impulse to try to level the playing field for black students when the school first opened.

By the late 1980s, ORU was still struggling to reach a 20 percent minority. But that was not good enough for Roberts. He declared, "God laid it on my heart to try to reach 30% black students."⁸⁴ To help with this goal, Roberts was intentional in recruiting African Americans to be part of the leadership of ORU. Among those serving on the board of Regents during this era was Bishop Charles E. Blake, who later became the presiding bishop of the Churches of God in Christ, the largest Pentecostal denomination in the U.S. Blake's oldest son attended ORU.⁸⁵ Another important person added to ORU's Board of Regents was Bishop John L. Mears of Evangel Temple in Washington D.C. John and his sons, Don and Virgil, became leaders in a racial reconciliation movement among Pentecostal and Charismatic ministers in the late 1980s. Mears' magazine, *Bridgebuilder*, featured many prominent ministers who were working for racial unity in the church. Among the regular ministers highlighted were John Gimenez, ORU's own Carlton Pearson, Kenneth Copeland, Charles Blake, and Oral Roberts. Mears' sons, Don and Virgil, were part of the first class of graduates from ORU. Mears chose ORU because of the "reconciling power of God's healing love was evident in that fact—that students from many different races, backgrounds, and denominations could come together in one school."⁸⁶

In a very bold move toward racial reconciliation in 1986, Oral Roberts and new Dean of the ORU seminary, Larry Lea, announced that ORU was ready to go "beyond reconciliation to restitution."⁸⁷ Roberts announced the establishment of the "John L. Mears Restitution Fund" with the goal of raising funds for scholarships for African American students to attend seminary at ORU. Lea commented, "Our goal is to help bring a new vitality to black churches in America—to train new pastors who are filled with and

acquainted with the workings of the Holy Spirit.”⁸⁸ Roberts believed he had a responsibility to sow into the inner cities that were so hurt by racial prejudice. Roberts said, “We want to be part of this reconciliation movement that’s taking place.” The administration placed an emphasis on the recruitment of black students by hiring Bill Owens, who started a program called, “Give Them a Chance Ministries,” which recruited black students from the inner city to ORU. This initiative increased ORU’s enrollment of African Americans from 4.1 percent in 1980 to 24.3 percent in 1992. Even through the infamous financial difficulties that led to the closing of the City of Faith in 1989 and the eventual transition of Oral’s leadership to his son, Richard, in 1991, the African American population continued to be 15–20 percent throughout the 1990s.

Despite the emphasis on diversity among the student body, ORU had a more difficult time recruiting African American faculty until the 1980s. In 1983, ORU recruited Anita Hill, the longtime aid to Clarence Thomas, to be a Professor of Law in the O. W. Coburn School of Law until it closed in 1986.⁸⁹ The ORU seminary in particular took steps forward by recruiting noted African American Pentecostal scholar, Leonard Lovett, to serve as Professor of Religion and Ethics from 1990–1993. Others who joined during this time are current faculty members Trevor Grizzle, William V. MacDonald, and James Barber.

Oral’s “Black Son”

The story of Oral Roberts’ efforts at racial reconciliation cannot be told without including the story of Carlton Pearson. Although currently an outcast of the evangelical community due to his controversial shift to the “gospel of inclusion,” during the 1970s–1990s, Pearson was one of Oral Roberts’ favorite protégés. Pearson grew up in a poor neighborhood in San Diego, California, where his family attended the Church of God in Christ. He and his mother watched Roberts on television. Pearson was called to preach at an early age and hoped he could attend ORU after high school, particularly because at the time there were no black Pentecostal

universities.⁹⁰ Roberts almost immediately recognized Pearson's gifts and within a year he was traveling in ministry with Roberts and became one of the most recognized black students at ORU.⁹¹ Roberts believed Pearson was special. In fact, in 1973, Roberts shared with Pearson an idea that would change his outlook on his own ethnicity. He said, "Carlton, the last person to help Christ on earth was a black man." Roberts added, "I believe that the next great move of the Holy Spirit would be among black people . . . And that you will have a leading part in it."⁹² That year Pearson was the driving force behind instituting the "Black Awareness Week" and was regularly called upon to encourage black participation in campus life. Pearson also started an all-black choir on campus called "Souls-A-Fire" and was a regular singer with the ORU World Action Singers featured on Roberts' prime time specials.

After graduation, Pearson was appointed "Associate Evangelist" and chaplain for Oral Roberts Ministries and he ministered side by side with Richard Roberts at crusades around the world. Pearson's relationship with Oral was close and he claims that in 1974 Oral singled him out as his "black son."⁹³ After a few years of ministry success under Roberts' wing, in 1977 Pearson launched out on his own ministry. He eventually launched an interracial church in South Tulsa named Higher Dimensions, which he modeled after the diversity he experienced at ORU.⁹⁴ The initially majority white church quickly grew to over 1,000 people. Pearson remained connected to ORU as a member of the ORU Board of Regents.

The interracial vision of Pearson was shaped in part by the role he played in Roberts' vision of racial equality at ORU. On the one hand, Pearson embraced his African American identity, while at the same time was critical of his own community focusing too much on being black. On the other hand, Pearson was uncomfortable with the way white ministers tried to use popular black preachers like himself only to address racial integration in the church. He wanted to be recognized as minister, not a token black preacher for white audiences. Pearson commented, "they needed me as an

evangelist before the blacks came, because my ministry is just as effective to a nonblack audience as an integrated audience.”⁹⁵

As a black minister in Tulsa, Pearson had become an important image both for ORU and for Tulsa race politics. Pearson’s church was integrated, but that was primarily achieved because it was planted in South Tulsa rather than North Tulsa. In fact, in the earliest days, his church was predominantly white.⁹⁶ Pearson provided ORU and the South Tulsa Christian community a version of blackness that whites could be comfortable with that was not “too black.”⁹⁷

As Marla Frederick points out, Pearson represented a new face of black Pentecostalism, which had been historically “associated with those on the economic margins of society.” His notoriety in Pentecostal and Charismatic circles, interracial leadership, visibility in Christian media, and economic wealth expanded the perception of blackness to his generation and allowed black spirituality to become mainstream. Pearson shattered two presumptions about African Americans, that blacks were poor and that expressivity should be “marginal not mainstream.” Fredrick said, “The performance of religious dandyism among African American televangelists provided a means of aesthetically affirming black uplift and social mobility, while simultaneously critiquing perceived notions of black religious complacency to the economic status quo.”⁹⁸ Of course, Pearson “learned the ropes” of both aspects from his mentor Oral Roberts.⁹⁹

Roberts’ mainstreaming of prosperity teaching and Pentecostal spirituality was now being used by a black minister to uplift himself and others in his community. Pearson had become the most recognizable black minister in America. Pearson’s popularity led to him being invited to be the “only African American” host of TBN’s *Praise the Lord* television show, which Pearson often hosted.¹⁰⁰ Pearson used his success to provide opportunities for other black ministers to break through similar visibility and economic barriers. The Azusa Conferences of the early 1990s gave a platform for a new wave of black ministers to be noticed by the larger church community. Most notably was T. D. Jakes, the megachurch pastor

who became a household name as America's favorite preacher.¹⁰¹ Others, like Donnie McClurkin, Dion Sanders, and Marvin Winans, were elevated to visibility through his presence on predominantly white Christian television. In the end, Roberts used Pearson to show a new face of blacks in the media that most whites had not yet seen, one molded to white expectations as he performed familiar white aesthetics with the World Action Singers. On the other hand, Pearson used Oral Roberts and ORU as a platform to mainstream black aesthetics for white audiences.

Conclusion

Today ORU is reaping the benefits of the past five decades of emphasis on racial healing. But that vision has been taken to a whole new level under Dr. William M. Wilson, the fourth president of ORU. Wilson's vision of globalization through Whole Person Education at ORU has had a tremendous impact on the global diversity of the student population, which today represents 114 nations of the world. Currently the student population consists of 45 percent white, 14 percent African American, 14 percent Hispanics, and 16 percent international students.¹⁰² The inclusive atmosphere created for African Americans is benefiting other ethnicities in this new era of a global society. Under the longtime Vice President of Student Affairs and African American graduate of ORU, Dr. Clarence Boyd, "Black Heritage Week" has continued to expand to what is now a number of Multi-cultural Committee celebrations including "MLK and Diversity Week," "International Emphasis Week," and the annual "CultureFest."¹⁰³ While Tulsa has continued to struggle to integrate, ORU has become a model for diversity representing Christ's ability to bring healing to all races through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Oral Roberts was a healing evangelist who did not limit his vision to physical healing. Roberts' healing theology naturally led to the belief that he could play a role in healing the racial divisions in the United States. Roberts' own racial identity was a seed that continued to grow until his belief in racial healing manifested in a university that would elevate the lives of

African Americans in Tulsa and throughout America. He was not afraid of hard conversations about race. Nor was he content to sit on the sidelines. In the deeply racially divided city of Tulsa, Oral Roberts was a voice for healing and reconciliation at a time when the black church needed a champion and the white church needed a prophetic voice.



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Notes

¹ Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promise Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1982), 12.

² James S. Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 34–35.

³ Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance*, 34–35.

⁴ Mary E. Jones Parrish, *Events of the Tulsa Disaster: An Eye-witness Account of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot* (Mary E. Jones Parrish, 1923; reprint, Tulsa, OK: Out on a Limb Publishing, 1998). This work contains the personal reflections of Ms. Parrish and others who witnessed the 1921 race riot.

⁵ The *Tulsa Tribune* article written by the editor, Richard Lloyd Jones, read “To Lynch a Negro Tonight.” According to Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance*, 81, the editorial was permanently “excised from the record” of newspaper archives. The only existing copies of that paper have the “entire editorial page cut out.”

⁶ Jones Parish, *Events of the Tulsa Disaster*, 8; Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance*, 79.

⁷ Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance*, 118–119, notes that reports on the amount of dead varied but the director of the Red Cross estimated the number killed could be “as high as 300.” They also noted that 1,256 homes were destroyed, 215 additional

homes were looted, and total damages were estimated at \$1.8 million. A detailed list of property losses are listed in Jones Parish, *Events of the Tulsa Disaster*, 98–112.

⁸ Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance*, 118–19.

⁹ Steve Gerkin, “Beno Hall: Tulsa’s Den of Terror,” *This Land Press*, 3 September 2011, n.p., <http://thislandpress.com/2011/09/03/beno-hall-tulsas-den-of-terror/> (18 January 2019).

¹⁰ Dan Beller, “Evangelistic Temple Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma,” a paper presented to Church Growth I, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1981, Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University. Evangelistic Temple became the home church for the Roberts family until Roberts joined the Methodist church in 1968.

¹¹ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 176, points out that the Pentecostal Holiness Church (PHC) had an African American branch in the early years. However, the black Fire Baptized Holiness and other black branches separated from the PHC in 1930.

¹² For the best source of the African American roots of Pentecostalism see, Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005).

¹³ Timothy Hatcher, “The Spirit of Immense Struggle: Oral Roberts’ Native American Ancestry,” *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology* 3:2 (2018), 177–98.

¹⁴ Oral Roberts, *Expect a Miracle: My Life and My Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 32. See also, Daniel D. Isgrigg and Vinson Synan, “An Early Account of Oral Roberts’ Healing Testimony,” *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology* 3:2 (Fall 2018), 169–76.

¹⁵ Hatcher, “The Spirit of Immense Struggle,” 193.

¹⁶ Oral Roberts, “The Drumbeat of Racial Bias,” *Abundant Life*, August 1968, 2.

¹⁷ G. H. Montgomery, “Deliverance Is Brought to Crow Indian Reservation,” *Abundant Life*, November 1955, 6.

¹⁸ Oral Roberts, “Oral Roberts Meets with Bishops,” Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, OK, 1989, audio cassette.

¹⁹ Oral Roberts, “With God There Is No Color Line,” *Charisma and Christian Life*, September 1990, 132–35.

²⁰ Oral Roberts, “God Opened the Doors for World Action in London and Israel,” *Abundant Life*, November 1968, 7, 11.

- ²¹ Hatcher, “The Spirit of Immense Struggle,” 179.
- ²² Hilliard Griffin, “Missionary to American Indians,” *Abundant Life*, November 1959, 7–9.
- ²³ Hatcher, “The Spirit of Immense Struggle,” 184.
- ²⁴ Oral Roberts, “How to Lift Your Level of Living,” *Abundant Life*, July 1967, 5.
- ²⁵ Roberts, “The Drumbeat of Racial Bias,” 2.
- ²⁶ Oral Roberts, “A Message to Pastors,” audio recording, 3 December 1968, Oral Roberts University, Holy Spirit Research Center, https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/or_collection/3/.
- ²⁷ David E. Harrell, Jr., *White Sects and Black Men in the Recent South* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), 101–3. Harrell notes that evangelists such as Jack Coe and LeRoy Jenkins were much more integrated than Roberts. Yet his examples of integration were documented in the 1960s, long after Roberts had championed integration.
- ²⁸ Oral Roberts, “Highlights of Healing,” *Healing Waters*, January-February 1948, 1, 7.
- ²⁹ “Oral Roberts in the Nation’s Capital,” *Healing Waters*, August 1953, 6–7, 10, reports that the Washington DC crusade was integrated because of “Washington’s policy of integration” and “many colored people attended and responded alongside whites at the altar.”
- ³⁰ C. M. Ward, “I Attended the Oral Roberts Healing Campaign,” *Abundant Life*, December 1949, 5.
- ³¹ J. M. MacLean, “Oral Roberts Campaign in Tacoma,” *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*, 15 September 1949, 4.
- ³² Oral Roberts, “Oral Roberts Meets with Bishops,” Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, OK, audio cassette.
- ³³ Oral Roberts, “Hate, Love and the Christian,” *Abundant Life*, March 1968, 11.
- ³⁴ Roberts, “Oral Roberts Meets with Bishops.” Roberts does not indicate which crusade in the south, but he held meetings in Mobile, Alabama, and Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1953.
- ³⁵ “Oral Roberts Answers Your Questions,” *Healing Waters*, December 1956, 11.
- ³⁶ *Abundant Life*, April 1959, 10.

³⁷ *Tulsa Tribune*, 4 April 1967, reproduced in *ORU Outreach*, Spring 1967, 32, https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/oru_outreach/3/ (1 January 2019).

³⁸ Oral Roberts, “God Doesn’t Look at Skin Color,” ORU Chapel Transcript, 26 September 1989, <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/chapel/8/> (28 December 2018).

³⁹ Mark Yudof and Rachel F Moran, “Now More Than Ever, We Need Diversity in Admissions,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 64:38 (20 July 2018), 15.

⁴⁰ The University of Tulsa (TU) officially integrated in 1958, seven years before ORU was established. The first black person admitted to the Law School in 1958 was Kenneth Dones, the son-in-law of Edwin Goodwin, publisher of the *Oklahoma Eagle* whose son Robert was a member of the first class of graduates at ORU. See Steve Gerkin, *Hidden History of Tulsa* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2014). However, the campus is still dealing with the racial history that TU shared with the city. In 2016, the Law School was named after John Rogers, the controversial attorney who had ties to the Klu Klux Klan and was part of the unjust Tulsa Benevolent Association, which was instituted after the Race Riot in 1921.

⁴¹ Roberts, “Oral Roberts Meets with Bishops.”

⁴² Roberts, “Oral Roberts Meets with Bishops.”

⁴³ Roberts, “Oral Roberts Meets with Bishops.”

⁴⁴ For a full list of ORU faculty see *ORU Outreach* (Fall 1965), Oral Roberts University, Holy Spirit Research Center, https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/oru_outreach/10/

⁴⁵ Oral Roberts and Larry Lea, “Going Beyond Reconciliation to Restitution,” *Kingdom Lifeline*, January/February 1987, 9.

⁴⁶ *Abundant Life*, October 1974, 8. The housing included apartments for students, graduate students, and a retirement home called University Village. Taulbert managed the University Village apartments during the mid-1970s.

⁴⁷ For an account of the tumultuous summer of 1967 see Malcolm McLaughlin, *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967: Urban Rebellion in America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

⁴⁸ “Before the Storm: The Story of the Detroit Crusade,” *Abundant Life*, November 1967, 26–28. Roberts likely thought that the Watts riot of 1965 was probably the worst, in that thirty-four were killed in Watts and twenty-six died in Newark. Ironically, what Roberts did not know was his own home town was the site of the

greatest race riot in history, with casualties five times that of Newark and Watts combined.

⁴⁹ “Before the Storm: The Story of the Detroit Crusade,” 26.

⁵⁰ Roberts, “Drumbeat of Racial Bias,” 2–3.

⁵¹ Roberts, “Drumbeat of Racial Bias,” 3.

⁵² Roberts, “Hate, Love and the Christian,” 11, comments, “Jesus calls to each man by name and says, ‘Why are you persecuting me?’ And we reply, ‘*We’re not persecuting You, Lord. We just don’t accept these black people.*’ Then you don’t accept Jesus!”

⁵³ Roberts, “Hate, Love and the Christian,” 12.

⁵⁴ Oral Roberts, “A Message to Pastors.”

⁵⁵ Oral Roberts, “In the Touch of Compassion There’s Healing . . . For a Nation, a Family, and You,” *Abundant Life*, February 1969, 19.

⁵⁶ Oral Roberts, “In the Touch of Compassion There’s Healing,” 19.

⁵⁷ Jim E. Hunter, Jr., “‘Where My Voice is Heard Small’: The Development of Oral Roberts’ Television Ministry,” *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology* 3:2 (Fall 2018), 239–57, <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/spiritus/vol3/iss2/9/>.

⁵⁸ Oral Roberts, “Yes, We’re Back on Television,” *Abundant Life*, March 1969, 1–3. Jackson was featured on the cover of this issue of *Abundant Life* and the February issue. Other African Americans featured on the show include Clara Ward and the Ward Sisters, Della Reese, Johnny Mathis, Lou Rawls, and Natalie Cole.

⁵⁹ Jonathan L. Walton, *Watch This!: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Black Televangelism* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 25–26, recognizes that prior to Roberts, Jim Bakker, and TBN, black religious figures were not featured in religious television. Televangelism worked to bring prominent pastors and evangelists to the forefront, which led to the expansion of black religious televangelism in the 1990s and led to the popularity of Reverend Ike, T. D. Jakes, and Creflow Dollar.

⁶⁰ Roberts, “Yes, We’re Back on Television,” 1, notes that racial tensions in America were one of the primary reasons for his return to primetime television.

⁶¹ Oral Roberts, “Reaching Out to Souls in a Ministry of Total Evangelism,” *Abundant Life*, August 1966, 20, discusses his invitation to meet with President John F. Kennedy. David E. Harrell, *Oral Roberts: An American Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 309, mistakenly places this meeting in 1963, just 252 | *Spiritus* Vol 4, No 2

before the assassination. Roberts was also invited to give the invocation at the Democratic National Convention in 1972.

⁶² “Commencement 1978,” Transcript, 30 April 1978, Oral Roberts University, Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University Vertical File; “Equity, Ethics and Excellence,” *Abundant Life*, July-August 1978, 24. Roberts considered Jackson to be a “dear, dear friend” and was requested by black students to be a speaker on campus.

⁶³ Roberts, “Oral Roberts Meets with Bishops.” Roberts claims in this talk that Jackson declared “ORU is the best place for blacks in America” from the microphone, but transcripts of the graduation do not confirm this.

⁶⁴ “Equity, Ethics and Excellence,” 23; “Commencement 1978,” 11.

⁶⁵ “Commencement 1978,” 10. Jackson further comments, “If you can demonstrate equity in numbers, ethics and values, and excellence in quality, you will be the vanguard organization to lead America's schools out of the mire of mediocrity and out of its calm, passive, institutional offerings” (14).

⁶⁶ Walton, *Watch This!*, 85, calls Roberts’ appeal to black audiences “good business” and notes that other evangelical televangelists followed suit.

⁶⁷ “Racial Brotherhood Chapel – 10-15-1969,” Transcript, 15 October 1969, Oral Roberts University, Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University Vertical File. The chapel featured local Jewish civil rights leader, Maynard Ungerman, and panel guests of “ordinary” women who experienced prejudice in Tulsa. The guests included Finney Att, a Jewish woman, Betty Hopkins, a Catholic woman, Katherine Copeland, a black woman, and Jeanie Sinclair, a white woman.

⁶⁸ “Racial Brotherhood Chapel 10-15-1969,” 13. One student even shared disappointment that after a white woman who had dated a black man broke up with him, no white men would date her. There are also accounts in interviews by the author of black students during this era that some members of the ORU administration were not as open to Roberts’ racial inclusion and less than enthusiastic about interracial dating. The general sentiment was that while Roberts was inclusive, his administration was often slower to adopt his vision.

⁶⁹ “Black Heritage Week 2-17-1971,” Transcript, 17 February 1971, Oral Roberts University, <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/chapel/14/> (3 February 2019).

⁷⁰ James Evers, “Racism is Wrong,” Chapel Transcript, 27 September 1972, <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/chapel/9/> (25 December 2018).

⁷¹ ORU Chapel Transcript, 18 February 1972, 5, <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/chapel/1/> (31 December 2018).

⁷² ORU Chapel Transcript, 18 February 1972, 6, <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/chapel/1/> (31 December 2018).

⁷³ The tradition of a festival celebrating diverse cultures continues today although now emphasizes the global cultures on the ORU campus rather than focusing solely on black culture.

⁷⁴ “Black Awareness Chapel,” ORU Chapel Transcript, 16 February 1972, <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/chapel/6/> (28 December 2018).

⁷⁵ Curiously, despite Ross’ unrestrained discussion of racial issues, he never mentioned Tulsa’s Race Massacre and history in his responses.

⁷⁶ Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance*, 187

⁷⁷ “Black Awareness Chapel,” 11. Ross declares, “I hope that if that day comes when blacks can be considered equal, I hope I’m dead, because the whole meaning of my life, I’d be out of a job, no, the whole meaning of my life would be over . . . I’m rather vindictive, because I think the only way blacks can become equal is to control the power mechanisms of this country . . . I’m going to get even with some of them, really, and I would think that I wouldn’t mind giving you all a turn at slavery.”

⁷⁸ “Black Awareness Chapel,” 25.

⁷⁹ Oral Roberts, “Washington High School Announcement,” 10 April 1973, Oral Roberts University, Holy Spirit Research Center, https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/or_collection/15/ (31 December 2018).

⁸⁰ Goodwin was born in Tulsa, was in the first graduating class of ORU, received a masters from Tulsa University, and a Ph.D. from University of California at Berkeley.

⁸¹ Oral Roberts, “God Opened the Doors for World Action in London and Israel,” 9, 14; “Trinidad,” *Abundant Life*, April 1969, 10–11, 13.

⁸² Robert Goodwin, “Black Heritage Chapel,” ORU Chapel Transcript, 20 February 1974, 7, <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/chapel/4/> (28 December 2018).

⁸³ Goodwin, “Black Heritage Chapel,” 11. Consequently, this was the same narrative that was held by many African Americans who survived the Race Riot in Tulsa. A great number believed that “Black Wall Street” was invaded, citizens were

forcibly removed and their homes were looted and burned to the ground because of the jealousy of poor whites in Tulsa. See examples of this in testimonies gathered in Jones Parrish, *Events of the Tulsa Disaster*, 24–62.

⁸⁴ This goal is truly remarkable considering the average percentage of non-white students as a whole for evangelical universities in 2016 was 28%. Beth McMurtrie, “Evangelical Colleges’ Diversity Problem,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 62:21 (5 February 2016), 23–26.

⁸⁵ “Look Who’s Choosing ORU,” *Abundant Life*, May-June 1989, 29.

⁸⁶ “Look Who’s Choosing ORU,” 30.

⁸⁷ Roberts and Lea, “Going Beyond Reconciliation to Restitution,” 10.

⁸⁸ Roberts and Lea, “Going Beyond Reconciliation to Restitution,” 10.

⁸⁹ *Abundant Life*, April 1985, 12. Hill asserts that one of the reasons she left Thomas to come to ORU was because of the sexual harassment by the soon to be Supreme Court Justice. Thomas claimed that he was the one who recommended she come to ORU and claimed he was unaware of any inappropriate behavior on his part. Anita Miller, ed., *The Clarence Thomas—Anita Hill Hearings* (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1994), 24–25.

⁹⁰ “I’m On My Way to Becoming a World Changer,” *Abundant Life*, September 1972, 16.

⁹¹ “Hell and High Water,” *Reform*, May 2013, 15

⁹² Carlton D. Pearson, “Oral Roberts’ Prophetic Word at Azusa 1996 with Carlton Pearson,” <https://youtu.be/vdXRuVaLkFU> (31 December 2018).

⁹³ “Hell and High Water,” 15. Pearson claims Oral said to him, “I need a black son, you are my black son.” Although, Roberts never made this specific claim.

⁹⁴ Walton, *Watch This!*, 84. Pearson commented, “I wanted my church to have ORU.”

⁹⁵ “Interview with Carlton Pearson,” *Bridgebuilder*, March/April 1987, 11–12.

⁹⁶ “Hell and High Water,” 16.

⁹⁷ Marla F. Fredrick, *Colored Television: American Religion Gone Global* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2015), 47.

⁹⁸ Fredrick, *Colored Television*, 36.

⁹⁹ Fredrick, *Colored Television*, 44.

¹⁰⁰ Fredrick, *Colored Television*, 46.

¹⁰¹ Shayne Lee, *T. D. Jakes: America's New Preacher* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

¹⁰² "Quick Facts 2018: Enrollment at Census Date," Oral Roberts University Registrars office.

¹⁰³ Clarence Boyd, "Historical Account of the Multi-Cultural Committee," n.d., Office of Student Affairs, Oral Roberts University.

“I WILL HEAL THEIR LAND”

THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HEALING (רפא) IN 2 CHRONICLES 7:13–16

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Abstract

This article explores the meaning and significance of Yahweh’s promise to heal the land of his people in 2 Chr 7:13–16 within its immediate context and also within the book of 2 Chronicles by exploring how the text is connected linguistically and thematically with other related texts. It argues that the meaning of healing in 2 Chr 7:13–16 extends far beyond the physical healing of the land that results in agricultural blessings, and the theme of healing plays a significant role in the Chronicler’s theology of retribution, repentance, and restoration.

Introduction

Second Chronicles 7:14 is one of the most familiar and favorite verses in the book of 2 Chronicles, and Yahweh’s promise to heal (רפא) the land of his people in this verse has caught the attention of scholars, preachers, evangelists, national leaders, and lay people. Yet, it is worth noting that since there is fluidity in the use of the Hebrew word רפא in the Old

Testament,¹ a dispute has arisen regarding the meaning of the clause (“and I will heal their land”) in v. 14. While some contend that healing the land in its literary context refers to national healing, spiritual renewal, and restoring *shalom* on earth,² others assert that Yahweh’s healing in 7:14 refers “not to healing the land politically or morally,” but to “the physical healing of the land of Israel.”³ Although previous studies have examined the meaning of healing in 2 Chr 7:14 within its immediate context,⁴ further exploration needs to be given to how the healing passage in 2 Chr 7:13–16 is connected linguistically and thematically with other texts in the book of 2 Chronicles. Thus, this article will investigate the meaning and significance of 2 Chr 7:14 not only in its immediate context (chs. 6–7) but also in its larger literary context by exploring potential textual connections between the healing passage in 2 Chr 7:13–16 and other related texts within the book of 2 Chronicles.

Immediate Context of 2 Chronicles 7:13–16

Yahweh’s promise to heal the land of his people in 2 Chr 7:14 is found in the context of his appearance to Solomon (2 Chr 7:11–22). In this text, which is based on “1 Kings 9:2–9 with certain changes,”⁵ Yahweh promises Solomon that he will respond to the people’s repentance and humble prayer in the temple by forgiving them and healing their land (2 Chr 7:13–16). In vv. 17–18, Yahweh reaffirms his promise to the Davidic dynasty if Solomon remains obedient.⁶ Yahweh’s promise in v. 14 is also connected with vv. 19–22, which serves as a warning to the disobedient who are not willing to repent. Kelly’s observation is apt: “The chapter [ch. 7] then concludes in vv. 19–22 by balancing the offer of the gift of restoration in v. 14 with the threat of divine judgment and rejection for those who refuse to repent.”⁷

When 2 Chr 7:11 (“And/when Solomon finished the house of Yahweh and his house of the king”) is read in conjunction with its parallel text in 1 Kgs 7:1, where the Chronicler states that it took Solomon thirteen years to complete building his palace, it can be deduced that Yahweh’s response to Solomon’s prayer in 2 Chr 7:11–22 occurred thirteen years after the

completion of the temple (cf. 2 Chr 7:11; 1 Kgs 7:1; 9:1–10).⁸ The Chronicler’s record of Yahweh’s response to Solomon in 2 Chr 7:12 (“I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice”) suggests that 2 Chr 7:11–22 needs to be understood in relationship with Solomon’s prayer in 2 Chr 6:12–42 and the temple dedication in 2 Chr 7:1–11.⁹ The Chronicler’s use of the same vocabulary in Solomon’s prayer that uses *second person pronominal suffixes* (6:40) and in Yahweh’s response that uses *first person pronominal suffixes* (2 Chr 7:15) signifies that the two chapters (6 and 7) are linked linguistically and thematically.

<i>Solomon’s Prayer</i> (2 Chr 6:40)	<i>Yahweh’s Response</i> (2 Chr 7:15)
Now, O my God,	Now
let <i>your eyes</i> (עֵינַיִךְ) be open	<i>my eyes</i> (עֵינַי) will be open
and <i>your ears</i> (אָזְנֶיךָ) attentive	and <i>my ears</i> (אָזְנִי) attentive
to the prayer of this place	to the prayers offered in this place

The above linguistic and thematic connections suggest, therefore, that Yahweh’s response to Solomon’s dedicatory prayer in 2 Chr 7:13–16 needs to be examined within its immediate context (chs. 6–7). Furthermore, in order to understand how the text (2 Chr 7:13–16) functions within the book, we will further examine how it is connected with other related texts by observing their linguistic and thematic connections within the book.

2 Chronicles 7:13–16 within Its Larger Literary Context

The Disasters as Yahweh’s Chastisement (2 Chr 7:13)

In 2 Chr 7:13, the Chronicler identifies the three disasters (drought, locust, and pestilence) that will threaten the people’s well-being on the land as Yahweh’s tools to chastise his people (cf. 6:26–28).¹⁰

- v. 13a When I shut up (עצר) the heavens so that there is no rain (מטר)
- v. 13b and when I command the locust (חגב) to devour the land
- v. 13c and if I send pestilence (דבר) among my people

Klein contends that the Chronicler intentionally “omits the references from chap. 6 to war, defeat, or exile that were in the *Vorlage*” and mentions only three disasters that “could typically affect postexilic Judah.”¹¹ However, as Williamson has noted, the three disasters mentioned in 7:13 should be regarded as representative of all the disasters mentioned in Solomon’s prayer in ch. 6,¹² because in 7:19–22, the Chronicler picks up the theme of the exile mentioned in 6:36–39 and warns the audience that Yahweh will remove them from his land if the people forsake his commandments. In the following, we will examine how the three disasters in 2 Chr 7:13 function within its immediate context and how they can shed light on a better understanding of the concept of healing in v. 14.

Drought in 2 Chronicles 7:13a

In the Old Testament, the verb עצר, “shut up” or “retain,” is used to depict the stopping of a plague, the heavens withholding rain, and the womb being withheld from conception.¹³ The disasters (drought, locusts, and plagues) mentioned in 7:13 harken back to Solomon’s prayer in the previous chapter (ch. 6).¹⁴ When the clause (“When I shut up [עצר] the heavens so that there is no rain”) in 7:13a is read in relationship with 6:26a (“because they have sinned against you”), it is evident that Yahweh’s shutting up of the heavens that results in no rainfall in 7:13 is caused by the people’s sin against Yahweh. In the Old Testament, adequate rainfall was depicted as a sign of God’s blessing to those who obey his commandments (Lev 26:3–4; Deut 11:13–14) and the withholding of rain was “a sign of divine anger” to those who are not willing to repent or turn to Yahweh (Deut 28:23–24; Jer 3:3; 5:23–24).¹⁵ If the Israelites turn away from Yahweh, his anger will burn against them and he will shut up the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce. As a result, they will soon perish from the

good land (Deut 11:16–17) because rainfall is Yahweh’s reward for the obedient and drought is his punishment for the disobedient.¹⁶

Concerning the relationship between the Israelites’ behavior and their land in the Old Testament, Wright observes, “Israel’s behavior on the land determines Yahweh’s response to Israel in the land, and the land will respond to both. The king’s just and benevolent government, for example, would bring environmental and agricultural benefits to the land (Ps 72:2–4, 12–16). But the people’s social evil made the land mourn (Hos 4:3).”¹⁷ In 2 Chr 6:26–28, Solomon’s prayer indicates that when the people pray (פָּלַל) to Yahweh and turn (שׁוּב) away from their sin (6:26), Yahweh will forgive (סָלַח) their sins and grant rain (מָטָר) upon the land (6:27). It is worth noting that the verbs “pray,” “turn,” and “forgive,” and the noun “rain” in 6:26–27 are also used in Yahweh’s response to Solomon’s prayer in 2 Chr 7:13–14 where Yahweh says, “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain (מָטָר), . . . If my people humble themselves, and pray (פָּלַל) . . . turn (שׁוּב) from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive (סָלַח) their sin and will heal their land.” Thus, when the people’s response and Yahweh’s healing of the land in 2 Chr 7:13–14 are seen in relationship of Solomon’s prayer in 6:26–27, it is apparent that Yahweh’s promise to heal the land in 7:14 may refer, but not limited, to Yahweh’s sending of the rain that will result in an agricultural blessing to his people who humble themselves, pray to him, seek his face, and turn from their wicked ways.

Locust Devouring the Land in 2 Chronicles 7:13b

In the Old Testament, there are different Hebrew words used for “locust” or “grasshopper” (חֲסִיל, אַרְבֵּה, חֲגַב etc.).¹⁸ While the Hebrew word חֲגַב (“locust”) is used in 2 Chr 7:13, a different Hebrew word for “locust” (חֲסִיל) is used in 2 Chr 6:28, where some of the covenant curses in Deut 28 are listed: “famine (v. 48), pestilence (v. 21), blight and rust (v. 22) and locust (v. 38).”¹⁹ Just as the locust plague (אַרְבֵּה) is used as Yahweh’s punishment upon the land of Egypt in Exod 10:3–19, a locust plague (חֲסִיל) is also used

as Yahweh's punishment for his people who lapse into covenant disloyalty (Deut 28:38, 42).²⁰ In the same vein, in 2 Chr 7:13, the Chronicler also depicts the locust (חגב) as Yahweh's instrument to chastise his people.

In Joel 2:25, it is announced that Yahweh would repay for the years in which the locust had eaten. Yahweh promised to compensate them for their losses during the invasion of the locusts that are identified as Yahweh's army (2:11, 25).²¹ In Joel 2:26, Yahweh further promises, "And you will surely eat in plenty and be satisfied and praise the name of Yahweh your God, who has dealt with you wondrously. And my people will never be ashamed." Here, the concept of eating plenty and being satisfied in 2:26 reverses the concept of food deprivation in 1:16 because "those who had formerly suffered from a shortage of food (1:16) would eat in plenty and be satisfied" (2:26).²² Similarly, in 2 Chr 7:13–14, if Yahweh's people humble themselves and pray to him and seek his face, he promises to heal their land (v. 14), implying that Yahweh will not only compensate what the locust would have eaten in the land but also bring agricultural blessings to them (v. 13). Seen in this light, the healing of the land in 2 Chr 7:14 may refer not only to Yahweh's removal of the locus from the land but also the restoration of its agricultural blessings to its fullness.

Pestilence in 2 Chronicles 7:13c

In the Old Testament, the word דבר ("pestilence") is usually depicted as "a divinely sent punishment for disobedience" and "it can come upon the people of Israel, foreign nations (Ex. 9:15; Ezk. 28:23), groups (Jer. 42:17, 22; 44:13) or individuals (Ezek. 38:22)."²³ R. K. Harrison notes that the Hebrew word דבר in 2 Chr 7:13c may refer to "bubonic plague," which is one of antiquity's most dreaded febrile diseases, and the "prospect of bubonic plague (Lev 26:25; Num 14:12) was one of the most serious threats that God could level against disobedient Israel."²⁴ In Exod 9:3, Yahweh sent pestilence (דבר) upon the Egyptians' livestock in the fields such as horses, donkeys, camels, herds, and flocks as his punishment (cf. Ps 78:48–50). In Leviticus 26, it is stated that Yahweh would send pestilence (דבר)

among his people if they failed to do his commandments (Lev 26:14, 25). Further, in Num 14:11–12, Yahweh said to Moses that he would strike the Israelites with pestilence (דבר) as a punishment for their distrust and disobedience. In 1 Chr 21:10–12, it is also worth noting that Yahweh’s sending of pestilence (דבר) upon the land is described as one of the possible punishments as Yahweh’s chastisement for David’s folly of numbering of Israel.²⁵ Thus, seen in light of the above observations, it is evident that the pestilence (דבר) in 2 Chr 7:13 serves as Yahweh’s instrument to chastise his people who are disobedient and the pestilence would negatively affect the health and well-being of the disobedient. When Yahweh’s promise of healing in v. 14 is seen in relationship with v. 13, it stands out that Yahweh’s promise to heal the land of his people in v. 14 will reverse the situation in v. 13 by healing the physical sickness of his people and their livestock. In v. 14a, Yahweh provides a way for his people to receive forgiveness and healing from him.

Repentance and Healing in 2 Chronicles 7:14

- v. 14a If my people who are called by my name humble themselves
and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways
- v. 14b then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin
and I will heal their land

“My People Who Are Called by My Name”

In Lev 19:34, the Israelites were instructed to treat the foreigners residing among them as their native born and to love them as themselves. While the absence of the term “foreigner” (נכרי) in 2 Chr 7:14 may indicate the Chronicler’s emphasis on Yahweh’s ownership of Israel,²⁶ Solomon’s prayer in 6:32–33 indicates that Yahweh would answer the prayer of a “foreigner” (נכרי) who comes and prays toward the house of Yahweh, implying that “anyone who acknowledges God’s name and authority may pray with the same confidence of a hearing.”²⁷ This view is supported by the phrase “on whom my name is called” or “who are called by my name” in 7:14a,

signifying that “the invitation is explicitly extended to all who call upon the name of Yahweh” (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Rom 10:13; Zeph 3:9; 1 Cor 1:2).²⁸ Thus, although the phrase (עַם) “my people” in 2 Chr 7:14 refers primarily to ethnic Israel as Yahweh’s own people, the phrase “who are called by my name” signifies that the recipients of Yahweh’s response and blessings may encompass all who call upon Yahweh’s name.

In Joel 2:32a (Heb. 3:5), those who will experience Yahweh’s deliverance are identified as “all who will call on the name of the Lord.” In the Targum, it reads, “But everyone who prays in the name of Yahweh shall be delivered.”²⁹ Based on Gen 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 1 Kgs 18:24; Ps 116:17; and Zeph 3:9, Stuart interjects with a specification, however, “to call on the name of Yahweh” means “not merely to pray to him, but to worship him consistently and presumably exclusively.”³⁰ Accordingly, Crenshaw contends that in ancient usage, calling upon the name of Yahweh is synonymous with worshiping him (cf. Gen 4:26; 12:8).³¹ Similarly, in 2 Chr 7:14, the people who are called by Yahweh’s name (“on whom my name is called”) are identified as those who humble themselves, pray to Yahweh, seek his face, and turn from their wicked ways.

In Isa 56:1–8, true membership of Yahweh’s new community who will experience Yahweh’s salvation and his deliverance is not determined by race or nationality but by maintaining justice and righteousness, keeping the Sabbath, temple worship, sacrifices, and prayer as a sign of keeping Yahweh’s covenant.³² In Isa 56:6, the prophet announces that the foreigners who are loyal to Yahweh can be a part of Yahweh’s servants. Therefore, in this context, “[i]t is not genealogy but character that marks the servants of God” (Isa 56:1–8).³³ While Isaiah 40–55 frequently identifies the servant with Israel (e.g., 41:8; 44:1; 45:4), in Isaiah 56–66, the identity of the servants “become restricted to those who are obedient to YHWH’s commandments.”³⁴ In the same vein, the Chronicler, being a post-exilic writer, also views those who will experience Yahweh’s forgiveness and healing as Yahweh’s people who appropriately respond to his invitation by humbling themselves, praying to him, seeking his face, and turning away from their wicked ways (2 Chr 7:14).

When 2 Chr 7:14 is read in relationship with 2 Chronicles 36, it is worth noting that while Zedekiah and the people of Judah were Yahweh's covenant people (Israel), the Chronicler reports that "there is no healing" for them because they refused to humble themselves before Yahweh. This implies that for the Chronicler, not all Israelites but only those who humbly repent and submit to Yahweh will experience the healing promised in 2 Chr 7:14.

"Humble Themselves"

The verb כנע in its Niphal form can be translated as "be subdued," "be humbled," or "humble oneself."³⁵ In 2 Chr 7:14a, the verb "humble themselves (Niphal)" denotes a key idea of the Chronicler's theology, "humility before God" and "submission to his will."³⁶ While the verb form of כנע occurs thirty-six times in the Old Testament, fifteen instances relate to the action of a king in submission of himself and Israel to God. Whereas kings who submit themselves to Yahweh's sovereignty are exalted, severe affliction is imposed upon those who are not willing to submit to his kingship.³⁷ In 2 Chronicles 12, the same verb כנע is used to depict how Rehoboam and the princes of Judah humbled themselves before Yahweh, and as a result, Yahweh no longer destroyed them, but granted them deliverance from the hand of the king of Egypt (12:6–8). McConville interprets 2 Chr 7:14 in light of 2 Chronicles 12 and argues that in this context, "humbling implies a changed attitude with regard to oneself, a renunciation of some wrong course which had been determined upon and which involved an arrogant rejection of God."³⁸ Similarly, Hill observes that the verb "humble" means "to subdue one's pride and submit in self-denying loyalty to God and his will (cf. Lev. 26:41)."³⁹ It is worth noting that in 2 Chr 30:11, the same verb "humble" is also used in relationship to some men of the northern tribes (Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun) who humbled themselves (כנעו) and came to Jerusalem to Hezekiah's invitation to return to Yahweh and renew festival worship in the reopened Jerusalem temple (30:1–11).⁴⁰ In this context, "humbling oneself is the first step of repentance according to Solomon in 2 Chr 7:14" and the northerners' coming to

Jerusalem denotes their humbleness and willingness to return to Yahweh (30:8–11).⁴¹ Hezekiah’s prayer for the people who set their hearts on seeking God (30:19) and Yahweh’s healing of the people in 2 Chr 30:19–20 signify that Yahweh’s promise to heal the land of his people who humbly repent and seek him in 2 Chr 7:14 is fulfilled in 2 Chr 30:20.⁴² This implies that humbleness before Yahweh is a prerequisite for receiving forgiveness, spiritual restoration, and deliverance.

“Pray”

In 2 Chr 7:14, the people’s humbling themselves in repentance is closely associated with praying (פָּלַל) to Yahweh. Hill notes that “pray” (פָּלַל) in this context refers to “a shameless acknowledgment of personal sin and a plea for God’s mercy, much like that of David’s prayer of repentance (cf. Ps. 51:1–2).”⁴³ In 2 Chr 33:10–13, the Chronicler records the repentance and prayer of Manasseh and Yahweh’s restoration. When Manasseh did evil and refused to pay attention to Yahweh’s words, he brought judgment upon Manasseh and the Assyrians brought him to Babylon (vv. 10–11). In his distress, Manasseh humbled himself and prayed (פָּלַל) to Yahweh in the land of his captivity (vv. 12; cf. 7:14). The Chronicler records that when Manasseh prayed (פָּלַל) to him, Yahweh was moved by his entreaty and listened to his prayer and brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom (v. 13). In 2 Chronicles 32, the Chronicler also records how the prayer (פָּלַל) of Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah resulted in Yahweh’s deliverance from the Assyrians (32:20–23). When Hezekiah was sick, he prayed (פָּלַל) to Yahweh who responded to his prayer with a miraculous healing (32:24).⁴⁴ In 2 Chr 30:18–20, as has been noted above, Hezekiah prayed (פָּלַל) for the northerners who had not cleansed themselves and yet ate the Passover, saying, “May the good Lord (Yahweh) pardon everyone who sets his heart to seek Yahweh.” The Chronicler records that Yahweh heard Hezekiah’s prayer and healed the people (30:20). In this context, praying to and seeking Yahweh resulted in forgiveness and spiritual restoration.

“Seek My Face”

In the Old Testament, “God as the object of *bqs* [בקש “seek”] appears about 30 times,”⁴⁵ and in 2 Chr 7:14, seeking Yahweh’s face signifies “the desire to determine what precisely God requires in terms of standards and of life-direction.”⁴⁶ In 2 Chr 11:16, the Chronicler accounts “how lay Israelites followed the example of the priests and Levites by dedicating their hearts to seek (בקש) Yahweh the God of Israel and to sacrifice to Yahweh the God of their ancestors.”⁴⁷ The same word (בקש) is also used in relationship with “seeking” Yahweh during the time of Asa. In 2 Chronicles 14–15, the word בקש is used interchangeably with another Hebrew word for “seeking” (דרש). In 14:4, Asa commanded the people of Judah to seek Yahweh and to obey his laws and commands. Thompson notes that seeking God in this context “involved more than a specific act of seeking God’s help and guidance but stood for one’s whole duty toward God (v. 7; 15:2, 12–13).”⁴⁸ In 2 Chr 15:1, the Chronicler records that the spirit of God came upon Azariah and exhorted King Asa to seek (דרש) Yahweh (15:2) by recounting how the Israelites turned (שוב) to Yahweh and sought him and how he was found by them. Thus, Asa and the people sought Yahweh with all their heart (v. 12), and as a result, Yahweh gave them rest (v. 15) and there was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa’s reign (v. 19). In this context, seeking Yahweh is closely linked with rest and peace in the people’s land.

“Turn from Their Wicked Ways”

The verb “turn” (שוב) frequently appears in Solomon’s prayer (6:24, 26, 37, 38). Just as 2 Chr 7:13–14 associates turning to Yahweh with prayer, which will result in Yahweh’s forgiveness and restoration, in Solomon’s prayer, turning to Yahweh is linked with prayer that will result in Yahweh’s forgiveness and deliverance of his people (Israel) from national defeat and captivity (v. 24–25, 37–39), and his provision of rain (vv. 26–27; cf. 7:13). As has been noted above, the verb שוב “turn” is associated with בקש “seek” in 2 Chronicles 15, where the Spirit-empowered prophet, Azariah, exhorted king Asa to seek Yahweh by recounting how Israel turned to and sought

Yahweh (vv. 1–4). In this context, turning or repentance (שׁוּב) signifies turning away from detestable idols and turning toward Yahweh and seeking him whole heartedly. The same verb שׁוּב is also used in Hezekiah’s exhortation to the people of Israel to turn to Yahweh by coming to the sanctuary and serving him so that he will also return to them and restore them back to the land (30:6–9). It is worth noting that the Chronicler also uses the verb שׁוּב (“turn”) in a negative context where Zedekiah hardened his heart against turning to Yahweh.⁴⁹ In this context (36:13–15), Zedekiah’s refusal to turn to Yahweh is closely linked with the priests’ and the people’s unfaithfulness, defiling the house of Yahweh, mocking his messengers, and despising his words, provoking Yahweh’s wrath, which led to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, and exile to Babylon (vv. 17–21). Here, refusing to turn to Yahweh resulted in his wrath that “rose against his people until there was no healing” (36:26). In sum, for the Chronicler, while turning toward Yahweh brings restoration and peace in the land (15:1–15), refusal to turn to Yahweh resulted in his wrath that led to disasters, destruction, and exile (36:13–21).

Yahweh’s Response in 2 Chronicles 7:14b

Concerning the relationship between 2 Chr 7:13 and 7:14, Merrill observes, “The remedy for national sin and its resultant drought, locust infestation, and plague (Heb. דָּבָר) was for God’s people” to humble themselves, pray, seek Yahweh’s face, and turn from their sin so that Yahweh will hear, forgive, and heal “both people and the ravaged land (v. 14).”⁵⁰ In the Old Testament, the verb סָלַח (“pardon,” “forgive”) is used sparingly and in all instances, the subject of the verb (“pardon,” “forgive”) is God, implying that the connotation of סָלַח is “an act of pardon by God alone.”⁵¹ In 2 Chr 7:14, the verb “forgive” (סָלַח) is closely linked with “heal” (רָפָא). In this context, forgiving and healing are described as the work of Yahweh who hears and responds to his people who humble themselves, pray, seek his face, and turn from their wicked ways. In Solomon’s prayer (6:24–25), a national defeat of war is depicted as a result of the people’s sin against

Yahweh. In this context, Yahweh's forgiveness of the sin of his people who turn and pray to him is associated with his restoration of the people from exile to their home land. Likewise, in 2 Chr 6:36–39, Solomon prays that when the people, who have been “carried away captive to a land far or near,” would repent and pray toward their land and temple, even from the land of their captivity, Yahweh would forgive his people. The clause “if they repent with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity” in 2 Chr 6:38 implies that Yahweh would respond to his people's repentance and prayer offered not only in the land of Israel or in the temple Solomon built but also in a foreign land, implying that Yahweh is sovereign over the nations. Thus, when Yahweh's promise to forgive his people in 2 Chr 7:14 is read in relationship with Solomon's prayer in 6:24–26, 36–39, it can be deduced that Yahweh's promise to heal the land in 2 Chr 7:14 may refer not only to the agricultural restoration but also to Yahweh's restoration of his people to the promised land.⁵²

“And I Will Heal Their Land” (7:14c)

It has been argued that Yahweh's promise to heal (רפא) the land in 2 Chr 7:14 refers only to “the physical healing of the land” and the restoration of agricultural blessings.⁵³ Based on Deut 11:16–17 that mentions Yahweh's wrath resulting in drought and no fruit in the land, Taylor argues that healing the land in 7:13–15 “relates specifically to the judgment of drought.”⁵⁴ Whereas Taylor correctly observes that the drought and locust will threaten the well-being of the people by causing the land to produce no fruit in v.13a and b, he fails to recognize that the pestilence (דבר) will negatively affect the health and well-being of the people and their animals. Thus, if Yahweh's promise to heal the land in v. 14 functions as his answer to v. 13 where drought, locust, and pestilence are depicted as Yahweh's punishments, then it may be deduced that healing the land in v. 14 refers not only to the restoration of agricultural blessings but also encompasses healing of the physical bodies of the people and their animals.

In 2 Chr 30:18–20, the same word רָפָא is used to depict Yahweh’s healing of the people of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun in response to Hezekiah’s prayer. While the unclean were not allowed to celebrate the Passover (Num 9:6), the Chronicler records that Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, who had not cleansed themselves, were not excluded from eating the Passover because of Hezekiah’s intercessory prayer.⁵⁵ It is worth noting that all of the verbs (“humble themselves,” “pray,” “seek,” “turn,” “forgive”), which are used in relationship to Yahweh’s response to Solomon in 7:14, are also used in Hezekiah’s reign: “turn” (30:9), “humble themselves” (30:11), “pray,” “forgive,” (30:18, 20), “seek” (30:19), “hear,” and “heal” (30:20). This implies that Hezekiah’s Passover in 30:1–20 alludes to Solomon’s prayer in 7:14.⁵⁶ When Hezekiah invited all Israel and Judah to come to the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, some of the people humbled themselves (30:11) and returned to Yahweh (30:9), setting their hearts to seek Yahweh (30:19). Hezekiah prayed for them and God healed (רָפָא) them (30:20).⁵⁷ Selman observes that Hezekiah’s intercession signifies that “God honours prayer requests offered in the spirit of Solomon’s dedicatory prayer (6:18–42; 7:12–16) and that prayer can overcome any formal deficiency in religious practice.” Yahweh’s acceptance of Hezekiah’s prayer is evident in 2 Chr 30:22 where Yahweh healed (רָפָא) the people, “fulfilling his promise in 2 Chr 7:14.”⁵⁸ In this context, Yahweh’s healing of the people does not likely refer to healing their physical sickness, rather it “likely refers to Yahweh’s pardoning their disobedience and cultic uncleanness.”⁵⁹ Thus, Yahweh’s healing in 2 Chr 30:20 is “God’s direct answer to Hezekiah’s request for forgiveness and thus “primarily of a spiritual nature.”⁶⁰ Hill aptly observes that Yahweh’s healing “in this context should be understood as spiritual restoration and social reconciliation, as the covenant relationship with God has been renewed and elements of the northern and southern tribes are reunited in true worship.”⁶¹

There are some more references in the book of 2 Chronicles where the verb form (רָפָא) and noun form (מִרְפָּא) occur. In 2 Chr 22:6, the Niphal of

רפא is used in relationship with Jehoram (Joram) of Israel who was wounded in the battlefield (“And he turned back to be healed [Niphal] in Jezreel because of the wounds which he had received at Ramah” [2 Chr 22:6]). In this context, the verb “healing” (רפא) signifies the physical healing and restoration of Jehoram. In 2 Chronicles 36, the noun form מרפא (“healing,” “cure,” “health”) is used in relationship with Zedekiah who refused to humble himself (כנע) before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of Yahweh (36:12), and also with the leaders, the priests, and the people of Judah (36:14) who despised the words of the messengers of God (vv. 14–16). Williamson notes that in 36:16, the word healing (מרפא) is “another echo of 7:14, where the same word is translated ‘heal (their land).’”⁶² Although Yahweh promised Solomon and his people that he would heal their land if they humble themselves, pray to, seek Yahweh’s face, and turn from their wicked ways (7:14), the Chronicler records that Zedekiah and the people of Judah refused to humble themselves and listen to the messengers of God (36:12–14). Consequently, Yahweh’s wrath aroused against them and “there was no healing” (מרפא) for the people of Judah (36:16). The immediate context indicates that Yahweh’s wrath results in the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile (vv. 17–21). Selman argues that the clause “there is no healing” in v. 36 “implies the cancellation of God’s promise to heal his land and that therefore even prayer will be utterly useless (2 Ch. 7:14; c. 30:20).”⁶³ Contrary to Selman’s view, however, it is more likely that the clause “there is no healing” in 36:16 does not cancel Yahweh’s promise to heal the land in 7:14, rather it picks up the theme of healing in 7:14 and implies that even though Yahweh’s promise to heal the land in 7:14 is made to all Israel, only those who humbly repent and seek and pray to him will experience the promise of healing and restoration.

Yahweh's Affirmation of the Temple (7:15–16)

In 2 Chr 7:15, Yahweh said to Solomon, “Now my eyes (עֵינַי) will be open and my ears (אָזְנוֹ) attentive to the prayer (תְּפִלָּה) that is made in this place (הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה).” When this verse is read in relationship with Solomon’s prayer in 6:40, “Now, my God, let your eyes (עֵינַי) be open and your ears (אָזְנוֹ) attentive to the prayer of this place” (הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה), the linguistic connections between the two verses denote that Yahweh’s promise in 7:15 functions as his answer to Solomon’s prayer in 6:40. Seen in this light, the prepositional phrase “in this place” (הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה) in both references refers to the house of Yahweh, the temple that Solomon built (6:20, 21, 26; 7:12), implying that Yahweh will respond to his people’s prayer offered at Solomon’s temple.⁶⁴ This view is further supported by 7:16 where Yahweh declares, “For now I have chosen and sanctified this house that my name may be forever. My eyes (עֵינַי) and my heart (לֵב) will be there for all time.” Based on this, it has been argued that “prayer and repentance were *not a private affair*; worship was expected to take place among the people who were called by God’s name.”⁶⁵ This statement appears to be correct when 7:13–15 is read in the context of Solomon’s prayer in ch. 6.

It is worth noting, however, that when the passage is read within its larger context, it is evident that for the Chronicler, prayer and repentance are both private and corporate, and Yahweh’s response to his people’s prayer is not limited to the temple alone. This is particularly evident in the Chronicler’s depiction of Manasseh’s repentance and prayer when he was captured and brought to Babylon (33:10–13). Yahweh used the Assyrians as his instruments to chastise Manasseh, who did evil things and refused to pay attention to Yahweh’s words (2 Chr 33:1–10). The Chronicler records that when Manasseh was in distress, he humbled himself (כָּנַע) before God and prayed (פָּלַל) to him. Then God was moved by his entreaty, and heard (שָׁמַע) his plea, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom (33:12–13). As Klein has observed, Manasseh’s entreating Yahweh’s favor, humbling himself, and prayer, followed by Yahweh’s granting of his prayer in 33:12–

13, “follow closely the outline described by Yahweh in response to Solomon” in 7:14: “If my people on whom my name is called humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land.”⁶⁶ Thus, when Manasseh’s (individual) prayer, repentance, and humbling himself are seen in relationship with Yahweh’s response to Solomon’s prayer in 7:14, it stands out that for the Chronicler, prayer and repentance can/should be done not only at the temple as God’s people as a community (corporate), but also as an individual (private) in a foreign land. While Yahweh’s response to prayer and repentance is closely associated with the temple or in Jerusalem, which Yahweh has chosen in chs. 6 and 7, it is not limited to the temple or Jerusalem alone because God responded to Manasseh’s prayer in a foreign land, Babylon (33:10–13).

Conclusion and Implications

In this article, we have investigated the meaning and significance of Yahweh’s promise to heal the land of his people in 2 Chr 7:13–16 within its immediate context and also within the book of 2 Chronicles by exploring how the text is connected linguistically and thematically with other related texts. Our study leads us to the following conclusions.

First, while the Chronicler emphasizes the significance of the temple in Solomon’s prayer (ch. 6) and Yahweh’s response to Solomon (ch. 7), his record of Manasseh’s humble repentance and prayer in Babylon, the land of his captivity, in 2 Chr 33:10–13 implies that Yahweh’s ability to respond to the prayer of his people is not limited to the temple and Jerusalem. Yahweh’s chastisement of Manasseh through the Assyrians, who brought him to Babylon, and his restoration of Manasseh from Babylon to Jerusalem (33:1–13) signify Yahweh’s sovereignty over the nations and his people.

Second, and related to the first, at the book level, 2 Chr 7:13–16 functions to promote the theme that Yahweh is sovereign over creation, the nations, and his people because he has the power to use natural disasters (drought, locust, and plague; v. 13; cf. 6:26–28) and powerful nations such

as Egypt (12:1–5), Assyria (33:10–11), and Babylon (36:11–21) as his instruments to bring judgment upon his own people as a divine chastisement, and he also has the power to bring healing, deliverance, restoration, and wholeness to his people and to their land when they humbly repent, pray to, and seek him (7:14; 12:6–7; 32:20–23; 33:12–13). Thus, in the book of 2 Chronicles, the theme of healing plays a significant role in the Chronicler's theology of retribution, repentance, and restoration.

Third, whereas the promise of healing was made to Israel as Yahweh's covenant people (7:14), not all Israel, but only the penitents who humble themselves, pray to, and seek Yahweh and turn to him experienced his healing and restoration, which Yahweh promised in 7:14 (cf. 12:6–7; 15:1–15; 30:11–20; *contra* 36:11–21). Throughout the book, the Chronicler presents that humble repentance and seeking Yahweh lead to healing and restoration, but stubbornness and refusal to turn humbly to Yahweh lead to his wrath and chastisement. Therefore, within the book of 2 Chronicles, the Chronicler's description of the disasters as Yahweh's chastisement of his people in 7:13 and his promise to heal their land that is contingent on the people's response in 7:13–16 function as both a warning and exhortation to his post-exilic audience to repent humbly, pray to, seek, and do Yahweh's will in the promised land as they look forward to an era of his healing and restoration.

Lastly, our investigation of 2 Chr 7:13–16 in relationship with other related texts in the book of 2 Chronicles has implications for contemporary readers and the Spirit-empowered community.⁶⁷ As has been noted in the introductory part of this article, some past studies that have examined our text within its immediate context assert that Yahweh's promise to heal the land of his people in 2 Chr 7:14 is limited only to the physical healing of the land of Israel. On the contrary, however, our study that examines the text not only in its immediate context but also in its larger context reveals that for the Chronicler, the meaning of healing the land in 2 Chr 7:14 extends far beyond the physical healing of the land of Israel that results in agricultural blessings, and also encompasses the restoration of bodily health,

forgiveness, spiritual restoration, racial reconciliation, wholeness, and well-being in every aspect of the lives of his people in the promised land.

Likewise, in 3 John 1–3, John prays for Gaius that he may prosper and enjoy good health just as his soul prospers (v. 2) because he is walking in the truth (v. 3). In this context, walking in the truth is closely linked with healing in a holistic sense that includes physical and spiritual health as well as wholeness in every aspect of one's life. This signifies that the Chronicler's view of Yahweh's healing in 2 Chr 7:14 is in line with John's understanding of healing in a broad sense, and thus promotes a holistic understanding of healing that results from having a right relationship with God.

Just as the Chronicler exhorts his post-exilic audience, who look forward to Yahweh's era of healing and restoration, to repent and turn to Yahweh in the promised land (2 Chr 7:13–16), in the book of Acts, Peter also exhorts his Jewish audience to repent and turn to God so that their sins may be blotted out and times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3:19–20). In this context, repentance and turning to Yahweh are identified as “turning each of you from your wicked ways” and accepting Jesus as the Messiah (Acts 3:26; cf. 2 Chr 7:14 “Turn from their wicked ways”). Furthermore, just as the Chronicler exhorts his audience to humble themselves and to seek Yahweh's will (2 Chr 7:14), in the New Testament, believers are also exhorted to submit humbly to God's sovereignty by seeking his kingdom and righteousness (Matt 6:33), and to humble themselves under God's mighty arm (1 Pet 5:6). Thus, when 2 Chr 7:13–16 is read in relationship with some related texts in the New Testament, it is evident that although the promise in 7:14 was primarily given to the Israelites, but not to contemporary Christians, the Chronicler's message in 7:13–16 exhorts not only his post-exilic audience but also readers in all ages to repent and turn from their wicked ways, and to submit humbly to God's sovereignty and seek his will.

Our examination of 2 Chr 7:13–16 at the book level reveals further that the Chronicler portrays Solomon and Hezekiah, who prayed to God on behalf of their people, as Yahweh's agents of healing and restoration (2 Chr

6:12–7:22, 30:1–20). Likewise, Luke also depicts the disciples and the apostolic community who were empowered by the Spirit as faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ who continued the holistic healing mission of Christ (e.g., Luke 4:18–21; 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1–47; 3:1–26; 4:22; 5:12–16; 8:5–13; 9:32–35; 10:36–42; 14:8–10; 20:7–12). Therefore, our reading of the healing passage in the book of 2 Chronicles in relationship with the New Testament suggests that we, the Spirit-empowered community, are called to continue the holistic healing mission of Christ by serving as his agents of healing and wholeness to our communities and to the world.



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Notes

¹ Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 30. In his study, Brown suggests that the general definition of the Hebrew word רָפָא (*rp*) is “restore, make whole,” and the word “heal” should be the first subheading of the general definition of “restore, make whole” because it is “used for the healing/making whole/restoring of body and spirit, land and water, city and nation” (29–30).

² Johannes C. de Moor, “Rapi’uma—Rephaim,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 88 (1976), 336. See also Martin J. Selman’s interpretation of 2 Chr 7:14 in his commentary, *2 Chronicles, A Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 338.

³ Jonathan Taylor, “The Application of 2 Chronicles 7:13–15,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 168 (April-June 2011), 152–54.

⁴ See, for instance, Brown’s treatment of 2 Chr 7:14 in his monograph, *Israel's Divine Healer*, 115. In his article, Taylor also examines 2 Chr 7:13–15 within its

immediate context and argues that healing the land refers to agricultural blessings (152) and 2 Chr 7:13–15 “supplies an answer to Solomon’s prayer in chapter 6, namely that God would hear the prayers offered in or directed toward the temple.” See “The Application of 2 Chronicles 7:13–15,” 156. While Taylor’s argument appears to be correct when the text is examined within its immediate context, he fails to see how Yahweh’s promise in 2 Chr 7:13–15 functions in relationship with other texts at the book level. This issue will be addressed more in detail in a section that examines 2 Chr 7:15–16 in relationship with 2 Chr 33:10–13.

⁵ Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 614.

⁶ J. G. McConville, *I & II Chronicles*, Daily Study Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 138.

⁷ Brian E. Kelly, “‘Retribution’ Revisited: Covenant, Grace and Restoration,” in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, eds. M. Patrick Graham, Steven L. McKenzie, and Gary N. Knoppers (London: T & T Clark International, 2003), 217.

⁸ Andrew E. Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 399.

⁹ Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), 56. Japhet also observes that when the Chronicler’s identification of the temple as “a house of sacrifice” in 2 Chr 7:12 is read in relationship with Isa 56:7, it is evident that for the Chronicler, sacrifice is the primary role of the Temple, and that a house of prayer is essentially a house of sacrifice.” See Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 614.

¹⁰ See Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 614.

¹¹ Ralph W. Klein, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 111.

¹² H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 225.

¹³ A. H. Konkel, “עֶזְרָה ‘sr,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 3:501.

¹⁴ Kelly, “‘Retribution’ Revisited: Covenant, Grace and Restoration,” 217.

- ¹⁵ J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 229.
- ¹⁶ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 94.
- ¹⁷ Christopher Wright, “ארץ ’erets,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 1:523.
- ¹⁸ Robert C. Stallman, “ארבה ’arbeh,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 1:491.
- ¹⁹ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 95.
- ²⁰ Robert C. Stallman, “ארבה ’arbeh,” 1:493.
- ²¹ James Crenshaw, *Joel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 157. Similarly, David Prior, *The Message of Joel, Micah & Habakkuk*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leister, UK: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 68, also asserts, “God, in acknowledging all the damage done to the land and to the people, promises to provide ample compensation for all they have suffered.”
- ²² Peter C. Craigie, *Twelve Prophets*, Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), 1:108.
- ²³ Mainz G. Mayer, “דבר Debher,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 3:126.
- ²⁴ R. K. Harrison, “דבר Deber I,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 1:915.
- ²⁵ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 294. See also Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 230.
- ²⁶ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 111.
- ²⁷ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 338.
- ²⁸ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 338.
- ²⁹ See the Targum translation of this verse: “But everyone who *prays* in the name of the Lord shall be delivered, for there shall be deliverance on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, as the Lord said. *They shall be delivered whom the Lord appoints*” [Italic his]. See Martin McNamara, ed., *The Targum of the Minor Prophets: Translated, with a Critical Introduction Apparatus, and Notes*, The

Aramaic Bible, trans. Kevin J. Cathcart and Robert P. Gordon (Edinburgh: T&T Clark LTD, 1989), 14:71.

³⁰ Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 261.

³¹ Crenshaw, *Joel*, 169.

³² Willem A. VanGemen, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 281, observes that in this context, the Sabbath is emphasized “not for its own sake but as an expression of loyalty.”

³³ John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 455.

³⁴ Bradley Gregory, “The Postexilic Exile in Third Isaiah: Isaiah 61:1–3,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126 (Fall 2007), 495.

³⁵ See William J. Dumbrell, “כִּנֵּה *kn*’,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemen (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 2:667.

³⁶ McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 250.

³⁷ Dumbrell, “כִּנֵּה *kn*’,” 667.

³⁸ McConville, *I & II Chronicles*, 139.

³⁹ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 400.

⁴⁰ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 586.

⁴¹ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 436.

⁴² Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 340.

⁴³ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 586.

⁴⁴ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 596.

⁴⁵ Chitra Chhetri, “בִּקֵּשׁ *bqs*,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Willem VanGemen ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 1:723.

⁴⁶ McConville, *I & II Chronicles*, 139.

⁴⁷ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 176.

⁴⁸ Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 266.

⁴⁹ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 111.

⁵⁰ Eugene H. Merrill, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2015), 360.

⁵¹ J. P. J. Olivier, “סלח *slh*,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Willem VanGemeren ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 3:260.

⁵² Selman views Yahweh’s healing of the land in 2 Chr 7:14 in the light of Jer 30:17 and 33:6–7 and argues that when healing is “applied to the land, as here, it can refer to bringing the exiles back to the Promised Land (Jer. 30:17; 33:6–7) or restoring the land and its people to peace and security (Jer. 33:6; Is 57:19).” Thus, he concludes that the clause “and I will heal their land” in 2 Chr 7:14 may refer to “the restoration of all God’s purposes for the people of Israel and for the Promised Land.” See Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 340.

⁵³ Taylor, “Application of 2 Chronicles,” 154.

⁵⁴ Taylor, for instance, argues that “Deuteronomy 11:16–17 underscores the point that healing the land relates specifically to the judgment of drought.” See “Application of 2 Chronicles,” 153.

⁵⁵ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 370.

⁵⁶ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 368.

⁵⁷ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 587.

⁵⁸ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 499.

⁵⁹ Merrill, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*, 515.

⁶⁰ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 499.

⁶¹ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 587.

⁶² Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 417.

⁶³ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 549.

⁶⁴ Stephen S. Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2001), 143.

⁶⁵ Taylor, “The Application of 2 Chronicles 7:13–15,” 145. Emphasis mine.

⁶⁶ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 482.

⁶⁷ In his Old Testament Theology book, John Walton notes that “The Old Testament was written for us but not to us.” See *Old Testament Theology for Christians: From Ancient Context to Enduring Belief* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 5. In the same vein, Kevin Vanhoozer also echoes that the

“Old Testament was written *for* if not *to* Christian disciples.” See “Toward a Theological Old Testament Theology?: A Systematic Theologian’s Take on Reading the Old Testament Theologically,” in *Interpreting the Old Testament Theologically: Essays in Honor of Willem A. VanGemeren*, Andrew T. Abernethy ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 316. Emphasis his.



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THE IMPACT OF HEALING ON THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY IN ASIA: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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Keywords *healing, missions, evangelism, Asian Pentecostalism, miracles*

Abstract

This article explores the role healing has played in the expansion of Christianity throughout Asia. It documents stories from various regions of Asia to demonstrate that healing is an effective method for evangelism.

Introduction

The followers of Christ are commissioned to be witnesses of Jesus Christ. This call to witness is a critical component in the building and expansion of God's kingdom (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15). Jesus was not just concerned with proclaiming the gospel, he also brought healing to the suffering. In fact, Jesus' whole life and ministry were characterized by displays of divine power, which both confirmed and helped promulgate the good news. In the same way, Christ delegated to his followers the power and authority to preach the gospel, cast out demons, and heal the sick (Luke 9:1). This commission was echoed in Paul's declaration, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1 Cor 2:4). From this point

of view, biblical proclamation of the gospel should go hand in hand with demonstration of the gospel in healing, signs, and wonders.

Although the continuity and validity of divine healing today continues to be questioned by some Christian traditions, the emergence and growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements has reignited the discussion on the validity of healing today. The explosive growth of Pentecostalism in Africa, Asia, and Latin America has contributed to the growing acceptance of healing as part of the gospel. Even non-Pentecostal churches in the global South frequently conduct healing services resulting in hundreds of people claiming divine healing and conversions.¹ In many places like China, Korea, and India, it is the phenomenon of healing that has accompanied the growth of Christianity across denominations.

Two prominent missionaries came to Asian countries to bring souls to Christ: Hudson Taylor to China in 1865 and William Carey to India in 1761. Their marvelous mission works resulted in bringing countless people to the knowledge of Christ. Subsequently, many other missionaries came and passionately worked for drawing non-believers to Christ, including Pentecostal missionaries. However, it was Pentecostalism that brought healing as an important part of Christian life and ministry. Pentecostal faith and ministry were introduced to China in 1907 by Bernt Berntsen, a missionary who was deeply impacted by his spiritual experience at the Azusa Street revival meeting.² It was also introduced to Japan in 1907 by several missionaries led by Martin L. Ryan.³ In 1928, Mary C. Rumsey, an American woman missionary, came to Korea as the first Pentecostal missionary.⁴

Pentecostals have excelled in promoting God's miraculous work of healing today as an essential element of evangelization. Supernatural healing has the potential to authenticate the witness of God's love and power, confirmed by signs and wonders. No one exemplified the wedding of healing and evangelism more than Oral Roberts, whose dynamic preaching and his "healing line" were watched by millions on television.⁵ What difference does the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit through

healing make in helping people to take a step of faith towards Christ? This study discusses the demonstrations of the Holy Spirit in healing among many Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal Christians, and its impact on the Asian church.

Experiences of Healing Power in Asia

The rapid growth of Pentecostalism in Asia over the past century has been remarkable. As Alan Anderson has pointed out, Asian Christianity has been given a “charismatic face” through explosive growth of Pentecostal communities.⁶ Because of this, healing, prophecy, exorcism, and tongues are naturally practiced in Asian Pentecostal churches. As I have pointed out, the religious history of Asia has provided fertile ground for Pentecostal practices of Christianity.

As the birthplace of all the world’s established religions and widespread animism, religions played a crucial role in providing solutions to life’s diverse challenges. Albeit the advent of modern education and economic development along with political independence from the middle of the twentieth century, religious faiths, both native and foreign to Asia, persist in all the East and Southeast Asian countries. Their dynamic worship, the expectancy of divine intervention, the teaching of empowerment by the Spirit, and external signs like speaking in tongues and healing have moved the fastest growing religion in the region. Their unique spirituality has brought the affective dimension of human existence into a religious experience.⁷

The phenomenon of the supernatural is prevalent partly because of Asia’s worldview, which recognizes that every religion includes elements of the supernatural.

The incorporation of healing as a major component of church growth has been exemplified in the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul Korea, where the practice of healing in worship and through ministry takes place

on the Prayer Mountain.⁸ Yonggi Cho has placed a strong emphasis on faith, prayer, and healing along with Spirit baptism accompanied by speaking in tongues as a sign. He passionately preached that God is pouring out his Spirit in our days according to the prophecy of Joel. The exceptional manifestation of divine healing and supernatural occurrences have become the main features of his ministry from the tent church era (1958–1961).⁹ Countless people were healed from diverse sicknesses, and subsequently, many non-Christians who experienced God’s healing came to his church. Cho’s sermons had a powerful impact on the lives of city slum dwellers, his initial congregation. Needless to say, divine healing was the driving force behind the growth of his church.

But Korea is not the only place in Asia where healing has been a major catalyst. Other Asian communities, such as the tribal people in the mountains of northern Luzon, Philippines, where my husband and I ministered for decades, have practiced these spiritual gifts during prayer time in the worship services when the Holy Spirit strongly moved upon the congregation. Within Asian Pentecostalism, cases of divine healing have contributed significantly to evangelism. Several cases are included as an illustration of the point.

Nepal

In 1961, Nepal had very few churches; only about twenty-five Christians were known to exist. However, by 2010, the number of Christians reached 850,801 adherents.¹⁰ Although Nepal is a Hindu kingdom, Christianity is experiencing a spiritual harvest. In the Himalayas, people are drawn to churches with an openness to the supernatural manifestation of God’s power, especially healing. Suresh Tamang’s testimony is a good illustration. When his mother was suffering from various diseases, his father and the village priest sacrificed several goats and chickens to their gods and prayed for her healing, but she did not improve. The priest traveled to other villages to buy more animals to sacrifice, but the mother soon died. In his sorrow, Tamang went to a Buddhist lama and implored him to bring back his

mother's life. The lama visited the house and chanted prayers for several hours, but with no result. Lastly, Tamang decided to call a group of Christians from a nearby village, having heard that their God had the power to heal. The Christians came to his home and prayed for his mother, while the entire village kept an eye on them. To Tamang's amazement and delight, his mother came back to life. As a result, he and his family, along with twenty other households, totaling more than 160 people, accepted the Lord. Today Tamang leads twenty new fellowships in the Himalayas and is closely associated with Asian Outreach.¹¹

It is known that healing frequently draws people to Christ in Nepal. One source asserts that "there must be thousands who have come to the Lord through healing."¹² One story from Nepal tells that an "expatriate carpenter ruptured his spleen in an isolated area" where necessary medical treatment was unavailable. But when the group of believers prayed, the man swiftly started to recuperate. Another story involves a researcher who traveled to Nepal and asked a Nepali Christian, Udaya Sharma, if he had seen any healing. He mentioned that in December 2005, he and several other Christians prayed for a person afflicted with a kidney problem for more than five years. The man was healed, a fact that was confirmed by his doctors who declared he no longer needed dialysis. As a result, numerous people in the village became Christians.¹³

Philippines

Elva Vanderbout was a legendary American Pentecostal missionary in northern Luzon, Philippines.¹⁴ In the entire year of 1954, each week she preached the gospel in an open-air service in Tuding where she proclaimed the healing power of God, based on Mark 16:15–18. Moved by the dire needs of the people, with her simple faith in the Word of God, she and her ministry team prayed for the sick and many people were healed.¹⁵

One such story was of a fourteen-year-old boy who was crippled because of a broken leg when he was 7 years old. As his bones grew, his leg abnormally developed so much that his deformed leg could not touch the

ground. Instead of walking, he hopped along with the help of a stick or by crawling along on the ground. He went to the witchdoctors for treatment, but there was no improvement. Because of this, his parents gave up on their pagan worship and decided to follow Christ.¹⁶ Vanderbout and her ministry team visited the boy's home. She laid her hands upon him and prayed, believing in Christ to heal. After the prayer, he threw away his stick because of his faith in God's healing.¹⁷ From that time on, he no longer used his stick as little by little his leg straightened up. Another story was of a young girl who had not been able to walk for a few years. Through Vanderbout's ministry, she was healed and began to walk. Her parents turned to Christ through the healing, and they attended the services regularly.¹⁸

Many were saved by healing experiences through God's power manifested in the ministry of Vanderbout and her ministry team. Such testimonies of healings caused revival to grow and added to the number of believers. The crowd attending her meetings normally comprised the whole village population. Such revivals soon spread. The revival in Tuding, for example, eventually spread to the whole Benguet Province and other provinces throughout the mountain region.

In 1951 in Banget Province, Manual Gonzales was very weak and the family prepared for his death. When Christians prayed for hours for his restoration, he suddenly began to shake himself and soon jumped out of bed. As he was fully recovered, his funeral was canceled. The word spread and more came to Christ. Years later, he became a prominent Christian leader.¹⁹

Dom Bustria, a rural pastor, who is now 61 years old, had epilepsy for twenty-five years. Often his seizures occurred around once a week. In his despair, he developed various addictions, particularly to alcohol. In November 1988, at the naval base in Diego Garcia, he accepted Christ as his personal Savior. From that day forward, he never had another epileptic attack, nor did he have any desire for his previous addictions. That has lasted more than two decades. He began sharing Christ in villages and finally left his well-paying work to become a pastor.²⁰

Malaysia

John Savarimuthus was the Indian bishop of the Anglican Church in mainly Muslim West Malaysia. He postponed a triple-bypass heart surgery due to his extremely demanding ministry. As his heart condition degenerated, however, the surgery was at last arranged. The night before the planned surgery, in prayer, he sincerely dedicated his heart problem to God. While still in prayer, he abruptly felt hotness in his heart. The next day, he had a pre-operation test and his heart condition turned miraculously normal. It was verified the sensation he had felt earlier was the touch of God's healing. Since this experience, when he prays for the sick, people start getting healed. He even held a healing service in Kuala Lumpur's stadium with permission from the government.²¹ Through his healing ministry, many sick people and non-believers came to the knowledge of Christ.

Myanmar

In Myanmar, the widespread personal accounts of miracles—including healing of cancer, tonsillitis, blindness, and deafness—have enabled the church to grow. A village priest who was close to dying was miraculously cured through prayer and became a believer, and a woman paralyzed for twenty years was radically healed.²² The expectation of the indigenous religion often challenges Christian works.²³ Lang Do Khup, a Baptist minister, was challenged by a village priest that the Christian God is not strong enough in healing in comparison to the traditional spirits. The minister began to seek God for the gift of healing. When he saw a lame girl in his church, he was urged to pray. Having returned home, the urge grew stronger to go back to her and pray again. After his second prayer, she stood up and took steps with no assistance. It shocked the entire village, both Christians and non-Christians alike. In the area, such a supernatural experience had never been known as part of the Christian life. This occurrence of healing was a watershed moment for bringing the villagers to the Christian faith.

Cambodia

As a nation, Cambodia was suffering from national trauma from the genocide campaign of the Pol Pott regime when the Christian message of healing was introduced in recent years. In five years (1975–1979), close to 2 million people, or more than 20 percent of its population, were killed by the Khmer Rouge government. Coupled with the claims of supernatural healing by folk Buddhism, healing was a Cambodian national agenda.²⁴ There was a widow in her fifties known for her mental disability. Sometimes she violently shook her body, while at other times, she could not acknowledge her mother. Many times, she lay on the ground. She was also deaf. Some Christians pitied her and prayed for her. Soon, she was led to faith in Christ, and she confessed her sins. At that moment, she felt something expelled from her ears, and from that time on, she could hear. This was followed by the disappearance of other symptoms. Her normal life was restored with no trace of symptoms.²⁵ Her healing and other people's healing became widely known, resulting in a large number coming to the Lord.

Indonesia

Many people have reported on miracles as part of the revival in West Timor, Indonesia, a few decades ago. John Wimber recounts, "A key element of this revival was its indigeneity of appropriateness for its Indonesian context. In its beginning, Johannes Ratuwalu, reportedly immature in his faith but responding to a vision, prayed for healings from October to December 1964, with many people being healed."²⁶ Though the numbers may be overstated, many have assessed that "thirty thousand healings through prayer took place in this period."²⁷ One study by a western observer stated that many blind and deaf people experienced healing through one particular person's prayers in a short length of time. He even reported "many eyewitness accounts of water being turned to wine."²⁸ The manifestations of healing were instrumental in bringing many non-Christians to Christ and impacted church growth.

South Korea

Prayer for destitute people, frequently with “report of miraculous answers,” has been considered to be a crucial contribution to church growth at Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea, the world’s largest church. Its founder, Yonggi Cho himself, experienced divine healing. He suffered from severe tuberculosis when he was young. Very often he was in bed with excruciating pain for a long duration. He put his trust in God and experienced a miraculous healing. To the astonishment of his doctor and his family, Cho was absolutely cured. A new set of x-rays showed that the large spot on his lung had gone.²⁹

Another healing story is of Jürgen Moltmann, a renowned theologian who once attended a theological conference hosted by Yoido Full Gospel Church. He offered his gratitude to Pastor Cho for his ministry and “theological reflection.” Moltmann expresses in his autobiography that he was suffering from recurring asthma when he visited the church. According to him, Cho “took my hand and prayed; and when I flew home, the asthma was in abeyance and remained so for some weeks. I do not want to make miraculous healing out of this, but it was certainly unusual.”³⁰

A seminarian named Jun Kim in Korea had an accident in 2004, falling from a two-story height. “His face was paralyzed from a head injury; he could not open one eye or control his facial movement but decided against surgery for his head injury.” Another patient in the same hospital room had the same signs, and the operation was unsuccessful. He was surprised that Kim would decline the option of the operation. He continued his prayer committing his problem to the Lord, asking whether God would heal him or not. The next morning, he was able to begin to move his face. The doctor who examined him was astonished by this unexplainable improvement. He was allowed to go home and keep exercising his face, which was not fully restored. Kim’s roommate was also astounded that Kim was discharged. An eyewitness declared such as “direct experiences of healing, as in the Gospels and Acts.”³¹

China

A large number of Christians have reported cases of healing and exorcism in the Chinese church. Earlier reports from some members of the official China Christian Council suggested that roughly “half of the new conversions of the last twenty years have been caused by faith healing experiences” of the convert or someone close to them. Speaking more broadly of Christians in China in general, one researcher estimates a much higher number. “[A]ccording to some surveys, 90% of new believers cite healing as a reason for their conversion.” Whatever may be the exact figure, the expectation and experience of healing in China is widespread. Testimonies of healing are so common that even some government officials recognize that many people become Christians in response to claims of prayers resulting in healings.³² The practice of healing and exorcism is widespread among unregistered rural churches where it is a regular practice for believers to visit sick people to pray for their healing.³³

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, healing miracles were instrumental in bringing numerous people to Jesus Christ. Craig Keener documents one case where doctors concluded that Nadaraj, a Hindu man, had an incurable case of blood cancer. Out of desperation, he asked pastor D. F. Rodrigo to pray for him and he was miraculously healed. Nadaraj became a believer right away and later an elder in the church. Another healing story is about a Buddhist who became anguished because of his failing health from a hole in his heart. He requested Pastor Premadasa Ginigaloda to pray for his healing. Subsequent medical tests showed a healthy heart, to the astonishment of the cardiologists.³⁴ He truly experienced God’s almighty power of healing.

Keener gives another healing account of a Sri Lankan man who became a Christian after the experience of healing through the prayers of a pastor.

For two years, Wimalasiri's right foot suffered swelling, and doctors, medicine men, and even a chief exorcist were unable to provide relief. He, therefore, scoffed when one evening some Christians prayed for his foot, though he felt something strange in his foot at that moment. The next morning he awoke to discover his foot completely healed. Despite initial resistance, he became a Christian after about three more months and eventually established a church, now quite large, in an area that previously had very few Christians.³⁵

India

In 1992, Nivedita Ghosh in India had an operation followed by radiation treatment for her final-stage brain cancer. It had completely ruined her salivary glands, thus, taking away the capability to speak and eat. Doctors determined that she would not live for more than five months. While she was unconscious, a believer in her neighborhood visited her and offered a passionate prayer for her healing. To the family's amazement, Nivedita's fever suddenly disappeared, and she started speaking. The family immediately removed their idol figures from the home and began to attend a church. For the following months, she was able to swallow food. Within six months, she became well and normal. Her neurosurgeon tested her and declared that she was cancer free. The doctor could not even locate the surgery marks from her earlier operation.³⁶ This marvelous testimony traveled across her village and amazed both believers and non-believers. As a result, numerous unbelievers began to come to church.

Conclusion

Healing was an integral part of Jesus' ministry along with his preaching and teaching. It served as the powerful demonstration of God's power and love. It also drew people to the presentation of God's kingdom. This crucial component of ministry continues today across Asia. Without doubt, healing

has played a vital role in evangelism and church growth, and will continue today and in the future in Asia.



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HEALING EN MASSE

EXAMINING THE UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED MOVEMENT TO THE PRACTICE OF MASS EVANGELISM

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Abstract

This article explores the unique innovation of mass healing evangelism by Spirit-empowered evangelists as an effective methodology for reaching people for Christ. It will trace the development of the idea of healing “en masse” in the Pentecostal tradition. It showcases a case study from a crusade conducted by the author in the nation of Brazil in which healing and evangelism were wedded together as an effective ministry strategy.

Introduction

During the coursework for my Doctorate of Ministry degree, I took a class on evangelism at Multnomah University in Portland, Oregon. There were ten students in the class, two students were Pentecostals from Africa, and the rest were from traditional evangelical backgrounds in North America and Europe. During a discussion about the role that healing plays in the calling of the evangelist, one evangelical student expressed surprise that when he did a crusade in Africa, the local Pentecostal believers expected him to pray for the sick after giving an altar call for salvation. As a

Pentecostal myself, I responded, “I believe evangelists should pray for the sick. In Acts 8, Philip was an evangelist who performed miracles when he preached the gospel in Samaria.” Another evangelical student responded that he did not believe that the model of the evangelist in Acts was prescriptive for today’s paradigm for evangelism but was only descriptive of what happened in New Testament times. After our discussion, the two African Pentecostals in the class were glad that I defended Pentecostal practices. My classmate’s response, though not surprising in a setting like this one, did highlight for me that the practice of integrating healing with evangelism is mostly unique to the Spirit-empowered movement. Spirit-empowered evangelists have made a unique contribution to the practice of evangelism and their methods of linking miracles and evangelism have proven to be effective, especially in the developing world.

Where did the practice of integrating prayer for healing with evangelism originate? The development of the methodology of mass evangelism can be traced back to Charles Finney (1792–1875). Finney was the first one to develop the methodology of evangelism through mass organization. In contrast to Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), Finney believed that a revival does not require a divine move of God; instead, he believed it could be organized using the proper techniques. When Finney came to town, his team secured a location, organized churches, and invited local churches to supply a big choir.¹ Similarly, D. L. Moody (1837–1899) used his business background to add business-like principles to the process of preparing a meeting, including the use of extensive advertising.² This formula was used by later evangelists such as R. A. Torrey (1856–1928) and Billy Sunday (1862–1935). This paradigm is essentially the blueprint for the evangelical model of evangelism exemplified by Billy Graham.³

From this first paradigm, a second paradigm has developed in mass evangelism exemplified by Luis Palau. In the early years of his ministry, Palau followed Billy Graham’s model, but later, developed an attractional methodology that sought to draw people using extreme sports, a skate

park, food vendors, and children's activities like bouncy houses and face painting.⁴ To match his methodology for reaching people, he renamed his evangelistic events "festivals."⁵ In the context of an entertainment driven society seeped in scientific skepticism, the Palau method of using entertainment and music to attract the lost is useful. Palau's son Kevin further developed this idea with an initiative called "CityServe," a holistic approach to evangelism where the evangelist works to serve the local community.⁶ Because the goal of the evangelist is to preach the gospel to as many people as possible, evangelists use a variety of attractions in order to persuade people to attend their events. Both of these paradigms employed by evangelical evangelists in mass evangelism have been effective, both at home and abroad.

However, evangelists in the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition have developed this third paradigm of evangelism: the healing crusade. In the context of developing nations where medical resources are limited the Spirit-empowered practice of emphasizing the healing power of God has proved to be an effective way to attract people to an evangelistic event.⁷ Advertising miracles is a different kind of "attractional" model that can be used to reach people, particularly in the global south. It is this model that has contributed significantly to Pentecostalism becoming the fastest growing segment of Christianity. As Candy Gunther Brown has pointed out, outside of North America, 80–90 percent of first-generation Christians attribute their conversions primarily to divine healing.⁸

This article will explore the unique innovation of mass healing evangelism by Spirit-empowered evangelists as an effective methodology for reaching people for Christ. It will trace the development of the idea of healing "en masse" in the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition. Finally, as a case study of the effectiveness of this unique approach, I will share research from a crusade conducted by the author in the nation of Brazil in which healing and evangelism were wedded together as an effective ministry strategy.

A History of Healing Evangelism in the Spirit-Empowered Movement

The roots of healing evangelism in the Pentecostal Movement can be traced back to the ministry of John Alexander Dowie (1847–1907).⁹ As a young man, Dowie was healed instantaneously of dyspepsia. Because of this miracle, he felt God was calling him into the ministry. In Newtown, Australia, over forty members of his congregation died in an epidemic. This tragedy caused him to hate disease for the rest of his life. He said, “My heart was sick and faint as I saw my people lay dying in this epidemic and did not know how to tell them to get healing, the healing I myself had received. I did not know how to preach divine healing as a doctrine or how to practice it as a ministry.”¹⁰ He began to study God’s word concerning divine healing and became convinced that God healed people today.

In 1888, Dowie came to America as a missionary and in 1890 established his headquarters in Chicago. In an effort to reach people, he built a tabernacle at the south entrance to the World’s Fair, across the street from Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West Show. Above the tabernacle was a twenty-foot sign advertising God’s healing power. Two key people were healed during this time, which catapulted his ministry into a national spotlight. One was the niece of Buffalo Bill Cody and the other was the cousin of Abraham Lincoln.¹¹ Eventually, he built the largest wooden arena of his time, which seated 8,000 people. Despite his flaws, he was a significant contributor to what would be known as the “healing movement” in America.¹²

As James Robinson has pointed out, Dowie’s emphasis on divine healing was the beginning of a unique approach not shared by earlier healing ministers like Charles Cullis and A. B. Simpson.¹³ For Dowie, healing was linked to his view of restorationism that God was restoring the gospel of healing and miracles in the last days. In this was the seeds of the idea that if salvation is for everyone, then healing is also for everyone as a part of the gospel. This was an important concept that would be

instrumental in the development of the Pentecostal theology of healing “en masse.”

After Dowie’s death, the gospel of healing became an essential part of the explosion of Pentecostalism following the Azusa Street Revival in 1906. Early Pentecostal healing evangelists such as Marie Woodworth-Etter (1844–1924), John G. Lake (1870–1935), F. F. Bosworth (1877–1958), Aimee Semple McPherson (1890–1944), and Smith Wigglesworth (1859–1947) implemented the practice of praying for the sick during evangelistic campaigns.¹⁴ They taught that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8). Pentecostals preached a “full-Gospel,” good news for the body, the soul, and for the spirit.¹⁵ Within the restorationist theology, they believed that the apostolic ministry included signs and wonders. This meant they were concerned with more than the saving of souls; they also believed in the healing of the body.

F. F. Bosworth

While most Pentecostals preached divine healing, perhaps the most significant early Pentecostal healing evangelist was F. F. Bosworth. Healed of a lung problem as a young man, Bosworth’s family moved to Dowie’s city, Zion, Illinois, and he became the director of the Zion City concert band.¹⁶ He was filled with the Holy Spirit when Charles Parham came to Zion. He also visited the Azusa Street Revival and pastored the First Assembly of God church in Dallas, Texas, for eight years. In 1912, he invited Maria Woodworth-Etter to hold six months of meetings at his church. Bosworth turned his attention to itinerate evangelism and for the next three decades became one of the best-known prototypes for what became the healing evangelist in the 1950s.¹⁷ Bosworth is best known for writing *Christ the Healer* in 1924, a classic book on God’s healing power that has seen multiple reprints over the years.¹⁸ In it Bosworth argued that if salvation was for all, then healing would also be for all. Not only could God make people whole, but God *wanted* to make people whole.¹⁹ In Ottawa, Canada, in the 1930s, he conducted a campaign that filled an 11,000-seat

auditorium. So many miracles were reported at this campaign that people brought the sick in cars, ambulances, and even hearses.²⁰ Through his largescale crusades, Bosworth became the standard other evangelists looked up to, including the next generation of Pentecostal evangelists that reshaped healing evangelism in the 1950s.

Voices of Healing

Bosworth became an important link in the development of mass healing evangelism because of his mentorship of many of the Voice of Healing evangelists of the 1950s–1960s, including William Branham (1909–1965), Gordon Lindsey (1906–1973), A. A. Allen (1911–1970), Oral Roberts (1918–2009), and T. L. Osborn (1923–2013).²¹ Each of these noted healing evangelists began simply preaching salvation and healing in revivals. But each was also convinced that healing was an essential part of the “full gospel” and used the prospect of healing as a means by which evangelism can be more effective. Gordon Lindsey, the architect behind the healing movement wrote, “[h]ealing the sick is a Christ ordained method for evangelization around the world.”²²

At first, Voice of Healing evangelists followed the traditional Pentecostal methodology of laying hands on each individual who needed healing, either in a healing line or a healing tent. However, the increasing popularity and the growing crowds, which were filling ever-larger revival tents, created a new dilemma. How does a preacher lay hands on everyone when the crowds consist of thousands of people at a time? One approach used was to hand out cards to attendees to help them organize and select those who could enter the healing lines. In 1951, Gordon Lindsey explained this procedure: “It has been found that the only satisfactory way to deal with large crowds is to give out cards that are methodically numbered or alphabetized. This allows for people to receive prayer in an orderly manner.”²³ William Branham and Oral Roberts, perhaps the exemplars of mass healing evangelism, both used this method of giving out cards to the sick so they could be called forward for individual prayer. Roberts’ crowds

were so large he would often pray for hours individually for people.²⁴ This model, while effective for those who received prayer, was not sustainable for the evangelists.

Tommy Lee and Daisy Osborn

The challenge of praying for healing of large crowds led to a new innovation by Tommy Lee Osborn and Daisy Osborn (1924–1995). The Osborns were unique among Voice of Healing evangelists because they primarily conducted healing crusades internationally, particularly in Africa, rather than America. T. L. and Daisy went to India as missionaries at the ages of 20 and 21 in 1945. While they were in India, they were disappointed at the lack of converts. Osborn found it difficult to communicate the gospel to the Hindu and Muslim people of India and returned home disappointed after only ten months.²⁵ When they returned to the States, they began to fast and pray to discover the reason why their ministry was so ineffective. In their desperation Osborn discovered the key to effective evangelism is “people must have proof of the gospel and evidence that Jesus is alive.”²⁶ This realization would come through a series of circumstances.

To learn more about how to minister healing, T. L. Osborn tried to attend a meeting conducted by healing evangelist Charles Price, but Price died right before the camp meeting. Osborn cried out to God, “Lord, who will now pack the nation’s auditoriums and proclaim the gospel in power and miracle demonstrations, so that the people will believe God’s word?”²⁷ In response to his prayer, Osborn received four visions of Jesus that changed the way he saw evangelism. In July 1947, he heard Hattie Hammond preach a sermon titled “If You Ever See Jesus, You Can Never Be the Same Again.”²⁸ Osborn cried and prayed all night asking for an encounter with the living Savior and the next morning, he reported, “the Lord Jesus walked into my bedroom at 6:00 am.”²⁹ Osborn’s second vision of Jesus occurred at a William Branham (1909–1965) meeting in Portland, Oregon. At the meeting, Osborn witnessed hundreds of people being healed instantaneously. Osborn said, “I was captivated by the deliverance of a little

deaf girl over whom he prayed.”³⁰ For Osborn, this was a revelation that Jesus could work through a person. Osborn’s third vision of Jesus was in the pages of the New Testament. As T. L. and Daisy read through the New Testament they were impacted by Heb 13:8, that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever,” which meant that Jesus could do miracles just as he did in the New Testament.³¹ The final working out of this came when the Osborns held a healing revival at their church in Oregon and all the people they prayed for reported being healed.³² The Osborns became convinced that preaching about a miracle-working Jesus was the answer to world evangelism. Soon thereafter, they left the United States once again and went to Jamaica.³³

In Jamaica in 1948, Osborn tried to lay hands on each individual who needed healing, but he was quickly overwhelmed because of the number of people who wanted prayer.³⁴ Then, he tried to give out numbered cards like Branham, but he soon had to stop because he found that the policemen who were assigned to give out the healing cards were selling them to the people instead of giving them away. Because of the large crowd, Osborn was disappointed because many people had to leave without receiving prayer.

The challenge of praying for large crowds came to a head. Osborn describes his questions in his book *Healing En Masse*, published in 1958:

Is it necessary to lay hands on the sick as a point of contact for setting a time to believe? Was it God’s plan that sick people form long lines to be healed? What is the solution to the problem of ministering healing to large audiences of suffering people without the system of numbered prayer cards and prayer lines?³⁵

Two critical ideas were identified that helped Osborn solve this dilemma. First was a conversation he had with F. F. Bosworth about the need for a methodology that would meet the needs of the masses.³⁶ Bosworth asked Osborn, “If I give an altar call and fifty people respond and I lead them in a prayer of salvation, how many of them are saved?” Osborn replied, “All of them.” Bosworth continued, “So, if I give a call for healing

and fifty people respond and I lead them in a prayer for healing, how many of them can God heal?” Osborn asked, “Why not all of them?” Because of this conversation, the idea to pray a single mass prayer for healing was born.³⁷

The second moment came at a meeting in Flint, Michigan, in June 1949, where the meeting was supposed to be William Branham’s crusade, but Branham was exhausted from laying hands on thousands of individuals and invited Osborn to come finish the meeting.³⁸ Osborn recalled what happened that night when he suddenly realized he could pray for large numbers of people to be healed at the same time. He wrote, “God seemed to say to me, ‘Why do you limit my power? I can heal ten thousand as easily as one.’”³⁹ Osborn explained his reasoning,

If one sufferer stands before me in a prayer line, I lay my hands on that one and pray to God. I believe He hears my prayer [and] the sufferer is made whole. That is proof that God has heard my prayer . . . Since I can pray and God hears and answers my prayer, why do I not ask God to perform a thousand miracles at the same time? If He is God, His power is unlimited! If He can do one miracle, He can do a thousand miracles at the same time!⁴⁰

Osborn wrote,

I knew that if a thousand people wanted to accept Christ and be saved, I would not pray for each one individually; I would teach them all to call on the Lord and to believe at one time. All who believed would be saved. I knew the same method should be followed in ministering to the sick.⁴¹

At that meeting in Flint, Michigan, Osborn decided to test his idea.⁴² He asked everyone who was deaf to come forward and fifty-four people responded. In one prayer, Osborn commanded the deaf spirits to leave. He reported, “All of those present received their hearing immediately, except three. By the next day, they too had recovered.”⁴³ Osborn concluded,

I knew that Mass Evangelism was the only way to reach the world for Jesus. I knew we must demonstrate the power of Christ on a mass scale if the millions of Heathen souls are to witness Christ's power. I knew that no person could pray for the masses individually. HEALING EN MASSE is the only answer.⁴⁴

After the meeting in Flint, Osborn continued to experiment with the best way to pray for the sick. In 1951, at a crusade in Colon, Panama, a Foursquare pastor reported on one of Osborn's meetings. He said,

The first night that Brother Osborn prayed for the sick, many pushed forward to the platform, and the only way to restore order was to dismiss the service. The next night, instead of forming a prayer line, he prayed for all the sick at once, mentioning in prayer many of the infirmities of the people.⁴⁵

Many healings were recorded at the crusade in Panama, and thereafter praying a mass prayer for the sick became a defining ingredient in Osborn's preaching. Osborn believed "that the most fundamental lesson possible to learn about missions and evangelism is that without miracles, Christianity is little more than another dead religion."⁴⁶

Over the next few years, Osborn developed his very simple methodology for healing en masse. Osborn found that through testimonies of people who were healed and a simple message about the power of Jesus, sick people would be healed. When people were healed, he invited them to the platform to share their testimonies. These testimonies became the catalyst for attendees to return to their neighborhoods and invite their friends and family to come to the crusade. Over his seven decades of ministry, Osborn's method of praying a mass prayer for the sick at evangelistic campaigns was adopted by many other healing evangelists, including Aril Edvardsen (1938–2008) from Norway, Benson Idahosa (1938–1998) from Nigeria, Robert Kayanja (1962–present) from Uganda, D. G. S. Dhinakaran (1935–2008) from India, and Peter Youngren (1954–

present) from Canada. But no one has more successfully utilized Osborn's "healing en masse" concept than Reinhard Bonnke (1940–present).

Reinhard Bonnke

Reinhard Bonnke and his wife Anni accepted the call to be missionaries in Africa in 1967. Over the next seven years they served as missionaries in the country of Lesotho, reaching out to people in the traditional way, but Bonnke became frustrated at the low number of salvations. A critical moment came when Bonnke saw videos of Osborn's healing crusades and read Osborn's books. He began to realize that Osborn's method of healing en masse was the key to reaching Africa with the Gospel. God also showed him a vision of a "blood-washed Africa," an Africa washed in the blood of Jesus. Bonnke began to proclaim, "All of Africa shall be saved, from Cape Town to Cairo."⁴⁷

In 1974, his evangelistic organization Christ for All Nations held its first crusade in the national stadium in the country of Botswana. Out of the many churches in the city, only one small fellowship decided to help with the crusade. Bonnke was disappointed when only one hundred people came the first night. Yet, as he prayed for the sick, a man jumped up and shouted, "I've just been healed!" Other healings began to happen, and news spread across the city that God was doing miracles. By the last night of that crusade, the entire stadium was packed.⁴⁸ Thousands were saved and healed, and twelve years later, when Bonnke returned to do another crusade in the city, the leader of a large denomination announced that 80 percent of his pastors had been saved in that first crusade.⁴⁹

Bonnke's healing crusades have continued to draw enormous crowds across Africa. On November 12, 2000, 1.6 million people came to a single crusade meeting that Bonnke held in Lagos, Nigeria.⁵⁰ In this six-day crusade, over 6 million people heard the gospel message. Blind eyes were opened, breast tumors disappeared, the lame walked, mutes began to speak, and many other miracles were reported. Six million booklets were passed out and over 2,000 churches participated in following up on all the converts

who were saved. The effectiveness of merging healing and evangelism as a tool for bringing people to Christ in Africa can be seen in the over 78 million documented decisions for Christ in the ministry of Bonnke.⁵¹ As some of the leading African scholars attest, there is great potential for evangelistic success when evangelism is coupled with healing in the Global South.⁵²

A Spirit-Empowered Model of Evangelism

This brief history of the development of healing evangelism demonstrates a unique contribution to the practice of evangelism that has been proven to be effective, especially in the developing world. In contrast to the other evangelical models, by merging prayers for healing with evangelism, this model provides us with the following advantages.

First, healing was used by Spirit-empowered evangelists as an evangelistic tool to instill faith in people that the God they preached about is real. The testimonies of God's healing power solidified the believer's faith and attracted others to faith in God. In an age of scientific skepticism and religious pluralism, the appeal to a God who heals provided powerful evidence that God is real. This special, tangible reality demonstrated through a Jesus who can heal the sick gives Christianity a powerful advantage in the marketplace of religious ideas.

Second, healing was an effective strategy to reach people in the developing world. While healing evangelism originated in America, more rational evangelical models were also effective in a Western society dominated by the influence of the anti-supernatural philosophy of David Hume. But in much of the Majority World, the supernatural and natural are perceived to be much closer together and many believe that what happens in the spiritual realm impacts the physical realm on a daily basis. This makes the integration of healing and evangelism much more effective than other models. Healing of the body, exorcism of evil spirits, the presence of invisible angels, and spiritual blessings are very real concepts because of the spiritual characteristics that already exist in these cultures.⁵³

Third, healing was an effective way for the evangelist to minister to the felt needs of people. Evangelical evangelists focused on meeting spiritual needs, like the need for peace with God or forgiveness of sin, but by praying for healing, Spirit-empowered evangelists appeal to the physical and emotional needs of their audiences. They preached a gospel that not only dealt with sin issues, but also provided people with hope that physical healing was part of the totality of God's salvation. Like Jesus in the story of the paralyzed man who was let down through the roof (Matt 9:2–8; Mark 2:1–12), the Spirit-empowered evangelist offered hearers both forgiveness of sin and physical healing.

Finally, healing was modeled after Jesus' method of evangelism. Jesus proclaimed the good news with signs and wonders following. This pattern of evangelism continued with the early Apostles. Their message of salvation was confirmed by healing as a sign that the kingdom of God had come.⁵⁴ In a skeptical world, Spirit-empowered evangelists model this reality to bring about God's reign in the lives of unsaved people around the world.

A Healing Crusade in Brazil

In this final section, I want to offer a case study of one of my own crusades to demonstrate how the Spirit-empowered practice of praying for healing enhances an evangelistic event. As an evangelist, I have traveled to over seventy nations and done over one hundred healing crusades. I want to focus on a recent meeting I conducted in Caicò, Brazil, in 2018 that emphasized the Spirit-empowered practice of praying a mass prayer for the sick.⁵⁵

Caicó is a city located in Northeast Brazil in the state of Rio Grande do Norte. There are 67,554 people who live in the city.⁵⁶ The city has the highest rate of suicide in the state and the third-highest rate of suicide in the country of Brazil. Local pastors identified idolatry and depression as major issues in the region.⁵⁷ All nine of the evangelical churches in the city were invited and participated in the crusade. The total membership of these nine churches equals 1,357, which is about 2 percent of the population of the

city of Caicó. A three-day training event for local believers was held in order to train them in how to pray for the sick. To advertise the crusade, we emphasized in our promotions that attendees could “Come and Receive a Miracle.”

On Saturday night, an estimated 4,300 people attended the crusade, of which 48.7 percent of those surveyed before the crusade reported that they arrived with some sort of pain or ailment in their bodies. Like the Spirit-empowered evangelists presented in this study, I preached the gospel message that God can forgive sins and heal the physical body. I prayed a mass prayer for healing for the whole crowd. A total of 641 people filled out decision cards at the crusade indicating they had decided to follow Jesus. According to the post-crusade survey, 78.5 percent of those who came with pain in their bodies felt better after the healing prayer. In a post-crusade survey of 182 people who answered they came with a need for physical healing, 176 (96.7 percent) “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they had received a miracle.⁵⁸ While it does not account for the experience of the whole crowd, the remarkably high number of those surveyed who felt they experienced healing confirms that healing was a felt need for a large number of attendees.

Advertising the possibility of healing through the power of God played an enormous role in convincing people to come to the crusade. On the question, “Why did you come to this meeting?”, fifty-five out of 169 (32.54 percent) respondents on Friday night and 116 out of 460 (25.22 percent) on Saturday night said they came because they needed a miracle. Another forty-six out of 169 (27.22 percent) on Friday and 106 out of 460 (23 percent) on Saturday said they came because they wanted to witness miracles.⁵⁹ The fact that healing was a major factor for over half of the attendees to the crusade demonstrates that advertising healing is an effective attractional element or “bait” in the evangelist’s efforts of “fishing for men.”

Healing also played a significant role in the responsiveness of the people to the call for salvation. A total of 641 (14.9 percent) people at the crusade filled out decision cards indicating they had decided to follow Jesus.

On the open-ended question, “Why did you pray the salvation prayer?”, the need for healing was primary for 98 percent of respondents. Examples of what they wrote include: “Because I needed a miracle,” “I needed to be healed,” “Because my daughter needed to be healed.”⁶⁰ This suggests that healing provides a space for people to believe and respond to the call for salvation.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the development of the methodology of mass healing evangelism and how this method continues to be effective to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The case study of the Brazil crusade confirms that the merging of healing and evangelism in the Spirit-empowered movement over the past century continues to be vital to its success. First, healing evangelism is effective because it is attractional. The major reason people came to the Caicó crusade was because they either needed a miracle or they wanted to see a miracle with their own eyes. Other evangelical methods, such as Graham’s organizational expertise or Palau’s attractional events have worked well for people in the United States, but for those in other countries, Spirit-empowered evangelists emphasize a holistic approach that appeals to more basic needs. Second, healing was not only effective for drawing people, it was a real benefit to those who came. Many of the people who came to the crusade came in search of a miracle and reported that they were healed by God. Not only does healing give people hope in a God who loves them, it also inspires them to put their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Third, the testimonies of healing were effective in convincing others that they should also come to the meeting. This sense of knowing that God is real helps local believers stay committed to sharing their faith with others and can lead to both spiritual and numerical church

growth. In the years to come, I believe healing will continue to play a role in the growth of the Spirit-empowered movement around the world.



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Notes

¹ Finney developed a variety of “New Measures” that were both effective and controversial. Finney wrote that a revival “is not a miracle, or dependent on a miracle in any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means.” Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals* (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835), 12.

² Bruce J. Evensen, *God’s Man for the Gilded Age: D. L. Moody and the Rise of Modern Mass Evangelism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 47; and Lyle W. Dorsett, *A Passion for Souls: The Life of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody, 1997), 236–37, 264–67.

³ Timothy P. Johnson, *Examining Billy Graham’s Theology of Evangelism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 3–4, notes that Graham himself identified himself in the line of Edwards, Moody, and Sunday as his pattern for modern evangelical evangelism.

⁴ Hongnak Koo, “The Impact of Luis Palau on Global Evangelism: An Evaluation of His Evangelistic Theology and Strategy,” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 173–74.

⁵ See Luis Palau and David Sanford, *Calling America and the Nations to Christ* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 74.

⁶ Kevin Palau, *Unlikely: Setting Aside Our Differences to Live out the Gospel* (New York: Howard, 2015), 7.

- ⁷ For information on the rise of healing evangelism see David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ. Press, 1975).
- ⁸ Candy Gunther Brown, ed., *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- ⁹ James Robinson, *Divine Healing: The Holiness-Pentecostal Transition Years, 1890–1906* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013).
- ¹⁰ John Alexander Dowie, *The Gospel of Divine Healing and How I Came to Preach It* (Chicago: Zion Publishing, 1874), 9–14.
- ¹¹ James William Opp, *The Lord for the Body: Religion, Medicine, & Protestant Faith Healing in Canada, 1880–1930* (Montreal: McGill—Queen’s University Press, 2005), 93.
- ¹² Paul G. Chappell, “The Divine Healing Movement in America,” (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1983), 284–330.
- ¹³ Robinson, *Divine Healing*, 72.
- ¹⁴ The unique contribution of Pentecostalism to mass evangelism was the practice of praying for the sick during evangelistic campaigns.
- ¹⁵ Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel*, Systematic Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology Series (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 37.
- ¹⁶ “F. F. Bosworth Obituary,” *The Blue Island Illinois Newspaper*, February 20, 1958, <https://healingandrevival.com/BosworthBI2201958.jpg> (23 September 2019).
- ¹⁷ Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 294.
- ¹⁸ F. F. Bosworth, *Christ the Healer* (Forest River, IL: F. F. Bosworth, 1924).
- ¹⁹ Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, 300–5.
- ²⁰ “A Faithful Pioneer Passes,” *Worldwide Revival Magazine*, 10 April 1958, 10.
- ²¹ Roscoe Barnes, *F. F. Bosworth: The Man Behind “Christ the Healer”* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), 5; Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, 294.

²² Gordon Lindsay, *Worldwide Evangelism through Healing and Miracles* (Dallas, TX: Christ for the Nations, 2015), 7; Dennis Gordon Lindsey, “The History and Global Impact of Christ for the Nations Institute,” (D.Min. proj., Oral Roberts University, 2014), 12.

²³ Lindsay, *Worldwide Evangelism through Healing and Miracles*, 169.

²⁴ Oral Roberts laid hands on more than 1 million people during his healing ministry. He believed that his hand was a “point of contact” that connected people with God’s healing power. He also erected healing tents for the sick to receive additional prayer and he used cards to organize the people who stood in his healing line. See Vinson Synan, “The Pentecostal Roots of Oral Robert’s Healing Ministry,” *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology* 3:2 (2018), 296.

²⁵ Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 332.

²⁶ T. L. Osborn, *Soul Winning* (Tulsa, OK: OSFO, 1963), 403.

²⁷ Tommy Lee Osborn and Daisy Osborn, “My Life Story,” *Faith Library in 23 Volumes* (Tulsa: OSFO International, 1997), 1:87.

²⁸ Osborn and Osborn, “My Life Story,” 1:87.

²⁹ Osborn and Osborn, “My Life Story,” 1:166.

³⁰ Osborn and Osborn, “My Life Story,” 1:166.

³¹ Tommy Lee Osborn, “The Message that Works,” *Faith Library in 23 Volumes*, 23:661.

³² Tommy Lee Osborn, “Heart Beat,” *Faith Library in 23 Volumes*, 23:1037.

³³ See Edith Dhana Prakash, “A Critical Investigation of Tommy Lee Osborn’s Work in India: Its Impact and Implications,” (Ph.D. diss., Regent University, 2013), 58–61.

³⁴ Tommy Lee Osborn, *Healing en Masse* (Tulsa, OK: T.L. Osborn Evangelistic Association, 1963), 11.

³⁵ Osborn, *Healing en Masse*, 11.

³⁶ Barnes, *F F Bosworth*, 65, points out that although Osborn was the first to implement healing en masse, it was Bosworth who first talked about the need in 1949.

³⁷ This story was related to the author in an interview conducted April 23, 2010.

- ³⁸ Osborn, *Healing en Masse*, 11.
- ³⁹ Osborn, *Healing en Masse*, 11.
- ⁴⁰ Osborn, *Healing en Masse*, 12.
- ⁴¹ Osborn, *Healing en Masse*, 13.
- ⁴² Tommy Lee Osborn, “North Michigan Rocked by Mighty Revival,” *Faith Library in 23 Volumes*, 1:147–48.
- ⁴³ Osborn, *Healing en Masse*, 15.
- ⁴⁴ Osborn, *Healing en Masse*, 13.
- ⁴⁵ Leland Edwards, “The Report of the Panama Meeting of T. L. Osborn,” *The Voice of Healing Magazine*, September 1951, 9.
- ⁴⁶ Osborn and Osborn, “My Life Story,” 1:84.
- ⁴⁷ Reinhard Bonnke, *Living a Life of Fire* (Orlando: E-R Productions, 2011), 259.
- ⁴⁸ Bonnke, *Living a Life of Fire*, 257.
- ⁴⁹ Christ for All Nations, “Christ Is For All Nations: CFAN History,” n.d., n.p., <https://cfan.org/history> (21 August 2019).
- ⁵⁰ Bonnke, *Living a Life of Fire*, 568.
- ⁵¹ John W. Kennedy, “The Crusader,” *Christianity Today* 57:9 (2013), 50–54. Bonnke keeps a running total of “decisions for Christ” on his website, now totaling over 78 million. See Christ for All Nations, “Reinhard Bonnke: Biography,” n.d., n.p., <https://cfan.org/reinhard-bonnke> (29 July 2019).
- ⁵² For more on how Pentecostal healing evangelism has developed in Africa, see Sylvia Owusu-Ansah and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Mass Evangelistic Crusades and the Gospel: A Comparative Study of American and African Healing Evangelists,” *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 18:3 (2013), 55–73.
- ⁵³ Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, 18.
- ⁵⁴ Howard M. Ervin, *Healing: A Sign of the Kingdom* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002).
- ⁵⁵ The crusade took place on the evenings of 1–2 June 2018.
- ⁵⁶ “Data of the Municipality,” n.d., n.p., <https://caico.rn.gov.br/omunicipio.php> (16 July 2019).
- ⁵⁷ Interview with local pastors, by author, 28 May 2018.

⁵⁸ Daniel King, “Appraising the Impact of an Evangelistic Campaign in Caicó, Brazil,” (D.Min. proj., Oral Roberts University, 2019), 153–55.

⁵⁹ King, “Appraising the Impact of an Evangelistic Campaign in Caicó, Brazil,” 158–60.

⁶⁰ King, “Appraising the Impact of an Evangelistic Campaign in Caicó, Brazil,” 152–54.

REVIEWS

The Wisdom of the Cross and the Power of the Spirit in the Corinthian Church: Grounding Pneumatic Experiences and Renewal Studies in the Cross of Christ. By Cletus L. Hull III.

Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018. x + 157 pp.

Cletus Hull is that desirable combination of pastor-scholar. A pastor for over thirty years (Christian Church, Disciples of Christ), he has also served as chaplain in two psychiatric hospitals. With two doctorates—DMin (Fuller) and PhD (Regent)—he is well-qualified in both pastoral and academic contexts. (Full disclosure: Hull includes this reviewer in his acknowledgments, viii.)

The Wisdom of the Cross and the Power of the Spirit in the Corinthian Church presents Hull's PhD dissertation for an audience of other pastor-scholars. When quoting the Greek New Testament or analyzing Paul's rhetorical use of the LXX text of Isaiah (21-22, 51), he leaves Greek words untranslated. That suits the scholar, but it makes Hull's book less accessible to readers lacking facility with Greek.

Hull repeatedly makes an important point: Christian experiences of the Holy Spirit must be grounded in a biblical and well-thought-out Christology centered on Jesus' cross and resurrection. He clearly shows that Paul's Christology and pneumatology are interdependent. A key for this interdependence is Paul's understanding of God's wisdom revealed in Jesus' cross. In turn, the cross is key to Spirit-empowered ministry in the church. Without the cross in our theology and practice of healing ministry, we risk theological distortions and ministry practices that wound rather than heal (144-53).

To ground our interpretation of Holy Spirit experiences in Christology, we could go to John 14-16, 1 John 4:1-6, or 1 Cor 12:3. Hull chooses to

focus on 1 Cor 1:18–2:16. This enables him to ground pneumatology in Christology but also in the cross of Christ.

Part One of Hull's study provides thorough exegesis of the passage, including historical and socio-cultural descriptions of the Corinthian setting. Central to Hull's thesis, however, is the chapter on "Wisdom" in Old Testament, New Testament, Qumran, and Greco-Roman sources (68–78). Particularly in contrast to Greco-Roman "wisdom"—so prized in Corinth—God's wisdom has power to save by the apparent weakness of the cross. Hull's next chapter focuses on "power and weakness" and their importance for the kingdom of God and our ministry practices (79–89). Part One concludes with separate chapters on Paul's Christology and his pneumatology.

Part Two juxtaposes Paul's pneumatology with his Christology. Coming immediately after the previous chapters devoted to those topics, this first chapter of Part Two could seem repetitive. Still, review of exegetical findings from Part One prepares the reader for the book's final chapter: "Conclusions and Conjectures for Practical Ministry." As a pastor, Hull wants insights from exegesis to inform his ministry practices, and he wants to encourage other pastors toward Spirit-empowered ministry that is well-grounded in Christ and his cross.

This last chapter is perhaps the book's best, bringing exegetical, theological, and historical observations to bear on the present moment. On foundations laid through Scripture study, Hull can declare that "the preaching of the cross" brings "the release of the power of the Spirit." He continues: "Every sermon must lead people to the cross," where we find "the true wisdom that liberates the power of God in the life of the church" (144).

The connection between the cross and the Spirit means pastors should pray for healing for suffering people—people for whom Jesus suffered. But if prayer does not immediately relieve suffering, "a reasonable theology of the cross and suffering" (144) can support us as we confront the limits of our understanding. This point is worth underscoring.

Simplistically blaming insufficient faith for continued suffering comes from a healing theology that needs to be healed—corrected by re-orientation

toward the cross (144-46). Indeed, we may need to crucify “our ministry” to let Christ do his (147)! If “Christ’s work on the cross empowers us to live by the Spirit” (150), our willingness to be seen as failures may enable someone to receive healing from the crucified Giver of the Spirit.

Having appreciated the message and motivation of this book, I trust to be forgiven for voicing some complaints. The first is that the book needs alert proofreading, as the discussion is often marred by distracting errors. Although the reviewer’s place is not to make a list of these, the reviewer feels some obligation to point out that such problems hinder a reader’s engagement with theological arguments. With apologies, I mention a few examples: “context of that proclamation” should be “content of that proclamation” (25, quoting Fee); “suped” should be “suppressed” (27, quoting Hengel); “1 Cor 5:17-21” should be “2 Cor 5:17-21” (93); “seed” in Galatians 3 refers to Gen 22:18 et al, not Genesis 3 (94); and “fad” should be “fact” (104, quoting Bultmann). Again, these are a few of many that proofreading should have caught. The number is remarkable because this dissertation (I assume) passed inspection by faculty readers.

Editorial guidance could have suggested omission or revision of some things perhaps important in the dissertation but somewhat extraneous to the aims of this book. For example, since the debate between the “New Perspective on Paul” (NPP) and the “Traditional Perspective on Paul” (TPP) is introduced, it needs more treatment than Hull gives it (4–5, 9–10, 101–03). When Hull says, “Grace is imparted or imputed, not earned as the NPP implies” (103), he betrays a misunderstanding of the NPP as serious as the errors he ascribes to the NPP. If discussion of the debate is included (I am not sure it should be), Hull should give attention to more examples of the NPP than to E. P. Sanders and James Dunn. He might find N. T. Wright, for example, supportive of Hull’s own pneumatic applications of Scripture.

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Holiness in the Letters of Paul: The Necessary Response to the Gospel. By J. Ayodeji Adewuya. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016. xv + 187 pp.

In *Holiness in the Letters of Paul*, Ayo Adewuya gives his readers a first major treatment of holiness in the Pauline epistles apart from a few unpublished theses. Adewuya (PhD, Manchester) comes from Wesleyan-Holiness and Pentecostal traditions and has written extensively on holiness and community in 2 Corinthians 6–7 and holiness in Romans 6–8 as well as a commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians. He is Professor of Greek and New Testament at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, Cleveland, Tennessee, USA.

Adewuya contends that the “main thrust” of Paul’s letters is holiness and how to live as God’s holy people (x); therefore, this demands a focused examination of holiness as a “stand-alone category” in Pauline thought (ix, n. 2). In the process, Adewuya challenges the false dichotomy of holiness/sanctification being either a status, in which ethics are minimized, or an ethical state, which can lean toward legalism. He also seeks to correct an overemphasis on an individualistic experience of sanctification to the neglect of its relational and communal dimensions. Instead, holiness is multidimensional, both positional and ethical as well as personal and communal. As such, one must avoid making one aspect of holiness the whole.

In terms of method, each chapter looks at the concept of holiness first by determining Paul’s use of the *hagios* (“holy”) word group and its cognates, and then moving on to related holiness language, aspects, and motifs in that particular letter or letters. For instance, his coverage of the Pastoral Epistles explores the following terms: *hagios*, *hosios*, *hagnos*, *eusebeia*, and *katharos*. From these, he says, the gospel “should produce a life of holiness: there is no separation between belief and behavior” (158). Most chapters close with practical summary points, like the one on 1 and 2 Thessalonians; Adewuya deduces that sanctification is a work of God that

requires a response that is practical, progressive, holistic, progressive, and preparatory for the parousia.

Adewuya begins his heuristic study with an essential overview of holiness in the Old Testament (OT). Holiness, he denotes, derives from God, who is holy, other, and pure. Holiness means to be set apart *and* to follow ethical demands as God's holy (elect) people. This relational holiness, which manifests itself in the community through social relationships, is missional—revealing God to the world. Throughout the book, he refers to this background as necessary.

In the next nine chapters, Adewuya examines holiness in the thirteen canonical letters of Paul. Some of these contain revised and updated portions of previously published material. In his coverage, Adewuya makes the case that Paul's view of holiness is multifaceted with various, complementary components divulged in different epistles. For example, several dimensions come to the forefront in the Corinthian correspondence. He argues from the temple metaphor and communal meals that holiness not only involves separation from contamination (idolatry and immorality) but also is inherently relational, which requires ethical responsibility. In this manner, personal sanctification intricately relates to the whole community—a “community-oriented holiness” (61). Adewuya determines that holiness in 2 Corinthians must be defined in ecclesial terms, which leads to another facet, missional holiness. The *ekklēsia*, as the holy dwelling place of God (temple metaphor), should make God known through the contrast of its distinct holy identity with the rest of society not along racial, institutional, or political lines, but through forgiveness, reconciliation, separation, and cleansing.

Even in epistles without the *hagios* word group, Adewuya delineates the underlying holiness concepts. One example is Galatians where he maintains that the crucifixion metaphor is central to understanding holiness. Sanctification is an active life of experiential participation in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ that leads to transformation. Here, a sanctified life is “both energized and lived by the power of the Spirit” (98).

In his last chapter, Adewuya concludes with a helpful summary of his findings, ending with four practical implications. First, to Paul, holiness and holy living are “central place” in God’s purpose and desire—not tangential. For Pentecostal readers, he notes well here and in chapters on Romans, Galatians, and the Pastorals that the gift of the Holy Spirit is “the Source and Enabler of holiness” (162). Second, “holiness demands a divine-human partnership” with subsequent experience to conversion (162). Third, holiness is preparation for the parousia. Fourth, holiness is not static but requires constant pursuit.

As the first major work on holiness in Paul’s letters in a long while, Adewuya has filled an important lacuna in holiness and Pauline scholarship. Through his delineation of the multifaceted dimensions of holiness—“separational, ethical, communal and missional” (160)—he accomplishes his goal of correcting one-faceted, too-narrowly-interpreted views of holiness. He rebalances with relational and communal aspects the overly-individualistic emphasis on sanctification common among Western Christendom. He also seeks a way forward for those entrenched on either side of the status or state debate. Furthermore, he makes a critical case from Paul that believers both have the duty to live holy lives and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to do so. Holy living takes place in community, not in isolation. Holiness is the fruit of the gospel, God’s will, but also every believer’s responsibility.

This heuristic study is purposefully economic due to its coverage of holiness in the OT *and* Paul’s epistles. As a result, some points may leave technical readers longing for a more comprehensive explanation. Case in point, how do purity, contagion, and holiness relate to one another in the OT? Nonetheless, an exhaustive treatment is not the author’s intent. Such a work may be the next step needed in this field of study. The only other shortcoming is a series of typographical errors on pages 11, 18, 20, and 144. For readers from Wesleyan-Holiness and Pentecostal traditions, Adewuya stresses the Holy Spirit’s fundamental role in sanctification. He also employs distinctive phrases like “growth in grace,” “subsequent experience to

conversion,” and “work of grace”; he keeps interpretation, however, within exegetical limitations of the biblical text. This makes the work accessible to a broad audience. Scholars, practitioners, and non-specialists alike, whether inside or outside the Wesleyan-Holiness and Pentecostal traditions, would benefit significantly from this critical examination of holiness in Paul’s letters.

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Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship. Edited by Lee Roy Martin. Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016. viii + 305 pp.

A unified theology of worship from the Pentecostal perspective seems to be a daunting task given that Pentecostals value what Lee Roy Martin describes as “spontaneity and liberty” in worship over more formulaic liturgies. Nevertheless, Martin praises the creativity of the diverse voices that contribute fifteen essays to theological reflection on the topic and challenges the reader to identify a continuity in thought and shared ethos among the various contributors. The general characterization of Pentecostal worship in this book is consistent with the universal function of worship as theocentric praise and anthropological service to God. However, three overarching convictions can be discerned that demonstrate a shared Pentecostal ethos: (1) an expectation of divine encounter in the context of worship, (2) an anticipation of a personal and/or communal transformative experience in worship, and (3) an emphasis on the Spirit as the agent of encounter and transformation in the context of the Pentecostal worship service. The contributors to the book under review identify the worship service as the sacred space where Pentecostals practice their distinctive doctrines of the Holy Spirit.

The first two convictions can be described using Philip Sheldrake's typology of spirituality ("Christian Spirituality and Social Transformation," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2016). The first conviction can be characterized as a mystical type of spirituality that focuses on the immediacy, or direct experience, of the transcendent God in the worship service. The second conviction represents the prophetic type of spirituality that envisions communal and social transformation. The third conviction reflects a shared theological emphasis among Pentecostals on the work of the Holy Spirit in the spiritual life of the individual and community. The mystical, prophetic, and pneumatologically-oriented qualities of Pentecostal religious experience have since been identified by Daniel Castelo (*Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition*, 2017) as evidence that the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement is, in fact, a mystical tradition. The contributors to the book under review share a conviction that God's transcendent presence can be experienced in a direct way in the context of Pentecostal worship. Furthermore, the contributors emphasize an active, prophetic engagement in the world that is born out of the Spirit's transforming presence in Pentecostal worship services.

Scripture is a central resource for the development of a language of worship for the purpose of theological reflection on Pentecostal self-understanding as a worshipping community. Several contributors develop a biblical perspective on worship and identify the Pentecostal worshipping community with the covenant community of Scripture. Jerome Boone identifies the Sinai pericope (Exodus 19–24) as the central worship metanarrative that establishes the identity of the covenant community of Israel as a holy nation and priestly kingdom. The covenant identity is conferred through their participation in worship. According to R. Hollis Gause, the New Testament worshipping community participates in Israel's communal vocation of priestly service before God through Christ, the officiating high priest and perfect sacrifice. Frank D. Macchia describes the diverse expressions in Pentecostal worship as the realization of the priesthood of all believers. The democratization of the charisms in

Pentecostal worship is formative and transformative for the community as the Spirit generates a unity in spirit and harmony in worship that reflects the Christocentric worship of Scripture.

Several contributors engage how the liturgical language of Scripture and various worship narratives have been interpreted as descriptive and prescriptive models for Pentecostal worship. Jacqueline Grey surveys early Australian Pentecostal interpretations of Isaiah that engage the text as a prescriptive model of worship, while Lee Roy Martin finds biblical patterns in the Psalms that express the covenant theology and covenant identity of the community. Biblical patterns of worship also provide guidelines for mystical encounter and potential prophetic transformation. Recitation of the Qedushah in Isaiah, the engagement of the whole person (i.e., body, mind, emotions) in the Psalms, and the narration of Christocentric worship in John's Apocalypse act as patterns of "true worship" and transformative encounter with God. Kimberly Ervin Alexander describes how three aspects of Pentecostal experience—rapture, rapport, and proleptic—are evident in the periodical testimonies from Pentecostal worship services. Early Pentecostals interpreted their mystical experiences in worship as anticipation and representation of their participation in the eschatological events of John's Apocalypse. Melissa L. Archer further identifies how imitation of the liturgical activities of the narrative worshippers in the Apocalypse can be identity-forming for the community and a catalyst for divine encounter.

Pentecostal worship reflects a commitment to the restoration of the identity of the covenant community through mystical encounter with God and the subsequent transformation of the individual, the community, and the world through the work of the Spirit. Daniela C. Augustine adopts the language of liturgical theology to describe how the worshipping community embodies the covenant identity of priesthood and how the community is restored to the liturgical fellowship of the cosmological temple in the Garden of Eden. Augustine describes Pentecostal worship as *theologia prima*, which she defines as the liturgical activity of communal witness to the divine actions of redemption and the renewal of God's people and creation

in history. The priestly service, embodied in the activities of the worshipping community, occurs in the context of the altar, which Johnathan Alvarado identifies as the central sacred space for divine encounter and spiritual transformation in Pentecostal worship services. The Spirit is the facilitator of divine encounter at the altar and creates the opportunity for the renewing of individual and communal self-understanding. Pentecostal worship services provide a space of liturgical, theological, and ritual play where the Pentecostal identity is cultivated through direct experience of the Spirit. Peter Althouse further develops the concept of ritual play and describes Pentecostal worship services as the liminal space of potential transformation.

Several contributors offer theological reflections on distinctive Pentecostal practices in worship services. John Christopher Thomas defends the use of anointed cloths in Pentecostal services on the basis of Acts 19:11–12. Early Pentecostals used anointed cloths as a method of prophetic engagement with people who could not attend a worship service. Daniel Castelo offers a defense of creedal forms of liturgy and Chris E. W. Green calls for reflection on trinitarian forms of Pentecostal worship. Antipas L. Harris reflects on the influence of African spirituality on enthusiastic modes of early Pentecostal practices. Finally, Wilmer Estrada-Carrasquillo discusses the participatory elements of Hispanic worship services. Thomas, Castelo, and Green raise questions regarding the role of sacramental theology and systematic theology in the development of a theology of worship, while Harris and Estrada-Carrasquillo explore the intersection between a theology of worship, culture, and social behavior.

The contributors to this anthology do not offer a systematic theology of worship but raise questions regarding the theological language and methodologies that can be employed to describe and critique distinctive Pentecostal practices in the context of worship. Several contributors draw on sacramental theology, liturgical theology, and systematic theology to reflect on Pentecostal worship, while others emphasize communal and social aspects of worship. Each contributor shares the Pentecostal ethos of the

anticipation of divine encounter and the expectation of the Spirit's transforming presence in worship that empowers the renewed individual and renewed community for prophetic engagement in the expansion of God's kingdom in the world. I suggest that a taxonomy of religious experience, such as Sheldrake's typology of spirituality, is helpful for describing and understanding the range of religious experiences and spiritual practices in Pentecostal worship. In addition to the mystical and prophetic dimensions of Pentecostal worship, Sheldrake's ascetical type of spirituality, which emphasizes individual discipline and detachment from the material world, offers an additional avenue for theological reflection on a Pentecostal theology of worship.

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Pentecostals in the 21st Century: Identity, Beliefs, Practices.

Edited by Corneliu Constantineanu and Christopher J. Scobie.
Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018. x + 265 pp.

Editors Corneliu Constantineanu and Christopher J. Scobie undertake the historic task of clarifying the identity, major doctrines, and practice of the Pentecostal movement. Constantineanu is Associate Professor of New Testament and Biblical Interpretation and Dean of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Croatia, while his co-editor, Scobie, serves as adjunct professor in the same seminary as well as pastors a church in Ljubljana, Slovenia. In *Pentecostals in the 21st Century*, the editors invite top Pentecostal scholars and pastors to reflect on various aspects of Pentecostalism ranging from hermeneutics to Spirit-baptism to discipleship. That the task they undertake is immense they acknowledge in their introduction: "The relative newness of Pentecostalism as a movement, the lack of uniform Pentecostal doctrine across adherents, various theological

extremes (examples of both fundamentalism and liberalism can be observed), and the fact that church ecologies (in relation to governance and authority) are diverse, all conspire to create a significant challenge to speak to [Pentecostal] identity” (3). The goal of their endeavor is to explicate the ecclesiological and pneumatological practices of the global Pentecostal movement.

Setting the tone for the volume, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen in his essay, “Pentecostal Identity,” makes the case for a Pentecostal identity based not on “creeds or shared history” (16) but on “Christ-centered charismatic spirituality” (17). Throughout the last one hundred years, this charismatic spirituality has led Pentecostals to experience the presence of God in worship services as they respond “bodily” (22) in corporate gatherings. Kärkkäinen brings special attention to the emotive, enthusiastic, and kinesthetic displays of Pentecostal adherents such as standing, kneeling, raising the hands, and the laying-on-of-hands during prayer. These dynamic worship experiences have grown out of the understanding that the presence of Jesus and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit can be mystically encountered and that these encounters can generate a greater capacity to experience the “full gospel” of justification, sanctification, healing, Spirit-baptism, and the premillennial return of Christ (19-20). Ultimately, these worship gatherings facilitate a “meeting with the Lord” that takes priority over more traditional worship practices (“sermons, hymns, and liturgy,” 26).

Roger Stronstad undertakes exegetical work in his reflection on “Some Aspects of Hermeneutics in the Pentecostal Tradition.” Using Luke-Acts, he helps the reader view Luke through the lens of an historian, theologian, teacher, exegete, and narrator. His most insightful work is done as he unpacks Luke’s use of the LXX, typologies, and parallelism in portraying the events of Jesus’ life as mirrored in the events of the early church and its leadership in Acts. The present volume is at its best when writers such as Stronstad showcase their exegetical expertise and add to the larger Pentecostal studies conversation.

The volume continues with Jean-Daniel Plüss addressing the Pentecostal reenactment of the Last Supper in various protestant traditions, Edmund J. Rybarczyk shedding fresh light on a Pentecostal's understanding of salvation, Glenn Balfour revisiting the practice of water baptism, Frank D. Macchia exploring the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Keith Warrington defining the gifts of the Spirit, Cecil M. Robeck surveying New Testament contributions to ecclesiology, Christopher J. Scobie articulating functional discipleship, Amos Yong pointing to the need for deep ecumenism within and around the Pentecostal movement, and Corneliu Constantineanu speaking to social engagement connected to Romanian Pentecostalism.

Excellent work is also achieved by Van Johnson in his essay on the "Fulfillment of God's Promise in the Soon-to-Return King." Johnson gives a brief treatment of the apocalyptic genre, the history of the development of a homogenous eschatological framework for the Pentecostal movement, and even some of the contradictions many in the Pentecostal movement still blindly (and optionally, we may add!) choose to embrace by holding to a dispensationalist worldview in one hand and a "full gospel" theology in the other: "The popularity of dispensationalism among Pentecostals is a bit ironic because the system itself rules out the existence of a modern-day Pentecostal movement. Dispensationalism limits the period of miracles to the time of Jesus and the early church, which prohibits any return of speaking in tongues and spiritual gifts later in church history" (188).

Johnson's essay provides a backdrop for Wonsuk Ma's essay on "The Theological Motivations for Pentecostal Mission." Because of the perceived imminent return of Jesus as outlined in a dispensationalist, pre-tribulation rapture of the church, the Pentecostal movement was initially filled with a sense of urgency. They understood the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the church as a "revival and renewal movement, challenging and energizing the church to recover its 'apostolic' authority and call to witness for Christ to the ends of the earth" (243). According to Ma, the movement's emphasis on mission via church planting and evangelism is deeply connected to its eschatological orientation.

While all of the essays are worthy of reading and reflection, Kärkkäinen, Stronstad, Johnson, and Ma give this volume some of its strongest pieces, taking seriously the need for more rigorous work on both exegetical and historical fronts to give additional clarity to the past, present, and future mission of the Pentecostal movement. This will continue to be a challenge as the one-hundred-year-old movement moves into the future, especially in light of the Pentecostal expansion through the African Independent Churches, most Chinese house church networks, and the majority of Latin American evangelicals.

I recommend this volume for students, pastors, or theologians who seek to familiarize themselves with the history, theology, and mission of the Pentecostal movement. The reflections are accessible, informative, and robust, making it a solid launching pad into the Pentecostal world for both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals.

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The Letter to the Hebrews: A Centre for Pentecostal Theology Bible Study. By Jeffrey S. Lamp. Cleveland, TN: CTP, 2018. xiv + 165 pp.

While Pentecostals and Charismatics have not been shut out of the commentary writing business, with the work of Gordon Fee and Craig Keener alone attesting to that fact, a complete commentary series directed towards Pentecostals and Charismatics has proven to be more elusive. Jeffrey Lamp aims his volume on Hebrews directly towards “pastors and lay persons who desire to live a Spirit-filled life that is formed and directed by Holy Scripture” (xii). The author’s faculty status at Oral Roberts University and publication by the Centre for Pentecostal Theology both bolster the

claim that this book is written by a Spirit-filled believer for Spirit-filled believers.

What Lamp presents his readers is not so much a commentary as a Bible study on the book of Hebrews. Instead of writing a critical commentary, Lamp bases his work on the popular 4MAT method of learning: meaning, content, experiment, and creative action (xii). He applies this method to his book by arranging each chapter with these divisions: Setting the Direction, Hearing the Word of God, Connecting with Hebrews, and What If (xiii-xiv). This arrangement, along with the outlines and handouts included, offers readers a book useful for group study as well as for personal use.

Lamp covers introductory matters in a concise yet clear manner. He explores the literary genre of Hebrews, noting its complexity (2) and concluding that the book displays characteristics of not only of a letter but also of homily and rhetoric (4). Although he mentions various options regarding its authorship, he rightly for this type of work chooses not to assign an author, although he does examine various theories of authorship (6). Other introductory matters that he scrutinizes include provenance, date, and its contribution to the New Testament. Lamp also notes the epistle's high Christology and examines it as an example of how early Christians interpreted the Old Testament and related the old and new covenants (6-9). Lamp offers his own translation of epistle's Greek text that is both readable in English and faithful to the original language. As befitting a work of this nature, critical concerns and textual variants are ignored.

Lamp offers commentary that is both rigorous and accessible at the same time. Laypersons should feel challenged by what they read, but not overwhelmed by what the commentator provides. Lamp makes allusions to the Greek language without bogging the reader down in minutia (14). His exposition of Heb 1:1-3:6 warrants closer examination. He spends chapter one of his book wrestling with issues of God, the Son, and angels, while in his second chapter he introduces another character, Moses. Lamp's summary of the argument put forward by the Hebrews author that Jesus,

the Son, builds the house on behalf of God while Moses is only a part of that house, demonstrates that the Son is as superior to Moses as he was to angels in Hebrews 1 (34). Readers should find this summary of one of the Hebrews author's first major theological points to be enlightening because of the clarity of Lamp's writing.

Lamp's commentary on Hebrews 5–7 is perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the book. He demonstrates both in his commentary and in his conclusion that the Hebrews author “suggests that the high priesthood of Jesus is the antidote to the spiritual malaise that appears to be afflicting his hearers” (68). In Lamp's explanation of Melchizedek and his priesthood and its relation to Christ he offers a simple but glorious comparison: they both are eternal (62).

As for criticism, Lamp waits until his commentary on Hebrews 11 to make any points specific to the Charismatic or Pentecostal realm. Commenting upon the first verse, he writes that certain Charismatic groups like to overemphasize the word “now” to highlight the present reality of faith (101). Briefly delving into the Greek, he notes that *de* is a conjunction and that translating it as “and” is just as appropriate as translating it “now” (101). Despite some groups' tendency to misinterpret the passage, the author of Hebrews stresses that “faith is a present response to the hopeful realization of God's future promise” (101). Although one should not force the text to say more than what it actually means, addressing more Pentecostal and Charismatic themes would better serve the audience that the commentator is trying to reach.

The most helpful aspects of Lamp's study of Hebrews are the outlines and handouts he creates. These tools provide the reader with valuable aids that help examine and explain the text. One should not ignore Lamp's commentary on the text either. Although it is not a critical work, it is not meant to be. Therefore, his commentary serves its purpose well. Lamp also offers a suggested bibliography for further study of Hebrews that contains several prominent volumes.

Readers of this book will find the commentary approachable and illuminating. Written in language that is understandable and accompanied by a clear translation of Hebrews, Lamp's scholarship undergirds his commentary, but resists overwhelming his intended audience with academic and critical arguments. Lamp delivers a study that will educate and inform pastors and laity alike.

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Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. Edited by Fenggang Yang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson. *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies*, 22. Leiden: Brill, 2017. xiv + 373 pp.

This collection of essays began its journey in the “Global ReOrient: Chinese Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements in the Global East” symposium held in November 2013, at Purdue University in the US. The final versions of several studies presented at the conference form roughly one-third (or six chapters) of the book (ix). Five additional studies were commissioned, and five more are revised studies previously published in the *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* (11). Two editors, Fenggang Yang and Joy K. C. Tong, were responsible for the conference. Yang is Professor of Sociology and Founding Director of the Center on Religion and Chinese Society at Purdue, while Tong is Visiting Assistant Professor in the Sociology and Anthropology Department at Wheaton College. The third editor, Allan Anderson, is Professor of Mission and Pentecostal Studies at the University of Birmingham, England.

Of the book's four parts, the first, “Historical, Global, and Local Contexts,” with four chapters, sets the context of the book. The chapters by Donald E. Miller and Daniel H. Bays situate Chinese “Pentecostal/Charismatic” religion vis-

à-vis the prevailing understanding of the term in academia. The authors rightly argue that the historical, cultural, religious, and political context of China has played a crucial role in the shaping of the unique form of Pentecostalism in China. These studies, therefore, warn outsiders to treat the subject matter with due caution. J. Gordon Melton's treatment of the True Jesus Church serves as a perfect case for the contextual uniqueness while Connie Au's early history of Pentecostalism in Hong Kong among the elite sheds light on the subsequent spread of Pentecostal faith among the poor.

The second part of the volume, comprised of three studies, is devoted to the True Jesus Church. Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye's historical study focuses on Wei Enbo, the founder of the church, and the influence of Bernt Berntsen on Enbo and the church. Especially fascinating is Ke-hsien Huang's study that casts the church's worship in the context of traditional Confucian values such as order, propriety, and control. Yen-zen Tsai's chapter focuses solely on the practice and role of glossolalia in the church, which had a wider impact on Chinese Pentecostalism.

The third part, "Pentecostal or Non-Pentecostal," presents the challenge of answering the question, "What makes selected Chinese churches Pentecostal?" by selecting three Chinese Christian groups to illustrate the complexity of the task. Jiayin Hu takes a close look at the Local Church movement and concludes that this indigenous movement is not Pentecostal. Michael Chambon, coming from a Catholic perspective, raises the question whether the widespread practice of healing makes a Christian movement or community Pentecostal. Yi Liu defines the contemporary revival in Henan Province as Pentecostal, yet differently from how the rest of the Christian world defines it.

The final part, "New-Wave Charismatics in Chinese Societies," is the longest with six chapters, all of which investigate today's Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic communities both inside and outside of China. Celena Y. Z. Su and Allan H. Anderson provide a helpful chapter on the fast growth of unregistered churches in China. It is followed by Karrie Koesel's discussion of the challenging place in which these churches are situated,

requiring them to navigate carefully their way through the socio-political system to have their voices in the public arenas. Rachel Ziaohong Zhu presents a rare study on Catholic Charismatics in China while Kim-Kwong Chan presents Singapore's City Harvest Church as a model of a diasporan Chinese megachurch that has embraced the multiracial and postmodern lifestyle. Across a strait, in a socially and religiously restrictive environment, Weng Kit Cheong and Joy K. C. Tong study Full Gospel Tabernacle, another overseas Chinese megachurch in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Both cases may serve as a useful model for an urban Charismatic church in China when socio-political conditions allow. This part of the book ends with a chapter by Joy K. C. Tong and Fanggang Yang on Forerunner Christian Church, one of the most influential Chinese churches in the U.S., and its leader, Grace Chiang. These sixteen chapters are bracketed by an introduction by Yang and Tong and a conclusion by Anderson.

Reviewing a collection of essays by different contributors comes with a challenge. For this book, due to my inherent interest in the subject, I read all the chapters. First of all, the editors are to be highly commended for producing this groundbreaking book. Everyone agrees on the importance of the Chinese churches in the development of global Christianity. The sheer size of its population—and hence the large number of believers—significantly affects the global picture. Asian Christianity (with less than 9 percent of its population Christian), lagging far behind the world average (over 33 percent), will be significantly boosted if the Chinese church maintains its current growth rate. Whether a large part of it is Pentecostal/Charismatic has been an ongoing debate for some time. This book provides the most substantial discussion of the subject as the contributors approach it from different academic angles.

Secondly, the book convincingly illustrates the complexity and challenges of any study on Chinese Christianity. The vastness of the country poses a fundamental challenge, while the large number of unregistered church networks further hinders an accurate picture of Chinese Christianity, making it almost impossible. Understanding Chinese Pentecostal/Charismatic

Christianity is further complicated by the lack of agreement on the definition of Pentecostalism among scholars. The Introduction helpfully presents these and other challenges. I would also add that the subject matter is a fast-moving target. By the time of publication, some data of the book may have already been dated. For example, the most informative chapter by Su and Anderson provides important updated information on the unregistered or “The Third Generation” churches in large cities (229–34). Since the publication of the book, however, many of them were closed by the new government policy. In the “The Missionary Movement of Chinese Churches” (235–37) section of the same chapter, there is no discussion on the China Mission 2030—the unprecedented mission network among unregistered urban churches and its well-coordinated annual mission conference in 2016–18. The movement began after all the chapters had been written. Since developments in Chinese Christianity are often drastic and swift, the other challenge I would add is the volatility of the situation in which Chinese (especially unregistered) Christians live and witness as the followers of Christ. Therefore, to protect believers, many researchers are unwilling to publish sensitive information. Perhaps for this reason, studies on Chinese Christianity often favor historical inquiries, shying away from contemporary subjects. And this is a valid concern. Until the social situation changes, these challenges will loom large over any published studies on Chinese Christianity. For future researchers who need to tread with caution, the short conclusion by Anderson provides several important “rules of engagement.”

While the book will serve as an important resource for any study of the subject, it calls for a continuing exploration of what it means to be Pentecostal/Charismatic believers or communities in China today. This identity in China will challenge the rest of the world to pay close attention to the role of the socio-cultural and political context of each setting in the formation of a local Pentecostal/Charismatic identity. From a missional viewpoint, the study also makes the world church, especially the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, think hard to explore ways to stand in

solidarity with fellow Christians in inclement or hostile environments. The book, therefore, has a deeper import than perhaps the editors and the publisher may have initially thought.

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God Forgive Us for Being Women: Rhetoric, Theology, and the Pentecostal Tradition. By Joy E.A. Qualls. Frameworks: Interdisciplinary Studies for Faith and Learning. Eugene OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018. xiv + 225 pp.

Throughout the history of the Pentecostal movement, as women have faithfully served in the ministry of the church, there have been ongoing debate and controversy within the Pentecostal tradition concerning the positions of leadership women should or should not hold. Joy Qualls, Associate Professor and Department Chair of Communication Studies at Biola University, contributes to a series of interdisciplinary studies for faith and learning as she provides a chronological study of rhetorical history exploring inconsistencies of women's roles, opportunities, and positions held in the Assemblies of God and its implication for the Pentecostal tradition and beyond.

In Qualls' study of the oral controversies and rhetoric that are woven into the doctrines of the Assemblies of God, she contends that rhetoric from the founders of the organization "both open a space for women as active participants in ministry" while at the same time create distrust and a "dissonance by the dichotomy of policy and practice" (28). Since Pentecostals have been characterized by orality, she reveals rhetoric that both endorses and discourages women who aspire to fulfill their calling and openly proclaim the gospel.

In Chapter 1, Qualls thoroughly investigates the rhetorical history of the Pentecostal tradition as a launching pad for her study and subsequent implications. She addresses various challenges and contradictions in women's leadership roles in the Assemblies of God and describes ways the evangelical movement influenced and substantially contributed to the dissonance within the organization. Problems that exist within the organization include "multiple narratives and competing messages" concerning roles of women, the lack of a strong unifying central organization, the evangelical culture that has historically rejected women in leadership roles, and the positions held on social-cultural issues, both secular and religious (31). Qualls contends that "what began as a movement counter to the culture has been absorbed by the culture and the politics of today" (33).

In the second chapter, Qualls presents varying perspectives of the early pioneers and historians in the Pentecostal movement on the "distinct" role of women within history and the impact of their voices around the world. She highlights accounts and narratives of several key women who were actively involved in Pentecostal fellowships and ministry as well as those who established churches prior to the Azusa Street Revival and advocated for unique rhetorical opportunities (41). Qualls contends that the contributions of these women led to and had "significant influence on the formation and development of the Assemblies of God" (35).

In Chapter 3, Qualls more specifically focuses on the conflicting rhetoric of women's roles within the Assemblies of God pertaining to their "institutional authority and cultural authority" (94). She identifies many of the women who were actively involved in ministry during its formative years as well as the influencing male voices that set the tone for contradiction in practice that limited women's roles and opportunities. Qualls evaluates historical documents and discourses describing the formative era of the Assemblies of God, arguing that in its initial formation, rhetorical conflicts of doctrine (The Sixteen Fundamental Truths) and

practice of women's roles in ministry occurred from its inception and continue today.

In the fourth chapter, Qualls discusses the next developmental season of the Assemblies of God as being a period of "growth and influence" (1927–1990s), but notes how over time it "lost sight of its unique cultural and religious identity" (36). As the fellowship grew and became more institutionalized, shifts in ideology influenced its unique foundational approach to theology. As a result of the distinct call for greater male participation and leadership (123) and a shift from a "prophetic position to a priestly function," women lost the prominent ministerial role they had enjoyed during the early years. Leading male voices interpreted Scripture as encouraging the limitation and suppression of women's roles and the elevation of men's. In their view, women's intellect was not only subservient to that of men, but equivalent to that of children (122).

Qualls further describes how the Assemblies of God responded to shifts in the broader American culture including feminism and stronger roles and autonomy for women in the workplace and the marketplace. The reactionary stance of the Assemblies' male leadership, which chose to remain conservative, caused further dissonance for women who desired to serve in the church, even though they persisted in creating opportunities to serve (125). Some sociological and theological scholars argue that the Assemblies of God "sacrificed its moment in time to be a catalyst for the changing role of women in the church and in American culture" (36).

In Chapter 5, Qualls examines "the relationship of the Assemblies of God to the broader evangelical community" (37). The organization gained greater influence, becoming a dominant fixture in the evangelical community, particularly the National Association of Evangelicals. Due to the historical influence and precedence established by women in the Pentecostal movement, Qualls explains ways the Assemblies of God could have more intentionally used their position of influence to help liberate and advance women to serve in ministry. Instead, they aligned with the

evangelical community by embracing a conservative political position that diminished the impact of their role in the broader culture (166).

In Chapter 6, Qualls explores the recent history of the Assemblies of God and the twenty-first century as they held a position of prominence in the Pentecostal movement worldwide. This era included scandals involving well-known ministers and other hardships within the organization that were handled in a dysfunctional manner, especially where women leaders were concerned. However, eventual changes in the denominational leadership transpired that signified a transition in rhetorical practice regarding the role of women in ministry with implications that fostered a cultural shift within the Assemblies of God. Male pastors were being encouraged to encourage openly women in ministry and allow them to preach, teach, exhort, and use their abilities to benefit the church (186).

In the seventh chapter, Qualls summarizes the purpose of her study, the contributions it makes to the rhetorical theory, and its implications for future study. She contends that the renewed focus on women in the Assemblies of God has created an opportunity for a new rhetoric, opening more open doors, and opportunities and “a renewed sense of calling and purpose” throughout the Pentecostal movement (38).

In an era when more women are speaking out and voicing their past and current experiences of discrimination, marginalization, and harassment, Qualls exposes controversies and discrepancies caused by historical rhetoric that continue to sideline and limit opportunities for women in ministry. Although her intention was not to contribute to feminist theory, Qualls does contribute to the study of gender and rhetoric. I highly recommend this book for its stated purpose as it explores the impact of tensions generated in the rhetoric of opportunity and constraint faced by women seeking positions of ministry in the Pentecostal movement (203). Hopefully, those currently holding positions of leadership, both men and women, will better understand how the rhetoric of Pentecostal tradition has impeded the progress of women in fulfilling their calling and using their voices of influence to promote the greater cause of spreading the gospel beyond the

discrepancies and controversies of gender-related positional restraints. This work is applicable to religious organizations beyond the Pentecostal tradition and reflects the larger societal problems and institutional barriers that impact women in leadership.

Throughout the book, Qualls thoroughly dissects the rhetorical controversies of Pentecostal women in ministry leadership as they continue to struggle to define, promote understanding, and find acceptance for their role as women pursuing a ministerial calling.

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The Miracle Lady: Kathryn Kuhlman and the Transformation of Charismatic Christianity. By Amy Collier Artman. Foreword by Kate Bowler. Library of Religious Biography. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. xii + 242 pp.

Religious movements in America seem always to have brought with them sharp reactions from other social and cultural venues. The Charismatic Movement of the 1960s through the 1980s typically incited vehement criticism from traditional Christian churches and leaders, who claimed that the movement engendered riotous emotional outbursts of fanaticism but little else. These critics believed that such religious activities created no real spiritual benefits, but rather were harmful to Christian life.

Amy Artman attempts to portray Kathryn Kuhlman as the primary force that reconfigured the Charismatic Movement into a socially acceptable Christian practice. Artman describes Kuhlman's personal and professional journey equally as an evangelist with large meetings (like the Billy Graham model), as a television show host (like Oral Roberts), and as a self-promoting celebrity (like Jerry Falwell and Jim Bakker). These means of

ministry promotion fit perfectly in the post-World War II American culture and brought attention to a broad spectrum of ministry approaches developing at the time. During that period of increasing awareness, Kathryn Kuhlman as a woman evangelist proved to be more interesting and recognizable than her predecessor Aimee Semple McPherson, the previous generation's independent female spiritual leader. Though Artman presents a sympathetic and generally factual view of Kathryn Kuhlman's difficult and unusual life and ministry, she is not above making occasional critical observations.

Artman portrays Kuhlman as taking a different approach to healing ministry than had been the norm to that point as well as carefully promoting selected elements of the narrative of her origin and early ministry while downplaying and avoiding others.

Kuhlman seemed to imply . . . that her healing ministry began as she rejected the practices [of other healing ministers] she deemed offensive and as God revealed to her a better way. Perhaps she truly was inspired to craft an alternative approach to divine healing. In all other versions of the beginning of miracles, however, everything began with a surprise announcement at a Tabernacle service in Franklin. . . . After recapping her years in Concordia and Idaho, skipping the years in the West and leapfrogging over her marriage and divorce, Kuhlman laid out the story as she would tell it throughout her life. Her account of her development of an awareness of the healing power of God rested on her devoted study of the Bible and a progressive revelation from God. Typically, she did not credit any early training and influences (48–49).

None of the author's evaluations appear to denigrate Kuhlman's theology or Charismatic miracle claims. She notes that Kuhlman consistently refused to take credit for the supernatural works of God, always claiming that she "had nothing to do with" any miracles. Kuhlman also "maintained throughout her career that she had no control over the healing

taking place in her ministry . . . ‘What is always so thrilling is to see God at work. I have nothing to do with it’” (151, 155).

Artman’s theme is that Kuhlman refined the image of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity. Her dynamic personality, frank responses to questions, and highly successful appearances on secular television seemed to make critics drop their apprehensions about miraculous Christianity. In evaluating the effect of Kuhlman’s television program, *I Believe in Miracles*, Artman offers the story of Colonel Tom Lewis as an example of “the testimonies of a variety of culturally elite guests . . . [that] contributed to the gentrification of charismatic Christianity” (138, 143). As he related on the show, Lewis’ original intention was only to investigate reports of the miraculous, and at first had felt like an outsider—uncomfortable and awkward— but soon was “drawn into the charismatic experience.” By watching guests like Lewis, viewers “saw a refined image of charismatic Christianity that was appealing” (137).

In the earliest stages of her television ministry, Kuhlman featured not the elite but the average American. She broadcast “images of average people speaking freely about divine and spiritual healing into hundreds of homes in the Pittsburgh (PA) area. This witness on the most public of technologies (television) began the dissemination of a gentrified form of charismatic Christianity into the homes, lives, and minds of people previously unexposed” (63). As time went on, Kuhlman “interviewed a wide assortment of guests” including an Apollo 15 astronaut, politicians, and professional football players (143). Artman concludes that “the presence of so many respected, professional people on Kuhlman’s show during its ten-year run testified to the growing cultural acceptance of charismatic Christianity in America” (144).

Kuhlman’s difficult childhood and chaotic early personal life are faithfully recorded by Artman without condemnation. Artman also outlines a short history of American Pentecostalism, briefly analyzing the ministries of such famous Pentecostal ministers as William Branham, Charles Price, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Smith Wigglesworth. As the history

continues, Artman also identifies the “leading lights” of the Charismatic Movement of the 1960s and 1970s including Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard, Pat Robertson, A. A. Allen, Ralph Wilkerson, Chuck Smith, and Norman Vincent Peale. Artman observes that Kuhlman’s ministry was found to appeal also to Roman Catholic believers and leaders, such as Bishop Fulton Sheen. In 1971, Dr. J. Massyngberde Ford of Notre Dame University was on Kuhlman’s show. According to Artman, “Ford’s presence on the show . . . was notable not just for her status as an academic but also for her Roman Catholicism. Featuring Catholics on [I Believe in] Miracles contributed to changing the popular conception of charismatic Christianity by locating adherents outside of conservative, rural, southern, Protestant circles” (139).

Much of Artman’s narrative describes specific details of events and personal interactions of Kuhlman with celebrities, supporters, and critics. Oral Roberts was Kuhlman’s personal friend, who receives praise rather than any rebuke from Artman for his support for Kuhlman. She portrays some other supporters, such as Tink Wilkerson, a businessman in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as antagonists in sheep’s clothing rather than truly helpful friends. Artman exhibits neither blame nor praise Kuhlman’s later life and the events and people surrounding her death and legacy include various social and personal issues, leaving analysis to the reader.

Overall Artman has written an interesting biography of one of the most effective evangelists in all Christian history. She can be credited with successfully demonstrating her thematic intention, that Kathryn Kuhlman was a major force in transforming Charismatic Christianity from merely another phase of a much-maligned element in an extreme brand of Christianity to a “gentrified” acceptable aspect of historical, evangelistic, experiential spirituality in modern American life.

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For the Life of the World: Theology That Makes a Difference. By Miroslav Volf and Matthew Croasmun. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2019. viii + 196 pp.

Volf and Croasmun write *For the Life of the World: Theology That Makes a Difference* to spur their target audience—Christian, Jesus-following theologians—toward the pursuit of a living theology that discerns, articulates, and “commends visions of *flourishing life* in light of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ” (11). While they target many of their remarks at professionally trained theologians, such as those graduating from seminaries and universities, they make the point that, ultimately, all followers of Jesus are called in some way to engage in healthy, robust, vibrant theology that fosters a flourishing life and culture.

The authors define a flourishing life as one focused on striving for the “good life” (13), a life for which all humans were essentially created, but not necessarily rightly pursuing. The thoughtful and evocative challenge the authors offer to professional theologians is to lead the way in the pursuit of the good and flourishing life by way of establishing a “tripartite structure,” the pillars of which are: (1) lives that are well led, (2) lives that go well, and (3) lives that feel good.

A major impediment to theologians arriving at a place where they might pursue environments that perpetuate this tripartite and flourishing structure are institutions of higher learning: places that are subject to the standards of evaluation accepted by professional guilds and accrediting organizations. A case is made that it is simply too expensive to get degrees and find positions in theological fields where graduates might earn a salary sufficient to support themselves and pay for their degrees. Because of this, many potential theologians are avoiding seminaries and other theologically oriented schools to pursue other endeavors. Therefore, Volf and Croasmun issue a challenge to institutions to re-structure their curriculum to be more focused on preparing graduates to engage the environments wherein they

are called, thereby stimulating the churches, families, and communities that comprise them to engage in flourishing lives. The authors ask:

Why does the world need multi-million dollar theological heads working for ninety-three thousand dollars a year? Why aren't the ten long years of postgraduate study of academic theology followed by thirty working years just a massive waste of time and money? Why should we employ and pay academic theologians—even pay them poorly (as we increasingly do) (57–58)?

The authors give a four-fold affirmative response to these questions that particularly focuses on those who teach theology in academic institutions, the individuals who attend those institutions, and those directly impacted by them. First is the necessity of and prescription for a “renewal of theology” (61). Theology that promotes flourishing must focus on God coming to indwell the world to bring freedom from guilt and to inspire love for God and love of neighbor. The authors propose that this be done through the pursuit of “a biblically rooted, patristically guided, ecclesially located and publicly engaged theology done in critical conversation with the sciences and the various disciplines of the humanities at the center of which is the question of the flourishing life” (82).

Second in the authors' four-fold response is the “challenge of universality” (85). By universality the authors mean that the entire world and every person in it must be seen as the home of God. This is accomplished by adhering to six foundational principles: (1) trinitarian monotheism, (2) God's unconditional love, (3) reverence for Jesus as the Light of the World, (4) a distinction between God's rule and human rule, (5) the moral equality of all human beings, and (6) “freedom of religion and areligion [sic].”

Third is the call for theologians to live lives in which there is an “affinity between life and thought” (120). That is to say, there must be a congruity between their thoughts, words, and actions. When this happens, their words and their actions will garner a weight wherein the effects bring

the desired flourishing ethos to all aspects of culture. The authors call for theologians to have an intellectual disposition characterized by (1) a love of knowledge of God and the world, (2) a love of dialogue partners, (3) courage, (4) gratitude and humility, (5) firmness and gentleness, and (6) faithfulness.

Fourth, for theologians to help establish a good and flourishing culture, a realistic vision of what that culture might look like must be established, not merely in a conceptual framework, but in reality. The authors aptly state that “flourishing requires the transformative presence of the true life in the midst of the false, which requires the true world come to be in the midst of the false world” (150). By false, they mean the fallen world, the one that works against the flourishing life. Yes, they hold that the flourishing life is a possibility even in the midst of the falsity of human fallenness.

It may be disturbing to some that postmodern/deconstructionist/Nietzschean philosopher Michel Foucault is used to support the authors’ positions in several instances. If this were an olive branch offered to millennials or more liberal readers, it seems that there are plenty of other out-of-the-box thinkers to whom they could have referred.

Ultimately, the book *For the Life of the World: Theology That Makes a Difference* presents a concise, workable, and palatable challenge to implement practically eternal theological concepts. It is biblically based and both theologically and philosophically challenging. If the goal of the authors was to spur their target audience toward the pursuit of a living theology that discerns, articulates, and commends visions of flourishing life in light of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ, they have accomplished their task.

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“The Spirit Helps Our Weakness”: Rom 8,26A in Light of Paul’s Missiological Purpose for Writing the Letter to the Romans. By Thomas A. Vollmer. Biblical Tools and Studies 36. Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2018. xviii + 319 pp.

Thomas A. Vollmer’s revised doctoral thesis, *“The Spirit Helps Our Weakness”: Rom 8,26A in Light of Paul’s Missiological Purpose for Writing the Letter to the Romans*, addresses the nature of “weakness,” the purpose of prayer, and the role that the Spirit plays in Pauline thought within the title verse. Employing a framework based upon Udo Schnelle’s criteria for historiography, Vollmer determines the implications of the phrase, “the Spirit helps our weakness” (*to pneuma synantilambanetai tē asthenia hēmōn*), within the Roman historical context and within Paul’s own matrix of Jewish background and Christian identity. As such, he seeks an interpretation that fits within the broader context of the entire epistle and as understood as part of Paul’s mission to spread the gospel message to see that the gospel impacts the lives of God’s people.

In chapter one, having explained that the points of comparison and contrast between Rom 8:26 and 27 require analysis of the verses together, Vollmer covers the history of interpretation of this passage organized by theme, along with consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of each. While these frameworks lend insights to the meaning of Paul’s texts, Vollmer desires to see a stronger link relating these two verses on the Spirit’s work to the entire Roman epistle and its overall purpose.

The overall purpose of Paul’s letter to the Romans is the subject of the second chapter. Vollmer concludes that various proposed strategies and motivations can account for some of the letter, but not the whole. Vollmer proposes that Romans be primarily understood in terms of Paul’s mission. By this, he means that Paul desired to convince the Roman church that his gospel was the correct one and held the expectation that they form a community of faith, follow a new way of life, and communicate the gospel to others. This purpose, though not necessarily Paul’s only rationale, incorporates insights from several of the aforementioned motivations for

writing Romans, and is consistent with Paul's self-understanding in his ministry as well as the central purpose for all his writings. That is, Paul's reason for living and writing was based upon his conviction that Jesus brings salvation, which, in turn, was the reason he desired unity for the Roman church and the ability to use Rome as a base for bringing the gospel to Spain.

The remaining chapters cover exegesis. Chapter three deals with Rom 8:26a within its broad and immediate context in the letter to establish the way in which God's intervention in the world is what overcomes the weakness of believers. Knowing that the Spirit is the mediating agent through which God establishes new life and creates his people establishes the hope that believers have in the midst of weakness, suffering, and trial.

Chapter four considers the first words of Romans 8:26: "likewise indeed" (*hōsautōs de kai*). Through surveying how this adverbial clause is used in Paul, the whole of the New Testament, and the Septuagint, Vollmer concludes that it links the verse to a more immediate referent. The hope of 8:24–25 relates to the Spirit in vv. 26–27, a connection that fits nicely with Paul's conception of mission and of the Spirit's role in the fulfillment of that mission. The Spirit is the agent by which believers have hope in the midst of suffering.

The fifth chapter highlights the theological, Jewish, and Pauline understandings of the Spirit (*to pneuma*) to find that the Spirit consistently mediates the accomplishment of God's mission in the world. That the Spirit "helps" (*synantilambanetai*) is the focus of chapter six. Vollmer identifies an administrative and management context for this verb, and the verb clearly establishes that it is the Spirit alone who helps and intercedes on behalf of the believers in their unknowing.

The seventh chapter returns to an investigation of "our weakness" (*tē asthenia hēmōn*) that the Spirit addresses, a discussion begun in ch. 3 with the immediate context of 8:26a. This weakness refers to a limitation in the ability of the Roman Christians to pray—not a sinfulness or sickness on their part—that pertains to being unable to "live in accord with God's

design” or to not being able to “succeed in expanding God’s mission to the world” (261). Therefore, Vollmer is able to reiterate that the Spirit is God’s missiological and mediating agent, a leader, who aids believers in overcoming their weakness so that they may be aligned with God’s will.

As is typical with revised dissertations, especially one that features untranslated Greek and German portions, biblical scholars compose the intended audience for this volume. Students may find Vollmer’s work to provide a helpful model for historical criticism and to apply Schnelle’s principles for exegesis. Vollmer generally provides thorough coverage not only of the historical context for the Roman epistle but also of the history of interpretation. He also provides an analysis of the words and phrases used in Paul and contemporaneous texts.

It would have been beneficial had Vollmer more clearly stated some of his exegetical conclusions. For example, his analysis of *ti proseuxōmetha*, either interpreted as “what to pray for” or “how to pray,” indicates that the believers struggle with the content of their prayer as opposed to the manner of prayer (127). In contrast, the use of *dei*, “it is necessary,” in the next clause leads him to conclude that the issue is not a lack of knowledge but an inability “to perform prayer in a manner that coheres with God’s will,” to be “connected” with God (133). He subsequently switches back to a reference to a struggle with content. Understanding that the purpose of prayer is to form the believer to see the world through God’s eyes and consequently carry out his mission, one wonders how Vollmer would understand the implications of whether the weakness in prayer of which Paul speaks involves content, manner, or both.

Nonetheless, Christian readers will be edified by Vollmer’s exegetical affirmations of how the Spirit leads, guides, and intercedes on believers’ behalf. The Spirit allows God’s people to accomplish what they could not do on their own to become heirs of God. It is powerful how Vollmer notes one specific way in which this takes place: the Spirit helps them overcome their limitations in prayer with groaning, the sound of frustration that is rooted in the desire for redemption. In other words, the Spirit intercedes

and helps believers by continuing to convict them of this very weakness, a weakness which does not bring despair but hope as God's people patiently wait for the realization of their salvation (8:24–25).

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