

# **End Time Evangelism for the Nameless Believer**

**The restoration of the spirit and power  
of Elijah to the Church**

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## **These are the days of Gideon and Elijah**

Judges 6:1 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. 2 Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds.

This can be likened to the current situation of the Church. We are so oppressed by the enemy that we hide in our churches and practice our religion. Not only we do not know how to overcome the enemy in the world outside, we have adopted a strategy of defensive retreat.

... 6 Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help. 7 When the Israelites cried to the LORD because of Midian, 8 he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 9 I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. 10 I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me."

There is a movement of prayer and intercession now in the Church. In response, the Word of God tells us that He saved us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of light. He gave us the land or nation where we live so that we could proclaim the gospel and disciple that nation in order to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. But instead we have disobeyed God and adopted the practices of the people that live around us, "worshipping their gods."

11 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. 12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

But the Lord is now speaking to mighty warriors like Gideon around the world who even at this moment are still hiding in fear from the enemy.

13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."

These "Gideons" are currently wondering where are the great signs and wonders that frequented the Church in the Book of Acts. Because of manifestations of such power the early Church grew explosively and earned the respect of the community. Acts 5:12-13 tell us: "The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people." But today some theologians would tell us that the Lord has taken away these weapons and that such signs and wonders have ceased.

14 The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

But the Lord tells us, "You already have what you need to defeat the enemy and fulfill the Great Commission. Have I not given you power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and sent you out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick?" (Luke 9:1-2)

The Church is like an army of foot soldiers each of which has been equipped with deadly M-16 submachine guns. However, all of the soldiers have their guns strapped to their shoulders. Some are completely oblivious to the presence of the weapon hanging at their side. Others know of the weapon but have not been trained how to use it. Still others are afraid to use it.

But today the Lord is teaching His "Gideons" how to use the powerful weapon entrusted to the disciples of Christ 2,000 years ago.

### **The End Time Model of Evangelism: the restoration of the spirit and power of Elijah to the Church**

The Lord is now restoring to the body of Christ something vital for fulfilling the Great Commission during these end times. It is something that has been missing for most of the history of the Church. Two millennia ago Jesus Christ gave the Church the Great Commission. Still we have not yet completed it. One of the primary reasons for the delay is the inability of the Church to

prove to the lost that our God is the true God through miraculous signs. In stark contrast, the early church of Acts understood how to heal the sick and cast out demons as the gospel was proclaimed. As a result, the gospel spread throughout much of the known world at that time. But as the Church became an institutionalized religion, this understanding was lost. Perhaps this is why billions of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and adherents of witchcraft refuse to take the gospel seriously. As Jesus told the royal official whose son lay sick in Capernaum, "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe."

But during these last days the Lord has shown us how to restore these miraculous signs to the Church in accordance with John 14:12...

"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."

This will not happen overnight; it will likely take many years for the Church to be equipped in this way. But it has begun. The spirit that the Lord gave to the prophet Elijah is now being restored to the Church.

## **The Restoration of Power and Boldness and Unity to the Body of Christ**

Malachi 4:5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

According to this prophecy, the prophet Elijah would be sent before the Coming of the Messiah. This of course was fulfilled by the coming of John the Baptist. Regarding John the Baptist, Luke and Matthew wrote:

Luke 1:17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Matthew 17:11 Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. 12 But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished..."

In his words Jesus hinted that Elijah would return again a second time in the future to restore all things. Malachi prophesied that Elijah would be sent before the Day of the Lord. The "Day of the Lord" was fulfilled once at Christ's first appearing two thousand years ago. But there will come another "Day of the Lord." If Malachi's prophecy still holds, this Second Coming will necessitate a second return of Elijah. What might this mean for us today?

It is likely that this does not mean a literal appearance of the man Elijah from heaven. Rather it may mean the reappearance on earth of the spirit and power of Elijah, just as John the Baptist came two thousand years ago in the spirit and power of Elijah. It may mean the restoration of the spirit and power of Elijah not to just one individual, but to the Church of Jesus Christ. What is the nature of the spirit that the Lord put in His servant Elijah?

During these last days, there are indeed different interpretations regarding the spirit of Elijah. One primary interpretation focuses on the purpose for which Elijah was sent. During his time nearly the entire nation of Israel had backslidden into the worship of a false god named Baal. Elijah was raised up to preach repentance from idolatry and to return to the God of Israel. Indeed today there are many idols in the Church from which we must repent.

The interpretation to be presented here instead focuses on the *method* by which Elijah succeeded in causing the Israelites to acknowledge that the Lord is the only true God. Initially there was frustration and failure. All his

preaching and prophesying, even three and a half years of drought and famine, failed to bring the backslidden Israelites to bow before the Lord. Finally, the Lord decided to take drastic action through His servant Elijah. He would demonstrate before the very eyes of the people in an irrefutable way that He was the true God and that Baal was a usurper.

On that day assembled on top of Mt. Carmel were thousands of Israelites along with the servants of Baal and the prophet Elijah.

I Kings 18:21 Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.

Then Elijah issued his legendary challenge to the servants of Baal. He told them to build an altar to Baal and to prepare sacrifices on it. He himself would build an altar to the Lord and prepare a sacrifice on it as well. But neither party would set fire to the sacrifices.

I Kings 18:24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God."

What a revolutionary way to determine which is the true God! No debating, begging, human persuasion or reasoning would be involved. If the Lord is in fact the true God, let Him prove it with a visible demonstration of His power in plain view of all. *This is the spirit of Elijah---the spirit of great boldness to proclaim the Kingdom of God as Elijah did.* The world actually favors this kind of no-nonsense approach:

I Kings 18:24 Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

After that the duel commenced. The servants of Baal went first and called on the name of their god. Nothing happened even after several hours. Finally they gave up in exhaustion. Then at the time of the evening sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and called on the name of the Lord.

I Kings 18:37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. 39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "**The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!**"

Only after witnessing the visible demonstration of the Lord's power with their own eyes did the Israelites bow down before the Lord and acknowledge Him as the true God. The spirit of Elijah involves not just *boldness* alone by itself,

but also the accompanying *power* to prove that our God is the true God. This is the spirit which the Lord is restoring to His Church during these end times. This is the spirit by which we will be able to proclaim to the world, "Our God is the true God, and we will demonstrate it to you in power!" This is none other than the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised would be given to us.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Why is it that the Church today does not proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost after the manner of Elijah? The answer is obvious. We are afraid of the possibility that the God of Elijah will not answer with fire after we pray. It is a very risky approach. The risk of failure in public view and subsequent embarrassment exist. Thus few dare to adopt this approach.

Is the approach of the "Elijah Challenge" found in the New Testament?

John 20:30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 **But these are written that you may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Christ performed many miracles while he was on earth. Among them were very many miraculous healings. What was the primary function of these miracles? Of course Jesus healed the sick out of his compassion for the suffering. But was compassion for the sick the primary reason? No, he did miracles and healed the sick to prove that he was indeed the promised Messiah, the Son of God who suffered unto death on the cross to bear our sins. He healed the sick to prove that we could have life in his name, to prove to the world that he was the only way to the Father in heaven.

As Elijah on Mt. Carmel performed the miracle to prove that the Lord is the true God, Jesus did miracles to prove his identify as the Son of God, the only Savior. Moreover, Jesus promised that those who believe in him would do the works that he did.

John 14:12 "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."

The Lord has begun to fulfill this promise in these last days. Those who believe in him will do the miracles that he did to prove to the world that our God is the only true God and that Jesus Christ is the only way to Him.

In this book we will learn how to do the miracles that Jesus did as an evangelistic tool to win the lost for the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

## **The Restoration of Unity to the Body of Christ**

Psalm 133:1 How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! 2 It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. 3 It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

When the first High Priest Aaron was anointed to carry out his ministry, he was anointed not with simply a few drops of precious oil, but rather with such a large amount that it ran down to anoint his body as well. What does this picture mean for the New Testament Church?

The precious oil of course represents the Holy Spirit. The body of Aaron the High Priest speaks of the body of our Great High Priest Jesus Christ, which on earth is fulfilled by the Church of Jesus Christ. We as the Church must be anointed and empowered in order to fulfill the mandate Christ gave us---the Great Commission. How will this come about?

It will come about when brothers live together in unity. When unity in the body of Christ is restored, the Church will be anointed and empowered to complete the Great Commission. The Lord will bestow the life forevermore which we are commanded to preach in the gospel.

John 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you... 23 ... May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

The Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, prayed to the Father for unity in the Church. What was the purpose of this unity? It was not for the sake of unity in itself, but rather so that the world would know that the Father sent the Son into the world as a redemptive sacrifice for our sins. This is the gospel that we preach. The world will understand this gospel when the Church is brought to complete unity.

Unity in the body of Christ is a prerequisite to the fulfillment of the Great Commission by the Church.



## **How do we know which god is the one true God who created the universe?**

There are two important criteria which can help settle this issue. The one true God should have **authority**.

- He should have **authority** over disease and demons.
- He should have **authority** to forgive sin.

Let us examine the first criterion from the backdrop of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Luke 4:33 Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, 34 saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us?"

Before we look at how Jesus handled the demon, let us examine what a practitioner of witchcraft or of some other power would do in a similar situation. Let's say that a person suffered from demonic nightmares every night and asked to be treated by a witchdoctor for a fee. Although there are different variations on the procedure, typically the witchdoctor would have his patient go to the market to buy some items, for example, a chicken. The practitioner would take the chicken and prepare a tasty meal to offer to the afflicting demon. This offering is actually a bribe to appease the demon in the hope that the demon will stop the harassment. If the demon is pleased with the bribe and the humble spirit in which it is offered, he might stop the affliction and the patient will be "healed." A variation on this theme has the witchdoctor obtaining the help of an outside demon to mediate and bring the nightmares to a halt.

Victims of demonic oppression indeed have been "set free" miraculously in such a way. Does this mean that witchcraft is from the one true God and should be emulated? No, it most certainly does not.

When one must resort to bribery and appeasement to gain favor from a second party, it is clear that the second party is the one with the greater authority. From this logic we conclude that the demon clearly has higher authority than the witchdoctor. Therefore witchdoctors and the "power" they use and serve cannot be from the one true God who is above all.

Healing which is from the one true God above will not utilize bribery and offerings of appeasement. The God who is above all is the King of all kings

and thus has *authority* over demons and diseases. A king exercises his authority in no uncertain terms. Observe how Jesus handled the demon:

Luke 4:35 But Jesus *rebuked* him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. 36 Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this is! For *with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits*, and they come out." 37 And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

We see that Jesus did not do what witchdoctors and other practitioners do. There was no appeasement. There were no incantations, no charms, fetishes, and amulets, and the like. Instead, Jesus **rebuked and commanded** the demon to leave with his words. And because He had been given authority and power from His Father, the demon obeyed His command.

By definition, the one true God is from above and therefore has all authority, including authority over demons and diseases. When He desires them to leave, He most certainly does not employ appeasement; instead He *commands with authority and power*. And because they are under His authority, they must obey. In this way, infirm people are healed and set free.

Thus we conclude from this that Jesus Christ must be the Son of the one true God. And we his disciples can learn to use His supernatural authority to drive out demons and heal the sick as proof to the world that our God is the only true God and that Jesus is the only way to Him.

Let's now look at the second criterion for deciding who is the one true God. He should have **authority to forgive sin**.

When someone commits sin, it is primarily against the one true God who is holy and just. Because He is holy, he hates sin; because He is just, those who sin must be punished for their sins. Sin can be considered a debt that a sinner owes to God. According to Scripture, the sinner must pay the debt to God by suffering eternally in hell.

The only One with the authority to forgive this debt is obviously God Himself. For example, if we borrow money from a bank, no one else but the bank has the authority to cancel and forgive the debt. Thus it is clear that only God Himself has authority to forgive sins.

Mark 2:1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "*Son, your sins are forgiven.*"

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

By uttering the words "your sins are forgiven" to the paralytic, Jesus was claiming to be equal to God Himself, for only God alone can forgive sins. This shocked the teachers of the law.

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 *Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?*

Let's answer this question posed by Jesus before the crowd gathered on that occasion. Telling a paralytic that his sins are forgiven in front of a crowd is outwardly an easy thing to do since the forgiveness of sins is an invisible spiritual transaction. There's no visible proof that his sins have actually been forgiven. Who knows if anything has really happened?

But for us to tell a paralytic to get up in front of a crowd of onlookers is a risky thing. The people are watching for the paralytic to get up and walk; they are anticipating a miracle. The utterance must be backed up by the miracle. What if the paralytic does not get up and no miracle takes place? Thus it is outwardly much more difficult to tell a paralytic to get up than to tell him his sins are forgiven.

10 *But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....*" He said to the paralytic, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

Jesus would heal the paralytic in front of the people to prove that he had authority to forgive sins. Disease and infirmities are ultimately the

consequence of sin. They can be compared to “monthly interest payments” that we pay on our earthly debts. If for some reason our debt has been canceled or forgiven, the interest payments of course cease. Thus where sin has been forgiven, it is possible that healing of the infirmity can follow. The one with *the authority* to heal physical infirmities is the one who has *the authority* to forgive sin. The one with the authority to remove the consequence of sin (in this case, physical infirmity) is logically the one who has authority to forgive sin itself. Jesus accomplished this by dying on the cross to bear our sin.

12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Jesus healed the man. He did that which was harder to say. In doing so he proved that he had authority to do that which was easier to say. By healing the man of his physical infirmity Jesus proved that he had authority to forgive sins. The many miraculous healings performed by Jesus two thousand years ago proved that he had authority to forgive sin.

How did Jesus heal the paralytic? He did not use bribery or appeasement, but rather *he used his authority to command* the man to get up and be healed. Thus the one who has **supernatural authority** to heal the sick is the one who has **authority to forgive sin**.

We disciples of Jesus Christ can learn to use this supernatural authority to heal the sick in His name as proof to the world that our God is the only true God and that Jesus is the only way to Him.

In contrast, there is no similar evidence that religion can forgive sin. Religion has no *supernatural authority* to heal the sick. Witchdoctors and the like have no *authority* to drive out demons as Jesus and his disciples did.

There are at least two criteria by which we can determine who is the one true God. Among other things, He must have:

- **authority** over disease and demons, and
- **authority** to forgive sin.

Luke 9:1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, *he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases,* 2 and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 *If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.*"

## Jesus Christ was Priest, Prophet, and King

We know that Jesus during his ministry on earth was our High Priest. He was also the Prophet and the King of kings. He was anointed by his Father to minister in these three offices. In the same way, His body---the Church---is anointed to minister in these three offices.

We understand the *priestly* anointing, with which believers offer fragrant sacrifices unto the Lord. With the priestly anointing we worship and praise the Lord; we offer petitions and prayer unto Him. The *prophetic* anointing has also been made clear to the Church. With this second anointing we prophesy to the Church and to the world. We speak forth the words of God.

The last anointing---the *kingly* anointing---is the third and perhaps the least understood of the three. It is the last anointing to be restored to the church in order to perfect it and equip it to complete the Great Commission. The kingly anointing involves the power and authority which has been entrusted to believers for expanding the Kingdom of God on earth through the preaching of the gospel.

In order to understand the kingly anointing, let us study the ministry of the prototypical Old Testament king, David. Even Jesus Christ the King of kings was known as the Son of David. Let us look at a very familiar incident early in his life, his confrontation with the giant Goliath. This incident begins with David at home with his father Jesse away from the frontlines where his brothers were fighting the Philistines under King Saul.

1 Samuel 17:8 Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." 10 Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." 11 On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were **dismayed and terrified**.

The fearful reaction of the Israelites was understandable. Goliath was a huge giant, and had never been defeated in battle. It would be foolhardy and certain death to engage him one-on-one. Unfortunately, this is also the reaction of the Church of Jesus Christ when we are challenged by giants. For example in countries where the prevailing belief is Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or witchcraft, the Church lives in weakness and fear. When we are challenged by a giant, we run away from it in dismay and terror. We

retreat to the sanctuary of our church buildings and remain hidden doing our religious thing. We have no idea how to face and kill the giant.

In western countries as well the Church is generally afraid and reluctant to face the local giants head-on.

Jesse sent David to look for his older brothers at the frontlines. David went and found them.

1 Samuel 17:23 As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. 24 When the Israelites saw the man, **they all ran from him in great fear.** ...26 ...David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is **this uncircumcised Philistine** that he should defy **the armies of the living God?**"

David's reaction to Goliath's challenge was stunning in its contrast to the fear that caused the other Israelites to flee for their very lives. Instead of terror, he felt holy anger burning in his spirit against the pagan Philistine who had dared to defy the servants of the living God. This is a manifestation of the kingly anointing that was already in David the future king. David stood his ground in the face of the giant and spoke to him.

1 Samuel 17:45 ...**I come against you** in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the LORD will hand you over **to me**, and **I will strike you down and cut off your head.** Today **I will give the carcasses** of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and **the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.**

David's words to the giant, to put it mildly, may sound presumptuous to those in our current church culture. Notice the frequency with which David uses the personal pronouns "I" and "me" as he describes what is going to happen to the giant. A contemporary believer might ask, "Where is the Lord in all this? Shouldn't David have said instead: '**the Lord** comes against you...**the Lord** will strike you down...**the Lord** will cut off your head, etc.'" If we did not already know how this story turns out from our Sunday School days, we would conclude that this arrogant boy who trusts in himself rather than in the Lord is going to end up dead. There is however one redeeming element in the narrative: "and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel." Well, at least David had the right motivation, though obviously lacking the proper trust and dependence upon God.

In a moment we are going to understand what was at work in David to enable him to kill the giant despite his---from our current perspective---“lack of dependence” on God.

1 Samuel 17:48 As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, **David ran quickly toward the battle line** to meet him.

Before our make our conclusions, we make one final observation. As Goliath advanced, David, in stark contrast to the others who always ran away, **ran toward** the enemy to engage him. Then he killed the giant with his sling. This skill in killing David learned and honed to perfection in his days as a shepherd protecting his father’s sheep from lions and bears.

What did David understand that our current church mindset does not?

When we are confronted by a giant, we will pray to the Lord and ask Him to kill or remove the giant. We will trust Him to remove the giant. After we pray we will remain in the friendly confines of our church sanctuaries and worship the Lord. We wait for the Lord to kill the giant. But often it seems the Lord does not kill the giant. Sometimes the giant seems to increase in strength instead.

What David understood that our contemporary church mindset does not is that when God wants to kill a giant, He does not necessarily do it directly from heaven. Rather He will often use a vessel, a human being who has been prepared to carry out His purpose. For example, God saves the lost as vessels known as believers share the gospel with them. God rarely saves the lost directly. In the same way, the Lord killed Goliath by the hand of David. The Lord had prepared him to do this. David was confident in the physical skills that the Lord had given him as he watched over his father’s sheep, and so with complete justification he proclaimed the giant’s demise to his face:

“I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, ...I will strike you down and cut off your head...I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army...”

This is the kingly anointing in operation. There are three characteristic of this anointing that can be articulated.

- Kings have authority to issue commands; kings do not ask or beg
- Kings are bold and fearless
- Kings have actual power to kill and destroy their enemies

This is the nature of the kingly anointing which the Lord is restoring to the Church. We are being given actual authority over infirmities and demons and



they must obey our commands. The Lord is restoring boldness to us. We are being given actual power to heal the sick and cast out demons so that the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.

Just as God sent David to kill Goliath, He is sending the Church to destroy the giants of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, witchcraft, and others. These giants will not be destroyed simply as a result of our prayers, although intercession is most certainly a prerequisite. These giants will be destroyed as believers heal the sick and cast out demons in the act of proclaiming the gospel to billions of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and the lost of every stripe around the world. The lost will witness the power of the name of Jesus Christ and be assured that our God is far greater than their god or gods. Many will repent and enter the Kingdom of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And they will be disciplined by the Church.

In our function as priests, we must pray and trust the Lord. In our function as kings serving the King of kings, we must exercise our authority over diseases and demons and command them to go in the name of our King Jesus Christ. Let us learn now to minister with the kingly anointing, with the spirit that the Lord gave to His prophet Elijah.

## **The Spirit of Elijah at Work**

Niger is a French-speaking country located north of Nigeria in West Africa. Not to be confused with Nigeria which has an oil industry and some of the largest churches in the world, Niger is impoverished. According to the UN it usually ranks as one of the three poorest countries in the entire world. In 2002 the population of Niger was over 99% Muslim and the number of born-again believers by one estimate was one-twentieth of one percent of the population. Most of the churches in Niger were very small and evangelical in doctrinal stance. To make matters even worse, there was no fellowship or unity between pastors and churches. Like in many places around the world, they eyed one another with mutual suspicion as rivals and competitors. The situation for the gospel in Niger was so bad that the Muslim government placed no official restrictions on the preaching of the gospel.

In November 2002 I went to Niger at the invitation of World Horizons and World Vision to conduct a Seminar and Crusade for the churches in the capital city, Niamey. For the first time of the history of the Church in Niger, churches and pastors came together. The purpose was to learn how to win the Muslims for Christ by demonstrating to them the power of the name of Jesus to heal the sick. As in most of the world outside the West, it is common knowledge that the most effective way of winning souls to Christ is through the tool of miraculous healings in His name.

First we held the Seminar to train the local pastors and leaders how to heal the sick in the name of Jesus according to the Scriptures. Both evangelicals and charismatics came together for the very first time. After completing several days of training, we held the very first open-air evangelistic Crusade in the history of Niger.

Muslims and Christians came bringing infirm people of all kinds to the seven consecutive evening meetings. Never before had there been such an event. Each night I proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Muslims who came. I told them, "since both Muslims and Christians worship the God of Abraham, all of us here actually worship the same God." (Actually I do not believe that we worship the same God as the Muslims. But historically it is true, and that fact can be used to build a bridge to the Muslims.) Continuing, I would say, "However, we do not agree as to the correct way to reach the God of Abraham. I believe that it is only through Isa Almasih [Jesus Christ in Arabic] that we can reach Him. However, you may believe that there is some other way, perhaps through the Koran or the Five Pillars of Islam. But which is the correct way?"

I told them, "Why don't we ask the God of Abraham Himself to show us tonight which is the correct way?" In this way there would be no need to debate or argue. Let the true God speak for Himself.

"Here's what we will do. There are all kinds of infirm people here. Let us ask the God of Abraham to heal them. Only the God of Abraham, the true God who created the heavens and the earth, can open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf."

"And when we pray to the God of Abraham to ask Him to heal the infirm, we will pray in the name of Isa Almasih [Jesus Christ]."

"If the miracles then happen and people come up to testify of their healings, what should we conclude? Well, if the miracles happen, it obviously means that the God of Abraham heard our prayer. Why did He hear our prayer? It must be because we must have prayed in the correct way, that is, in the name of Isa Almasih."

"Therefore if the miracles happen, that means that Isa Almasih is the only way to the God of Abraham." The logic was inescapable. The people agreed that it would be a good way to determine the true way to the God of Abraham.

(Most believers would agree that this could be a very effective way of preaching the gospel. Then why is this approach hardly ever used? The answer is obvious. We entertain certain doubt. What if nothing happens? Then not only will we be embarrassed, we will have proven that Jesus Christ is *not* the only way to the God of Abraham! What kind of spirit is behind this way of thinking? It is none other than the spirit of fear.)

So I called the trained pastors and leaders to come forward to the front. Their job was to heal the sick to prove that Jesus Christ is the only way to the God of Abraham. Before releasing them to minister, we first called on the God of Elijah and asked Him to send the fire of healing to prove that Jesus Christ is the way, the life, and the truth.

After prayer, I instructed the trained believers to lay hands on the sick and to heal them as they had been taught. And as they ministered, the Lord was faithful to perform miraculous healings through them. Each night those who were healed came up to the platform to testify of what the Lord had done for them. People with many different kinds of infirmities were healed, including the blind and the deaf. A man who had been unable to get up for months was brought to the meeting on a cot and he got up and began to walk around to the amazement of the onlookers. A demon of epilepsy was driven out. Two Muslim witchdoctors came to one meeting seeking healing for their infirmities. Their witchcraft was unable to cure them. But they were healed in the name of Jesus Christ and came forward to testify. We must

acknowledge that not all the infirm people were healed. But many were healed and gave their testimonies before the crowd.

Each night I shared the gospel using different Scriptures, but always at the end asking the Lord to prove who He was through miraculous healings. Each night He responded with miracles through the trained believers. After the testimonies of miracles were over, I would give the invitation for the people to accept Jesus Christ as the only way to the God of Abraham, as their Lord and Savior.

“Well, through the miracles you have just witnessed, the God of Abraham has spoken to us. He has very clearly shown us that Jesus Christ is the only way to Him. Who now wants to believe on him as the only way to the God of Abraham?”

The result was that for the first time in the history of Niger, Muslims came to Christ in numbers. By the end of the Crusade, about two hundred Muslims had accepted Jesus, some of them entire families. This was totally unprecedented in Niger. Prior to the Crusade, Muslims came to Christ with great difficulty---one here, another there, never in numbers. The difference was that in the Crusade they heard the gospel and saw the confirming miracles.

After the meetings were over, Pastor Joel Biao from our one of our sponsors World Vision of Niger wrote me a report. He is an evangelical, non-charismatic pastor.

“...I can't still help smiling as I am trying to figure the way that God lead this Campaign. Of course Clive Cook (Director of World Horizons for West Africa, co-sponsor of the Campaign) and I started talking about this without any conviction the first day. And we did a very short prayer that day. I couldn't imagine, Brother William, that this would end into an event so great in the history of the Church in Niger.”

“My life as a pastor and leader is really affected: I have learned to be bold in ministering the healing. I have got much more in faith. Through that campaign I can say God added something more to my faith. I could through the campaign know the kind of message we give when we try to bring people know the transforming power of God. I discovered that God can do much more as we try with humility to show that he is the almighty God. I also concluded that without signs, wonders and miracles we only do very little in winning the souls.”

“The first important thing the campaign has achieved for the churches is the unity. That was the first time that really the churches worked together in a

real spirit of unity. Also many barriers have been knocked down; indeed some of the churches that ministered healing didn't believe in it [at first]. They thought that is for the pentecostal churches [only]. Through your teaching and training they were convinced that anyone who is engaged in announcing the Good News in the name of Jesus can do so. Moreover, henceforth the churches are united and free to work together without any denominational discrimination. The church in Niamey is confident in preaching the Gospel with signs and wonders; the church knows how to handle the spiritual warfare; the church is really bold in preaching the Gospel."

"The Gospel will become effective in Niger as the Muslim people will themselves witness miracles in the name of Jesus. There will be much more fruit than what we had previously. The Church in Niger will become really bold and effective in reaching out to Muslim people. The harvest will be great."

According to one charismatic teaching, a believer must first be baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues before the Lord can use that believer to perform miraculous healings. The merits of this teaching notwithstanding, it has had the unfortunate consequence of alienating non-charismatic evangelical churches and erecting walls of separation between them and charismatic churches. "Conventional wisdom" taught that signs and wonders were only for tongues-speaking charismatics and not for evangelicals. This has turned out not to be true, whether through experience or based on the evidence of Scripture as we shall see later.

In our Niger Crusade we witnessed evangelical and charismatic pastors standing side-by-side ministering to the infirm, and God was using both to heal the sick. Barriers to unity and walls of denominational discrimination crumbled. The spirit of unity nurtured through the Campaign exists in Niamey to this very day even though evangelicals remain evangelical and charismatics remain charismatic. Miraculous healings continue to occur through the ministry of the local servants of God. Surely the Lord is pleased with the restoration of both unity and power to His Church in Niamey, Niger. The age of the big-name, one-man-show evangelist has run its course and is slowly coming to a close. The age of the faceless, nameless believer has begun.

## **OTHER HISTORIC CAMPAIGNS**

### **Egypt 2002**

In August 2002 our team held the largest evangelistic Crusade in the history of Egypt up until that time. Egypt is considered the head of Islam world-wide. Sponsored by the evangelical missionary organization Campus Crusade for Christ of Upper Egypt and the local Presbyterian Church, it was the first time the Egyptians witnessed miraculous healings on a mass scale at a Crusade. The Lord used the trained team members to heal hundreds of infirm people in Christ's name, drawing thousands of spiritually-hungry Egyptians to the meetings. At the meetings the crowd would surge forward and swarm around the team members to receive their healing as happened during the time of Jesus two thousand years ago.

As a result approximately ten thousand souls accepted Christ as Lord and Savior, including Muslims. By one estimate, one third of the people attending the meetings were Muslims.

Some very well-known preachers had tried to hold meetings in Egypt, but because of their fame they were ultimately denied permission. But a band of nameless, faceless believers was able to slip in and advance the Kingdom of God powerfully.

Shortly after the Campaign, we received a report from our primary host, the Director of Campus Crusade for Christ of Upper Egypt at that time. His name is Ashraf Kamel. He wrote:

"I want to thank you very much for your love. You and your team are a wonderful team. We saw and touched Jesus through the team. We saw and touched Jesus through your prayers, actions, behavior, words, and your ministry. You sacrificed with your time, money, effort, and all your life to come to minister people whom you don't know at all ... really this is Jesus' love. God bless you all.

When you came [on your first visit] last year and my family and I met to pray with you, I couldn't imagine at all what God would do in our country a year later [when you returned]. I spoke with you, I began to arrange [the Campaign] with other people but it never came to my mind that [we would witness such] great days.

Maybe you came with your team just for evangelistic meetings but for us it didn't really mean just that, you did more and more:

You changed our attitude about healing, you put [in its place] a new one. God used you to change our mind and thinking. It was the first time in El-Minia to have a conference about healing. All the leaders and the pastors were affected by that conference.

- You joined together two big church communities, the members of Campus Crusade in El-Minia with the members of the Evangelical Church in Saft El Laben in El-Minia, especially the leaders who become so close friends.
- You encouraged about 100 staff leaders and students in those days to work together for the new events
- I can confess that every member of my staff has at least one situation which makes him weep with many tears.
- It was the first time to see about 20,000 people [who] had very bad illnesses and circumstances in four days. We saw how much Satan had done; [it was a] great challenge to defeat him by healing people and casting out these illnesses and troubles....Can you see it was not only a matter of evangelistic meetings but also more than this? And I need more time to write more about these results.

My general observation and impression of this Campaign is wonderful:

- It was [not only] the first time in El-Minia, but also in Egypt to have an event like this, in that we had 20,000 people in four days in two meetings every day, these are historical events in Egypt. We made a big tent which held 5,000 chairs so that the attendance was about 5,000 people daily from different districts, towns, different levels in teaching [education], in living [standard], in different things.
- We held five clinics for different cases for men and women, old and children ... all kinds of people. We had about 1,500 cases through these four days. They received medicine, eyeglasses, and other things for free. Each case paid only [a nominal fee].
- The Seminar about Healing encouraged the leaders and pastors to practice healing in their churches. It was a very new teaching in our churches.

As for my observation on the impact of the Campaign on the work of the gospel in El-Minia, I can say that it was more that we expected. My town is not large and I know many people. So after these events, many people saw me in the street and stopped me to ask many spiritual matters, they ask me to make it [the Campaign] again. Others say, I know you, you were the interpreter for Brother William ... how is he? ... and so on. And as I wrote in the beginning how it was wonderful for us.

About miracles: to see a blind person, and God opened his eyes, and to see a lame [person] walk, it did many things in our people in El-Minia: some were encouraged by their healing, others take new steps in faith, others asking God to have this power.

After you left many cases came to our office saying that we were healed but I couldn't stand up to give my testimony because of the crowd. Another came with her child, he was about four years old. He had a bad disease in his chest, now he is completely cured. An old man couldn't move, his son's wife came to our office to explain how God healed him in those days and other stories I have.

Let me share some of the statistics:

- about 20,000 people attended these meetings
- about 10,000 people accepted Jesus as their Savior
- about 1,500 were treated in clinics

Let me say I myself was changed in my life, faith, and attitude which makes me (as a Campus Crusade director) lead my staff in the office with a new power, new view, and new attitude.

The last miracle is spite of all these new attitudes, new concepts, new healing, and many new [things], we didn't face any attack from others till now but otherwise people love us and appreciate us.”

## **Vietnam 2003**

In July 2003 we were hosted by the Evangelical Vietnam Fellowship, a network of nearly thirty denominations and organizations. For the first two of days of our meetings, 250 pastors and leaders from nearly 30 mostly illegal denominations---including Baptist, Campus Crusade for Christ, Christian & Missionary Alliance, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Assembly of God, Pentecostal, and various local denominations---came together for training in our Seminar. We had held Seminars in many nations of the world, but never had we seen such a response. Because of the move of the Holy Spirit in the persecuted underground churches, miraculous healings had taken place. But lacking systematic Scripture-based teaching on this type of ministry, the pastors saw these things only sporadically.

When in the Seminar it was laid out for them clearly from well over 200 references from Scripture, they were overjoyed. Eagerly they applied the



teaching about healing to one another in the training sessions. Miraculous healings took place. One pastor came to the Seminar, his body weak because of a heart problem that had also resulted in severe loss of his hearing. After two other pastors ministered to him, he testified with great excitement before the delighted group that his heart pain was gone, his body felt well, and his hearing was restored! Like the disciples in the gospels, the pastors at the Seminar had been taught to "proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." (Luke 9:1, 2)

On the third day there was a large Evangelistic Crusade where non-believers were invited to come to hear the gospel and receive healing prayer. This was the very first mass meeting since the fall of this country to communism decades ago in which a foreigner was invited to speak. It turned out to be even more historic than that. Never before in the history of this country under communism had such a large meeting been known to take place.

My wife and I were taken to a hall completely crammed with thousands of people who had been waiting an hour before the start of the meeting. There was no place to sit down even for us. People with various debilitating infirmities had been physically carried to the meeting; the area to the side of the speaker's platform was filled with people in wheelchairs. Never before here had so many infirm people come to be healed by Jesus Christ. There was an air of expectancy.

The praise and worship, led by the local pastors, was vibrant and powerful. One of the pastors who had attended our Seminar was so stirred that he read to the crowd the New Testament account of blind Bartimaeus who had been healed because of his faith. He then told the sick in the crowd to cry out to the Lord by faith as he prayed over them. The Lord Jesus began to minister by the Holy Spirit as never before seen by anyone in the crowd, perhaps as never before in the history of this country. Miraculous healings broke out "spontaneously" in the crowd. Cripples, paralytics, and stroke victims began to walk; some had not gotten up or walked in years. Many people were healed directly by the Lord without anyone laying hands on them or praying over them. A 40-year-old man deaf and dumb since birth could hear and speak, an emaciated woman with terminal cancer who had been carried to the meeting by eight people walked up to the platform with arms raised to Heaven to testify that she was healed. Another woman with breast cancer came up and testified it had disappeared. The crowd roared with delight and gave praise to God. After several such testimonies, I was handed the microphone so I could preach. But time and time again, before I could begin speaking, commotion broke out in the crowd as another and another and still another person was healed and came up to testify. I could only stand there in awe at what I was witnessing. I couldn't help laughing

and thinking to myself that the Lord wasn't about to allow me to speak. Even my host asked me if I actually had anything to say after all the miracles the Lord did...certainly it would be anti-climactic!

But I was reminded that the purpose of all the miracles was to bring precious souls to faith in Jesus Christ. I took the microphone and told them that *the overriding purpose of the great miracles* at which they had marveled was to provide the visible proof that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. The miraculous healings were the evidence that He had authority to forgive their sins and to save them from punishment in the next life, which many Asians dread. When I gave the invitation for non-believers to accept Christ, it appeared that about one-fifth of the crowd stood up. (Quite a few of those who had come to the meeting were already believers.) I led them in a sinners' prayer, and the angels in heaven rejoiced!

Then we ministered to those in the crowd who had not yet been healed. They laid hands on themselves and on one another and repeated after me as we exercised our authority over diseases and demons in the name of Jesus Christ. The Lord's power to heal appeared to be even greater than before. Elderly paralytics and bed-ridden people got up to walk normally and demonstrated their complete healing by squatting down and bending over. One 18-year-old woman had been blind in one eye since birth. The Lord opened the eye and she was able to see clearly with the eye. A government official who came to the meeting in a wheelchair got up out of the wheelchair and walked. In the days and weeks to follow, people healed in the meeting would testify in their own churches how the Lord had healed them of all manner of diseases. It was later reported that demon-possessed people were set free, and people suffering from depression were healed, no longer needing to take their medication. We will never know the full extent of all the miracles the Lord accomplished that evening. Not since the 1960's when American evangelists T. L. Osborn and Kathryn Kuhlman visited this country prior to its fall to communism had anything approaching this event occurred.

A video of the Crusade was produced and sent to about six hundred churches throughout Vietnam. Some infirm people who viewed the video were healed and accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. Some churches experienced revival after seeing it.

Afterwards, the pastors who had attended the Seminar began to minister with great power, healing the sick as they had been trained. Some began to teach others as they themselves had been taught, even in countries outside of Vietnam. The equipping of the saints had been effective.

## **The Approach is Specific to the Task**

The subject of healing inevitably summons certain images or associations to the mind of a believer. To a believer of the charismatic persuasion, the “gift of healing” likely comes to mind, perhaps accompanied by images of huge healing services held by preachers with the gift of healing. To an evangelical believer, the associations may be negative for a variety of reasons.

What we are going to present here is not related to those associations. We are not teaching the gift of healing nor are we involved in the kind of healing services that are sometimes seen on Christian TV.

The gift of healing is taught in I Corinthians 12 as one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are for the express purpose of building up the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

The context of this chapter tells us clearly that “the common good” refers to the common good of the body of Christ. Therefore all the gifts, including the gift of healing, are for primarily ministering to believers. The gift of healing is thus for ministering to infirm believers. Sometimes there are manifestations of this gift during worship gatherings where the Lord’s presence sovereignly appears and infirm people are physically healed.

However, our concern here is not primarily how to minister healing to sick believers. Rather it is how to minister supernatural healing to demonstrate to the lost that our God is the only true God and that Jesus is the only way to Him. There is a sharp contrast between these two contexts or tasks in which one can be involved. The first is simply building up the body of Christ. By contrast, the second is reaching out to the lost, which is an evangelistic context. The context which concerns us here is the second---demonstrating to the world that Jesus Christ is alive and the Son of the Living God.

The approach to healing which we will study here will be specific to our task or context. Thus we will not be studying the gift of healing. Rather we want to study healing in an evangelistic context. Where in Scripture do we find such a teaching? We find it in the ministry of Jesus in the gospels and the early disciples. Jesus did not come to build up the body of Christ. The Church as we know it today did not yet exist in his time. Rather, Jesus came to save

the lost. The miracles that he performed were all done in an evangelistic context---for the primary purpose of proving to the world that he was indeed the promised Messiah sent by the Father. This is virtually identical to the context and task that concern us in this study. Thus let us study the ministry of Jesus himself. After all, he promised in John 14:12 that we would do the works that he did. It makes much sense that we should do them in the way that he did them.

## **A prophecy about Jesus**

Isaiah 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has *anointed* Me to preach good tidings to the poor; he has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives...

It is clear that the Holy Spirit would come upon Jesus to anoint him to preach the gospel and to fulfil his mission as the Messiah. This prophecy was fulfilled at the Jordan River after Jesus was baptized in the water by John the Baptist.

Luke 3:21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Luke 4:1 Then Jesus, **being filled with the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Luke 4:14 Then Jesus returned **in the power of the Spirit** to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.

After he was anointed by the Spirit, he began to minister in the power of the Spirit. He began to do miracles, healing the sick and casting out demons. Exactly how did Jesus minister to the sick and demonized after he was anointed by the Spirit?

## **How did Jesus heal the sick?**

Luke 4:31 Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. 32 And they were **astonished** at His teaching, **for His word was with authority.**

The key word here is "authority." His word was with such authority that the people were astonished. Exactly how was his word with authority?

Luke 4:33 Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, 34 saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us?...."

As Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, a man was demonized and began to yell and create a disturbance. In a moment we are going to see how Jesus handled this situation. Before we do, let us ask the question what we believers would do if faced with such a situation.

Realistically, if this should happen in a typical church during a Sunday morning service, those sitting next to the demonized person might get up and run. Those who are more spiritual would not flee, but would likely pray to the Lord for the demonized person. If the church were a charismatic church, some might pray in tongues. This is typically how believers would react to such a situation. What did Jesus do?

Luke 4:35 But Jesus **rebuked** him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"

Note that Jesus did not pray to His Father on behalf of the man. Instead, Jesus spoke directly to the demon with harshness and sternness. He rebuked the demon and issued a command to him to be silent and to leave.

And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, **it came out of him** and did not hurt him.

The demon responded to the command by obeying it.

Luke 4:36 Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a **word** this is! For **with authority and power** He **commands** the unclean spirits, **and they come out.**"

Why were the people amazed at what Jesus did? They were amazed because only God Himself had the authority and power to command unclean spirits. As far as they knew, human beings did not have such authority. Certainly demons would not obey the command of a mere man. So when they saw a man of flesh and blood---the one known as Jesus---speak a command to a demon with the authority that only God Himself had, they were understandably amazed when the demon obeyed the command.

We see that when Jesus was anointed by the Spirit, he received from the Father authority over unclean spirits. He exercised this authority not by

praying to the Father, but rather by directly rebuking and commanding the unclean spirits to come out.

Luke 4:38 Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her.

Peter's mother-in-law had a bad fever. The Scripture does not say that it was caused by a spirit, so it likely was purely physical in nature. Her body had been invaded by a foreign body like a virus or bacteria, and her body was reacting. How did Jesus handle it? Did he pray for her?

39 So he bent over her and **rebuked** the fever, and it left her.

Surprisingly, he did not pray for her. Rather, he did something a bit strange. He spoke to the fever and rebuked it, just as he rebuked the unclean spirit in the synagogue. We would understand Jesus rebuking a spirit since a spirit has intelligence although disembodied. But a fever has no more intelligence than a vegetable, so why did Jesus speak to it and rebuke it? If we look at the outcome, we will understand. The fever obeyed Jesus' command and left the woman.

When the Holy Spirit anointed Jesus, he received authority over infirmities as well as over unclean spirits. He exercised this authority simply by rebuking the fever in the case of Peter's mother-in-law. Although Scripture does not record it, it is possible Jesus rebuked the fever simply by commanding it to go. And it obeyed his command. A simple operational definition of authority is the following: whatever you have been given authority over must obey your commands. It did not matter a great deal to Jesus whether he was dealing with a spirit or a fever. He had authority over both, and so he dealt with them and spoke to them in the same way. And in each case the result was the same. The person was healed.

Matthew 8:15 records the following additional detail about the incident: "He **touchd her hand** and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him."

Thus we know that Jesus did two things to heal the woman. He rebuked the fever, and he also laid his hand on her. Scripture shows us that often when Jesus healed the sick he would lay his hand on them and then issue a command. As we shall see much later, Jesus laid his hand on the infirm in order to transfer healing power into them. So often there were two factors at work when Jesus healed the sick: the transfer of healing power and the exercise of authority. These two factors are distinguishable.

Luke 5:12 While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell

with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." 13 Jesus reached out his hand and **touched the man.** "I am willing," he said.

Again, Jesus reached out his hand to touch an infirm person whom he wanted to heal. We may note that under Old Testament law it was forbidden to touch a leper since physical contact with an "unclean" person would render oneself unclean as well. But Jesus was not concerned with becoming unclean by physical contact with the leper. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit, and when he made physical contact the power could only travel in one direction: from him to the infirm person. It could only travel *from* the one of greater power and authority *to* the one of lesser power and authority. Jesus could not be made unclean by touching a leper.

Luke 5:12 **"Be clean!"** And immediately the leprosy left him.

Again, Jesus did not pray for the leper, asking the Father to heal him. Since he had been given authority over infirmities, he simply spoke directly to the infirmity commanding it to "be clean!" And the leprosy obeyed his command. We are now beginning to see a pattern. Jesus never prayed for the sick. Rather, he healed them. He healed the sick often by laying his hand on them and then speaking forth a command based on his authority from the Father. He cast out demons by commanding them to go.

## Have Disciples of Christ Been Given Authority?

We know that God can heal the sick. Christians also know that Jesus can heal the sick. This is common knowledge. But what about disciples of Jesus Christ---have they been given any authority to heal the sick and cast out demons as Jesus did? This is the real question that faces us.

Luke 9:1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he **gave them power and authority** to drive out all demons and to cure diseases,

It says clearly that to the Twelve, who later were to become mighty apostles, Jesus gave power and authority over demons and diseases. Therefore they could begin to heal the sick and cast out demons in his name. They would no longer need to ask Jesus or the Father to heal the sick. They could now do it themselves. Some of what the Father gave to Jesus as he was anointed by the Holy Spirit he now gave to his twelve disciples. For what purpose did Jesus give them this authority?

Luke 9:2 and he sent them out **to preach the kingdom of God...**

The primary purpose of this authority was not to hold healing services for believers, as wonderful as such healing services might be. Rather they needed this authority because he was sending them out to preach the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom has a King. A real King by definition should have great authority. This Kingdom authority was to be manifested by the disciples to demonstrate to the lost that the Kingdom was in fact near.

Luke 9:2 ...and **to heal the sick.**

The authority of the King and the coming of the Kingdom were to be demonstrated specifically by the disciples healing the sick with authority in the name of their King, who was Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

Luke 11:20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

We note that Jesus sent the Twelve out, commanding them to do two things:

- to preach the kingdom of God, and
- to heal the sick.



The disciples went out and obeyed these two commands.

Luke 9:6 So they set out and went from village to village, **preaching the gospel** and **healing people** everywhere.

Today in the ministry of the Church we see a vast difference from the ministry of the disciples in the gospels. Yes, to some extent we are preaching the gospel to the lost. But why are miraculous healings so rare in the Church today, unlike what is recorded in the gospels? A variety of reasons has been proposed to explain the dearth of miracles today. (Some have provided a theological basis as the reason. According to this doctrine, following the death of the original twelve apostles, miracles ceased. Moreover, the canonization or formal completion of the New Testament made miracles unnecessary.)

Some will say that God may not will to heal the sick, and that is why miraculous healings are so rare today. However, if Jesus commanded his disciples to heal the sick as they preached the gospel to the lost, that certainly meant that he wanted the sick to be healed as the gospel was preached. It is generally God's will to heal the sick when the gospel is proclaimed to the lost because without such miracles it will be more difficult for them to believe. As an illustration, when the Lord commands us to preach the gospel to the lost, does that mean it is His will for the lost to be saved? Of course it is. (Will all of them be saved? Generally, they will not.) It is the same with the Lord's command for us to heal the sick.

There is a simple yet profound explanation for the scarcity of miracles in today's Church. *There are few miraculous healings today because the Church has for some reason failed to obey Christ's command to heal the sick as the Kingdom of God is proclaimed.* We shall develop this more fully later.

Matthew also bears witness to Christ's commands to the Twelve:

Matthew 10:1 And when He had called to *Him* His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. 7 And as you go, proclaim, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. You have received freely, freely give.

To the Twelve who were later to become apostles of the Lamb, Jesus gave a very high level of authority, enough to heal *all* kinds of infirmities. Jesus had freely given them the authority, now he expected them to heal the sick freely as they proclaimed the Kingdom of Heaven to the lost.

Jesus commanded his twelve disciples to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven and to heal the sick. His final command before returning to heaven is found in Matthew 28, also known as *the Great Commission*.

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Therefore today we must teach disciples of Jesus Christ what He commanded his disciples to do two thousand years ago---to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven and *to heal the sick*.

### **What about disciples who are not apostles?**

Luke 10:1 After this the Lord appointed **seventy others** and **sent them** two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

Seventy more disciples---who were not apostles, simply "ordinary" disciples--were commissioned and sent out to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Did Jesus also give them any authority to heal the sick and cast out demons?

Luke 10:9 **Heal the sick** who are there and tell them, '**The kingdom of God is near you.**'

Just as he commanded the Twelve, he also commanded the seventy to heal the sick. It is noteworthy that the command to heal the sick came before the command to proclaim the Kingdom of God. The order of these commands is probably not highly significant, but at least we can say that it is not unscriptural to heal the sick before proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom. The miracles of healing grab the attention of the people so that they may pay attention to the preaching of the gospel. Did Jesus also give these ordinary disciples authority to cast out demons?

Luke 10:17 The seventy returned with joy and said, "Lord, **even the demons submit to us** in your name."

### **Conclusion**

It is reasonable to conclude that a measure of authority over disease and demons was given to whomever the Lord sent out to proclaim the Kingdom

of God to the lost. The miracles would confirm the truth of the gospel to the listeners and draw them to faith in Christ for eternal life.

Whom has the Lord sent out to proclaim the Kingdom of God? Every born-again believer is sent out to the lost to witness for Jesus Christ. Therefore every believer has already been given a measure of power and authority over disease and demons to be used in the context of sharing the gospel to the lost. We say "a measure" because not all believers receive the same level of authority. Apostles may receive a relatively high level of the authority, while those who are not may be given a lesser level of authority. But all born-again believers are called to do the works that Jesus did. This authority is "standard equipment" with which every believer comes.

### **The authority to heal is not the same as the gift of healing**

This is a crucial difference, because some believers will simply avoid this tool of evangelism altogether because they will say that "they just don't have the gift of healing." However, we are not studying the gift of healing here.

- The gift of healing from the Holy Spirit was available to the Church beginning only on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came. In contrast, the authority to heal was given by Jesus to his disciples in the period of the gospels before the Holy Spirit came.
- The gift of healing is primarily for ministering to infirm believers, while the authority to heal is given to us to demonstrate to the lost that the gospel we preach is in fact true.
- The gift of healing is not given to every believer, while the authority to heal is given to every witness of Jesus Christ, i.e., every believer. 1 Corinthians 12:29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

Based on these three arguments we may safely conclude that the authority to heal given to every born-again believer is separate and distinct from the gift of healing as taught in 1 Corinthians 12.

## **The Difference between Praying for the Sick and Healing the Sick**

We have seen that Jesus commanded his disciples to heal the sick as they proclaimed the Kingdom of God to the lost. Most believers would reasonably conclude that this command is still valid for the Church today. Yet how many believers actually obey this command? The answer, sadly, is very few. Why is this the case? When the Lord gives us a command and we do not obey it, it is called disobedience. There are very many believers who love the Lord and are deeply committed to the gospel, yet they gloss over and disobey this particular command to heal the sick. Why?

First of all, there is some confusion regarding God's will to heal. If it is not God's will to heal a particular person, how can a believer heal that person? But we have already seen that when the gospel is preached to the lost, it is the Lord's will to heal the sick to convince the lost that Jesus is the only way to the Father.

**Luke 10:9 Heal the sick** who are there and tell them, '**The kingdom of God is near you.**'

This area is very rarely taught, and so it is reasonable to expect that the Church will fall so far short in healing the sick. But why is it not taught? The answer likely lies in the difference between praying for the sick and healing the sick. Not a few believers know how to pray for the sick. It's not difficult. One simply prays to the Father in the name of Jesus, asking Him to heal a sick person. If the person is healed, praise the Lord. If the person is not healed, praise the Lord; it's not God's will to heal at that time. Therefore if the person is not healed, the person who prays has not at all failed. All he does is ask, it's God's business to heal or not to heal. The person praying has absolutely no responsibility to heal the person; it's completely God's decision. Therefore praying for the sick is risk-free. There's no possibility of failure, looking bad in front of others, or embarrassment. That's why the Church is so good at praying for the sick. Unfortunately, in the gospels Jesus *never* commanded his disciples to pray for the sick as he sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost. He commanded them several times rather to *heal* the sick. Healing the sick is a different proposition altogether.

Healing the sick is exactly what Jesus did. The people to whom he ministered were actually and in fact healed and gave testimonies of the miracle he had done for them. They were not healed "by faith," in which they were not really healed but simply claimed their healing and expected it to take place at a future time. Blind eyes and deaf ears were actually opened, lame people actually walked, and infirm people were actually

healed. That is what happens when believers heal the sick as Jesus did. Is there any risk of failure when believers try to heal the sick in this way? The answer unfortunately is yes. There is no ironclad guarantee that a believer can heal the sick the way that Jesus did. Without a doubt, believers have attempted to heal the sick the way Jesus did. They have tried to command and rebuke the way Jesus did, but more often than not the sick were not healed. Because of repeated failure and disappointment when trying to heal the sick in this way, many believers have stopped trying. They know the Scripture teaches that they have authority, but it has simply not worked. So we have decided instead *to pray for the sick instead*.

After all, is it not more spiritual for us to trust God to heal the sick than to do it ourselves? Let us simply trust God who knows everything and has all compassion to heal the sick person in His own time. In that way He will get all the glory. If instead we heal the sick, God might be robbed of His glory and we could become proud.

All these reasons sound well and good and even spiritual, but they are in fact rationalizations. Since when is it spiritual to disobey the Lord's command? Never, for obedience is better than sacrifice. It is *not* because we want to be spiritual that we disobey God's command, it is in reality because we have a spirit of fear. We are afraid of failing to heal the sick and the subsequent embarrassment. But since this is difficult to acknowledge to ourselves, we cover it up with a veneer of spirituality. That is why we pray for the sick instead of healing them as Jesus commanded us when in the context of proclaiming His kingdom. The Church has a spirit of fear with regarding to Jesus' command to heal the sick. *We have been crippled in this area by the spirit of fear, doubt, and unbelief*. This is the primary reason for the paucity of miraculous healings in the Church today. And that in turn and in part explains why the Church has failed to complete the Great Commission even after two thousand years. Without the demonstration of power to prove that our God is greater than all other gods, billions of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and idol-worshippers cannot take the gospel of Jesus Christ seriously.

In line with this, who has given us the spirit of fear? It is without a doubt Satan who has done this to cripple the Church. But today we must repent of our fear and unbelief so that we can be delivered from this crippling spirit. Only then can we receive the spirit of **power**, of love and of self-discipline. Only then can the spirit of Elijah be restored to us. Only then will we be able to minister with the kingly anointing to fulfil the Great Commission.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

## Is it Easy to Heal the Sick?

When we hold Seminars teaching believers how to heal the sick as Jesus did, we always pose the question: which is easier, to pray for the sick or to heal the sick?

If one understands the question and its ramifications, the answer is obviously praying for the sick. When we pray to the Father in the name of Jesus to heal an infirm person, it is God's decision and responsibility to heal or not to heal. We ourselves do not perform the healing and are thus not responsible for the outcome. All we do is ask. Therefore if the person is not healed, we have not failed and need not feel embarrassed.

In contrast, healing the sick means doing exactly what Jesus did; for example, miraculously opening the ears of the deaf such that the deaf person can actually hear. When we heal the sick, we have a measure of responsibility to perform the healing in Jesus' name. Attempting to do this, especially in public view, would appear to be fraught with the risk of failure--that is, when nothing happens---and subsequent embarrassment.

But I was surprised time and time again to hear some believers, especially in Third World countries, reply that healing the sick is easier than praying for the sick. I was puzzled, but eventually came to understand this reasoning. The basis for it is Mark 11:24.

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Some believers have applied this verse to receiving supernatural healing from the Lord. The infirm person asks the Lord to heal him. He believes that he has received his healing, that is, that he is already healed regardless of what his body may tell him. In this way the healing will materialize.

One can also apply this same verse to healing the sick. This is how it is done: we tell the infirm person that in the name of Jesus Christ he is healed "by faith." Whether or not the person is actually healed in reality is immaterial. The infirm person must truly believe that he is already healed. If he truly believes and does not doubt in his heart, he will receive his healing in due time. The person cannot rely on what his senses tell him---for example, that the pain is still there---*by his faith* he is already healed.

This is the reasoning by which some believers say it is easier to heal the sick than to pray for the sick. To heal the sick, we simply say to the infirm person, "In the name of Jesus Christ you are healed by faith" and then we believe that the person is healed. That is the end of our responsibility; it is settled. If we say it a second time to the infirm person it means we doubt that he is already healed. Whether or not the person is really healed is now up to the faith of the infirm person.

Without a doubt people have been healed by this approach. However, there are some matters that should be raised at this point. The first is that the great majority of miraculous healings done by Jesus Christ as recorded in Scripture does not follow this pattern. Jesus generally did not heal people "by faith." No, he actually and really healed them on the spot. People were actually healed when he ministered to them. The blind *did* see and the deaf *did* hear when he healed them. Only in a few instances as recorded in Scripture were people healed afterwards by their own faith. Yet in today's church hardly anyone heals the sick as Jesus did. Most believers and ministers, especially in Pentecostal circles, heal the sick "by faith." And by that we mean primarily the faith of the infirm person. By this definition, healing the sick is very easy indeed.

It is convenient but unscriptural to throw the greater burden of the responsibility for the healing on the infirm person. Whether or not he is healed depends on his faith. The minister gets off practically scot-free. But Jesus was balanced. He would praise certain infirm people whose faith had healed them, but he also taught the responsibility of his disciples to exercise their authority over diseases and demons with mountain-moving faith (Matthew 17:19-20). Many of the instant miraculous healings as recorded in Acts were performed in this manner. But today's believers are afraid to take the risk of using *their* mountain-moving faith to heal the sick instantly as Jesus did because of the risk of possible failure and embarrassment. It's safer to shift the responsibility to the sick person. But this is the very spirit of fear which has brought significant paralysis to the Church in the area of healing.

Within the walls of the Church before believers who understand, one might practice the concept of healing the sick "by faith." But in the gospels and Acts, miraculous healings were performed instantly so that the lost would put their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Would healing the sick "by faith" as practiced by some today impress non-believers and draw them to Jesus? They would certainly not accept such "healings" as genuine miracles. For the Church to use miraculous healings as a means of drawing the lost to the Kingdom of God, we must learn to heal the sick as Jesus did, not simply "by faith."

It is time for balance to be restored to the Church in the area of healing. Because of the spirit of fear and some unbalanced teaching, miraculous healings are rare in today's Church compared to their frequency in the gospels and Acts. Once we study the Scriptures and understand how Jesus and his early disciples healed the sick, we discover that indeed it is not as difficult and risky as we think it is. Sometimes it is downright easy.



## Why do we fail to heal the sick as Jesus commanded us?

Matthew 17:14 When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. 16 I brought him to your disciples, but **they could not heal him.**"

This is the scenario which discourages us from attempting to heal the sick, especially in public view. It's likely the disciples felt shame and embarrassment before the crowd of onlookers as the father reported to Jesus that they had failed to drive out the demon of epilepsy. How did Jesus feel about their failure to do a miracle in his name?

Matthew 17:17 "O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?"

His reaction is nothing short of outrageous by our current way of thinking. Jesus rebukes the disciples severely and publicly before the crowd for their failure to do the miracle of casting out the demon. Imagine you are a pastor of a church. One day you receive a call from an infirm person in the community asking for someone from your church to visit and to minister healing. The person could be part of an unchurched family. You summon one of your elders to go. Your elder visits the infirm person and ministers healing in the name of Jesus. However, the person's condition is unchanged. The elder reports back to you and informs you that the person is not yet healed. Would you in your wildest imagination ever say to the elder, "O unbelieving and perverse elder, how long shall I stay with you and have to put up with you? I'm moving to another church."

The answer, of course, is no. For one thing, our elder would likely be offended and we might lose him to the church down the road. For another thing, who is the elder that we should expect him to heal the sick and thus rebuke him if he fails? Only the Lord can heal the sick---all we can do is to pray and trust the Lord! This is the current mindset in the Church. However, it was obviously not the mindset of Jesus. He clearly expected his disciples to succeed in driving out the demon and healing the boy. Otherwise he would not have rebuked them so sternly. How could Jesus have possibly *expected* them to do a miracle in his name? There are in fact three reasons for Jesus' "unreasonable" expectations and behavior.

- The disciples *were being trained* to do what Jesus did, including preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and casting out demons.

- The disciples *were given the authority* to heal the sick and cast out demons.
- The disciples *were sent out and commanded* to heal the sick and cast out demons.

Based on these three reasons, Jesus was completely justified in expecting the disciples to perform the miracle in His name. The next question is obvious. Does Jesus expect us disciples today to do miracles in His name as we proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost? If we are honest, we can only respond in the affirmative.

One wonders what Jesus thinks of us today. He has given his Church the authority to heal the sick and cast out demons. He has sent us out and commanded us to heal the sick and cast out demons as his Kingdom of proclaimed to the lost. The Scriptures that we so treasure and have committed to memory and read so many times contain all the teaching that we need in order to carry out his command. Yet still we have failed to heal the sick and cast out demons. One wonders if Jesus would rebuke us even more severely than he rebuked his disciples above, for they appeared generally to be more successful in obeying his command than we are today.

Luke 9:6 So they set out and went from village to village, **preaching the gospel** and **healing people** everywhere.

Having said all this, however, we must add that at the same time he loves us, the bride he purchased with his own blood. That is why during these end times he is restoring and perfecting his bride, his Church.

Returning now to the account of the disciples' failure to cast out the demon...

Matthew 17:17 Bring the boy here to me."

Since his disciples have failed to heal the boy, Jesus takes matters into his own hands.

18 Jesus **rebuked** the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.

Why was it that Jesus succeeded where his disciples failed? Perhaps it was because they did not properly *rebuke* the demon. What was missing in their rebuke? Let us read on.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "**Why couldn't we drive it out?**"

Stung by their failure and their Master's rebuke, they wanted to know why they failed to do the miracle. Their question is as relevant to us today as it was to the disciples then. Why is it that we disciples today cannot heal the

sick and drive out demons? The answer that Jesus would give is of paramount importance. Before we look at it, however, let's consider four explanations that we usually offer up to explain why the sick are not healed when we minister to them. We will say that the infirm are not healed because:

- It's not God's will
- It's not God's time
- The sick person lacks faith
- The sick person has sin

These four reasons are not without validity. If it is not God's will or time, the sick person will certainly not be healed regardless of what we do. In Scripture we also see that some people were healed by Jesus according to their faith. The converse was also true:

Mark 6:5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

Finally, it's clear from James 5 that a believer should confess his sin before he can be healed. If he has unconfessed sin in his heart, he might not be healed.

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

Therefore the four explanations above can have some validity regarding why people are not healed. However, notice that with the first two explanations we are essentially assigning the "blame" for the lack of healing to God. With the last two explanations, we put the blame on the infirm person. It is interesting that rarely if ever do we assign the blame for the lack of results to ourselves as disciples. No, the fault always lies elsewhere, doesn't it? It's either because there's a problem with God's will or time, or there's a problem in the heart of the infirm person. Well, let's see who Jesus blamed for the failure in the particular case of the demonized boy.

Matthew 17:20 He replied, "Because **you** have so little faith.

Jesus did not assign "blame" to anyone other than the disciples. They failed to heal the boy because they lacked faith. What do we learn from this? We should no longer automatically come up with the four standard explanations to explain why a healing does not take place. Sometimes, perhaps more often than we would like, the explanation is simply that we disciples of Jesus

Christ have so little faith. Only if we acknowledge and confess this can we learn to succeed in obeying Christ's command to heal the sick. We need to examine the nature of the faith that they lacked and which resulted in their failure.

20 I tell you the truth, if you have faith as a mustard seed, **you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move.** Nothing will be impossible for you.

The kind of faith the disciples lacked was not "saving faith," but rather "mountain-moving faith." We learn that what was lacking was not authority, for Jesus had just given them power and authority to heal the sick and cast out demons. However, authority by itself was not enough to drive out the demon. Another ingredient was missing, something called mountain-moving faith. Both authority and mountain-moving faith were necessary in order to do a miracle in Christ's name.

In the same way, we know that as born-again disciples of Jesus Christ we already have a measure of power and authority over disease and demons. But still we fail to heal the sick as Jesus commanded. Why? In some instances, especially when we are preaching the gospel to the lost and thus it's God's will to heal, it is because we lack mountain-moving faith. Let us study the nature of this mountain-moving faith. How can we increase in this kind of faith?

21 But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

A demon of epilepsy has considerable power; it can throw its victims down to the ground in convulsions. Before the disciples attempted to cast out this powerful demon, they should have prayed and fasted first. Through such activity our mountain-moving faith grows.

### **Exactly what is mountain-moving faith?**

Mark 11:12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 13 And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 Then he **said to the tree**, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

Jesus does something a bit strange here. He talks to a tree in the hearing of his disciples. This sort of "bizarre" behavior one does not normally encounter with servants of God. A pastor would not likely talk to a tree before his

congregation. But not only Jesus talk to the tree, he curses it and speaks violence over it, essentially commanding it to die. Believers are taught to bless, not to curse; we are taught to be gentle, not to be violent in any way. Let's try to understand what's happening here.

...20 In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots.

Let us not at this time delve into the spiritual meaning behind this incident, for example what the fig tree might represent. Let's just understand what happened in the physical sense. Jesus commanded the tree to die, and it obeyed his command. How did he do this miracle? When the Holy Spirit anointed him, he received authority from the Father. This authority evidently included (but was not limited to) diseases, demons, and even trees. Since the tree was under his authority, it had to obey his command to die. Jesus did the miracle simply by exercising his authority. He do this not by praying to the Father, but by speaking to the tree directly and commanding it to die.

21 Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"

Peter was impressed by the powerful miracle. Recall how Peter in the boat, upon seeing Jesus walk on water, wanted to try it as well. He was evidently fascinated by the miracles that his Lord did, and liked to imitate him. Perhaps Peter wanted to know how Jesus performed this particular one.

22 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered.

If we look at the original Greek, Jesus actually did not say "have faith in God." Every literal translation of the New Testament known to the author renders the answer that Jesus gave to Peter as "**have faith of God.**" What could this possibly mean? Does God have faith? As far as we know, only sinners and fallible human beings need to have faith, that is, faith in God. How is it, then, that God Himself has faith? (Perhaps no wonder the Bible translators rendered it "have faith in God.") For the answer, let us simply look at the very next verse.

23 "I tell you the truth, **if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt** in his heart **but believes that what he says** will happen, it will be done for him.

The "faith of God" is the same as "mountain-moving faith." Jesus here gives us the key to performing miracles using whatever authority has been given to us. When we speak to something that is under our authority, we must give the command with "mountain-moving faith." This means that when we give the command, there is no doubt whatsoever in our heart that what we

command will come to pass. This is the faith of God, or faith without a doubt. It is not simply enough to have authority; we must know **how** to give the command to that which is under our authority. It must be given with the faith of God.

I was told by a retired military man that officers in the United States Marines are taught not only about their authority over their men, they are also taught **how** to exercise that authority. They are taught **how** to give commands to their men. If they do not give commands in the proper way, their men might end up not obeying them. Authority in itself is not sufficient; one must also *exercise that authority with mountain-moving faith or the faith of God.*

### **So why did the disciples fail to cast out the demon?**

The disciples had already been given authority over demons by Jesus. But they failed to drive it out, according to Jesus, because they lacked faith. When they issued the command to the demon to leave, they did not issue it with mountain-moving faith. The result was that the demon did not obey their command. Let's try to understand mountain-moving faith, or the faith of God, as clearly as possible. *It is primarily because we do not understand the faith of God that we often fail to carry out successfully the Lord's command to heal the sick and cast out demons as the gospel is preached to the lost.*

How would God move a mountain? He might speak to it and command it to move. Now when God says "move" to the mountain, is there some doubt in His heart that the mountain will move? Is He a bit concerned that there's a possibility the mountain will just sit there and completely ignore His command? Of course God has no doubt. Why does He have no doubt? It is because He knows that He is God, and therefore He has all authority. Thus whatsoever He commands **must** be done. And so when God speaks to the mountain, he gives the command with the "faith of God," with faith-without-a-doubt, with mountain-moving faith. Speaking with the faith of God is therefore linked to and based on understanding the authority that one has or has been given.

Let's take another illustration. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Some time after that God said, "let there be light." These words are essentially God's command to the light to appear. Let's say that angels were present at that moment. Do you think that when God commanded the light to appear there was some apprehension in his heart that if the light did not appear as He commanded, He would look bad in front of the angels? This sounds like a silly question. Of course God would have no

doubt. But why would He have no doubt? God would have no doubt because He knows He has all authority, and because of that the light would of course appear as He commanded. God would command the light to appear with the faith of God, with no doubt in His heart, with no fear of possible failure or embarrassment. And that is because He understands His authority as God.

When Jesus commanded the fig tree to wither in the hearing of his disciples, did he experience a twinge of anxiety? He would certainly look quite foolish in front of his disciples if nothing happened. (Does this sound familiar to you personally?) The answer of course is Jesus had no doubt that the fig tree would obey his command to die. The Father had given him this authority, and of course the tree would obey him. Therefore when Jesus said to the tree, "may no one every eat fruit from you again," he uttered the command with the faith of God, with faith-without-a-doubt, with mountain-moving faith. The faith of God is linked to the authority that one has been given.

Recall Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Standing before the tomb next to Jesus were Mary and Martha plus some Jews who had come along. Jesus commanded the dead man, "Lazarus, come forth!" When Jesus spoke these words, was there any fear in his heart that Lazarus might not come back to life and thus make him look bad in front of Mary and Martha and the Jews? No, Jesus knew that the Father had given him the authority to raise back to life any dead person he chose.

John 5:21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

Therefore when he commanded the dead man to come forth, he experienced no doubt or fear of failure and possible public embarrassment. Of course Lazarus would come out as he was commanded. When Jesus gave the command, he spoke with the faith of God, with mountain-moving faith. The faith of God is linked to authority.

### **We must know how much authority we have been given**

The crucial consideration here is authority. We can only command with the faith of God only that which is under our authority. As an example, let's say you're a pastor of a church. One Sunday after the service, you decide to take your congregation to a nearby park for a picnic. Next to the park is a beautiful cemetery where some deceased church members are buried. Let's say you would like to have those members alive again (what pastor would mind having more people in his congregation?). So you say to the people, "let's go over there and raise some of those dead bodies back to life. In the name of Jesus, come forth from the grave!" Would you have some doubt in your heart that those dead bodies will come out of their tombs? I think you

would. Would you be concerned that your people might think you need a vacation or even early retirement from the ministry? I think you would. We would not be able to give the command with the faith of God. Why not?

The faith of God is based on authority. And Scripture does not clearly tell us that every believer has been given authority to raise back to life from the grave any dead person he chooses at any time he wishes. God certainly has this authority. But we do not. Therefore if we attempt to give a command to that which may not be under our authority, we will not speak with the faith of God. And the command will not be obeyed. The authority is lacking; the faith of God is lacking. If we are foolish enough to give commands to our boss while we are at work, we will do so without authority or the faith of God. And not only will our boss not obey our command, we may lose our job as well.

Therefore it is very useful to look at the authority that the Lord has given to us. Over what has the believer been given authority? Jesus has given to every born-again believer authority to heal the sick and cast out demons in the context of proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the lost. Clearly in this context we should be able to command diseases and demons with the faith of God, without any doubt that they will obey us. And when we do, they should obey and people should be healed.

### **Some everyday examples**

Let's consider an everyday example. Some people have a pet dog at home. We feed and house that dog, therefore we have authority over it. Let's say we want the dog to sit. How would we get the dog to sit? Obviously none of us would pray to God and ask God to make our dog sit. No, we would say to it, "sit!" When we tell the dog to sit, do we feel any fear of failure or embarrassment if the dog should not obey our command? No, of course the dog will sit. We're the master, and the dog had better obey us. *This is exactly what it means to be in authority.* What if the dog doesn't sit? Will we feel rejected and publicly put to shame? No. We will simply raise our voice to let the dog know that we mean business. What if he just sits down halfway? Well, we will push his rump down until he is fully seated. We are likely bigger and stronger than he is. The bottom line is: we have authority over our dog, and one way or another HE WILL SIT according to our command. This is the "faith of God" in us as we command our dog. That is how authority is exercised.

Perhaps this illustration is not meaningful to you because you do not have a dog. But if you have or have ever had a young child in your care, then you understand what authority means. Let's say it's bedtime for your five-year-



old child. How would you get her to go to bed? Would any parent pray to the Lord and ask Him to make the child go to bed, and after prayer simply wait upon the Lord and trust Him to get the child into bed? No, the Lord would generally not answer such a prayer. He has given parents authority and responsibility over their young children. Therefore He expects parents to exercise their authority over them. The parents should be able to get the child into bed without the Lord's direct supernatural intervention. The parents simply order the child to go to bed. One way or another, the parents should be able to succeed in getting the child into bed.

Let's say we have a child named Mary, and we want her to go to bed. Would we say, "Father, in the name of Jesus, we command Mary to go to bed. 'Mary, go to bed.' Thank you, Jesus. [Then a burst of speaking in tongues follows for those believers who are charismatically inclined.] Lord, nothing is impossible for you. Please have Mary go to bed. 'Mary, in the name of Jesus Christ, please go to bed.' Hallelujah, thank you, Jesus. Help me, Lord..."

Of course we are being facetious here. But the point we are trying to make is that when we have been given authority over someone or something, we can exercise that authority simply by the giving of a firm command. We should not *need* the Lord's direct intervention.

But let's say that Mary would rather stay up to play even though it's late. She disobeys your command and refuses to go to bed. What do you do? Do you feel you have failed or feel rejected or embarrassed? Do you cry out in fear to the Lord to help you as did Peter when he began to sink beneath the waves of the Sea of Galilee? No, many parents would simply raise their voice and repeat the command very authoritatively. Once she realizes you mean business, Mary will go to bed for her own good. What if she still disobeys? Does the wise parent have a nervous breakdown? No. The wise parent may decide to apply physical force of some kind (according to Scripture) to get the child into bed. Whatever the case, we have no doubt we will get the child into bed. That is the faith of God. That is how authority is exercised. (Parents who fail to exercise their authority in this way will find child-raising to be misery. They will fail to raise their children to become mature and responsible adults.) Authority is present everywhere in everyday life, at home, at school, at play, and at work. We all understand it.

Not exercising authority with the faith of God may result in failure, as in the case of the disciples failing to cast out the demon out of the boy. Let us say that you are in a position of authority at work and you have a secretary named Mary Jane working under you. One day you want your secretary to get you a cup of coffee. You say to her, "Mary Jane, would you mind getting me a cup of coffee? I know that you're very busy with work and I'm very, very sorry to bother you. If you don't feel like getting me the coffee, it's

perfectly fine with me. Do forgive me for disturbing you...oh, don't worry about it, I'll get the coffee myself." Let's say that this is how you exercise your authority and give orders to Mary Jane day in and day out. Do you think she might begin to disobey your orders? Yes, definitely, for that is how the world works. Sooner or later, Mary Jane is going to boss *you* around even though you are technically the one in authority. Authority in itself is insufficient to get the job done; one must exercise that authority with assurance, finality, and the faith of God. This faith does not take "no" for an answer from the one under submission.

### **Authority over disease and demons**

When the disciples tried to cast the epileptic demon out of the boy, they lacked the faith of God. It is likely they experienced doubt that they could cast out the powerful and intimidating demon. So when they commanded the demon to go, it was likely with a tentative tone lacking confidence that betrayed their fear and doubt. The demon could sense their doubt and refused to leave. Fear and doubt are the very opposite of the faith of God, and when expressed before demons and disease will result in failure.

Let us instead believe the word of God, which says that disease and demons are under our authority as we proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost. If we do, we will not be tormented by fear and doubt when we minister healing to the sick. We are the boss; we are in charge over disease and demons when the gospel is being preached. We are the master, they are the dog. When we command tell them to sit, they **MUST** and **WILL OBEY!** And if they do not or their obedience is but halfway, we will be indignant with "holy anger" and exert greater force to ensure their complete submission to our will.

Disease and demons are not quite in the same category as a pet dog, a small child under our care, or our secretary. Unlike them, demons and diseases are to be considered *enemies* for the sake of the gospel. In the context of evangelism, they are to be considered the works of the enemy. They do not willingly obey our commands as our pet dog might. They will find every reason ---like weak mountain-moving faith in us---to disobey our command. We must *force* them out by rebuking them sternly and issuing commands with spiritual violence and the faith of God. The only language they understand is spiritual power and force greater than they possess. This is how Jesus drove out demons and often healed the sick. And he has given us this power and authority to drive them out as well.

### **In conclusion**

When someone---like a military commander---gives a command to that which is under his authority, he utters the command with no doubt or fear of being rejected. Because he has been given authority in that realm, he believes that what he says will happen. Disciples of Jesus Christ who are sent out to proclaim the Kingdom of God have been given authority over disease and demons. When in this context we command diseases and demons to go in Christ's name, we speak with the faith of God, without doubt or fear of failure. Authority over diseases and demons must be exercised with the faith of God or mountain-moving faith. The consequence of lack of faith could be failure.

Authority may be viewed as "potential energy" in a believer from the Lord. It is potential only. How is this potential energy in us transformed into actual "kinetic energy" to heal the sick? By issuing a command to the infirmity or demon with mountain-moving faith, the potential is realized as a miraculous healing.

So far in this discussion we have mentioned only in passing the role of God's will to heal. If the context in which we are dealing is evangelistic, we know that God's will is generally to heal. In such a case if both sufficient authority and sufficient mountain-moving faith are present, the miracle should take place. If authority is present, but the faith of God in the believer is not, then the miracle might not occur. Should God's will for some reason be not to heal, then no amount of authority and faith will bring healing. God is the One who gives the authority and the faith. Thus He can override it if for some reason it opposes His purpose or will.

There are those in the body of Christ who believe that it is always God's will to heal. Thus when the healing fails to materialize, it is called a "mystery" that cannot be understood by us.

Let us keep in mind that God heals in ways other than through the authority and faith of the believer. He can heal also through the gift of healing in a believer, and the dynamics involved in the gift of healing are quite different from that in the exercise of authority. This will be examined in greater depth later.

## Starting Out

Although it is solidly based on Scripture, giving a command to an infirmity or demon without any doubt in your heart may be easier said than done. If a believer has never done this before, it may seem almost impossible not to entertain any doubt that it will actually work and the person will be healed. Does this mean we should not even try? It would appear that we are defeated even before we begin if we have doubt in our heart.

Demons (and infirmities, if you will) cannot necessarily discern what is in the heart of a believer. You might well have doubt in your heart, but the demon or disease does not "know" it unless you betray yourself with your behavior. If you show clear evidence of fear and doubt---for example, by giving a command without conviction or force, or by crying out to the Lord to help you---then the enemy will likely have reason to disobey your command. Therefore, in the beginning at least, it is possible to "bluff" the enemy into leaving by putting up a show of great ferocity even though inwardly and invisibly you are trembling in fear and doubt.

Below is a testimony of what happened early in our ministry. It is taken from the first chapter of our book, *Dancing on the Edge of the Earth*.

Chen Sookmay's eyes seemed ready to pop from her head as my wife, Lucille, and I searched them deeply, hoping to find the trail of her tormentors. Thick eyeglasses magnified her eyeballs, but they were a symbol of the wide-eyed terror that would come when she would be hurled to the floor of her Borneo shanty in thrashing madness. Chen Sook, her anxious husband, sat with us. "My wife has had this severe epilepsy for over ten years now," he said. "Please pray for her." (*Chen Sookmay* means Aunt Chen, and *Chen Sook* means Uncle Chen.)

I glanced over to where she sat across the bare homemade table from us and saw little response. "How are you doing, Chen Sookmay?" asked Lucille, hoping to reassure her. She grinned weakly from behind her thick eyeglasses. But I had the feeling the daily attacks of *grand mal* epilepsy had left her dazed, barely aware of her surroundings.

"When it comes," continued her husband, "she's thrown to the floor suddenly, her body curls up like a shrimp and convulses violently. Then everyone in the house rushes over to her to keep her from hurting herself. After about a half hour or so the seizure stops. She'll be unconscious and totally drained of strength. We pick her up off the

floor and lay her on her bed. In a few hours she'll wake up, exhausted, not knowing what happened to her."

To Lucille and me it sounded like the epileptic boy whose father took him to Jesus' disciples in Mark 9. The people attributed the affliction to a powerful unclean spirit which the disciples could not drive out.

"The strange thing," added Chen Sook, "is that before each attack occurs, we all feel an uneasiness spreading through the whole house."

We sensed a powerful evil had Chen Sookmay in its grip, but had not dealt before with such strong forces. It would have seemed hopeless had we not innocently trusted in the name of Jesus before whom every knee *must* bow.

Along with our new co-worker, Brother Elias, we began to minister to Chen Sookmay. Though in her condition she could not understand the gospel, her husband was at that time a believer. In 1 Corinthians 7:14, Paul writes that the unbelieving wife is sanctified by her believing husband--and vice-versa. Immediate benefits of the believing mate's salvation are available even to the unbelieving spouse--though not ultimate deliverance from judgment. So, because of her husband's faith and request we began to command the unclean spirit to leave her in the name of Jesus Christ. For five minutes nothing happened. She just sat there, unimpressed by our efforts. We inquired of the Lord what we should do.

Since Chen Sook was a new believer, I asked if there might be something in his house abominable to the Lord. Perhaps before he became a believer he had been given a charm or fetish as treatment for his wife's condition. Local witch doctors so commonly dispense such prescriptions for their patients that eventually quite a collection accumulates. The fetishes can be found hanging here and there on the walls or forgotten in nooks and crannies of rooms and desk drawers.

Chen Sook disappeared into the back of the shanty and reappeared moments later with some fetishes. He gave them to us and we burned them. Then we continued the ministry to Chen Sookmay. The front door, usually left open in the sweltering midday heat of the squalid sawmill settlement, was closed.

"In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to manifest yourself, demon!"

Suddenly Chen Sookmay's head dropped. Her eyes, previously open, closed. "This usually happens before it comes," commented Chen Sook. Lucille placed her hands on her head and with her eyes closed prayed softly. I also closed my eyes.

"Bill!" Lucille's cry pierced the momentary lull. "My hands, my hands! I had them on her head. But look! Something spread them apart!" Lucille had placed her hands on Chen Sookmay's head, one hand on each side. But when she reopened her eyes she saw her hands no longer on Chen Sookmay's head but instead spread far apart on each side. It was as if some unseen force had radiated outward from her head and shoved Lucille's hands apart. We had come in the name of Jesus Christ, and Chen Sookmay's tormentors were challenging us. I took up the gauntlet.

"I bind you, demon! Come out of her right now in the name of Jesus Christ! Come out ... *now!*" I commanded.

Looking down at this frail, innocent woman, I felt sorry for her. "Are you all right?" I asked, peering tenderly into her face. What I then saw and heard cannot be adequately described.

Her head was raised toward me. Her eyes were now wide open, bulging in their sockets and fixating on me with hate and fury. A guttural growl emanated from her throat, no longer just challenging, but now threatening. Fear rose within me; my confidence vanished. Elias looked once at the terrifying face of the adversary and wanted to run for the front door and safety. Terror gripped me as well. My soul was screaming, *Run! This thing is going to attack you!*

But something else inside did not allow me to flee. Mixed with the fear, I suddenly bristled with indignation toward this demon who dared to stand against the name of Jesus Christ. I stood my ground, strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Deliberately resisting the fear, I drew my face close until we were staring eye to eye and that horrifying face loomed in my sight.

"In the name of Jesus Christ, come out!" I screamed, refusing to show my fear, and summoning every last reserve of boldness. "*Come out!*"

The evil countenance lifted. Chen Sookmay shrank perceptibly. After a brief moment she reopened her eyes. She was herself. Never again did she suffer from those violent convulsions. The strong man had finally been driven out of his long-time dwelling in the name of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

A similar incident involving effective bravado was reported by a pastor in Malaysia. He had just attended our Seminar.

"...[the following Sunday at our morning service] I called for people who desired to be healed of diseases to come forward. About five people walked down. I noticed an elderly lady and her daughter came along with them. They were new visitors in our church. The adult

daughter was helping her mother describe to the altar workers about the pain in her leg, side and arms. Other altar workers were also attending to the other four – one of them was a young child.

As you have taught me, I took authority over all the diseases by commanding them to go in the name of Jesus. I also asked the workers and congregation to repeat after me loudly. Honestly, I was a little hesitant inside but I put on a brave front and kept up with my exercise of mountain-moving faith. After the whole event, I dared not ask the people to testify. What if they were not healed?

Suddenly the elderly lady was waving her hands furiously and bending her knees. Her adult daughter was clapping and smiling from cheek to cheek. I asked Grace to verify the healing and managed to get the lady up onstage to testify. Praise God... in spite of my "hesitant" faith, this lady was visibly and gloriously healed. God is so merciful and knew how new I was with this kind of approach...The people were so excited about this new healing method that some of them asked me to do this every week."

However, in the long run the Lord may not allow us to get by on mere outward bravado alone. In the beginning He is gracious and helps us to stay afloat when we are taking our first baby steps. But eventually He may require that we develop real mountain-moving faith of our own. He may require His adult children to have the same kind of faith that He Himself has.

To do the works of God, we must have the authority of God and the faith of God.

## The Scriptural basis for miraculous healing

Matt 8:16 ...many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

For the writer of Matthew's gospel, when Jesus cast out demons and healed all the sick, he was fulfilling an ancient prophecy given by the prophet Isaiah about 700 years before Christ appeared. Let us look at that messianic prophecy.

Isaiah 53.4 Surely he **took up our infirmities** and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

According to verse 4, the promised Messiah would take away infirmities. Jesus fulfilled it abundantly. The blind saw, the deaf heard, and the lame walked. What was the significance of these miraculous healings that he performed?

The ultimate origin of physical disease is original sin. Before Adam and Eve sinned, they were not subject to physical disease and death. But after they disobeyed God's command and ate the forbidden fruit, their nature changed. It became a sinful nature. Their physical bodies changed as well and became subject to infirmity and eventually physical death. Now if a believer in Jesus Christ suffers from an infirmity, it is not necessarily because that believer sinned. But at the very least, we can suffer from sickness because we are descendants of Adam and were born in his physical image. Even though we may be born again and our sinful nature has been put to death, our bodies can still suffer from infirmities. For a non-believer, a physical disease may in fact be a consequence of sin. For example, smoking can result in lung cancer. Homosexual sex can result in AIDS. We can conclude that physical infirmities are either directly or indirectly a consequence of man's sin.

Now there are many consequences of sin. As we have seen, physical infirmities are one of them, especially for non-believers whose sins have not yet been forgiven. But the worse consequence of sin is of course the second death in hell. Here on earth, if someone breaks the law, he is arrested and put on trial. He is found guilty and put in prison. His imprisonment is a consequence of his transgression. In the United States, the President is able to release the convicted criminal from prison. This is only because he has the legal authority to pardon the criminal of his crime. Thus the President's



power to release him from prison proves that he has authority to forgive his transgression against the law.

Physical disease is also a prison for the infirm person, especially for the non-believer. He is in this prison because of his transgression against God's law, that is, because of his sin. However, 2,000 years ago Jesus healed many people of their infirmities; he released them from the prison of disease. What did this signify about him? It proved that he also had authority to forgive the transgression that put the person in prison in the first place. How could he do this? It was because of his death on the cross.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Yes, because Jesus suffered and died on the cross to bear our sins, he was able to heal infirmities which for the lost are a consequence of sin. For example, a tree has roots that go deep into the ground with fruit on its branches. If the roots are cut, the tree will die and the fruit will wither. In the same way, Jesus came to cut the root of sin in us by dying on the cross. Because the sin has been put to death, the fruit of physical disease in us will also ultimately wither.

Conversely, as argued above, his power to heal our infirmities proves that Jesus has authority to forgive sin through his atoning death on the cross.

Mark 2:10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralytic, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.

Thus the basis for physical healing is the forgiveness of sin which Jesus accomplished for us on the cross. Healing the sick in Jesus' name is very different from what witchdoctors do. They must receive payment for their services, and they request the services of dark powers to "drive out" darkness. This is actually impossible and cannot result in true healing and deliverance. It actually *increases* the darkness and oppression. In contrast, Jesus paid the price for our physical healing by suffering on the cross to bear our sins. Thus we should avoid ministering healing in Jesus' name in a vacuum, that is, apart from the gospel of the forgiveness of sins. It is best to link healing from infirmities to the forgiveness of sins. In this way, people who come just for physical healing will also accept Christ as Savior for the forgiveness of their sins.

Therefore when we preach the gospel of the forgiveness of sins, physical healings can logically follow the preaching. They will also be a confirmation that the gospel is indeed true.

## **For believers, forgiving others may be a requirement for their own healing**

Mark 11:25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Matthew 6:15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

John 13:34 "A new command I give you: **Love one another.** As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

Sometimes infirm believers who ask the Lord for healing do not receive it because there is unforgiveness or some other issue in their hearts. Thus it is important for a believer to walk in forgiveness and love towards others, especially if they want to be healed of their sickness. However, there is no such requirement for a non-believer who comes to Jesus to be healed. Not once did Jesus say to a non-believer who came to him: "Repent of your sins first. Forgive others first. Then I will heal you." No, Jesus healed those who came to him. And among those who were healed, many decided to repent and follow him as their Messiah.

## Authority: Talents Given by the Master

Matthew 25:14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ...24 ...'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

When the master returned from his journey he summoned the three servants to account for what they had done with the talents entrusted to them. The first two servants had been faithful, and they were rewarded accordingly. But the third servant had been *afraid* to invest the talent given to him and so hid it in the ground. This last servant was severely rebuked by the master. The talent was taken away from him and given to the first servant who had already accumulated a total of ten talents.

Matthew 25:29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance...

The authority over disease and demons that the Lord entrusts to believers can be viewed as a kind of talent. Believers do not all receive the same amount of authority; it is given by measure according to our "ability" or according to what He calls us to do for Him. Apostles may have a higher level of authority over disease and demons than do believers who are not apostles. Nevertheless, all believers as witnesses of Jesus Christ have some measure of this authority. We should use whatever level of authority that has been entrusted to us for the purpose for which it is given: proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the lost. If we are fruitful and bring precious souls to Jesus Christ, we will have proven to be faithful and trustworthy. As a result we will receive more authority and we will have an abundance.

Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much...

As an example, a foot soldier in the United States is given an M-16 rifle as a standard-issue weapon for the purpose of fighting and defeating the enemy.

If he is found to be proficient in killing enemy combatants, he may be promoted to a higher rank in the military with commensurate higher authority. This greater authority may mean that he will now have greater firepower at his command. "Ordinary" believers are all foot soldiers as witnesses of the Christ. As such they have been given a standard-issue weapon: a measure of authority to heal the sick and cast out demons. With this weapon we defeat the kingdom of darkness by healing the sick and saving the lost. If we are *successful* in bringing spoils to our Master---it is not enough simply to be "faithful" having good intentions---we will receive more authority with which to further the interests and Kingdom of our Master. Perhaps this increased authority will enable us to do greater miracles for the glory of God. However, if like the third servant we are *afraid* to use the weapon given us to heal the sick because of the risk of failure, the Lord might take it away and give it to someone who is actually preaching the gospel effectively.

Matthew 25:28 "Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Instead of focusing on what happened to the third servant and whatever it might mean to us theologically, let us boldly use the powerful weapon that has been entrusted to each one of us and proclaim the Kingdom of God to the world. There is no argument that the Church is called to fulfill the Great Commission.

Philippians 3:13 ...Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

## Healing in the Book of Acts

Up until now we have looked at how Jesus and his disciples healed the sick and the demon-oppressed in the gospels before the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost. How did Peter and Paul minister healing to the sick in Acts *after the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost* and the gift of healing was made available to them? We would like to know if the disciples suddenly stopped exercising their authority over disease and demons and began to move exclusively with the gift of healing.

Acts 3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple **at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.** 2 Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put **every day** to beg from those going into the temple courts.

From the narrative we see that Peter and John went to the temple regularly to pray, while the lame beggar was also there every day to beg. The people in the area of the temple knew this beggar. It is quite likely therefore that Peter and John met this beggar on previous occasions when they went to the temple. We know that Peter is going to heal this lame beggar on this occasion. Why did Peter not heal the man on an earlier occasion, for example, the very first time he saw the beggar? Why did he wait until that particular day to perform the miracle? If Peter had acted earlier to heal the man, then souls who ultimately entered the Kingdom of God later that day would have been saved sooner. Why wait? We cannot be sure why Peter delayed (if indeed he did), but let us take an educated guess.

The beggar had been lame for his entire life from birth. His infirmity was perhaps among the severest imaginable. His legs had shrivelled to useless appendages which he dragged along behind him as he crawled forward on his hands to beg for alms. Such a physical condition requires an enormous amount of mountain-moving faith to heal. Perhaps Peter had sufficient authority as an apostle to heal the man (Matthew 10:1), but he wondered if he had enough faith to move such a large mountain. And so Peter may have decided to wait on the Lord. To move such a formidable mountain, Peter needed the leading of the Lord since his faith to heal the man was unsure. Charismatically-inclined believers would say Peter waited for a *rhema* from the Lord, a word from the Lord concerning what Peter should do and when he should do it with regard to the beggar. Where authority or faith is insufficient to do the miracle, one may well wait for a *rhema*. This is in addition to prayer and fasting.

3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter **looked straight at him**, as did John. Then Peter said, **"Look at us!"**

At this moment the Lord stirs Peter's heart---what some would call a *rhema* from the Holy Spirit---and he knows this is the occasion on which the Lord wills to heal the man. Peter looks straight at him and speaks to him with authority. What does Peter have in mind? Is Peter going to get down on his knees and pray that God will heal the man since it is now His time and will?

5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. 6 Then Peter **said**, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."**

No, Peter does not pray for the man, asking the Lord to heal him. Instead Peter commands the man to walk. He speaks to the mountain and commands it to move with great authority. Peter exercises his authority over the man's infirmity with the faith of God, with faith-without-a-doubt. This is not a manifestation of the gift of healing, but simply the exercise of authority which Peter received from Jesus before the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost.

7 **Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up**, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

Before the healing took place, Peter took a step of faith by helping up a man who had never walked in his entire life. Peter believed that what he said to the man would come to pass; he believed that the man would walk. That faith was put into action as Peter helped him up. When ministering to people who are lame or who have difficulty getting up to walk, we can follow Peter's example. After you issue the command, help them up. And sometimes you will see miracles take place to draw souls to Jesus Christ.

Acts 3:11 While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. 12 When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ...16 **By faith in the name of Jesus**, this man whom you see and know was made strong.

To give the glory to God, Peter explains to the crowd how the miracle happened. He attributes it to "faith in the name of Jesus." Then in the next verse (NIV version) he breaks this faith into two components.

16 ...**It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him** that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

Yes, we know that there is power in the name of Jesus. But how is this power translated into an actual miraculous healing? This healing power resident in the name of Jesus is released by "the faith that comes through him." What is that? The faith that comes through Jesus Christ is none other than the faith of God or mountain-moving faith. The power of the name of Jesus to heal is released when a believer commands a mountain to move or an infirmity to be healed in Jesus' name with mountain-moving faith. We can even say that if we have faith in the name of Jesus, we will be given His faith (the faith of God) with which we will be able to do the works that He did according to John 14:12. We may conclude that Peter did not use the gift of healing to perform this miracle, but rather by exercising his authority with the faith of God. Why did he not use the gift of healing since the Holy Spirit had already come and brought the gifts to the Church? It is because the gift of healing is not in operation at every moment and at the beck and call of a believer. No, the gift works only according to the will and timing of the Holy Spirit. At that moment at the temple gate, the gift was not in operation. But Peter knew that *authority* was available to use at any moment, especially when precious souls were at stake. Based on the *rhema* he received from the Holy Spirit, Peter exercised his authority with the faith of God, performed the great miracle, preached the gospel to the crowd that gathered, and reaped a harvest. He got the job done. This is also what we are called to do.

We can conclude that this miracle was a result of Peter exercising his authority after he received a *rhema*---a manifestation of a gift of the Holy Spirit. First was the manifestation of the gifting, then the separate exercise of authority based on that manifestation. The two can work together in that way.

Acts 4:4 But many of those who heard the Word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

Acts 4:22 For the man who was miraculously healed was **over forty years old**.

Let us note that this man had never walked in over forty years.

### **The healing of Aeneas**

Acts 9:32 As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. 34 "Aeneas,"

Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. 35 All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

Peter is travelling and is ministering in Lydda. He happens on a man named Aeneas who has been unable to get up for eight years. Note that the Lord has already used Peter to heal a man who had not walked in over forty years. What might have gone through Peter's mind when he met Aeneas who had not walked for just a mere eight years? It's quite possible that Peter saw just a small mountain that did not require much faith to move. Did Peter wait on the Lord before healing Aeneas as he may have done in the case of the lame beggar?

34 "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. 35 All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

No, Peter does not wait for a *rhema* from the Holy Spirit or for the Lord to stir his heart. Without hesitation he speaks to the mountain with the faith of God; he commands Aeneas to get up. The man was immediately healed. When word of this miracle spread to the community, many turned to Jesus Christ. Why did Peter not wait on the Lord before taking action? It was because Peter knew he had the authority and mountain-moving faith to heal Aeneas. God had already used him to move a far greater mountain at the temple gate; healing Aeneas would be far easier by comparison. Peter did not need a special *rhema* from the Lord regarding Aeneas because Jesus had already given him authority to heal the sick (Luke 9:1-2) and he was confident that he had enough faith to get that particular job done. Peter understood how much authority and faith he had, and so was able to minister efficiently. When he had insufficient authority or faith to perform a particular miracle, he would pray and wait on the Lord. When he knew it was within his authority and faith, he would do the miracle without hesitation and people seeing the power of Jesus' name would turn to him.

At times Peter would minister according to the *logos*, which can be considered equivalent to the written word. At other times, he would wait for a *rhema*, considered by some to be equivalent to the spoken word. When we know we have authority to heal according to the written word, for example according to Luke 9:1-2, and our faith is sufficient to perform the healing in question, we do not need a *rhema*. The *logos* is enough. But where our faith or authority may be insufficient, we may need to wait on the Lord for a *rhema* before attempting to take action.



## **The balance between trusting the Lord and the exercise of authority**

There are two distinguishable ways for believers to ministering healing to the infirm taught in the New Testament. However, there can be overlap between the two and they can sometimes work together in a given healing as in the case of Peter at the Temple Gate. The one on which we have focused in this study is "authority-based" or "*logos*-based" healing. The other way let us call the "Spirit-based" or "*rhema*-based" approach.

According Vine's Expository Dictionary, *logos* can include the whole Bible, the written word, while *rhema* can refer to an individual scripture quickened to us by the Holy Spirit for a specific need. The *rhema* need not necessarily be a quote from the Bible, but a word spoken to a believer by the Spirit.

Traditionally, evangelicals have put much emphasis on the written word, devoting much time and effort to Bible study. They purpose to lead their lives in accordance with the counsel found in God's written word. While charismatics believe in the importance of the written word as well, they also believe that God will give a specific *rhema* to them to address a specific need. Each approach has its strengths and potential weaknesses. Evangelicals are indeed justified in centering their lives around the correct interpretation of the Holy Bible. At the same time, it is certainly advantageous when a believer receives specific instruction or information from the Lord regarding some particular matter. When the *rhema* concerns the course of action the believer is to take, he can expect God's blessing or God's will to be accomplished in the matter when he acts upon the information. But each approach has its weaknesses when taken to an extreme.

When an evangelical believer puts all emphasis on the *logos* to the exclusion of the *rhema*, he may rarely sense the leading of the Holy Spirit. There will be relatively less opportunity for the Spirit to speak to or direct him about a certain matter if he is not waiting and inclining his ear to listen. Thus although the believer is most certainly living a righteous Christian life according to the written word, incursions of God's miraculous grace into that life may be rare. The believer might not be experiencing all the victories that God intends for him.

Similarly, charismatics or Pentecostals who choose to place excessive dependence on receiving a *rhema* from the Holy Spirit might also find themselves falling short of walking in the victory that God has for them. For example, if as a rule a believer will not act until she receives a word from the Lord, she might eventually find herself in a fruitless state of semi-paralysis. Of course, when we do receive a *rhema* from the Lord, we act

upon it with confidence and may see God's supernatural intervention. However, does God will to give us a word for every matter or decision that we must make in life? For example, do we share the gospel to someone only when we feel led to, or may we share the gospel to others simply because the *logos*, the written word, commands us to? I believe it was John Wesley who said, "when I share the gospel, people get saved; when I don't share the gospel, they don't get saved."

The Holy Spirit who lives in us is involved in both approaches, whether by *logos* or *rhema*. However, in Spirit-based healing the role of the Holy Spirit is of course is more direct and pronounced, while in authority-based healing the believer has more responsibility than she may have in the Spirit-based approach.

### **"The Son can do nothing of Himself"**

John 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do;** for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

Some have concluded from this verse that when Jesus sought His Father each morning, he was given visions or revelations regarding what the Father was doing and therefore what he himself do later that day. He did not do any miracles other than what the Father showed him. Based on this interpretation, there are believers who will not attempt to minister healing unless and until the Lord gives them the specific leading to do so. At least part of the motivation behind this may be the concern that if they try to minister healing apart from the Lord's leading, it will be of the flesh and therefore nothing will happen. However, if we delve a bit deeper is it possible we might find lurking in the background something familiar---the fear that nothing will happen when we minister? Is there any possibility at all that it may be hiding behind the above interpretation of John 5:19? To answer this question let us examine the validity of the interpretation by looking at the entire discourse.

John 5:20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him **all** he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.

Is it possible that the Father during those morning devotional times showed Jesus **everything** that He does? Obviously the Father is not limited in what He does, so how could He in a finite amount of time show His Son **all** He does. So what does it mean?

21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life **to whom he is pleased to give it.**

According to this, the Father gave Jesus the authority to raise back to life any dead person he chose whenever he wanted to do so. This would be up to Jesus himself, and not limited to what the Father showed him. This would seem to conflict with the conventional interpretation of John 5:19.

22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has **entrusted all judgment to the Son,** 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

In addition, the Father gave Jesus the authority to judge all people. In fact the Father Himself would not judge anyone, it would be completely up to His Beloved Son. Again this appears to be not quite consistent with the conventional interpretation of verse 19. The purpose behind the Father's endowing of this authority was to bring equal honor to the Son.

...26 For as the Father has life in himself, **so he has granted the Son** to have life in himself.

Not only was Jesus given the authority to do as he wished, he was granted to possess life in himself like the Father Himself.

27 And **he has given him authority to judge** because he is the Son of Man.

Finally, after he rose from the dead Jesus said, **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** (Matthew 28:18)

We reasonably make the following conclusion: Yes, Jesus was completely dependent on the Father. At the same time, he was given the authority by the Father to do as he saw fit. These two statements would appear to be mutually exclusive; how can they both be true at the same time? To resolve this we must understand that in Scripture we do see examples of such "dynamic tension" in which are presented two contradictory truths. For example there is the debate regarding eternity security and the possibility of losing one's salvation. Proponents on both sides are convinced of the validity of their stance by the evidence they find in Scripture. Then which is correct? Both are correct. In our finite earthbound minds we are not capable of understanding heavenly truths which may be multi-dimensional. On earth we live in the three spatial dimensions of length, width, and height. Can we with our imagination conceive of four or five or six spatial dimensions? No, it's impossible---only mathematically can we understand such things. In the same way there are things that we cannot understand now. But when we see Him we shall be like Him and understand like Him.

In the same way, we might not be able at this time to resolve to our satisfaction the paradox found in John 5. However, we may be able now to discern at least some light.

We see that Jesus was completely dependent on the Father and at the same time he had authority to do as he saw fit. We can apply this truth to ourselves as his disciples. Yes, we should be dependent on the Holy Spirit when we want to heal the sick or cast out demons. At the same time, we do have a measure of authority through the indwelling Holy Spirit to heal the sick and cast out demons whenever we proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost. What is the *practical* outworking of this? When the Lord is leading us--- when the gifts of the Holy Spirit are in operation---we should follow. When the Holy Spirit is "silent," we can minister with the authority that we already have. The first is Spirit-based healing; the second is authority-based healing. Spirit-based healing may be more suitable for ministry to infirm believers whereas authority-based healing is in order when proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the lost. At times, the two approaches may work together.

Often in our evangelistic healing meetings, the Holy Spirit may give us supernatural knowledge ("words of knowledge") regarding infirmities that the Lord wills to heal first. People with those infirmities are called to the front, where trained believers minister healing to them by exercising their authority over disease and demons. Many people are healed in this way and give their testimonies, drawing souls to faith in Jesus Christ. Afterwards, the trained believers minister to all the remaining infirm people without the benefit of words of knowledge, and more miraculous healings take place. In such a way Spirit-based healing and authority-based healing work together to bring glory to God and souls to Jesus Christ. It is important for there to be a Scriptural balance between the two approaches.

In charismatic churches there is a greater reliance on Spirit-based healing, especially in healing services for believers. This approach is relatively "safe" and free of the risk of failure because it relies on the Lord's specific leading. But we should be careful of opting for a certain approach partly out of the fear of failure. Based on what we have learned, we want nothing to do with the spirit of fear.

In this approach we wait for the leading of the Spirit before doing anything. But just because we do not feel the Lord's leading does not mean that we are helpless and can do nothing. For example, there are not many believers who ask the Lord what kind of toothpaste they should use; we understand that we have been given the authority to make such decisions "on our own." In the same way the Scriptures teach that even when we do not sense the Lord's leading, we still have the authority over disease and demons that is available to us in the context of sharing the gospel to the lost. An extreme

dependence on Spirit-based healing can lead to partial paralysis in the body of Christ with regard to signs and wonders for the lost. On the other hand, an extreme dependence on authority-based healing can lead to spectacular and embarrassing failures hurting the cause of the gospel and discouraging believers from ministering with authority. It may lead to the unscriptural teaching that believers have all authority like God Himself.

One can say that the apostle Peter waited on the Lord (the "Spirit-based" approach) before healing the lame beggar at the temple gate using his authority. In contrast, when healing Aeneas Peter did not wait on the Lord at all, but simply exercised his authority by commanding him to get up---the "authority-based" approach. Peter understood both the leading of the Spirit and also his authority as well; he was balanced in his ministry.

Like Peter, we should seek to be balanced. We should seek to be led by the Lord in what we do, yet at the same time recognize that He has given us a measure of authority to do certain things for the sake of the gospel. Being unbalanced in either direction can result in undesirable consequences. If we will not lift a finger until the Lord leads us to do so, there will be a tendency toward inaction because the Lord generally does not lead us in every single matter in life. This inaction on our part can rob God of the glory He deserves to receive through our ministry. There will be situations in which the Lord desires us to move by faith alone in His written word. On the other hand, however, if we fail to seek the Lord's guidance and rush headlong into every ministry opportunity, we will become exposed to the danger of presumption and wasting time and strength doing things we have not been called to do.

There are commands given in Scripture concerning which we might not need a *rhema* or a specific word before we obey them. For example, we love our enemies, we forgive those who have wronged us, we tithe to our local church without necessarily needing any specific guidance from the Holy Spirit. There are other commands which I believe have nearly the same universal applicability for us: "Preach the gospel, heal the sick, cast out demons, make disciples." In general, we are to obey such commands "in season and out." We should not need a specific leading or *rhema* from the Lord in every instance before we engage in these because they can be considered the general will of God.

There is still other light in which we can consider this balance. When Jesus woke up in the morning, often he would seek His Father in prayer. His attitude would be of humility, helplessness, and complete dependence before the Father: "the Son can do nothing of himself." But after prayer he would rise and go forth into battle to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and cast out demons. Authority and sovereignty from the Father would rise up from

within him; he would heal whatever infirm person he wished and cast out any demon he chose: "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.'" (Matthew 28:18)

We ministers of the gospel should likewise walk in this balance. There is a time to go before the Lord in complete humility; this "pleases Him who sends us." (John 5:30) There is also a time to march forward with assurance and boldness to destroy the works of the enemy with powerful weapons. These weapons the Lord Jesus has entrusted to us are far superior to anything the enemy has, and they consist of authority to heal the sick to prove to lost souls that Jesus is indeed the Son of God and that only he can save them. In such a way, "all will honor the Son just as they honor the Father." (John 5:22)

Obviously, in ourselves, we believers have no absolute sovereignty. But in John 14:12 Jesus says that for the purpose of confirming his identity as the Son of God "anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing..."

## Healing in Acts Part II

### The Raising of Dorcas

Dorcas was a faithful believer in Christ. When she died the believers sent messengers to summon Peter. He went and raised Dorcas back to life. This miracle took place in two separate and distinct stages.

Acts 9:39 Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Acts 9:40 Peter sent them all out of the room; then **he got down on his knees and prayed.**

Here there is a major difference from what Peter did in healing the lame beggar at the temple and in healing Aeneas. In those two incidents it is not recorded that Peter prayed at all. Here he actually gets down on his knees before praying to the Lord regarding Dorcas. Why did he pray here but not in the two earlier miracles? On those two occasions Peter did not pray because he did not need to. He had been given authority over disease and demons and therefore could himself perform the miracles provided he had sufficient mountain-moving faith. Where we have been given authority and have the faith of God to exercise it, we need not pray about it but simply use our authority to get the job done. But Dorcas did not have a disease or a demon. She was in fact dead. Did Peter as an apostle have authority to raise the dead?

Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ...7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 Heal the sick, **raise the dead**, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.

The twelve were commanded by Jesus to raise the dead, among other miracles. Thus it is reasonable to conclude that they had been given a measure of authority to in fact do so. Peter as one of the apostles must have been aware of it. Nevertheless, raising the dead is not exactly like healing the sick. If someone is sick, there can be hope for recovery. But if that person has died, then we normally say that hope for recovery is gone. When asked to raise a dead person, it is reasonable that Peter experienced some doubt. (Those who have tried to raise the dead might understand.) When there is doubt, prayer is needed in order to get rid of the doubt and to replace it with mountain-moving faith.

There is a possible additional factor. Peter knew that he did not have "blanket authority" over death; he did not have equal authority to Jesus to whom the Father had given the authority to raise up any dead person he chose (John 5:21). In such a case, the role of God's will is important. It is not God's will for believers to raise back to life all dead people. Most people who die will remain dead. Some, however, will be raised back to life to glorify the Son of God.

Thus it is possible that when Peter prayed, he said, "Lord, is it your will to bring Dorcas back to life?" Perhaps the Lord responded to Peter in the affirmative. Then Peter may have followed up with, "in that case, Lord, take away any doubt that I have and give me Your faith to move this mountain." Peter understood that the Lord would not do the miracle directly, but rather through His servant Peter who would need the faith of God to carry out the Lord's will.

What was Peter's attitude as he was on his knees before the Lord? It was an attitude of much humility, for Peter had no authority or faith to do the miracle apart from the Lord. When we come before the Lord, we come with utmost respect for the Lord who has all authority. We come with empty hands, having no authority before Him who is the author of all authority. After prayer, what did Peter do? He shifts gears into the offensive mode--- the second stage of the miracle. We can call this stage the "attack stage."

Acts 9:40 Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. 42 This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

This is the stage of ministry when the actual miracle takes place. It is important to understand this stage. Peter turns toward to dead woman. It is likely that Peter gets up from his knees before turning toward her. First of all, it is simply more difficult to turn when standing up then when on one's knees. Second of all, he is no longer in prayer; rather he is going to speak to the mountain of death with authority and the faith of God. Being on one's knees is not a position of authority, but rather of humility. At the moment Peter speaks to the mountain, his authority must be at a maximum in order for the miracle to take place. Thus we can reasonably conclude that after the first stage of prayer Peter opens his eyes, stands up, turns toward the dead woman, and issues the command to the dead woman. How can we be sure that Peter opened his eyes? We know this from common sense. When we direct speech to people or things (other than God), we generally open our eyes and look at them as we speak. The dead woman obeys Peter's command and sits up. The expected and desired result is that many people believe in Jesus Christ.



If we are to be successful in using authority to do miracles and heal the sick, we must understand and practice the crucial distinction between the first stage of prayer and the second stage of speaking to the mountain. In the first stage of prayer to the Lord, our eyes are probably shut and we speak to the Lord with utmost reverence. We have no authority in this first stage. In fact, none is needed---we come before the Lord not to command, but to ask in all humility. After prayer we shift to the second stage of speaking to the disease or demons in Jesus' name---attacking the works of the enemy. In this stage we rebuke and command them to go with authority and the faith of God. For the mountain to obey our command, our authority must be at a peak. That is why we should be on our feet with our eyes wide open. We are going to shoot the enemy and his works with our weapon of authority. Does a soldier fire his weapon at the enemy with his eyes open or shut? If his eyes are shut he will very likely miss his target. The contrast between the first stage and the second stage could not be greater. They must be kept separate and distinct.

This miracle had two stages. The first stage involved prayer in which the priestly anointing was in operation. The second stage involved commanding in which Peter utilized the kingly anointing.

What would have been the consequence if Peter had combined and mixed the two stages together? Let's think about this. In the first stage he had no authority; in the second stage he needed his authority to be at a maximum. If he had combined the two stages, his authority would have been diluted or compromised and the miracle would not have taken place. *Unfortunately this is what is done with great frequency in the Church today when believers minister to the sick.*

Too often, especially in charismatic churches, pastors and believers will minister to the sick in ways similar to the following:

"Father, in the name of Jesus, we command this infirmity to be healed."

"Father, in the name of Jesus, we command these unclean spirits to leave."

The moment a believer says, "Father," that is none other than prayer addressed to the Almighty before whom we have no authority. In the same breath we then command the disease to go, but is the authority and mountain-moving faith there? No, it has been compromised since the command has been mixed with prayer. In prayer we exercise faith *in* God. When we give commands to diseases and demons we must exercise the faith *of* God. Therefore the command should never be mixed or confounded with prayer. The two stages *must* be kept separate and distinct.

The approach, "Father, in the name of Jesus..." is not found anywhere in the New Testament in the context of healing the sick or driving out demons

through the exercise of authority. (However, in the operation of the *gift of healing*, it might be valid.) Therefore it is unscriptural to use this method when ministering in the context of proclaiming the gospel to the lost. This is why instant miracles are very rarely reported when using this method. Once in a while a miracle may take place when using this approach. It may be because the Lord is so gracious. Even if we do not minister scripturally, He still does small miracles on occasion. What's more, small miracles may happen because it may require minimal authority and faith to move small mountains. Does this, however, relieve us of the responsibility of studying the Scriptures and ministering according to what it teaches? Of course it does not. How much more we will have results---far more satisfying ones---if we are faithful to obey what the Scriptures teach.

This conclusion might not apply for someone to whom the Lord has given a special gift of healing. The gift does not require authority and mountain-moving faith to operate.

From where did the method "Father, in the name of Jesus..." originate? We do not know for certain. We may have seen or heard someone else minister to the sick in that way, and we have blindly followed without examining its validity. It is a "charismatic tradition." It is not a bad tradition. But it is unscriptural and does not result in the miraculous healings that are so missing in today's Church. They are missing because we have been ministering to the sick in an unscriptural fashion.

Perhaps this unscriptural way of ministering to the sick arose because of the usual fear that nothing would happen if we simply spoke directly to the infirmity in Jesus' name as the Scripture clearly teaches. Just in case nothing happens, let's first say, "Father." In that way if nothing happens, which is usually the case, we can always say that it's not the Father's will to heal. More likely, however, is the notion that we are not able to get the job done and so we need the Lord's "help" in healing the sick. We entertain some fear and doubt that we are able to heal the sick as Jesus commanded us, so we ask the Lord to help us. In this way, perhaps, "Father, in the name of Jesus..." came into wide acceptance within the body of Christ as a way to minister to the sick.

But its origin may be based on none other than *fear and doubt*. What is the consequence of doubting that we can do what the Lord commands us to do?

## Let's Heal the Sick Now

If you would like to get a head start on healing the sick before resuming this study, this would be a good time to do it. You have probably learned enough to heal the sick.

It would be good to start out with something relatively easy. Minor infirmities require less authority and faith to heal, whereas severe infirmities may require greater authority and faith to heal. When we go to the gym with the intention of lifting free weights to build up our muscle mass, we always begin with lighter weights. When we warm up or over time increase in muscle mass, we graduate to lifting heavier weights. In the same way when we learn to heal the sick we should begin with easier things. In this category are infirmities in the joints like knee pain, back pain, and neck pain. Headaches are also included in this class as well as asthma and various allergies. Find someone (at this stage preferably an understanding believer) who has such an infirmity and would like to be healed in Jesus' name.

If you would like, first pray to the Lord in humility and dependence upon him. After you are done with prayer, then open your eyes and look at the person with the infirmity. Ask what is the nature of the infirmity, and if there is pain, ask exactly where the pain is located. Lay your hand(s) precisely where the pain or infirmity is localized. Your hand does not need to shake as you do this. You do not need to squeeze or massage the afflicted area or to tap on it as some believers are tempted to do. Neither is it necessary to push the person so that they fall down onto the floor. None of these techniques are scriptural and therefore are generally unnecessary when exercising one's authority over disease and demons.

As you lay your hands on the infirmity with your eyes open, speak to the infirmity with authority and mountain-moving faith, with no doubt in your heart that the infirmity will obey your command. Remember that you are speaking to the works of the enemy. Therefore you will rebuke the infirmity and issue a command to it with sternness and spiritual violence in the tone of your voice. Recall how Jesus rebuked a fever just as he rebuked a demon.

As an example, you might say:

"I rebuke this pain in the name of Jesus Christ! I command you to go in the name of Jesus Christ! I rebuke any spirit of infirmity and command it to leave in the name of Jesus! All pain, leave right now in the name of Jesus Christ! Be healed now in the name of Jesus...be restored completely!"

When you are done, ask the person if they are healed, or if there is any change in their condition. Tell them to be truthful and accurate with their response. "Claiming one's healing by faith" is not appropriate here. When Jesus healed, he actually performed the healing on the spot. The sick people to whom he ministered did not need to claim their healing by faith as is done often today---they were actually and really healed. Our goal here at this moment is to train believers how to heal the sick using their authority and faith as Jesus did, and not to place the primary burden and the responsibility on the faith of infirm the person. The role of the faith of the infirm person will be dealt with at a later time.

What if there is no change whatsoever? If when you tell your dog to sit or your child to turn off the TV and do his homework they do not listen, you would raise your voice and repeat the command with greater authority to make it understood that you mean business. You should take the same course of action when an infirmity or demon does not listen to your command and there is no change. Then the infirmity will begin to obey your command.

What if there is some but incomplete healing? To answer this question, what would you do if your dog sits down only part of the way in response to your command? What would you do if your five-year-old agrees to go to bed after you tell him to, but instead veers off to the game room?

What if the person says that they are completely healed? Do not be surprised. This is indeed what should happen when you give a command to something that the Lord has placed under your authority. But do be thankful to the Lord who has given you such authority and faith.

In general, the specific words which we use to minister healing are taken from Scripture and variations thereof.

To heal the sick:

- Be healed in the name of Jesus!
- I rebuke the pain/infirmary in the name of Jesus!
- Leave, go in the name of Jesus!
- Be set free in the name of Jesus!
- By His stripes you are healed!
- Jesus heals you!
- To deaf ears or blind eyes: Be opened in the name of Jesus!
- Get up and walk in the name of Jesus!

- Sometimes I even say to believers "Your sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus!" based on Mark 2:1-10.

To cast out demons:

- I rebuke the spirit of pain (or infirmity) in the name of Jesus!
- Get out in the name of Jesus!
- Leave in the name of Jesus!
- Do not come back in the name of Jesus!

These of course should not be taken as the last word. There are other variations, but there should be a Scriptural basis or principle for whatever words we speak when exercising our authority over disease and demons.

## Our Old Enemy: Fear and Doubt

### Peter walking on the water

On one well-studied occasion Peter was seated in a boat on the Sea of Galilee and he saw Jesus coming toward the boat walking on the water. Peter was apparently impressed with this miracle and wanted to try it for himself. But first he wisely requested Jesus to command him to do it.

Matthew 14:28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." 29 "**Come,**" he said.

With the command to "come," Jesus effectively gave Peter the authority to walk on water as well as the assurance that it was the will of the Lord for Peter to do it. This should be a rule of thumb for believers. We only attempt something---especially if it is in the realm of the supernatural---if we have been given the authority by the Lord to do it and it is in accordance with his revealed will and command to us.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

Based on the command that Jesus gave him, Peter steps out of the boat and begins to walk on the water toward Jesus. Initially he is successful in doing the miracle as Jesus had commanded him.

30 But when he saw the wind, **he was afraid** and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

The miracle of walking on water sank along with Peter when fear came into his heart. The miracle was over when Peter allowed fear to come in. Naturally he cried out in prayer to Jesus to save him from drowning in the waves. Preachers always encourage us to cry out to Jesus when we are afraid. He is pleased that we trust him enough to cry out to him and he will certainly save us. Undoubtedly there is some truth in this. But was Jesus really pleased with Peter's cry for help in this situation?

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.

Yes, Jesus heard Peter's cry and saved him from drowning. But was he pleased with the prayer?

**"You of little faith,"** he said, **"why did you doubt?"**

After fishing Peter out of the sea, Jesus rebuked him for his little faith which had caused him to sink. Jesus was displeased with Peter's cry because He had already commanded him to come walk on the water and expected him to obey the command successfully. He would have preferred for Peter not to have failed. Why did Peter fail? He failed because he doubted. Exactly what did Peter doubt?

We preachers rightly encourage believers not to doubt God. He is able to save us, to help us, to deliver us. But did Peter doubt Jesus here? Did Peter doubt that Jesus could walk on water? Of course he didn't. Exactly what then did Peter doubt? *He doubted that he himself could walk on water, even though Jesus had commanded and authorized him to do so.* This has direct bearing on the Lord's command to us to heal the sick. We fail to heal the sick for the very same reason that Peter sank into the waves. We fear and doubt that we can do the miracle even though He has commanded us and authorized us to do it.

According to our present church culture and mindset, we believers can do nothing at all except to trust God and wait on Him to do it all for us. In this way He receives all the glory. "Only Jesus can heal the sick...we can't do a thing except to pray and trust him." This is a religious spirit that has paralyzed the Church in the area of healing the sick and casting out demons in the context of evangelism. It is particularly deceptive because it is veiled under a cloak of partial truth. *Yes, of course only God can heal the sick, but in His word it is clear that the vessels of that healing are often His disciples to whom he has commanded and given the authority to heal the sick.*

This religious spirit acts as a veil that clouds our mind with doubt even though Scripture clearly teaches that we have been given authority to heal the sick as a demonstration to the world that Jesus is alive and that he is the only way to the Father. Many times we read the Scriptures presented here but because of the veil just cannot see what is there. We think that by humbling ourselves in the unscriptural way that we have, we exalt the Father and bring all glory to Him. No, by denying or ignoring what the Lord has given us and commanded us to do in His word, we have robbed ourselves of the capacity to demonstrate to the nations that our God is the true God and ultimately, of the capacity to complete the Great Commission.

Perhaps it is this religious spirit that has given birth to our traditional way of ministering to the infirm: "Father, in the name of Jesus...." We are afraid that we cannot heal the sick as commanded by the Lord, so we ask the Father to help us as we are ministering. This may seem spiritual at first

glance. But it is not. Peter was authorized and commanded to walk on water. Although initially he succeeded, he ultimately failed to complete the miracle because he doubted that he could in fact do as Jesus commanded him. So he cried out to the Lord when he sank. This may be why we cry out to the Father as we attempt to heal the sick or cast out demons. We doubt that we can get the job done "by ourselves" as Jesus has commanded and authorized us, so we call on the name of the Father. The result of this doubt is paradoxically what we would like to avoid: failure to accomplish the miracle that would bring glory to God.

Imagine the following scenario: you are sharing the gospel before ten thousand Muslims. One of them comes up to you walking with a limp that is obvious to the whole crowd. He asks you to prove that Jesus really does have authority to forgive sin by healing him in the name of Jesus. Boldly you accept the challenge and lay hands on his leg. You rebuke the infirmity and command him to walk in Jesus' name. He limps away unchanged and back to you in front of the crowd; he is not healed. "Seeing the waves," fear and doubt overwhelm you and you begin to sink. You cry out to the Lord in desperation and ask Him to heal the man since you have failed so spectacularly.

When we cry out to Jesus to heal the sick person in such a situation, he may in fact hear our prayer. He may stretch forth his hand and the sick person is healed. He wants to prove to the Muslims for whom He died that He is in fact their Messiah. But he might not be pleased with us, just as he rebuked Peter for his doubt after pulling him out of the sea. So what should we therefore do when faced with the scenario above?

Instead of allowing doubt to pull you under, you refuse to take "no" for answer from the infirmity. After all, the Lord has put it under your authority. You lay your hands on the man's leg a second time. With greater mountain-moving faith and authority than the first time you rebuke the infirmity and command him to walk in Jesus' name. The Muslim walks away with no trace of the limp. After that the crowd hangs on to your every word as you proclaim the Kingdom of God to them. And you reap a harvest of souls. This is not a hypothetical scenario; it actually happens.

### **Fear and faith are opposites**

Matthew 8:23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. 24 Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was



sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

Again a familiar scene unfolds on the stormy Sea of Galilee. The disciples are threatened by a furious storm. Jesus is asleep in the boat. They are afraid and cry out to Jesus to save them.

Matt 8:26 He replied, "You of **little faith**, why are you so **afraid**?"

This time as well Jesus is not pleased with their cry since it is based on fear. He rebukes them for their lack of faith.

26 ...Then he got up and **rebuked** the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. 27 The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves **obey** him!"

Jesus graciously saves them. He rebukes the winds and the waves, and they obey his command. We might wonder what Jesus expected them to do instead of cry out to him. This incident at sea contains some ingredients that are also found in Matthew 17 where the disciples failed to cast out the demon of epilepsy out of the boy.

Matthew 17:19 Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" 20 He replied, "Because **you have so little faith**."

When the disciples here failed to cast out the demon of epilepsy, it was because they **lacked the faith of God**---they doubted they could drive out the demon as Jesus had commanded them.

In both incidents, Jesus reprimands the disciples for their lack of faith. Both times Jesus is forced to take matters into his own hands after the disciples are unable to do anything. He rebukes the demon, the storm. His command is obeyed each time.

When Peter sank into the waves as he tried to walk on water, it was because he **lacked the faith of God**: he doubted that could walk on water as Jesus had commanded him.

Matthew 14:31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "**You of little faith**," he said, "why did you doubt?"

When the disciples on the boat feared the wind and the waves, they cried out to Him.

Matt 8:26 He replied, "**You of little faith**, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

What kind of faith did they lack such that they were so afraid? Again, they **lacked the faith of God**.

What might Jesus have expected his disciples to do about the storm instead of crying out to him? It is not unreasonable to conclude that Jesus expected his disciples to rebuke the storm themselves using their authority.

### **Where we have been trained and given authority, we should not be afraid but rather take action**

If we have faith in God, we know that the Lord is able and that He can do "it." But the faith of God in us is different. It assures us that *we* can do it because we have been given the authority and the ability and the command from the Lord to do it. We all know that *Jesus* can heal the sick. The relevant question here is: can *we* heal the sick in His name as He has authorized us and commanded us?

The Lord is giving to us mountain-moving faith by which we do not doubt that diseases and demons will go when we so command them. Thus when we minister to the sick in an evangelistic setting, we will not suffer from the doubt that caused Peter to sink under the waves. We will not be afraid and due to that fear cry out to the Lord, "Father, in the name of Jesus..." No, we will speak directly to the disease or demon and command it to leave with the faith of God. And it will obey our command.

In the first stage that involves prayer, there may be fear and doubt in our hearts. As we pray and cry out to the Lord, we take care of such issues. Charismatic believers may speak in tongues in this stage to build themselves up and prepare for the second stage. After we have finished praying, then we move into the second stage; we shift gears and move into the offensive mountain-moving mode. We pull out our spiritual M-16 and shoot the enemy with devastating force. The sick are healed and the name of Jesus is exalted.

## **Another View of the Disciples' Failure to Drive out the Demon**

Mark 9:20 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. 21 Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"

"From childhood," he answered. 22 "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

23 "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes." (New International Version)

Mark's account of this incident appears to differ from Matthew's which we have been studying. In verse 23 just above of Mark's version, Jesus appears to question the father regarding his words "but if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us" as if implying that of course Jesus can do something.

This would appear to conflict with the parallel account in Matthew 17 where Jesus rebukes the disciples for their failure and attributes it to their lack of mountain-moving faith. In contrast, Jesus seems to say in Mark's account that if the father will only believe, Jesus himself will help and drive out the demon. The emphasis is decidedly different. How can we explain this discrepancy?

The Literal Translation of the Holy Bible renders it in the following way:

Mark 9:23 And Jesus said to him, If you are able to believe, all things [are] possible to the [ones] believing.

The Greek word which is translated "believing" above can also be translated "having faith." Thus Jesus could just as well have said, "all things are possible to the ones having faith." It is therefore entirely possible that Jesus meant that all things are possible to the ones having *faith of God*.

This is entirely consistent with Matthew's rendering of Jesus' rebuke to the disciples:

He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this

mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

If they had had mountain-moving faith, they would have succeeded in driving out the demon. And we have learned that mountain-moving faith is the kind of faith that God Himself has; it is *faith of God*.

Matthew says that nothing will be impossible for those having mountain-moving faith. And Mark adds that all things are possible to the ones having [the] faith of God. Seen in this way, the two versions of this incident completely agree with one another.

We all know that nothing is impossible for God. And now we understand that God accomplishes the impossible on earth through those who have [the] faith of God.

If we want to do the great works of God, we must have the faith of God.

## The Consequence of Fear and Doubt

We have seen that fear and doubt cause us to sink or fail when attempting to do the miraculous in obedience to the Lord's command. Just because we have been commanded to do a particular thing does not mean necessarily that we will succeed. Fear and doubt can cause us to fail. But the consequence of fear and doubt can be more tragic than simply failure as we understand it.

After the Lord delivered the Hebrew slaves from Egypt by punishing Pharaoh and the Egyptians with the ten plagues, Moses led them into the desert. The Lord's plan was for them to advance to the promised land of Canaan and then to invade and conquer it. Moses first sent twelve men to explore the land before invading.

Numbers 13:25 At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land. ...27 They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. 28 But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. 30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, *for we can certainly do it.*"

The report by ten of the spies was mixed. The land was flowing with milk and honey, but inhabited by powerful giants. However, Caleb was undaunted, saying that they could *certainly* take possession of the land.

What kind of faith is this? This is none other than the faith of God. Caleb had *no doubt* that they could accomplish what God had commanded them to do, which was to take possession of Canaan.

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." 32 And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. ...All the people we saw there are of great size.

The other spies had the spirit of fear and doubt. They feared the giants of the land and doubted that they could conquer the land. This spirit spread among the people.

Numbers 14:6 Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes 7 and said, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. 9 *Only do not rebel* against the LORD. And *do not be afraid* of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up.

Fear ultimately leads to rebellion against the Lord. God has great work for us to do---among other things, He commands us to complete the Great Commission. But fear will cause us to shrink back from carrying out this Mandate.

10 But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites. 11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people **treat me with contempt?** How long will they **refuse to believe** in me...? 12 I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them...

The spirit of fear and doubt can ultimately result in disobedience. Despite the ten great miracles which God performed in Egypt to deliver the Israelites, they refused to believe in Him; they refused to obey His command. This was tantamount to *treating God with contempt*. In the same way, despite the great miracle of our being delivered from sin by Christ's death on the cross, many of us still refuse to obey the Great Commission. We doubt that we can take this land for the Kingdom of God. The Lord was angry with the Israelites and desired to destroy them. But Moses interceded on behalf of the people.

19 "In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now."

God graciously answered his prayer.

20 The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. 21 *Nevertheless,* 22 not one of the men who ... disobeyed me and tested me ten times— 23 ...No one who has *treated me with contempt* will ever see it.

Even though God forgave the people, they would never enter the Promised Land. Those who disobeyed Him and treated Him with contempt would die in the desert. Is it possible that even today God forgives us of our sins, but some of us still "die in the desert?" We never enter the land of milk and honey---the abundant life---but remain forever in the wilderness.

24 But because my servant Caleb *has a different spirit* and *follows me wholeheartedly*, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.

Those who have the spirit that Caleb had and follow the Lord wholeheartedly will boldly enter Canaan and possess the land for themselves and their descendants. The New Testament also speaks of this incident.

Hebrews 3:16 Who were they who heard and *rebelled*? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? 17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who *sinned*, whose bodies fell in the desert?

18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who *disobeyed*? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter, *because of their unbelief*.

There are different ways in which we can apply this to New Testament believers. For example, those whom Moses led out of Egypt refer to those who are delivered from slavery to sin by Jesus Christ whose blood was shed on the cross. Yet there are those among us who sin and who will die in the desert. These will disobey Christ's command to take our land for the Kingdom of God. This command includes the Great Commission. They disobey because they have unbelief---they doubt that they can heal the sick and proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost. Because of this doubt, they are afraid to attack the spiritual giants of the land. Another name for these spiritual giants might be enemy strongholds: secular humanism, false religion and ideologies, witchcraft, greed, and sexual sin, to name a few.

These giants are so powerful and firmly entrenched in our land that to the Church it seems impossible to dislodge them. And so the Church has mostly refused to invade the Promised Land to attack these giants. Some have mounted an attack, but improperly equipped for battle. They preach the gospel with words only, without a demonstration of the spirit and power. They do not heal the sick and cast out demons as a demonstration that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father.

1 Corinthians 2:1 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ...4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

And so for the most part, the Church has chosen rather to remain in the desert and worship God there. But God considers this rebellion nothing short of rebellion. It is tantamount to treating God with contempt. Fear and unbelief ultimately lead to disobedience and rebellion against the Lord's command. Those who do this will die in the desert.

Those who like Caleb have a different spirit---not the spirit of fear and doubt---and follow God wholeheartedly the Lord will bring into the Promised

Land, and their descendants will inherit it. What kind of faith did Caleb have? He had the faith of God.

The primary reason why the Church has not completed the Great Commission even after two thousand years is her helplessness caused by the spirit of fear and doubt. She is toothless and weaponless. She cannot heal the sick or cast out demons as taught and commanded by her Lord Jesus Christ. But to those who want to follow the Lord wholeheartedly, the Lord is restoring the spirit of power and boldness---the spirit of Elijah that dares to proclaim the Kingdom of God accompanied by confirming signs and wonders.

### **We are commanded to be strong and courageous**

Since Moses failed to lead the people into Canaan because of their unbelief and fear, God made sure that his successor would not fail for the same reason. After Moses died, God chose Joshua and spoke to him:

Joshua 1:6 *"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. 7 Be strong and very courageous ...9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."*

Not once, not twice, but three times God *commanded* Joshua to be "strong and courageous."

For those who want to enter and possess the Promised Land, being strong and courageous is not optional. Indeed it takes supernatural strength and boldness to heal the sick and proclaim the Kingdom of God outside the walls of the church. That is why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

After Moses died, the Lord raised up Joshua to get the job done---leading the Israelites to inherit the Promised Land. Before sending him out, the Lord made it perfectly clear to Joshua that strength and courage would be among the requirements for success. The fear and unbelief that paralyzed the Israelites under the leadership of Moses had to go and to be replaced by strength and courage under Joshua's leadership. If we do not heed these commands given to Joshua by the Lord, we will like Moses before him fail to lead the Church into the Promised Land of fulfilling the Great Commission.



Then the task will be entrusted to another generation after us. The spirit of fear and doubt ultimately results in rebellion against God and subsequent failure to take the Promised Land.

### **What about "the anointing?"**

Many believers today are constantly seeking "the anointing." Of course this is important; only after Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit did he begin his work as the Messiah. However, did Jesus ever tell his disciples that they lacked "the anointing?" No, he never did. But several times it is recorded that he rebuked his disciples for lacking faith. He was very displeased when they entertained doubt and fear. It is time for the Church to go back to basics. We like the anointing in part because when we move "under the anointing," the probability of failure is low. Moving "by faith" on the other hand, can be fraught with the risk of nothing happening, or even considered moving "in the flesh" by some. Thus we would rather seek the anointing than the faith of God. But this decision can be from a spirit of fear of failure. If this is the case, the whole premise is faulty.

Jesus has commanded us to "heal the sick, and tell them 'the Kingdom of God is near you.'" There is an overemphasis on seeking and relying on the anointing when we should also seek to be strong and courageous, obeying what Jesus commanded us to do. The "anointing" may be more appropriate in the context of building up the body of Christ. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are primarily for ministering to the Church. But in the context of proclaiming the gospel to the world we must be strong and courageous to minister with mountain-moving faith, healing the sick with the authority that has already been given to us. This is the only way to fulfil the Great Commission and enter the Promised Land, as God commanded Joshua.

### **False humility**

There is a false humility in the Church that masquerades as spirituality. Although Scripture clearly teaches that we have authority to heal the sick and cast out demons, we walk around in sackcloth and ashes pretending that we are utterly helpless and must trust God to do these things Himself. There is a subtle yet important difference here. In ourselves of course we can do nothing. But as disciples of the Christ, we can do the works that he did. What we have done is to emphasize the first statement and neglect the second. We conclude that we disciples of Christ can do nothing but trust God. This can be a religious spirit, a spirit of false humility with roots in fear and unbelief that has paralyzed the Church. If we truly trusted the Lord, we would obey his commands. True humility recognizes that although we can do

the works that Christ did, we are in his sight unworthy servants. We are simply vessels of his glory and power. We must have this healthy balance if we are to kill the giants and fulfil the Great Commission.

### **An illustration**

Let's say you enlist in the army. You go through boot camp and training; you are equipped and taught how to use your powerful M-16 automatic rifle. Then you are sent to the front lines of the battlefield. There you are engaged in a firefight with the enemy. But suddenly in the middle of the fight you feel hesitation. Would you put down your weapon, take out your radio and call your commander-in-chief? "Mr. President, I'm afraid I can't kill the enemy. Even though I have been trained and equipped with firepower far superior to that of the enemy, I doubt that I can defeat them. Please come and help me, Mr. President. You come, you fire the weapon, and you kill the enemy yourself. I can't do it." As ridiculous as such a scenario is, this is precisely how many believers minister to the sick in a situation where unsaved souls can be drawn to Christ if a miracle is done in his name. Such situations can be encountered often, especially in Third World countries.

As an example, this is how such believers might minister: "Father, in the name of Jesus, we command this pain to leave in Jesus' name. Be healed in Jesus' name. *Oh Jesus, we thank you that by your stripes we are healed. Only you can heal this person, Jesus. We can't do it. Do it for your glory, Jesus.* Be healed in the name of Jesus. [For charismatic believers there is usually some speaking in tongues interspersed.] *Thank you, Father; thank you Jesus.* Be healed in Jesus' name. *Thank you, Jesus.* We command the spirit of infirmity to leave in Jesus' name. *Where are you, Lord? Please help me; I can't heal this person.* Be healed in Jesus' name."

Notice this believer is speaking to God, then to the infirmity, then back to God, then back to the infirmity, ad nauseam. This schizophrenic kind of ministry clearly lacks the mountain-moving faith and authority to drive out diseases and demons. Usually nothing happens because the disease and demons "know" that this believer lacks the faith of God even though theoretically he may have authority from the Lord. They can discern this by his frequent crying out to God which betrays his fear and doubt.

A commander-in-chief trains and equips his soldiers, and then sends them out to fight the enemy. He does not go with them onto the battlefield; he remains in his headquarters. In the same way, with regard to preaching the gospel, believers are equipped and then sent out to proclaim the Kingdom of God, heal the sick, and cast out demons. Jesus does not actually go with

them; he remains at the right hand of the Father. He does not need to go with them because his soldiers are fully trained and equipped to defeat the enemy. It is true that he is with us always to the very end of the age through the indwelling Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:20), but with regard to the warfare called healing the sick and casting out demons, his fully trained and equipped disciples are called to do it themselves. It makes little sense to "cry out to the Lord" in fear and doubt in the middle of a battle. He is always with us. It may also be displeasing to him.

### **Speaking in tongues while ministering to the sick**

Why do charismatic believers often speak in tongues when ministering to the sick? An examination of the miraculous healings in Acts does not uncover any instance where the disciples spoke in tongues as they healed the sick using their authority. Unless they are specifically being led by the Holy Spirit or moving in the gift of healing, charismatics usually speak in tongues on such occasions because they don't know what else to do. They have been taught to just speak in tongues when in doubt. Well, they should not be constantly in doubt regarding how to heal the sick. Scripture tell us quite clearly how to heal the sick: speak to the infirmity or demon with mountain-moving faith. Speaking in tongues, by contrast, is speaking to God. No man or infirmity or demon understands what the believer is saying, and thus generally nothing happens.

1 Corinthians 14:2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.

Therefore if one wants to command a disease or demon to go, it makes little sense to speak in tongues. Rather speak directly to the disease with authority and the faith of God, commanding it to go. Speaking in tongues while healing the sick may be evidence of sinking, just as Peter cried out to Jesus when he sank beneath the waters. When nothing is happening as a charismatic believer ministers to an infirm person---he is "sinking"---he automatically steps back and begins to seek the Lord by speaking in tongues. This is not necessarily wrong. However, after we have been built up and strengthened in our faith or receive a word from the Lord as we speak in tongues, *go back into the ring swinging and knock out the enemy!* The important thing is that when we do confront the enemy, we do so without any fear or doubt but with the faith of God.

Speaking in tongues is a gift from the Holy Spirit. If a believer does not have this gift, he or she can still minister to the sick with authority. Even in the

gospels before the Holy Spirit came, the disciples were given authority over disease and demons.

Thus if we want to be able to minister healing effectively as Jesus and the disciples did, we will separate prayer and commanding. This is how it should be done when using authority to heal the sick.

### **Do competitive athletes have confidence in themselves?**

An athlete that has reached a high level of skill in his sport has a high degree of confidence that he can win in competition. This confidence is born of rigorous training and proficiency proven on the field. Moreover the athlete will likely not be shy in expressing this confidence. In the same way, servants of God need to know who they are in Christ.

Samuel 17:32 David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."

The young man expresses to the king his willing eagerness to fight Goliath. The Church of Jesus Christ should have this same spirit toward the giants that keep the Kingdom from advancing---for example, the giants of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and witchcraft.

33 Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth."

This is the spirit of fear and doubt that has paralyzed the Church. It tells us that we will surely fail if we attempt to fight the giants. They are simply too strong for us.

34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 **I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.** 37 The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

As the shepherd of his father's sheep, David had to learn how to fight and kill the wild animals that endangered the sheep. The Lord had trained him how to fight skilfully as he protected them from lions and bears. It is arguable that a lion or bear is more ferocious than a giant human being. In David's mind, Goliath was not a problem. David had **balanced** confidence: confidence in the Lord as well as confidence in what the Lord could do through him. Servants of the Lord should have the same balanced

confidence. First of all, Jesus told us that he has given us authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy. With this authority over ground-level demonic powers, we can heal the sick and cast out demons and bring souls to Christ. Second of all, the Lord through numerous Scriptures in the New Testament trains us *how* to use this authority to defeat the works of the enemy. As David was trained, so we should and can be trained as well. Like David, we can have balanced confidence. We are confident that in the area of preaching the Kingdom of God, we *can* heal the sick, we *can* cast out demons, we *can* bring souls to Jesus Christ. We are confident because the Lord says we are able to do it and in his word he has trained us how to do it effectively.

## **Emmanuel of Nigeria and the Faith of God**

Brother Emmanuel is an evangelist in Nigeria who attended an Elijah Challenge Seminar in the Nigerian city of Enugu in November 2004. After the training, the Lord began to use Emmanuel very powerfully in evangelistic healing Crusades. Here is his report on his Crusade in the town of Oshiri:

“The Oshiri community is sold out to two powerful deities who they claimed is their god. These deities claimed that they were protecting the land from invaders, and they manifested themselves in December with some spectacular signs that the community must take notice of. Dogs are the major animals that are sacrificed to this satanic deity. This community was loaded with stubbornness, deafness and epilepsy.

On the 8th of December 2005 was the first day of the crusade, there were about six thousand people in attendance at the market square named Eke Market. After praise and worship, I mounted the stage. I told them I am not a miracle worker, but I have come to introduce the miracle worker who is Jesus Christ, the greatest of all gods.

I preached on the topic THE HEALING JESUS and I ministered to the sick *en masse* [mass healing], taking authority over demons of infirmity, sickness and diseases, and mentioning names of various sicknesses commanding them to go in the name of Jesus.

I called out for those who were actually and completely healed, not those that were getting healed. Over fifty people came out to testify of the Lord’s mercy.

About five people testified that their short legs grew out as we tested them on the stage before everybody. Some testified of growths on their neck, stomach, and hand dissolving. Some who could not stand erect due to spinal cord injury could stand perfectly as we tested them. People testified of epileptic seizures healed. I asked them how they knew they were healed. They said they saw personalities coming out of their bodies forcefully as their bodies experienced electrical current. Still on the last day of the program I still called them out to make sure if they are actually healed. I was told that the attacks never came back neither the symptoms; they said they usually have attack almost

three times daily but after the first day of the program, no signs of that attack again.

When the people were testifying some of the others were mocking me saying it was pre-arranged or manipulation. On the second day which was Friday when I came up on stage I told them I would prove to them that it was not manipulation or a set-up. I said, 'bring me all the deaf and the dumb, I want to minister to them.' They brought seven deaf and dumb people all of whom were known to the entire community.

It takes great faith---the faith of God---to minister to deaf and dumb people before a large crowd of people for the specific purpose of proving that past miracles are in fact genuine. In this case, moreover, everyone in the community knew these deaf and dumb people. Outwardly, there would appear to be a high risk of failure and embarrassment.

"When they came forward the crowd shouted, 'Take them up to the stage so that everyone will see God healing them. I told the ushers to bring them on the stage.'"

Normally one does not want to minister to the sick on the stage before a crowd. It is much safer to minister to them off the stage, preferably in a quiet corner off to the side. In this way, no one will know if some are not healed. It takes great faith---the faith of God---to minister to the deaf and dumb right on the stage to prove that past miracles are not fraudulent. What if nothing happens? But Emmanuel wrote:

**"My faith did not shake at all."**

This is mountain-moving faith; this is faith-without-a-doubt; this is the faith of God. This is the faith by which Jesus did many of his miracles. This is the faith that He is restoring to us who proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost of this generation.

"I laid my hand on the first one and commanded the deaf and dumb spirit to leave and it left in a second. We tested him and he repeated every word perfectly. The crowd shouted praising God. After much praise and celebration, we discovered that the remaining six could hear without being ministered to as every one of them were tested---from that moment all mockery stopped. Every person in the crusade believed and rejoiced in God.

I then preached on breaking the power of witchcraft, after the message almost all the community gave their life to Jesus. Many were weeping asking God for mercy as I led them to receive Jesus as their Lord and personal Savior. I ministered to the sick (*en masse*); the testimonies were outstanding as partially blind eyes were perfectly healed. People unable to walk who were brought to the crusade, could walk without walking aids and many others testimonies were given.

On the third day a neighboring community heard that JESUS is in Oshiri doing wonders and miracles. They came *en masse* and we recorded about 10,000 people in attendance. The whole crowd was committed to everything we are doing because they were convinced. A large number of people were healed on the last day, we couldn't collect all the testimonies. I was called yesterday on the phone to be informed that miracles of healing are still taking place on their own even without anybody ministering to them and that every home has a spectacular miracle which they cannot deny.

I was able to train over fifty ministers and believers in a Healing Seminar for two days in the morning...thank you for training me to train others."

The Lord will raise up many more like Emmanuel during these last days to proclaim the Kingdom of God as it was in the Early Church. Not all will be crusade evangelists like Emmanuel speaking before crowds. But all can be trained to heal the sick in the context of personal, one-on-one evangelism to prove to the lost that Jesus is the only way to the Father. And all should be able to train other believers to do the same. The Church must complete the Great Commission. Then the end will come.



## Faith in God and the Faith of God

We can say that faith has two "directions." Looking at faith in this way can help us understand the two different kinds of faith.

Faith in God is our putting our faith God through Jesus Christ and his work on the cross. It is therefore saving faith and foundational to our personal relationship with God. When we pray or worship God, we exercise faith in God. It is for prayer or worship directed "up" to God in heaven.

In contrast, faith of God or mountain-moving faith is for speaking to that which has been placed under our authority, for example for issuing commands to diseases and demons in a context which is evangelistic or potentially so. We can say that it is God's faith coming "down" upon us so that we can do the works that Jesus did.

We see these two directions of faith in John 14:12.

"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."

Anyone who has faith in Jesus, that is, faith in God, will be given the faith of God for doing the works that Jesus did. With the faith of God the believer will be able to heal the sick and cast out demons as Jesus did. Whoever has faith in Jesus Christ will be born-again and Jesus will come to live in that person. Because of the indwelling Christ, that believer will have authority over disease and demons. He will exercise this authority with the faith of Christ who dwells in him.

### The testimony of David

2 Samuel 22:1 David sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul... 4 I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. 5 "The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. 6 The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. 7 In my distress I called to the LORD; I called out to my God. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came to his ears.

In his distress and helplessness in the face of overwhelming enemies, David calls upon the Lord. The Lord hears his cry and graciously delivers him. Here we see David exercising faith *in* God and trust *in* the Lord. Look, however, at what David wrote next in the very same chapter.

2 Samuel 22:33 It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. 34 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights. 35 He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. 36 You give me your shield of victory; you stoop down to make me great. 37 You broaden the path beneath me, so that my ankles do not turn. 38 "I pursued my enemies and crushed them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. 39 I crushed them completely, and they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet. 40 You armed me with strength for battle; you made my adversaries bow at my feet. 41 You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes. 42 They cried for help, but there was no one to save them— to the LORD, but he did not answer. 43 I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth; I pounded and trampled them like mud in the streets.

The contrast in tone between these verses and the previous ones from the beginning of the chapter could hardly be greater. At the beginning David cries out to the Lord in complete trust and helplessness with faith *in* God. Then later David shifts to the faith *of* God, brimming with confidence regarding his ability to destroy his enemies. The Lord arms him with strength and trains his hands for battle; he can bend a bow of bronze. God makes him great. He crushes his enemies completely and tramples them like mud in the streets. Because the Lord has trained him, equipped him and sent him, David confronts and destroys his enemies with great boldness. There is no fear or doubt in him, only the faith that moves mountains. Because David has faith *in* God, he can fight his enemies with the faith *of* God.

It is the same with disciples of Christ who are also soldiers of the Kingdom of God. If we have true faith *in* God and therefore in His word as well, we will be given the faith *of* God to do the works that Jesus did. We will take ground from the enemy kingdom just as we have been trained, equipped, authorized, and sent to do.

To do the *works of God*, we must have the *authority of God* and the *faith of God*.

God saved David from his enemies. Later God would anoint him to become King. He would use David to defeat Israel's enemies and establish God's reign over Israel. In the same way God saves us from sin and darkness. Then He anoints us to serve Him as we proclaim and extend His Kingdom in the world.

### **An unbalanced focus on what God can do for us**

In the West the focus of most believers is on "what God can do for me." If we listen to the lyrics of most contemporary Christian songs, we hear about God saving us, healing us, restoring us, and delivering us from our trials; about God's mercy and grace upon us in our great need. The same can be said of most of the preaching that we hear from our pulpits. The focus is on God's help and blessings in this life on earth. This may be all well and good, but it is only the beginning and only one facet of the truth.

Much of the Church, especially in the West, has forgotten that we are "blessed to be a blessing."

Genesis 12:2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

We focus on the blessings of God and how to secure them for ourselves. But we pay mostly lip service to the purpose of God's blessings in our lives. In terms of our being a blessing we usually do not go much beyond tithing to our local church. Sadly, this is not a serious problem for most churches; at least the tithes can pay the bills and the church can survive. Our "being a blessing," however, must go far beyond that. It is said that we are saved to serve.

According to Scripture, the Church is to be the instrument of the fulfillment of the Great Commission. We are to preach the gospel, heal the sick, cast out demons, and make disciples of all nations. As an unstoppable army we are commanded to declare war on the kingdom of darkness (Matthew 28:18-20). But the Church spends most of its time learning to secure God's blessings in this life, whether material or spiritual. Currently there are positive emphases on being true worshippers, on intimacy with God, and on restoration. But these also can dead end in just another self-indulgent spiritual high for the Church if they do not result in obedience to the command of God---carrying out the Great Commission. Soldiers do not stay in boot camp or on their base forever; their goal is to fight and to win on the battlefield. When is the Church going to graduate from boot camp and

actually begin to fight and take ground from the enemy? It's been *two thousand years* since we were given our marching orders.

The Church expends most of its effort "trusting the Lord" and receiving blessing from him. This is "faith in God" which waits upon the Lord and is mostly passive in nature. It should only be the beginning, however. The Church must then advance to doing the works that Jesus did. She must exercise the faith of God and take the battle for souls to the enemy in the spirit and power of Elijah. It is better to give than to receive. And by that we are not simply referring to the giving of our finances.

"Discipleship" should not simply be a class that a believer attends. Rather it is equipping that should ultimately result in the believer not only becoming like Jesus, but actually doing the works that Jesus did---preaching the gospel, healing the sick, casting out demons, and making disciples. At this point, the Church stills falls far short.

## The Operation of the Laying on of Hands

Mark 5:24 ...A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and **touched his cloak**, 28 because she thought, "if I just **touch** his clothes, I will be healed."

This infirm woman had faith that if she just made physical contact with Jesus by touching his clothes, she would be healed. Perhaps because she was unclean by virtue of her bleeding, she was reluctant to touch Jesus himself. Why was physical contact important for her to be healed?

29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. 30 At once Jesus realized that **power had gone out** from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who **touched** my clothes?"

When the woman made physical contact with Jesus, healing power came out of him and went into her through the contact. She was completely healed. Jesus felt the power go out from him when the woman touched him. When Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit, he not only received authority from the Father, he also received healing power. This healing power was resident in his body. When the infirm woman touched him this healing power went out from him into her.

This is the reason why Jesus often, but not always, laid hands on the sick when he ministered to them. Through the laying on of his hands, healing power would flow forth to heal the sick. Believers are also taught to lay hands on the sick as they preach the gospel to the lost.

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ...17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: 18 ...they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

We understand why Jesus would lay hands on the sick to heal them. But why should believers do the same? One obvious reason is that we want to do what we see Jesus doing; that may be justification enough. However, if this is unsatisfactory, we can look a bit deeper. Where is Jesus right now? He is at the right hand of the Father in heaven. But through the Holy Spirit we know that he lives in us.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

Since the Christ who healed the sick two thousand years ago lives in us, is it possible that his healing power is in some way in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit? Could this glorious power dwell in these vessels of clay? I believe it is possible. That may be the reason why believers are taught to lay hands on the sick to heal them. It is possible that when we do this, the healing power of Jesus Christ flows to minister healing to the infirm person. It is not uncommon for the infirm person to feel some kind of sensation, sometimes heat or coolness, at the point of contact. At times the hand of the believer laid on the infirm person may feel warm.

Luke 9 also tells us that Jesus called the Twelve together and “gave them *power* and *authority* to drive out all demons and to cure diseases.” The disciples received from Jesus not only authority, but also power. This could be the healing power that is transferred when believers lay hands on the infirm.

Exactly where on the infirm person should hands be laid? Within charismatic circles it is not unusual for a minister to put his hand on the forehead of the person. Some may also apply pressure with a gentle push, resulting in the person falling down backwards. Where did Jesus lay his hand on the infirm? Let’s see what Scripture teaches.

Mark 7:32 There some people brought to him a man who was **deaf** and **could hardly talk**, and they begged him to **place his hand** on the man.

Where did Jesus place his hand on the man?

33 After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus **put his fingers into the man’s ears**. Then he spit and **touched** the man’s tongue.

Why did Jesus put his fingers into the man’s ears? It was because the man’s deafness was localized in his ears. Jesus wanted healing power to go into the man’s deaf ears, so he inserted his fingers there for maximum efficiency of transmission. There may not have been any “spiritual” reason why Jesus did this; he may have simply wanted to transmit healing power over the shortest distance possible. Jesus also touched the man’s tongue for the same reason. The tongue is the primary organ for speech. There was something wrong with the man’s tongue which resulted in his speech disability. In order to transmit healing power directly to his tongue, Jesus touched it. We note that Jesus also spit before touching the man’s tongue. Spitting in this way might be socially unacceptable in many cultures, so one

must exercise good sense before attempting it. The minister might want to ask permission first. Whatever is the explanation for why Jesus spit---and different ones have been proposed---it may be better in most contexts simply to omit this step. Let us say that we need more understandable and revelation regarding the spitting and how it can be applied in a modern setting.

34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "**Be opened!**"). 35 At this, the man's **ears were opened**, his **tongue was loosened** and he began to speak plainly.

Notice that Jesus gives a spoken command to ears that cannot hear at all. But it does not matter because Jesus has authority over the condition and it must obey his command. We see that Jesus heals the man by following the familiar pattern of laying on his hands and then issuing a command with mountain-moving faith.

Mark 8:22 They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to **touch** him.

Where did Jesus touch the blind man to open his eyes?

23 He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and **put his hands on him**, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

As we shall see in the next verse, Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then he questions him about any improvement in his eyesight. Normally when believers minister to an infirm person, they do not bother or dare to ask the person if he is healed. This is because they really don't expect anything to happen. Jesus clearly did expect something to happen. We should also expect an infirmity to obey our command and therefore should not hesitate to ask if healing has taken place.

Mark 8:24 He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

The man was only partially healed of his blindness. Scripture does not tell us the reason for this. The point here is that Jesus was only partially successful in opening the man's eyes. What did Jesus do? Did he conclude that it was the Father's will only to heal the man partially? Could the Father have wanted to teach him patience and therefore did not grant him complete healing at that time? Whatever the case may be, let's look simply at what Jesus did.

25 Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

First of all we see that Jesus had laid his hands on the man's eyes. It was not on the man's forehead or anywhere else. Jesus touched the man's eyes in order to transmit healing power to where it was needed in the most efficient way possible. On this second try, the man's eyesight was completely restored.

We learn that sometimes we will need to minister more than once for the complete healing. If it took Jesus twice to complete the man's healing, it may take us two times, three times, four times, five times or more to complete a healing in His name. We will need to persevere and to continue giving the commands until the person is completely healed. Then the name of Jesus is glorified and souls will be drawn to him.

Usually Jesus healed the infirm with a word, on the first try. Such was the level of his authority. It was not "magic." It was the application of authority through mountain-moving faith. Moving diseases and demons is comparable to moving mountains with commands born of authority. Jesus' authority and faith were so great that the mountains moved quickly at his command. Diseases and demons fled at his command.

But in the case of the blind man above, it is not recorded that he exercised his authority by speaking a command to the infirmity. Perhaps he only laid hands on the man to transfer healing power. And perhaps because there was some obstacle, the healing was incomplete. Therefore Jesus laid hands on the man a second time, and then his sight was completely restored.

### **Authority (*exousia*) and power (*dunamis*)**

It is best when ministering healing for believers to practice *both* the exercise of authority *and* the laying on of hands whenever possible. This is because of the difference between the nature of authority and the nature of power, as hinted at earlier in this chapter. In the Greek the word for authority is *exousia* while the word for power is *dunamis*. It may be useful for our understanding to see these two terms as carrying different meanings. *Exousia* or authority is of course exercised by issuing commands to things placed under our command. On the other hand, healing *dunamis* or power is transferred to the infirm person through physical contact or the laying on of hands. Seen in this light, power and authority can be separate and parallel ways of ministering to the infirm. Best results are generally obtained when combining the two approaches. In this way there will be two factors at work together to remove the infirmity. And generally two are better than one. Of



course there are circumstances in which it is not possible to lay hands on the infirm person. We shall deal with this when we look at "healing-at-a-distance" in a later chapter.

Luke 9:1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them *power* and *authority* to drive out all demons and to cure diseases...

There is a different way to look at authority and power which may also be helpful in understanding their relationship. This was presented in an earlier chapter. There, *authority* is "potential energy" in us to heal the sick. This potential is transformed into manifest *healing power* only as we exercise the authority by issuing commands to disease and demons with mountain-moving faith.

### **Persistence**

When we minister healing to the infirm, we may see cases like that of the blind man above. Perhaps the first time we give the command and lay on hands, nothing happens. It may be that the mountain of infirmity is a very large one and thus requires great authority and faith to move into the sea. So we repeat the command with greater authority and faith, again laying on hands. There may be some improvement after the second time---the mountain has begun to move, but has not yet completely disappeared into the sea. So we continue to command with authority and faith until the mountain of infirmity has moved into the sea and the person is completely healed. Then the person gives public testimony and souls are drawn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Many of the miraculous healings we see are in that category.

### **"Being slain in the Spirit"**

Some charismatic ministers see this manifestation take place when they lay hands on people. Whatever the merits of this practice---and there may be---let us examine it through the lens of Scripture. We see that in the context of ministering healing to the infirm, it did not take place in Scripture. Sometimes when Jesus confronted demons, they would throw their victim down to the ground (Luke 4:35; 9:42). But this was the action of the demons, not the Holy Spirit. Therefore we conclude that the manifestation of "being slain in the Spirit" when ministering healing is not strongly supported in Scripture. Again, we are not saying that there are no merits to this manifestation; people have been healed by the Lord in this way. However, it does not appear in Scripture.

Jesus often healed the sick by exercising authority and through the laying on of hands. It is clear that we can do it the same way. And there will be far less controversy in the body of Christ when we do it in the way that Jesus did. People are healed and testify. As a result of the preaching of the gospel and the confirming miraculous healings, souls will make the decision to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

When people are "slain in the Spirit" in a public evangelistic meeting, the result might not be as clear cut. First of all, non-believers are not necessarily impressed when they see people falling down. They may even be confused and wonder what it means. When a person falls down, it is not necessarily a miracle. The person could have been pushed down or have fallen down by herself. Or when the person gets up, she is not necessarily healed of her physical infirmity. Moreover, evangelical believers who attend the meeting may be put off by manifestations that they consider unscriptural. This hurts the unity of the body of Christ. In an evangelistic meeting that is open to everyone, it is better to heal the sick in the way that Jesus and his disciples did than to have people fall down. In a public meeting, testimonies from people who are healed of their infirmities are generally more impressive to the lost than having people "slain in the Spirit."

## **The Virtue of Persistence in Healing the Sick**

Earlier in this book I reported on a Crusade that we held in Niger, West Africa in November 2002. After the final training session leading up to the Crusade, I sent the following report to our intercessors back home:

"I had noticed that the believers I had trained were not really ministering with boldness and perseverance during the first two pre-Crusade church services. Although people were getting healed, I felt it could have been better. They needed more training. So for the third pre-Crusade meeting which took place just a couple of hours ago, I decided not only to preach the gospel to any unbelievers (Muslims) who might be present, I decided I had to give more training to the believers. It was not enough for me just to go over the Scriptures on how Jesus healed, but I decided I had to actually lay hands on the infirm and heal them in front of everyone for them to see how it was done.

Usually I simply minister in mass healing...those who are healed come forward to testify, and those who are not healed don't. It's relatively "free of risk," because those who are not healed don't come forward and tell everyone they weren't healed. But I had to show the believers that I was willing to stick my neck out by ministering to the infirm one-on-one from the front if indeed I expected them to do the same.

But the pastor of Bethel Church, where we had the meeting tonight, is a very enterprising man of God. Instead of holding the meeting inside his church, he decided to hold it outside the church in the open-air, right by the side of a busy street. He erected a stage, put up lights and a powerful sound system. Several hundred people gathered, not just believers, but unbelievers from the street drawn by the hoopla and singing of the choir he had assembled. It was a mini open-air Crusade!

I first shared to the unbelievers about Jesus' identity as the light of the world (John 8:12), and how we his disciples are given the responsibility of preaching the gospel and demonstrating to the world who Jesus really is by healing the sick in His name. Then I taught from Mark 8:22-25 how Jesus had to minister twice to a blind man before he was completely healed and from Mark 7:32-35 how Jesus opened the ears of a deaf man. We would do the

same that evening. I announced by faith in the name of Jesus that I would be the first to minister to the blind (or those with poor eyesight) from the stage so that the believers could learn how to do it.

Four people came up to the stage. I ministered first to a younger woman with poor eyesight, who testified to the crowd she could see well after I ministered about four times to her. But the real eye-opening healing was the next one involving an elderly woman who was practically blind and practically deaf. When I first rebuked the spirit of blindness and commanded her eyes to be opened, there was no improvement. I asked the crowd what I should do---should I be discouraged, embarrassed, and give up? No, they shouted in accordance with what I had just taught them, continue! I ministered a second time. She looked around but there appeared to be no improvement in her vision. I turned to the crowd and asked them what I should do. "Continue," they shouted.

Once again I rebuked the blindness in the name of Jesus. She said she could see a bit better! The crowd roared its approval and gave thanks to the Lord. "What should I do now?" I asked them. They told me minister again. Finally the Lord completely opened her eyes, and she could see well!

I decided not to leave well enough alone and told the crowd we were going to open her ears in the name of Jesus. I inserted my fingers into her ears, rebuking the spirit of deafness and commanding her ears to open up. Nothing happened for a few times. Not only that, she started to feel pain in her jaw after I started praying over her ears. This of course signaled an evil spirit in the woman; it was not pleased with my rebukes and was retaliating. With renewed vigor, I rebuked the spirit and commanded it to come out. The pain remained despite all my efforts. (Perhaps I should have quit when I was ahead after the woman's eyes were opened?) The crowd waited.

Then the thought came to me---it must have been from the Lord. I asked the woman through someone who communicated via sign language if she was a follower of Jesus, and she said she was not. Then I understood. I told the crowd that God had already shown her grace by healing her eyes, but if she now wanted Him to restore her hearing, she had to respond to God's

grace by accepting Christ. She indicated she wanted Jesus in her heart.

Then I knew I had the enemy on the run...I inserted my fingers into her ears one last time to rebuke the deafness. A wide smile immediately broke out on her face---she could hear! The crowd went wild with gladness and praise unto the Lord.

Then I had the believers---who had just witnessed the teaching from the Lord from the stage---come forward to minister healing to the many in the crowd who needed healing. With great faith, boldness, and persistence, they attacked the works of the devil as they laid hands on the infirm. Many people were healed of various infirmities through them and came up to the stage to testify. What a meeting it was...the believers in Niamey are so greatly encouraged, and the Muslims have witnessed the power of the name of Jesus with their own eyes! It is also the perfect way to prepare for the opening night of our big open-air Crusade tomorrow."

## Meetings in Uganda and Benin

In February 2005 we were invited to Arua, Northern Uganda to hold an Elijah Challenge Seminar. Afterwards we put it into practice at an evangelistic event. It was not a huge affair with a huge budget. Rather it was something that any small group of trained believers can do.

The event was held outdoors at a location where people were milling around--at a village marketplace. Without any announcements in the media or fanfare, our team of a handful of believers arrived and set up our sound system. Our worship team then took up their positions and microphones and began to sing and worship. The people at the marketplace began to notice us and were drawn to the sound of music. They trickled in slowly until there was a crowd of about a hundred people around the singers. Finally I came out of the pickup truck where I had been sitting and took the microphone in my hand. I announced to the crowd, "The God of heaven has sent us here to proclaim His Kingdom. In order that you may know that His Kingdom is near, we are going to ask Him to do miracles in your midst. We are going to ask Him to heal you of your physical infirmities. Please raise your hand if you have an infirmity and would like God to heal you."

This approach to proclaiming the Kingdom of God is in accordance with Jesus' command to his seventy disciples when he sent them out:

Luke 10:9 Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'

I looked around and saw a forest of hands go up. It seemed most of the people gathered there had infirmities and desired to be healed. Now it came time to deliver what I had said to them. I told the leaders and believers to go and heal the infirm people just as they had been taught in the Seminar. They went and laid hands on the sick in Jesus' name, exercising their authority over the infirmities and demons with the faith of God. Soon miracles of healing began to occur and those who were healed came to me to give their testimony over the microphone. As the believers continued to minister, a line of ladies formed with each waiting to give her testimony. The line grew longer and longer as more and more people were healed through the laying of hands of the trained believers. As the testimonies went on one after another, the people who had gathered from the marketplace began to listen and pay attention. After all, they had never seen or heard of such a thing before...miraculous healings taking place in broad daylight.

The testimonies continued. One of the last testimonies was from a little boy. He had been brought to the market by his mother. He had some kind of

large growth in his stomach causing it to bulge out. As a believer laid hands on him he could feel the power moving and working in his stomach.

After the testimonies I immediately began to share about the Kingdom of God. The miracles proved that the Kingdom of the only true God who created the heavens and earth was near. I explained some of the characteristics of this Kingdom, in particular the life eternal given to those who entered this Kingdom. The only way to enter this glorious Kingdom, I stressed, was by faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God who died on the cross to bear our sins. When I asked how many wanted to escape from the kingdom of darkness and to enter the Kingdom of Light, between sixty and seventy-five people raised their hands. They raised their hands again when I asked if they wanted to believe on Jesus Christ as the only way into the Kingdom. Then I led these people in prayer to receive Jesus and follow Him as their Lord and Savior. The following Sunday some of these new believers went to a local church in the area bringing other sick people to be healed.

*Of greatest significance* is that the local churches here can now hold such meetings on their own. The Lord used *the local believers* to do the miracles, *not an outsider*. It was not necessary to holding a huge and expensive mass crusade featuring a specially-anointed servant of God from the outside. When many churches are trained in this way, the practice of witchcraft here can be wiped out. The Lord is restoring power to His Church for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Our local host for the Seminar was Pastor Jimmy Kato, originally a refugee from Sudan. He reported later in the year: "We have open-air evangelistic meetings every Sunday evening using The Elijah Challenge method and it is beautiful."

In June 2006, Pastor Jimmy wrote me:

"Praise the Lord for the work the Lord is doing through your ministry. I am sorry for the delay in sending you the report after the Arua mission last year in February, but I think it is high time for you to know what is on the ground here. The Lord has done many things through the teaching you gave us in Arua. About four churches were opened outside of Arua by different church leaders who were in your Seminar. Many miracles happened and are still happening as a result of The Elijah Challenge.

The church I pastor has grown twice (doubled) or more since you left. We have evening services every day and all-night meetings twice a week. I was the only pastor before but now we have four pastors.

I praise the Lord for using the family of Douglas and Anne Sampson for hosting you *in order to bring this great revival to Arua and beyond*. May the good Lord bless them and bless your ministry.

The pastors are now united and form a strong association now registered with the government of Uganda.

This is all about what God did in Arua. Let's continue to serve Him as long as we still have the chance. God bless you."

### **Benin, the birthplace of voodoo**

The country of Benin in West Africa is known as the birthplace of voodoo in the world. Missionaries here report being under frequent attack and harassment by the powers of witchcraft. Even believers in Jesus Christ live under the fear of witchcraft. In late November 2003 we were given the opportunity of training local pastors and leaders in the capital city of Cotonou. Then on December 1 we began our evangelistic meetings.

We met in Lenin Plaza, which is in the middle of a busy intersection where seven streets converge from different directions like the spokes of a wheel. A traffic circle at the center forms the perimeter of the Plaza. We brought our worship team and our powerful speakers which could be heard for blocks around. There were no seats provided; by-standers, passers-by, and whoever happened to be drawn to the lights and music were our audience.

However, Cotonou is the largest city in Benin and unlike rural Arua in northern Uganda, its people are not so easily impressed. No one came up to enjoy the music and singing. People who passed by looked at us but kept walking. Those standing or sitting at a distance stayed where they were and did not approach us. So when I stood up, I grabbed the microphone and announced to all within the sound of my voice that we would ask the God of heaven to heal the sick to show that His Kingdom was near. "How many of you would like God to heal you?" I shouted into the microphone. I looked around the Plaza and saw many hands up in the air. "If you want God to heal you, then come and stand right in front of me!"

Suddenly people with infirmities appeared from out of nowhere and stood in front of me---by my estimate, between one hundred and two hundred people. I told them that the miracles of healing would show them that "the Kingdom of God is near to you tonight."



I instructed the trained believers to come and minister healing for those who had gathered at the front. Within a few minutes, people began to come up to me to testify of their healings, including men, women, and children. The first person, a woman, told us at length that she had been unable to walk because of pain that had strangely moved about in her legs. The Lord had healed her as a believer ministered to her. After her were several more testimonies of healings. When I felt I really had the crowd's attention, I stopped receiving testimonies and began to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I told them they had just seen a dramatic demonstration that the kingdom of God was near (Luke 10:9). But in order to enter the kingdom of God, they had to believe in Jesus Christ.

After preaching about the demoniac of the Gadarenes from Mark Chapter 5, I challenged them to accept Christ. As far as I could see, most if not all of those who had come forward for physical healing also accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. They raised their hands and came forward with eagerness and no hesitation. The pastors and ministers saw how simple it was to bring souls into God's Kingdom, and some began to proclaim the gospel in this same way afterwards. Miraculous healings are a powerful and scriptural way to get people to listen to the gospel.

Acts 8:4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. 5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. 6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, *they all paid close attention to what he said.* 7 With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. 8 So there was great joy in that city.

For the second evening we returned to Lenin Plaza. Like at the first evening, I told the people gathered there---more than the previous night---that we would ask God to prove that Jesus was His Son and the only way to Heaven. We would ask Him in the name of Jesus Christ to do miraculous healings that only He alone could do. If the miracles occurred, this would be the proof of the true identify of Jesus.

That second evening I sent the trained believers into battle to minister healing to the sick one-on-one. I call this "hand-to-hand combat in the trenches." They came out of the trenches with several miracles. The most notable miracle concerned a rough young man who was known around the immediate neighborhood as being completely deaf and mute as well as having an abnormally coarse demeanor. To the amazement of the people there, he came up to the platform, able to hear and speak and in his right mind. Shortly after the testimony a group of incredulous local boys streamed up to the platform to see him. Another young man testified of being healed

of a hernia which would have cost him 500,000 francs to treat with surgery. There were numerous other testimonies as well.

Then I seized the opportunity to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I argued from Mark 2:10 that the miracles proved that Jesus had the authority to forgive their sin, the sin that had plunged them into suffering, sickness, demon oppression, voodoo curses, and eventual torment in hell. When I asked which of them wanted to have their sins forgiven, all of them standing in front of the podium raised their hands and prayed the sinners' prayer. Afterwards they eagerly met with counselors for follow-up.

At the end of the meeting, my translator, a brother named Theophan, spoke with me. He shared with joy that previous Crusades in Cotonou had cost more money, but did not bear the fruit that we had just seen.

One of most hosts in Cotonou, Pastor Joel Biao, wrote me in June 2006:

"I write to you regarding the follow-up I have been doing since The Elijah Challenge had the campaign in Benin in November 2002. ...Some local churches are experiencing great miracles in applying the lessons learned during your time in Cotonou. One of them is "Communauté des Frères Chrétiens," the church where you preached when you came to Cotonou and other local churches. I went to Cotonou with my team in July 2004 and in August 2005 for follow up and God did wonderful things."

This is the End Time Model of Evangelism. The entire body of Christ will be trained to do the works that Jesus did: proclaiming the Kingdom of God, healing the sick, casting out demons, and making disciples. The age of the big-time "one-man-show" evangelist is coming to a close; the age of the body of Christ is at hand. Huge and expensive Crusades will take on less and less significance as nameless and faceless believers take a greater role in preaching the gospel and healing the sick in smaller, even one-on-one evangelistic settings. Only when the entire body of Christ is mobilized can we complete the Great Commission.

## The Day of Freedom for God's People

In the book of Esther the people of God are threatened with annihilation by an enraged enemy, Haman. They are helpless and have no authority to defend themselves. In some ways there could be similarities with the current situation of the Church of Jesus Christ in the world today. In particular, we might interpret the current worldwide resurgence of the spirit of Islam in that light.

Esther 3:12 Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out ...all Haman's orders.... These were written *in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring*. 13 Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and little children—on a single day...

The Jews were helpless to protect themselves. Their enemies had been given the legal authority to kill them. The church often feels helpless to fight the "giants" that threaten and defy her. But God was at work to turn the situation around for the Jews.

Esther 6:1 That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. 2 It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

Because of this turn of affairs, favor was taken away from Haman and given instead to Mordecai.

Esther 8:2 The king took off *his signet ring*, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and *presented it to Mordecai*. And Esther appointed him over Haman's estate. 3 Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews... 10 Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed the dispatches *with the king's signet ring*, and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king. 11 The king's edict granted the Jews in every city *the right* to assemble and protect themselves; *to destroy, kill and annihilate* any armed force of any nationality or

province that might attack them and their women and children;  
and to plunder the property of their enemies.

The king's signet ring, which represents his authority, was given to Mordecai. He then wrote an edict, sealed with that signet ring, giving the Jews the legal right and authority not only to protect themselves, but to destroy their enemies. During these end times, God is restoring authority to the Church to destroy the works of the enemy---to heal the sick and cast out demons in order to expand His Kingdom. He is giving us *the right*---even *the command*---do these things for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

9:1 On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now *the tables were turned* and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them. 2 The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes to attack those seeking their destruction. No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities *were afraid of them...* 5 The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and *they did what they pleased* to those who hated them.

This event signifies the kingly anointing and authority which the Lord is restoring to the Church during the end times to fight the enemies of the Kingdom of God. The "tables will be turned" and we will get the upper hand over them. The powers of darkness will be *afraid* of us, and for a while we will "do as we please" to them as the gospel of the Kingdom is preached. This is what accompanies authority. This will be the day of freedom for the Church of Jesus Christ.

We are not saying that all will repent and turn to Jesus Christ. Many will not enter the Kingdom of God. But in the sight of the Lord the Great Commission will be fulfilled by the Church, and then the end will come.

## How can we grow in mountain-moving faith?

Luke 17:5 The apostles said to the Lord, **“Increase our faith!”**

The disciples, as recorded in Matthew 17, failed miserably to cast a demon of epilepsy out of a boy. This drew a sharp rebuke from Jesus in front of the people who had gathered. They had failed to cast out the demon because they lacked faith, said Jesus. In particular it was mountain-moving faith that they lacked. Perhaps, among others, this was one reason why the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith. The Church today should ask the Lord for the same thing. We have failed to do miracles in His name because we lack faith. The principal cause of the dearth of miracles in the Church today is because we lack faith.

6 He replied, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.

Jesus begins by using a metaphor very similar to the faith that moves mountains. The difference is that here he speaks of faith to move a mulberry tree. The principle, however, is the same. If we have faith as a mustard seed, we can speak to a mulberry tree and command it to be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it will obey our command. What is faith as a mustard seed? There has been much discussion about this. Allow us to add something.

A mustard seed was among the smallest of seeds. Yet when planted and allowed to grow, it became one of the largest of garden plants. Therefore we know that faith which is truly like a mustard seed will inevitably grow strong and life-giving.

Matthew 13:31 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.”

There may be a secondary characteristic of a mustard seed to be considered as well. Because of the genetic material stored in a mustard seed, it can only grow into a mustard plant. It is absolutely impossible for a mustard seed to become something other than a mustard plant. Therefore if you have faith as a mustard seed, when you give a command to something under your authority you have no doubt that your words will come to pass. Any other outcome is impossible. *It will obey you.* What is it in general that obeys our command? *Servants* obey their masters’ commands.

7 "Suppose one of you had a *servant* plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'?"

We should keep in mind that Jesus spoke this parable two thousand years ago. At that time there was little understanding of human rights and equality as we have today. Let us say you were a master at that time, and you had a servant. One day he was working hard outside taking care of your crops and herds. Around supper time he returns to the house. You, of course, have been busy yourself and are hungry. You would certainly not say to him, "Oh, you poor dear, what a wonderful servant you are! You have been working so hard for me outside. Even though I'm the boss and you're the servant, I've prepared a tasty meal for you. Just sit down and enjoy. After you finish, then I'll eat." Such a scenario would be impossible.

8 Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? 9 Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?

Since you are the master, your servant is to serve your interests, not his own. So most certainly you would have him cook dinner and serve you first. You would not be overwhelmed with gratitude just because your servant obeyed your command to go out and work in the fields. He is simply doing his duty and does not deserve any special consideration from you. Yes, this may make sense, but what does this have to do with increasing our faith?

We are not surprised at all when a servant who is under our authority obeys our commands; rather, we expect him to do so. In the same way, we should not be surprised when diseases and demons which the Lord has placed under our authority obey our commands to leave. Scripture clearly tells us that in the context of proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the lost we have authority to heal the sick and cast out demons. Thus when we exercise this authority in that context we do not find it extraordinary when the diseases or demons obey us and people are miraculously healed. They *should* obey us. They are simply doing what they were told to do. For us this is "business as usual."

Servants not coddled or spoiled by their masters. They are not allowed to get away with disobedience. In the same way, we do not coddle diseases and demons. We do not treat them gently. We expect them to submit to our commands.

Viewed in this way, we *expect* the infirm to be healed when we minister to them in an evangelistic context. When they are *not* healed, we are surprised and indignant at the audacity of the infirmity to disobey our command. Our

reaction is to rebuke and command it even more severely. Although they are actually enemies for the sake of the gospel, God in His wisdom has made infirmities to be like "servants" for us. They help us do our job of winning the lost as they obey our commands to leave and people are healed. Our mountain-moving faith is strengthened when we have this kind of understanding. We are no longer be intimidated when we see infirm people as we are sharing the gospel to the lost. In contrast, we will see the infirmities as "opportunities" to bring glory to God and souls to Jesus Christ. This is how the apostles Peter and Paul sometimes viewed infirmities, and they took great advantage of them by healing them in public. This understanding increases our mountain-moving faith.

In a later chapter, we shall see that there is still another thing that has been placed under our authority and must obey us as "servants"---our sinful nature.

10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"

When we have obeyed the Lord's command to proclaim the gospel and heal the sick and people are saved as a result, we have no reason at all to become proud. We should not begin to think that somehow we are now specially-anointed vessels and deserve special honor in the body of Christ. We should not think that now we are better than our Senior Pastor and may rebel against his authority. We should not be tempted to split off and start our own church apart from his blessing. Actually, we haven't done anything beyond the call of duty---we've merely done what the Lord commanded us to do and what He *expected* of us.

The authority over diseases and demons comes from the Lord. The word of God that trains and equips us comes from Him. The orders come from Him. Thus the kingdom, power, and glory belong to Him. We are just unworthy servants. We have no reason to praise ourselves and think that we now deserve earthly fame and fortune. Leave it up to the Lord to praise us when He returns: "Well done, good and faithful servant...."

John 9:1 Now as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

The disciples were in part questioning Jesus about the possibility of a "generational curse" which resulted in the man being born blind. We believe such things do exist. However, let's look at the perspective of Jesus on the man's infirmity.

3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

Jesus did not view the man's condition as the result of a generational curse, but rather in a far more helpful and positive manner. He was born blind so that God's gracious work of healing could take place in him to bring glory to Himself. After that, Scripture records that Jesus opened the man's eyes. Later the man was to acknowledge Jesus as His Messiah. So let us view such works of the enemy in the same light as Jesus. They are servants; they are opportunities for God to be glorified and souls to be saved.

This is the understanding that results in faith as a mustard seed that moves mountains.



## **The End Time Model of Evangelism**

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

This Great Commission given by Jesus Christ to the Church requires us to proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost *and* to make disciples of all nations. It is not simply a matter of sharing the gospel with the lost; they must accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ and then be discipled. It is clear that not all will be saved through faith in Jesus and become his disciples. Many people will not enter the narrow gate, "for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it." (Matthew 7:13) However, it is equally clear that we are commanded to bear fruit for Jesus. This means making disciples of all nations after preaching the gospel to them. Although the gospel has not yet been preached to all creation, many have in fact heard, especially in the West. Some have believed. But most have not yet been discipled.

There are many fine evangelists in the body of Christ. Some of them are very famous and anointed, and hold very large Crusades. Crowds in attendance at such events held in developing nations have been reported to far exceed a million people in number. It is not uncommon for tens of thousands of people to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior at such events. This is the predominant model of evangelism we find in the Church today. Although one-on-one evangelism is certainly going on as well, the Church seems to put much hope in large, special events as a means of fulfilling the Great Commission. At the moment of this writing, for example, the churches in our city are putting much time and resources in hosting a "festival" where the primary speaker will be a famous evangelist. This is the favored model of evangelism today.

### **The current model of evangelism**

In this current model a meeting is held in a large and expensive facility like a stadium. Much time and a lot of resources are required. The one who speaks and in some cases ministers healing to the infirm is a specially-anointed and gifted servant of God from out-of-town. Because of his anointed ministry, many miraculous healings may take place and many people confess Jesus

Christ as their Lord and Savior. Therefore during the Crusade, there is much excitement and joy in the body of Christ.

However, after the Crusade is over and the man of God leaves town, the miracles cease. The excitement dies down. But souls have been saved and the Church has taken another giant step towards the fulfilment of the Great Commission. Or has she really? As we have seen, the Great Commission is not simply a matter of preaching the gospel and seeing people repent and turn to Jesus Christ. It is even more a matter of making disciples for Jesus Christ. What happens to the thousands of precious souls who accept Christ at these large Crusades? Is the follow-up process that should result in the discipleship of these new believers very effective? The answer is no.

Take for example the ministry of Dr. Billy Graham, the most beloved and famous evangelist of this generation. He is a faithful man of God with integrity. His ministry has tracked how many people who accept Christ in his Crusades actually end up attending a local church for discipleship. The percentage of new believers who are eventually discipled is very low, reportedly far less than 5%. This does not represent a giant step forward for the Great Commission.

In Muslim Indonesia in the year 2003 a very powerful evangelist from Canada held an evangelistic Crusade in a certain city. Relatively large amounts of money were spent by the local churches to host this Crusade. During the meeting great miracles of healing took place as the evangelist ministered, resulting in crowds of Muslims coming to the meeting and accepting Christ. However, a conservative Christian denomination in that city lodged a protest with the local government, and the meetings were shut down. What about the thousands of Muslims who came to Christ in the Crusade? One of the hosting local pastors reported to me that likely due to Muslim pressure, not one new believer to his knowledge could be discipled in the conventional way. All were lost. To add injury to insult, local authorities imposed stricter regulations on foreign evangelists and future evangelistic meetings in that city.

We conclude that although great miracles took place to announce the Kingdom of God in that city, the cause of the Great Commission in terms of making disciples was not greatly impacted through the Crusade. It is arguable that the price paid to hold the Crusade was not worth the end result.

In India there are many great evangelists. Have they succeeded in completing the Great Commission there? While holding meetings in Malaysia, an Indian pastor shared some troubling information with me. Although it is anecdotal and I was not given the source of the information, I believe there is more than a grain of truth in it. Crusades in populous India can easily

boast of hundreds of thousands in attendance, and tens of thousands of souls accepting Christ. If one adds up the number of souls confessing Christ in all the Crusades held so far in India, the total number exceeds the current population of India. Yet India is perhaps only 5% Christian. The great evangelists and the great Crusades are not getting the job done. The current model of evangelism has failed to enable the Church to fulfil the Great Commission.

### **The end time model of evangelism**

Huge Crusades are often rare or even one-time events because they are prohibitively expensive. In countries where Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism are the predominant religions, such large events also present a tantalizingly large and easy target for the kingdom of darkness to strike and shut down, if they can be held at all. The Church must switch tactics. Instead of one huge Crusade, there should be many relatively small Crusades. If every disciple of Jesus Christ is taught how to heal the sick and cast out demons as Jesus did according John 14:12, then every local church can hold an evangelistic healing Crusade using its own facility. If that is not feasible, then some small public facility can be used.

In such a small-Crusade setting, a local servant of God, for example, a local pastor, will proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost and the infirm who attend the meeting. Then to prove to the lost that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father, trained local believers will lay hands on the sick and heal them. Those who are healed will testify publicly about the power of the name of Jesus which has delivered them from the infirmity. His authority to heal proves that he also has authority to forgive sin and save from judgment in hell. Sin is the ultimate root of sickness. The one with authority to heal sickness is also the one with authority to forgive sin. When an invitation is given for the lost to accept Christ after the sick have been healed in His name, souls will put their faith in him.

Such Crusades or rallies can be held as often as desired. Minimal cost is involved. There is no need to invite a celebrated evangelist to come. It is all done by the nameless, faceless local disciples of the Christ. They will no longer be the sleepy and fearful believers so common in the Church today. They will be in a constant state of revival because they are doing the miraculous works that their Lord did two thousand years ago.

An Elijah Challenge Seminar was held in the town of Arua in Northern Uganda in February 2005. It was hosted by a local pastor named Jimmy Kato. Now he reports: "We have open-air evangelistic meetings every Sunday evening using The Elijah Challenge method and it is beautiful."

What about the follow-up and discipleship of the new believers? It will be entrusted into the hands of the local disciples of Christ. In fact, these disciples must be given responsibility at every level of the evangelism. It will be their responsibility to bring their unsaved and infirm family members, neighbors, co-workers, and acquaintances to attend the evangelistic event. Thus the expense of promoting the event with expensive media is avoided. At the Crusade event, it will be their responsibility to heal the sick and cast out demons as the Kingdom of God is proclaimed by the speaker. Finally, it will be their responsibility to follow up on those who accept Christ at the meeting. Since they already have a personal relationship with them, it will be natural for these believers to follow them up. They will bring them--- physically, if necessary---to church the following Sunday or to the midweek cell group. They will continue to do this until the new believer feels comfortable coming by himself. New relationships will be established and grow. In this way the process of discipleship can begin. Follow-up of new believers done by the body of Christ through personal relationships will be far more effective than the impersonal kind of follow-up currently in use after big Crusades.

The key here is training and mobilizing the entire body of Christ---an army of nameless and faceless believers---to do the work of the Great Commission. No longer should the Church look to a handful of superstar one-man-show professional evangelists to get the job done.

This End Time Model of Evangelism is also effective for personal one-on-one evangelism or for evangelism in a small group. Miracles are usually a powerful tool for drawing sinners to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in whatever setting.

### **Testimony from Malaysia**

I was in a city in Malaysia equipping believers in End Time Evangelism. After the training, we held an evangelistic meeting to provide the trained people with actual "battlefield" experience. This is what I wrote after the meeting....

I preached the gospel and asked the Lord to confirm it through miraculous healings as the trained believers laid hands on the sick. Many miracles took place as they exercised their authority over diseases and demons in Christ. Among them: a boy born with a hole in his heart could no longer hear the telltale "swishing" sound of his heartbeat. A woman had come to the meeting with a large hard cancerous tumor in her stomach and pain in different parts of her body because of the tumor and the

chemotherapy. Through tears of joy she testified that her stomach had become soft and all the pain had disappeared. A woman had come with several growths in her breast and because of them, debilitating fear. She could no longer find any of the growths and her fear had vanished in the name of Christ.

Christ's authority to free the people from the prison of infirmity proved that he also had the legal authority to forgive the sin that had put them in prison. When I gave the invitation for people to receive Jesus Christ, precious souls responded. It was most glorious. The saints rejoiced at what the Lord had done through them.

Some time later an anointed evangelist from another country came to hold a Healing Service in a local church in that area. Some of the believers we had trained were members of that local church and attended the Service. One of them wrote me the following about the meeting...

The Service was so similar to your teaching except that it was a one-man-show. The first night of the meetings, we (those who had attended your training) felt so frustrated because we had to restrain the burning desire to minister to the sick. The second night we just went ahead doing just as you taught us, like the evangelist [on the platform] but we had to stop before getting the job done because a pastor stopped us. In fact by that time some had already been healed as we ministered. What an impact it could have made if the whole body of Christ in that big hall had ministered with authority and commanded healing together with the evangelist just as you did with us...what a pity and a waste! I could not help noticing the disapproving way the pastors and some elders looked at us while we were ministering to the sick---that very disapproving look---you know our church has a kind of mentality that allows only certain people to pray or minister and we happened to be not those 'certain people.' It is not that we wanted to show off, but the need was there. So many sick people were queuing up waiting to be prayed for. Maybe the way we ministered with authority opened their eyes. Anyway all praises and glory be to God for all the miracles, the fruit and the harvest from those two nights. The evangelist is indeed a man of God and has an apostolic and prophetic anointing.

Just like Moses was unable to take the Israelites into the Promised Land, the current generation of specially-anointed evangelists has failed to lead the

Church to fulfill the Great Commission. Their meetings focus on the anointed ministry of one man or one woman. Of course they have brought much glory to God in their time. I believe they have now fulfilled their purpose. An vast army of nameless and faceless Joshuas is now being raised up to lead God's people into Canaan. The Lord has begun to fulfill Jesus' promise in John 14:12: "Those who believe in Me will do the works that I have done, and even greater works will they do..."

It will be the Body of Christ consisting of multiplied millions of trained believers who will preach the gospel, heal the sick, and cast out demons like Christ did---who will fulfill the Great Commission. Where a handful of world-class evangelists failed in this particular regard, this huge army of nameless and faceless little ones will get the job done.

What is the primary work of the five-fold ministry?

Ephesians 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 *to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...*

*Their work is to prepare God's people for works of service.* "One-man-show" ministries do not generally do this, although there may be exceptions. They usually draw much attention to themselves and pay relatively little to equipping the body of Christ. Now is the time for the five-fold-ministry to fulfill the primary purpose of its existence: equipping us to do the works that Jesus did.

## Healing Outreaches for Nameless Believers

### Hong Kong City Mall in Houston, Texas

God is restoring His power to His people to complete the Great Commission--proclaiming the gospel to the world and discipling all nations. Where do we find "the world?" We know that we do not find the world in our churches which are for the most part sanctuaries for those who profess Christ. Unbelievers are found outside the walls of our churches---in their homes, in the marketplace, and in public places.

It is pleasing to the Lord when we dare to take the gospel outside the church, and to proclaim it boldly in the spirit of Elijah. It was Elijah who dared to proclaim atop Mt. Carmel that the Lord is the true God *and that he would prove it*. The fire that descended from heaven in full view of everyone in response to Elijah's challenge and prayer was the evidence that Elijah's God was the true God.

The New Testament equivalent of what Elijah did is to preach the gospel to the lost and to demonstrate in a public fashion that Jesus is the only way to the Father by performing signs and wonders in His name for everyone to see.

One way to do this is by holding a "healing outreach" in a public place, for example, in a shopping mall. This is actually being done in Houston's Chinatown district.

There is a large shopping mall called Hong Kong City Mall patronized by the Asian community of Houston---mostly Chinese and Vietnamese. Most of these are Buddhists. In the beginning, we set up a table with Christian literature underneath a sign which said "FREE HEALING PRAYER" in Vietnamese, Chinese, and English. Our purpose was to draw Buddhists and unbelievers to us to hear the gospel.

People with infirmities, both Christians and unbelievers, saw our sign and requested prayer for healing. Between eighty and ninety percent of those ministered to immediately experienced God's healing touch and testified that they felt better or were healed. If they were unbelievers, we would seize the opportunity, like Peter at the temple gate in Acts 3, to share the gospel of Christ with these precious souls. In this manner, many Buddhists and unbelievers have come to know Christ as Lord and Savior. The Vietnamese Baptist Church, which has now been trained to take over the outreach, follows up these new believers.

For two months, Siu Wang had rheumatic fever along with pain in her joints--especially her ankle and back---and could not sleep at night. Her doctors did not understand what kind of arthritis she had, and the medication they prescribed for her did not help at all. One Sunday she and her husband traveled to Houston from Austin for her weekly acupuncture treatment at the Hong Kong City Mall. After the session she was still in pain. She happened to pass by our table in front of the Hong Kong Food Market and saw our sign which said, "Free Healing Prayer." My wife approached Siu as she browsed over the literature on the table, asking if we had any tracts on healing. We didn't have any, but Lucille offered to pray over her. We had her sit down. She told us about the pain in her ankle and back. I laid my hand on her ankle and rebuked the pain, after which she got up and tested her ankle. The pain had subsided, she said. Lucille quickly shared the gospel with her and asked if she wanted to receive Christ. She replied that her friends had also shared Christ with her, but that she wanted to read the tracts first. Then she shared about her back pain, and Lucille laid her hand on her back with authority in the name of Jesus Christ. Her back pain was much less, and she was very happy feeling so much relief. She left to rejoin her husband who was still shopping inside the Hong Kong Food Market.

When her husband saw her walking toward him without pain, he asked, "What happened to you? You have no difficulty walking!"

"Yes, a pastor prayed over me, and that's why I feel so good now!" she replied. They returned home to Austin that afternoon.

Siu was well---no more pain in her body, the fever was gone, and she could sleep at night. She called her Christian friends and shared with them about the pastor in Houston who had ministered to her and how she was healed. She and her husband wanted to believe in Jesus Christ, but she regretted that she didn't accept the Lord on the Sunday that she was healed. She didn't know how to contact us. On one of the tracts she had taken from our table she found the name and number of a Chinese pastor in Houston. She called him and recounted to him what had happened to her. He knew us and gave her our telephone number, and she called us Thursday night. Over the telephone with my wife, she and her husband accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior. Later Siu Wang, completely healed, was baptized in water along with her husband. They joined a large evangelical Chinese church in Austin.

Mrs. Diep Huynh anxiously surveyed her bloated tummy which throbbed with pain. She had watched herself gradually swell from a size eight to a size sixteen. Finally she went to see a doctor. The physician at the Hong Kong



City Mall in Houston told her she needed a colonoscopy for an accurate diagnosis, but his initial written diagnosis was a tumor that had made her tummy as hard as a rock. Mrs. Huynh, an immigrant from Vietnam who did not speak English, did not have insurance or the money for this expensive treatment. She left the doctor's office in bewilderment, looking for someone in the Mall, anyone who could comfort her fears and tell her what to do.

She approached our table in the Mall area, drawn by a sign which read "Free Healing Prayer" in Vietnamese. My teammate Jordan Diep and I laid hands on her and ministered to her in the name of Jesus. She literally felt something happening---something moving around---in her stomach. And there was the definite sensation of liquid leaking out and wetting her pants. Instinctively she reached down to touch her pants, but they were dry. At that time she felt her pants beginning to fall off, and she quickly grabbed hold of them to keep herself from certain embarrassment. Her tummy had shrank back to its original size; if there had been a tumor, it had vanished. The pain in her tummy was gone. She had been completely and instantly healed in the name of Jesus Christ. In gratitude, Mrs. Huynh accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior, and began attending the Vietnamese Baptist Church. Her family was still in Vietnam, and they were idol-worshippers. But Mrs. Huynh sent them sermon notes from her Pastor along with pages torn out from a Vietnamese Bible. Through her ministry, her family in Vietnam accepted Christ and began to reach out to others.

Later Mrs. Huynh had an opportunity to return to her home village in Vietnam. The church there had been struggling along with about thirty people. But as she shared about what Jesus had done for her, God began to move in her village. Hundreds of people came to Christ as a result, and the church laid plans to construct a new building. On this trip the Lord began to use Mrs. Huyuh to heal the sick, even in ministering mass healing to crowds in the powerful name of Jesus.

At the same time the Lord was moving powerfully through Pastor Khanh Huynh and Jordan Diep at the Vietnamese Baptist Church. After Pastor Khanh invited me to hold the Elijah Challenge Seminar for his congregation, God began to heal the sick miraculously through the ministry of the church. Every Sunday unbelievers would line up in the church to receive their healing in the name of Jesus Christ. These people, mostly Buddhists, began to witness to other unbelievers about the Jesus who heals. And precious souls were saved as God manifested the visible proof that Jesus is His Son and has authority to forgive sins. That proof consists of the miraculous healings (cf. Mark 2:1-12).

The healing outreach continues to bear fruit as miraculous healings take

place in the busy Hong Kong City Mall. It was reported that an average of ten souls accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior there every Saturday.

### **Brookshire Soup Kitchen (outside Houston, Texas)**

At a food pantry ministry in Brookshire, Texas, Pastors Randy and Jennifer Campbell of the Open Door Fellowship demonstrated the love of Jesus by distributing food to the poor at their food pantry. They also offered healing ministry to the sick who came as a demonstration of the power of the name of Jesus. God did many miracles of healing and deliverance as they ministered through the laying of hands to the infirm who waited in line to receive food. A work of transformation in the community of Brookshire began through this merging of the ministries of compassion and power. More and more people began to come not for the food, but for healing and prayer in the name of Jesus. Jennifer reported:

Today, we went out to work the food pantry at the Manna House in Brookshire. We had five people come for food. We were able to pray with all of them. One man had some problems with his knee, yet at the moment had no pain. Another woman had back problems and depression and was on much medication. When I took authority over her depression, it was very powerful. We both sensed it. She hugged me and left with tears in her eyes. It was so exciting to share with them that they can take authority over these things themselves. All of the people who came today were believers. I told Randy on the way home that that was the most fun I had had in a long time. I hope you understand my meaning, I knew I was doing exactly what I was created to do. Certainly I have taken the Elijah Challenge and can't wait to see all that lies ahead. I believe that God is releasing the spirit of Elijah today for believers.

It was exciting at the Chuck Wagon Ministry (food pantry) this past Tuesday. We distributed food to 11 families consisting of 42 people. It was nonstop sacking food and praying over individuals. We even had people come back and say they did not care if they got food or not but they wanted to be prayed over. It is quite an eye opener seeing needs of people at our back door. There is such a spiritual battle that is taking place. We prayed over people with back problems, depression, suicidal thoughts, diabetes, high blood pressure, leg problems, and heart problems. God is giving me a greater vision for later in the year.

## **Zambia**

Arthur Pienaar is a western missionary to Zambia from South Africa who attended The Elijah Challenge Seminar in February 2005. The following is Arthur's report on what the Lord did through him and his team after the Seminar. Arthur wrote us from Zambia:

Before I accepted God's calling for me to be a missionary in Zambia, I made a deal with Him. I said I'll go but He has to be with me and confirm His presence with signs and wonders during ministry. Otherwise, what's the point? I can't say that I have ever satisfied this expectation I had from God until now.

There was a team of ten people that came from my sending church in South Africa and I met them with four translators and members from a newly planted church in Mulauli (which means witch finder or place of witchcraft). This is the darkest area in the western Zambia region where I work. I started sharing the principles of The Elijah Challenge and the corporate anointing of believers to the team when they just arrived. During the next four days, I started teaching the team The Elijah Challenge End Time Model of Evangelism for three or four hours each morning. Our regional overseer had done the training with me when you visited Livingstone, and we took the lead during the first two evenings of ministry.

God started showing himself powerful by healing all who came for ministry after we gave The Elijah Challenge. I have included below a more detailed report about this. During the following evenings the team started ministering with great success. All the people that came for ministry were healed from various sicknesses, infirmities and demons, and just about everyone there came for ministry.

Some new converts from the first two evenings of ministry attended the training, and later that same week they ministered healing to all who came for ministry. To me this was the greatest miracle of all; to see baby believers of two or three days old healing people with success. It was the most powerful crusade I have attended since I got saved 14 years ago (of which seven is in fulltime ministry). I have anticipated this to happen during crusades for a long time and I thank you, William, for sharing the blessing. There is no new doctrine that you have taught us

except to follow the examples given in God's Word, and do it exactly the same way they did. *I think there is a mind concept (like a veil of religiosity) over the body of Christ that prevents them from seeing and applying the plain truth.* That's what your teaching did for me and is doing for all the people I teach these principles to.

We had an Elijah Challenge Conference in September 2005 where 26 churches attended the training. During the demonstration time all who came forward ministered with authority and saw the power of God confirming the word. All were healed, except one woman who was deep in witchcraft and voodoo and her sickness was a direct result of habitual evil practices. She started manifesting when we prayed for her and after much demonic torment, she revealed her practices and renounced them. She immediately received deliverance and healing. We have seen that sometimes when people are not willing to stop their evil practices, God would not heal them. But everyone who showed a change of heart experienced the power of God restoring them. The Elijah Challenge...is a new way of ministering with a clearer understanding of the word of God. We're still following Jesus' example, but only with a clearer understanding of how he ministered.

We do not regard The Elijah Challenge as a milestone in ministry or as a momentous event in terms of "been there, done that," or "those were the days." We've adopted the End Time Model of Evangelism as our ministry practice. If God confirms The Elijah Challenge principles with signs and wonders, it will be nothing less than disobedience to not continue in what God is doing.

My calling is to mobilize the Western Zambian churches starting by laying a sure foundation on the principles of the Word of God. Only once these churches are properly trained and equipped and start to take the initiative to fulfill the Great Commission, will we see the true impact of the End Time Model of Evangelism.

We are in the last days, and the Lord is restoring to the Church the spirit that He gave to the prophet Elijah. He is fulfilling his promise that whosoever believes in Jesus Christ will do the works that He did when He was on earth two thousand years ago.

## The Evangelistic Ministry of the Apostle Paul

1 Corinthians 2:1 And I, brothers, when I came to you, did not come *with excellency of speech or of wisdom*, declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you *except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*.

The apostle Paul did not come with fancy sermons laced with human philosophy and arguments to bring souls into the Kingdom of God. He preached only Jesus Christ who suffered on the cross to bear our sins.

4 And my speech and my preaching *was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*, 5 so that your faith *should not stand in the wisdom of men*, but in *the power of God*.

Paul did not use enticing words of man's wisdom. When people come to Christ because of our use of man's wisdom in the preaching of the gospel, their faith can be weak. For example in some countries, the Church will use good works to convince people to "convert to Christianity." Rice, food, and medicine are given to the poor. Hospitals and schools are built. These works of compassion are good and may even be necessary. However, they alone are not a strong foundation upon which to build faith in Jesus Christ. For example, the following can happen in countries where witchcraft happens to be strong. People can convert to Christianity in part because they are drawn by the promise of material benefit. They are baptized in water and attend church on Sunday. But when they become sick or are oppressed by the forces of darkness, they have often found that the church or the medical doctor cannot help them. After going to church on Sunday, they may be visiting the witchdoctor on Monday for treatment. As far as they can see, the Church has no power; the witchdoctors do have power. This is an example of faith standing in the wisdom of men.

Paul urges that faith should stand in the *demonstration* of the Spirit and of power. When people see the demonstration of the Spirit's power, when they see the sick healed in the name of Jesus Christ, their faith will more likely be unshakeable. When they are attacked by infirmity or demonic forces, they will trust in the power of God instead of running back to the witchdoctor or sorcerer. Going to the *medical* doctor for a physical infirmity, however, is fine, as long as they are trusting the Lord for their recovery.

Today the gospel should again be proclaimed according to the model of the apostle Paul. This is part of the End Time Model of Evangelism. First, the gospel is proclaimed simply and concisely. "Jesus Christ crucified is the only

way to the Father in heaven.” Then before we invite people to believe on Jesus Christ, we do a demonstration of the Spirit and of power. We invite the infirm to come forward to be healed in Jesus’ name. The trained disciples of Jesus Christ will lay hands on them, exercising their authority over disease with mountain-moving faith. People will be healed and testify publicly about what the Lord has done for them. Only after such clear demonstrations of the Spirit and of power do we invite the lost to leave the kingdom of darkness and to enter the Kingdom of God through faith in Christ. When we proclaim the gospel according to Paul’s model, it is not surprising to see ten times as many souls accept Christ than when sharing the gospel in the conventional way, that is, without the demonstration of power.

In May 2004 we trained Vietnamese believers in the city of Perth, Australia. Afterwards they held a small evangelistic outreach to reach the predominantly Buddhist community. After the gospel was shared, the trained believers ministered to the infirm and the Lord performed miraculous healings through them. Here is the report from one of the leaders:

We have done many evangelistic meetings in the past with the Vietnamese community in Perth but we have NEVER experienced more than three unbelievers to committing themselves to become Christians. However the recent crusade with you allowed about thirty-six adults (not including a number of children) to commit themselves to Christ. The Lord used you to achieve a result far beyond our thoughts!

By some evangelistic standards, thirty-six souls is a small number. But it was over ten times more than the results achieved in past evangelistic meetings. Significantly, the miraculous healings that were witnessed in the meeting occurred as the trained Vietnamese believers laid hands on the infirm. I personally did not minister healing to anyone during the meeting. It is important to recognize that such meetings therefore are not dependent upon the presence of a specially-anointed evangelist, but rather on the presence of Jesus Christ in trained believers.

### **Paul’s healing ministry**

Acts 28:7 There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. 8 His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, *after prayer, placed his hands on him* and healed him.  
(NIV)

Paul first prayed to the Lord. After that he laid his hands on the man *and healed him*. It would appear Paul healed the sick in a way very similar to the model of Jesus and Peter. Paul kept the stage of prayer and the stage of healing separate and distinct as has been taught earlier in this volume.

Acts 14.8 In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was *lame from birth* and had never walked.

As we have seen earlier, to heal someone who is lame from birth requires a very high level of authority as well as of mountain-moving faith. This is not the kind of miracle that one can do at any time one would like.

9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that *he had faith to be healed*

As Paul was preaching the gospel to the people, he saw a lame man who had *faith to be healed*. Perhaps Paul was preaching about Jesus' power to heal, and this man had faith in Jesus to heal him. The question is: if he had faith to be healed, then why was he not yet healed? Why was he still sitting on the ground? The answer can be the following. The faith required to bring about the healing of such a condition is of a very high level. Although the man had some faith to be healed, it was not quite enough to result in his healing as he listened to Paul. Something was missing. Therefore Paul had to take action. He had to supply some faith of his own to be added to the lame man's faith. The total faith would be enough to result in the miracle.

10 and *called out*, "*Stand up on your feet!*" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

With mountain-moving faith Paul commanded the "mountain" to move. With the faith of God he commanded the lame man to stand up. This was how Paul injected his own faith into the situation. The combination of the man's faith to be healed and Paul's mountain-moving faith was sufficient to bring about the man's healing. It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that faith is additive. The faith to be healed of the infirm person can be added to the mountain-moving faith of the one ministering the healing to result in a miraculous healing. Thus the greater the faith of the infirm person being ministered to, the easier it will be---the less effort it will demand---for the one who is ministering the healing.

Therefore when we minister healing it will be helpful to encourage the infirm person to have faith in the Lord to be healed. The infirm person does not need to be what evangelicals would consider a "born-again believer." Many infirm people came to Jesus to be healed during his time on earth, and we can reasonably assume that not all of them were born-again believers. But since they came to Jesus believing that he could heal them, they were in fact healed.

Matthew 9:27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" 28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. 29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"; 30 and their sight was restored.

Among those who were healed by Jesus or who witnessed His miracles, some decided to put their faith in Him as the promised Messiah. Such was the primary purpose of the miracles.

### **How Paul cast out demons**

Acts 16:16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and *said to the spirit...*

Many believers might almost out of habit say at this point, "Father, in the name of Jesus, we command this demon to come out of her." But this is not what Paul said. We have already seen that such a way of casting out demons is unscriptural and not effective. Instead, Paul said:

*"In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!"* At that moment the spirit left her.

Notice that Paul speaks directly to the spirit, rebuking it and commanding it to come out with mountain-moving faith. The spirit obeys the command of authority.

We see that the healing ministry of Paul is very similar to that of Peter. This is not surprising, because Peter was taught directly by Jesus Christ himself. And many would agree that Paul spend much time being taught by Jesus in the spirit.



## Healing at a Distance

Although very often Jesus would heal the sick through the laying on of his hands, he did not always do so. There were times in which Jesus healed the sick at a distance apart from the laying on of hands.

Luke 7:2 There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. 3 The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant... 6 So Jesus went with them.

The centurion originally wanted Jesus to come to his house to heal his servant. Jesus agreed and set out with the elders. But then he changed his mind about having Jesus come to his house. Perhaps he suddenly realized or was made aware that having Jesus enter the home of a gentile would render him unclean according to Jewish custom.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. 7 ...But **say the word**, and my servant will be healed.

According to this centurion, Jesus did not need to come to his house to lay hands on the servant as he normally did when healing the sick. Rather, all he needed to do was to "say the word." What word did Jesus need to say to heal the servant? What was it about the centurion that gave him special insight about how Jesus could heal his servant?

8 For I myself am *a man under authority, with soldiers under me*. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

The centurion, being in the military, understood the nature of authority better than most people. The military operates on authority. His commander-in-chief had placed soldiers under his authority. With this authority he could give commands to his men and they would obey him immediately. His authority over them was such that their obedience to his commands was unquestioned, and he knew it. Moreover, distance had no effect on his authority. If he could not give a command to a soldier face-to-face, he could have a message sent to the soldier and it would carry the same weight of authority. In modern terms, a general in the military can give orders over the telephone or using any other media to his men who may be at a distance from him. They would obey his orders just as if they had received them directly in his presence.

The centurion understood that Jesus also had authority, especially in the realm of the spirit and over disease and demons. Since authority does not deteriorate over distance, Jesus could simply issue a command to the infirmity from a distance, and it would have to obey him. According to the centurion, all Jesus needed to do to heal his servant was to say "be healed!" or something to that effect, and his servant would be healed. Jesus simply needed to exercise his authority with the faith of God.

9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, *I have not found such great faith even in Israel.*" 10 Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

When Jesus heard the centurion's words, he praised him, or shall we say, he praised the man's faith using a superlative. On various occasions in the gospels Jesus had commented on the faith of infirm people who had come to him and who had been healed according to their faith. But the centurion had the greatest faith of them all. Why did Jesus praise the faith of this man in such a way? Perhaps Jesus was so impressed because the centurion understood not only faith *in* God, but also the faith *of* God and the nature of authority. Obviously he had faith in Jesus to heal his servant. But he also understood *how* Jesus would heal the servant, that is, through the exercise of authority with the faith *of* God.

Perhaps "complete faith" involves having both kinds of faith, both faith *in* God as well as the faith *of* God, that is, mountain-moving faith.

This allows for an understanding of the possible difference between *exousia* (the Greek word for authority) and *dunamis* (the Greek word for power). *Exousia* is used for ministering healing at a distance. *Dunamis* is the power that is transferred to the infirm person through the laying on of hands. When ministering healing to an infirm person, it is best to have both factors in operation for optimal results. We lay hands on the sick *and* we exercise our authority with mountain-moving faith. However, if because of distance we cannot lay hands on the person, then we will exercise authority alone to minister the healing. When the infirmity is minor and not difficult to heal, then the laying on of hands alone without the exercise of authority could be enough. That is how Paul may have healed the father of Publius in Acts 28:8.

Today we have at our disposal the telephone to make healing at a distance more convenient than during the time of Jesus. We can call the infirm person on the telephone. If the person is a believer, she can lay hands on herself while we exercise our authority over the infirmity at the other end. (If desired, she can also repeat the commands to the infirmity after us.) People can be healed in such a way.

## **Mass healing: a special case of healing-at-a-distance**

Some evangelists are known to minister “mass healing” in situations where there are too many infirm people to minister to individually. What is the basis for this kind of healing? Again, it is found in the nature of authority. If a military commander desires to give a command to ten soldiers simultaneously instead of giving each soldier the same command one-by-one, he will suffer no loss of authority at all. The soldiers will obey the command equally in either case. Numbers have no effect on authority. A general can give a command to ten thousand soldiers at the same time. If indeed he has been given this authority over them, they will all obey the order. This is the nature of authority.

In the same way, believers have been given a measure of authority over disease and demons. When circumstances prevent us from ministering healing to infirm people one-by-one, we can minister healing by exercising our authority over many diseases and demons simultaneously. We issue commands to all the diseases and demons present in the meeting, and all those over which we have been given authority at that moment will obey our commands; those people will be healed and set free. Conversely, those infirmities which for some reason are not under our authority at that moment will not obey our commands and those people will not be healed. This is the theory behind the ministry of mass healing.

In practice, it may appear that when we minister mass healing, the Lord is free to heal those present in the crowd whom He wishes to heal. His sovereign will in this case interacts with the authority He has given us to heal.

When ministering mass healing to a crowd of people, many of whom are usually believers, we can ask those with infirmities to lay hands on themselves as we exercise our authority by rebuking diseases and demons in Christ’s name. Although we do not see the infirm laying hands on themselves in Scripture, believers are taught the principle of laying their hands on people with infirmities (Mark 16:17-18) in order for the healing power of Jesus Christ to be transmitted. There is no reason why this principle does not apply to a believer laying hands on himself.

It is also very helpful to lead all the believers present at the meeting in exercising their authority over the infirmities. Together with one voice (echoing the speaker) the believers command and rebuke in Jesus’ name. Perhaps there is a corporate anointing or authority at work in such a way. The results can be surprising. We have discovered that in ministering mass healing in this corporate way, powerful miracles can take place in Jesus’

name---miracles that can be otherwise difficult through the individual laying on of hands. We have seen people rise from wheelchairs in this way.

How do you know if miraculous healings have taken place through mass healing? Immediately afterwards you ask the people to check their infirmities or to try to do what they could not do before because of their infirmity. We have seen that always a certain, usually small percentage of the infirm people are healed in this way. These are asked to raise their hands and then to come forward to testify publicly. (Those who are not healed during the mass healing will then be ministered to on a one-on-one basis through the laying on of hands of the trained believers.)

The ministry of mass healing is not limited to a few super-evangelists. Many believers have enough authority over disease and demons to be able to minister mass healing successfully. In August 2002 we led a team of seventeen trained believers to Egypt for a historic Crusade. After the Crusade several of the team members held smaller meetings of their own in Cairo churches. The Lord used them to minister mass healing in their meetings.

### **Clive Cook of the United Kingdom and mass healing**

Clive Cook was formerly Field Director for World Horizons in Niger, West Africa, where he and his wife Alice were missionaries for twelve years. Clive hosted The Elijah Challenge in Niger in November 2002. He later trained and ministered with The Elijah Challenge on a mission trip to Indonesia. Clive reports below on three nights of village evangelistic meetings he held in South India in November 2005.

“The crowd for the first evening was initially 120 people. There were drunken men in the crowd trying to start trouble, shouting and hurling abuse at others including me. I had to ignore them and just keep on preaching.

I felt a great freedom as I spoke my message. The atmosphere was intimidating. There seemed to be little response from the crowd and attention was being taken by the fighting and shouting. I preached on all the same, trusting that somehow the message would touch those assembled. As I finished speaking, I knew something had to happen for there to be a breakthrough, so I trusted God and asked the people to lay their hands on any sick part of their body. Then I asked God to heal [through mass healing]. A few minutes later, eight or so people put their hands up to say God had touched them with His healing power.

Only three dared to come forward to tell what God had done for them. One lady testified that she had come to the meeting with head, chest and neck pain, from which she had been completely healed as I ministered healing in the name of Jesus. Another lady had come suffering arm and shoulder problems. She lifted her arm high to show that God had indeed healed her. The crowd suddenly applauded, taking me by surprise.

The disruptive people had drifted away by that time. Clearly people were too fearful of the others present to come forward for an altar call, so I asked Pastor M to lead the people in the prayer of salvation to accept Christ. Many responded, repeating the prayer out loud and I believe a good number truly accepted Christ that night for the first time in their lives. Three Hindu firemen watching the meeting later reported that they had also been healed of various ailments.

We held two other evangelistic meetings in other villages. At each the Lord graciously extended his hand and healed to confirm the message.”

## Authority in the Old Testament

The principles of authority are not found only in the ministry of New Testament believers. If we examine the Old Testament, we see it there as well. It predates the time of Jesus Christ and his disciples.

### Moses & the Israelites at the Red Sea

After the Lord brought the ten plagues upon the land of Egypt, Pharaoh relented and allowed Moses to lead the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt. Thus began the Exodus into the desert. When they arrived at the Red Sea, they could go no further. In the meantime, Pharaoh came to his senses and realized what he had done in allowing his slaves to go. He had been defeated and embarrassed by the God of slaves. Furious, he sent his mighty army to the Red Sea to kill the Hebrews.

Exodus 14:10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and **cried out to the LORD.**

The Israelites responded to the danger in a way that New Testament believers are often taught to respond when confronted by life-threatening situations. They cried out to the Lord. We teach believers that the Lord is always pleased when we cry out to him, for it means that we trust Him. Surely He is gracious to save us when we cry out to Him. Was the Lord pleased with the cry of the Israelites in this case? We shall see.

11 They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? ...13 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. **Stand firm** and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. 14 The LORD will fight for you; **you need only to be still.**"

Moses reassures the people, telling them not to be afraid. He counsels them to "stand firm" and "only to be still." It would appear that Moses was telling them that they did not need to do anything with the Egyptians bearing down on them with drawn swords. The Lord Himself would fight for them; they did not need to lift even a finger. It sounds much like the sermons we hear today urging us to "be still and let God be God." Obviously this can be wise

counsel since it is found in the word of God. But what did the Lord think of Moses' counsel in that particular situation?

15 Then the LORD said to Moses, **"Why are you crying out to me?"**

The cry of the Israelites was *not* pleasing to the Lord. They were *not* to just stand there and cry out to the Lord in fear. They were *not* simply to do nothing and just wait upon the Lord and trust Him to fight the Egyptians. Then what were they supposed to do?

Tell the Israelites to **move on**.

They were *not* to do nothing, but they were to take action. They were to *move on* into the Red Sea. But how could they do that? They could not swim and had no boats. Sometimes God just seems unreasonable. But wait. The Lord says to Moses,

16 **"Raise your staff and stretch out your hand** over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground."

Imagine the Lord saying to Moses at this time, "Moses, what is that in your hand?"

"Well, God, it's the staff that you gave me. It's a pretty powerful staff and I've done some really neat things with it. I threw it on the ground and it became a snake. I struck the Nile River with it, and the water turned into blood. And then I struck the ground, and it become flies..."

"Well, Moses, don't just stand there and wait for me to do something. *You* raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide it!"

The staff represented the authority of the prophet Moses. In his staff Moses already had the authority to take action to save the Israelites. He already had the authority the divide the Red Sea. The Israelites were not to cry out to the Lord in fear. They were not to just stand there and wait upon the Lord to do everything for them. *Instead, they were to move on and Moses was to raise his staff over the sea to divide it.*

A typical believer today would not do it this way. They would likely say to the Lord, "No, Lord, *You* do it; *You* divide the Red Sea. If you use *me* to do it, then the people will think that *I* did it and that might rob you of your

glory. So I'll just step back and watch *You* do it in *Your* time." All too often, however, behind such spiritual-sounding words hides the spirit of fear of failure and embarrassment before man. This is the same spirit that has paralyzed the Church of Jesus Christ in the arena of healing the sick and casting out demons as the Kingdom of God is proclaimed to the lost.

But today the spirit and power of Elijah is being restored to the Church. The spirit of fear is being cast out. No longer will we allow this spirit of fear to hide behind our veneer of spirituality. Where we have been given authority to take action, we will not fear or doubt, we will not just sit there and wait for God to move in His time. No, we will exercise our authority with the faith of God. Mountains will be moved, the sick will be healed, demons will be cast out, the Good News will be preached to the poor, and the Great Commission will be fulfilled.

Now for a word of balance. The Church has not been given all authority as Jesus our Commander-in-Chief has. In the situation where we have not been given authority, then we pray to the Lord, trust Him, and wait on Him.

### **Ezekiel and the Valley of the Dry Bones: prophetic authority**

The prophet Ezekiel was given a vision in which dry bones were to be miraculously resurrected to become a mighty army to serve the Lord. How did this miracle actually come to pass in Ezekiel's vision?

Ezekiel 37:4 Then he said to me, "*Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5 This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. 6 I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"*

Ezekiel was commanded to do a rather strange thing: to speak to dead and dry bones. This kind of bizarre behavior is rarely found among contemporary disciples of Christ. But as the prophet communed with the Lord in prayer, He was told to prophesy to the bones on behalf of the Lord regarding their resurrection. Note that during the prophet's prayer and communion with the Lord, nothing was happening to the bones. They were as dead and dry as ever. When did the actual miracle of resurrection begin to take place in the vision?

*7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones*



came together, bone to bone. 8 I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

*Only when the prophet spoke to the bones did the actual miracle begin.* Nothing had happened when the prophet was in prayer before the Lord. But at this point the miracle was not yet complete. The bones had been clothed with flesh, but the bodies were not yet alive. How was the miracle completed in the vision?

9 Then he said to me, "*Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'*" 10 *So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.*

In the vision the bodies came to life and the resurrection was complete only when the prophet did as he was commanded. When he prophesied to the breath, commanding it to come from the four winds and breathe into the dead bodies, the vast army stood up on its feet. During the prophet's time of communion with God, nothing happened outwardly. But when the prophet spoke to the bones and the breath, the miracle took place in the vision.

This is the authority given to the prophet. If he only prays, but dares not to prophesy as he has been commanded, the Lord's purpose will not come to pass. In the same way if the Church only prays for the sick, but dares not to heal the sick as we have been commanded, the sick will not be healed as God intends.

These are the days of the prophet Ezekiel. The resurrected army can refer to Israel, but it can also refer to the body of Christ. For so long the Church has been like a valley of dry bones in the area of performing miraculous healings to prove that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father. We know that it is the Lord's will to restore the Church. Therefore let us not only pray for the Church, let us also prophesy and speak to the dry bones with the prophetic authority given to us.

**Elisha: the prophet with the double portion of the spirit of Elijah**

Elisha was given a double portion of the spirit of Elijah. Thus if we want to understand the working of the spirit of Elijah, it makes much sense to study in detail the ministry of Elisha who had the very same anointing, but doubled.

2 Kings 4:8 One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. 9 She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. 10 Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us." 11 One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. 12 He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the Shunammite." So he called her, and she stood before him. 13 Elisha said to him, "Tell her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?'" She replied, "I have a home among my own people."

The prophet desires to bless the Shunammite woman in return for her kindness to him. Elisha has connections with people who are in power and offers to use these connections for her benefit. She refuses his offer because she does not need any help.

14 "What can be done for her?" Elisha asked.

The prophet appears frustrated. He wants to return her kindness, but does not know how. A mature contemporary believer would likely pray and ask God for wisdom according to James 1:5. Surely God will give it generously to him without finding fault. Curiously, the prophet does not pray and ask God for wisdom. Instead he asks his servant Gehazi for advice.

Gehazi said, "Well, she has no son and her husband is old."

According to the incident recorded in the beginning of 2 Kings 5, Elisha's servant Gehazi was a very carnal person. He attempted to take advantage of Naaman's generosity by deceiving him. This was the man from whom the godly prophet asked for advice. It was not the Holy Spirit giving the advice. Nevertheless the prophet received the counsel and spoke it forth.

15 Then Elisha said, "Call her." So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. 16 "About this time next year," Elisha said, "you will hold a son in your arms."

Scripture records that it came to pass just as Elisha said. The Lord performed the miracle just as the prophet spoke it forth. How can we explain this since it did not originate from the Lord but rather was a carnal suggestion coming from a carnal man? The miracle took place because of Elisha's authority as an anointed prophet: what he spoke forth came to pass.

If we study Elisha's other miracles recorded in 2 Kings, we see that they fall generally into two categories. In the first category, Elisha would speak forth "according to the word of the Lord," and the miracle would transpire. This is not at all surprising. What is surprising is the second category of miracle. Here it is not recorded that Elisha spoke forth according to the word of the Lord. Rather he simply spoke forth according to his own wisdom. And what he said also came to pass. This was the extent of the authority entrusted to the prophet. What he spoke forth as a prophet came to pass.

This is part of the authority that the Lord is restoring to the Church in these end times. In the area of proclaiming the Kingdom of God, we have authority over disease and demons. We exercise this authority by speaking forth to infirm people, to diseases and demons with mountain-moving faith. These are the days of Elijah.

## **The Theology of Helplessness and the Paralysis of the Church**

For centuries after the time of Augustine and then again following Luther, much of the Church was taught what could be called a “theology of helplessness.” According to this perspective, believers are generally helpless and can only wait and trust God to move in response to prayer. In fact, we are taught that the weaker we are, the better off we are. The apostle Paul wrote:

2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

However, the weaknesses of which Paul speaks here involve insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for the sake of the gospel. Even the “thorn in the flesh” which forms the context of this verse is some sort of physical weakness. But in terms of faith, power, and personal holiness, Paul was anything but weak.

Yet the pervasive theology of helplessness leave us feeling that God’s glory and power are somehow positively correlated with our failure and lack of faith. One wonders if this misinterpretation of the Scripture to the Corinthians had its origin in people trying to justify their own failures and personal weaknesses.

Of course there is some truth in this theology. Indeed there are situations we face in which we can only pray and trust the Lord. At such times we are to be still and wait for God to deliver us. The error is applying this to every situation. There are circumstances in which the Lord has given us the authority to act in His name. When we have such authority, we are not simply to pray and wait upon the Lord.

As an everyday example, how would a parent get an active young child to go to bed when it is well past his bedtime? Would the father pray and then wait upon the Lord to move the boy to bed? It’s likely that God would not answer such a prayer. He has already given the parent authority over the child, and the parent should simply tell the child firmly to go to bed. Any parent who

would rather pray and trust the Lord to carry out the parent's responsibility is guilty of stupidity and likely laziness as well.

Yet there are areas in the life of the Church where we have been given authority and the responsibility to act, yet we pray to the Lord and wait helplessly for Him to act for us. Are we any less guilty than that parent?

Luke 9:1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. ...6 So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

Luke 10:1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ...9 Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'

In the context of proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the lost, the Church has clearly been given authority and commanded to heal the sick and cast out demons. Nowhere in the four gospels did Jesus teach His disciples simply to pray for the sick as He sent them out to preach the good news. (We acknowledge that in the context of ministering to infirm believers as taught in James 5, prayer can be in order. However, it can be argued that even James taught about healing the sick, not only prayer for the sick.)

Yet because of the doctrine of cessationism ("no more miracles") as well as the prevalent theology of helplessness, the mere mention of believers "healing the sick" raises eyebrows and suspicions of false teaching. But if one does not subscribe to cessationism, how does one deal with the Lord's commands in Luke to heal the sick?

Asking God to heal the sick is not vastly different from asking Him to get your child into bed. In neither case is anything likely to happen. We can now understand why miraculous healings are so rare today in contrast to the Book of Acts. In Acts, the disciples were constantly preaching the gospel and healing the sick to bring souls into the Kingdom. Healings are rare in the Church today simply because we have failed to obey Christ's command to heal the sick as we proclaim the gospel to the lost.

Why have we failed to heal the sick? Cessationism notwithstanding, we have failed to heal the sick and cast out demons generally because we lack faith (Matthew 17:14-20). The disciples' failure to heal the boy with the epileptic demon elicited a stinging public rebuke from Jesus. He clearly expected

them to be able to do the miracle in his name, and when they failed, he was visibly upset and disappointed.

According to the theology of weakness, we would expect Jesus to have been pleased or at least certainly not frustrated upon hearing that his disciples had failed due to their weak faith. Did not their weakness bring glory to God? Didn't their weakness make them strong in God's sight? No, because of their weak faith, the demon continued to torment the boy and God was not glorified and Jesus was not pleased. (One cannot argue convincingly that their failure brought Jesus into the picture to promptly heal the boy and thus bring glory to himself. Jesus was in the very process of training his disciples to do the works that he did, and was obviously hoping it was successful.)

Failures in ministry or our personal life due to lack of faith do not in themselves glorify God. This is twisted pseudo-spirituality at its best. Yes, to the glory of God we can be forgiven or restored, but our failures in themselves are generally just that in God's sight. Lack of faith leading to sin or failure do not glorify or please God.

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God...

God is glorified and pleased when by faith His Church uses the authority entrusted to her to obey His commands successfully. Among other things, He commands us to proclaim the Kingdom of God, heal the sick, cast out demons, and make disciples of all nations. We do not ask the Lord to come down from heaven to proclaim the gospel and disciple all nations. That is clearly our job. Why therefore do we ask Him to heal the sick and cast out demons, and after that do nothing but wait on Him?

It is time for the Church to revisit and reconsider the theology of weakness that has paralyzed her and contributed to her failure to complete the Great Commission a very long two thousand years after Christ gave us that mandate.

## The spirit of Elijah to be restored in the Last Days

Revelation 11:3 "And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they will **prophesy** one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 These are the **two olive trees** and the **two lampstands** standing before the God of the earth.

These two witnesses who prophesy are called olive trees. An olive tree can represent the nation of Israel. However, it is also the source of olives from which comes olive oil, signifying the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It may be that these two witnesses, whoever they may be, are so anointed that they are compared to olive trees.

Zechariah 4:1 Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep. 2 He asked me, "What do you see?"

I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. 3 Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."

4 I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"

5 He answered, "Do you not know what these are?"

"No, my lord," I replied.

6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.

7 "What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'"

8 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 9 "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. 11 Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?"

12 Again I asked him, "What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil?"

13 He replied, "Do you not know what these are?"

"No, my lord," I said.

14 So he said, "These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth."

In some way the two witnesses are able to channel the anointing of the Spirit to the Church as mentioned above in Zechariah 4:12. The Church of Jesus Christ is represented by the solid gold lampstand in Zechariah 4:2. One of these two witnesses is typified by Zerubbabel to whom was given the task of restoring the Temple. He was powerfully anointed by the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:6) and given mountain-moving faith (Zechariah 4:7) to complete the rebuilding of the Temple. We are in the end times, and the Lord is restoring the spirit and power of Elijah to the Church. Let us now return to the two witnesses of Revelation 11.

Revelation 11:5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds **from their mouth** and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.

It is unlikely that physical fire will actual issue forth from the mouth of these witnesses to kill their enemies. Perhaps it refers instead to the deadly words that they will speak forth against those would harm them. In such a way did the prophet Elijah deal with soldiers sent by the king of Samaria to arrest him (2 Kings 1). On two separate occasions he spoke forth and fire came down from heaven to consume them. The two witnesses of Revelation 11 will have this same power.

6 These have **power to shut heaven**, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, **as often as they desire**.

Like Elijah they will have power to shut heaven. Like Moses they will have power to strike the earth with all plagues. But perhaps the most telling phrase of the above verse is "as often as they desire." Such is the extent of the anointing and authority entrusted to them by the Lord that they can speak forth these things in prophecy *whenever they would like*, and the things will come to pass. Who are these two witnesses? Revelation 11:4 above refers to them also as "two lampstands." Lampstands in Revelation can represent churches (1:20). Perhaps these two witnesses do not signify two actual individuals, but an army of Elijah-like believers to be raised up in the end times.



7 Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them.

These believers will pay an earthly price for their ministry.

## Broader authority in the context of preaching the gospel

Up until this point we have been considering the authority over disease and demons given to believers in the context of proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the lost. However, there is also authority which goes beyond that to heal the sick and cast out demons. The context, however, remains the increase of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Acts 13:6 They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, 7 who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.

Paul and Barnabas were sharing the word of God with an influential government official. If he believed, perhaps a wide door for the gospel on the island could be opened. However, Elymas the sorcerer came against Paul and Barnabas, trying to stop the proconsul from following Jesus Christ. Elymas was probably vehemently opposed to the spread of the gospel on the island. How did Paul react to this? Today's preachers would pray to the Lord. Some might ask God to remove Elymas; others might ask God to bless him. After all, we are called to love our enemies and to bless when we are cursed. Perhaps Elymas might repent and turn to Christ if we did good to him. It is not recorded whether or not Paul prayed for Elymas. However, it is clear that he took definitive action at the leading of the Holy Spirit.

9 Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 10 "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? 11 Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun."

First, to his face Paul calls Elymas "a child of the devil." Can you imagine any contemporary preacher doing that? After that Paul places a curse of blindness on the sorcerer. He utters the curse with the faith of God: "YOU ARE GOING TO GO BLIND!" This is even more outrageous and unheard of in today's western church. Are we not to bless instead of curse since we are called to inherit a blessing? Before we attempt to understand Paul's behavior, let's look at what happened next.

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

What Paul spoke forth actually came to pass. As a result of witnessing the amazing miracle the influential government official believed on Jesus Christ. Now let's examine this miracle in greater depth.

First of all, was Paul acting in the flesh or in the Spirit? He was obviously being led by the Holy Spirit since verse 9 tell us that he was "filled with the Holy Spirit" when he uttered the curse. But what about the command to love one's enemies? When Jesus taught us to love our enemies, he was speaking in a certain context. For example an employer who dislikes and mistreats us because we are a disciple of Jesus Christ would fall into that category. We would submit to him and do good to him and pray for his salvation. But Paul's context was very different. He was proclaiming the Kingdom of God and Elymas was an enemy of that Kingdom; "an enemy of everything that is right." He was an agent of Satan sent to frustrate the advance of the Kingdom of God on that island.

As a herald of the Kingdom of God, Paul had authority to deal with Satan's agent in a spiritually-violent fashion. He removed the obstacle---the mountain standing in the way of the gospel's advance---by exercising his authority with mountain-moving faith. He commanded a curse upon the sorcerer. But even within this curse there was room for God's grace. The blindness would only be temporary.

Thus our authority as those sent to proclaim the Kingdom of God includes bringing judgment upon the works of the enemy. We can judge and remove infirmities, demons, and at times obstacles that stand in the way of the gospel. However, placing curses on Satan's human agents should be by the leading of the Holy Spirit as in Paul's case. We do not easily put curses on people; these should be rare in comparison to the blessings that we want to speak over people, even over those who persecute us. But when we do utter a curse, it is clear that the miracle will be a result of our speaking forth with mountain-moving faith and not simply a result of prayer.

## **Broader authority in North India**

An example of this broader authority comes from the Indian state of Manipur in 2000. We were having a series of five open-air Crusades where thousands of people converged at each meeting to hear the gospel and to be healed of their infirmities. Many miraculous healings had taken place and souls were entering the Kingdom of God through faith in Christ. God was greatly glorified. As I went to the open-air field for the fourth meeting, I noticed that the sky was dark with heavy clouds. In the distance over the mountains lightning bolts flashed. A strong wind was blowing. A bad storm was brewing. However, a crowd had already gathered for the meeting. Despite the ominous weather, we began the meeting with praise and worship unto the Lord. Midway through the singing one of the host pastors came to me and asked, in view of the approaching storm, if we should just dismiss the crowd to go home after the worship. It made good sense. It would certainly look better for us to dismiss the meeting than for the rain to fall on the crowd during the service and everyone scatter helter-skelter.

However, without hesitating I replied no. The Lord had been working so powerfully each service. To me it was clear that the enemy wanted to stop any further advance of the Kingdom of God by sending the storm. Therefore the approaching storm was not in God's will. I was not about to receive it. After the singing I mounted the platform and told the people about the enemy's plan to stop us. I led the people in prayer to the Lord, asking Him to stop the storm. It's not difficult to see that such a prayer is a bit risky. What if after we pray, the rain falls and scatters the people? It's embarrassing. But nevertheless we prayed to the Lord. After "in Jesus' name, amen," I opened my eyes, and pointing up to the sky before the crowd of onlookers, I rebuked the storm in the name of Jesus Christ. This action is even more risky than prayer to God to stop the storm. What if after I rebuked the storm, the rain begins to fall on my head? That would be a most embarrassing rejection.

But the Lord was gracious. After I spoke to the storm and with mountain-moving faith commanded it to move, it split into two. One part moved to the north where the storm was unleashed. The other half moved in the opposite direction to the south where the rain came down mercilessly. But in between in the middle where we were proclaiming the Kingdom of God, there was no rain! The meeting was glorious with miraculous healings occurring as the trained believers ministered and precious souls accepting Christ as Lord and Savior. We who are sent to proclaim the Kingdom of God have a measure of authority to remove obstacles to the increase of the Kingdom. These obstacles are removed not only through prayer, but by exercising our authority with the faith of God.

## **Sister Neng of West Java, Indonesia**

In the area of West Java lives the world's largest unreached people group, the forty-plus million Muslims of the Sunda tribe. They are notoriously resistant to the gospel. Indonesian churches have for the most part given up trying to reach them with the gospel. In 2003 we held a Seminar to train the local disciples of Jesus Christ how to reach the Sundanese Muslims effectively. We taught them how to use their authority to perform miracles to prove to the Sundanese that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father. One of those who attended the Seminar was a fiery Sundanese believer named Sister Neng.

Sister Neng was invited to attend a community function hosted by a relative who was a Muslim. Since there was heavy rain, her relative the host summoned witchdoctors to do whatever they could to stop the rain. The rain simply worsened and flooded the area. Finally he called Sister Neng, whom he knew was a Christian, to pray to her Lord. After she prayed, she stepped outside and rebuked the rain, commanding it to stop in the name of Jesus. The rain stopped immediately. Later, there were two cars which could not make it up an incline because the rain had made the road very slippery. When the sister commanded the cars to climb the hill in the name of Jesus, they begin to move forward. Through local believers like this sister, the name of Gusti Isa ('Lord Jesus' in the Sundanese language) is being lifted up and the Kingdom of God is increasing. They have learned how to perform miracles by giving commands in the name of Jesus with the faith of God.

## The Operation of the Gift of Healing

Up until now we have been concerned with the operation of the believer's authority over disease and demons in the context of proclaiming the gospel to the lost. Now let's look at the operation of the gift of healing. As we have seen, the gift of healing is primarily for ministering to the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7). It operates in a way quite different from authority. For one thing, it may require very little effort in comparison to the usage of authority.

Acts 5:15 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16 Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

This is a manifestation of the gift of healing. Notice that Peter did not have to lay his hands on people and command diseases and demons to go with mountain-moving faith. Simply, when his shadow fell upon the sick, they were healed of their infirmities and delivered of their evil spirits. Minimal effort was required. We can say that most of the effort was done by the Lord Himself as Peter's shadow touched the sick. The contrast with the operation of authority is marked.

With authority, the role of the believer is relative more important. She must actively exercise her authority by giving commands to move mountains. She expends physical energy. Sometimes she must speak to the mountain several times before it goes. Through this effort, the Lord heals the sick or oppressed person. With authority, the effort of the believer is essential. In contrast, with the gift, the role of the Lord is more pronounced and that of the believer is minimized.

Did Peter always minister to the sick with this gift? No, he did not. We studied three of his miracles in Acts and saw that all three of them were done through the exercise of authority. Since this gift of healing was not in operation at every moment but only at the will of the Holy Spirit, Peter could not operate in it at any time of his choosing. When it was not in operation but there was an opportunity to glorify the Lord by healing the sick, Peter would put out his "other weapon" and get the job done. One can say that the Church has been given two tools---the gift and the authority---for ministering to the sick. When one gun is not working, we can pull out the

other gun and shoot the enemy. As the old adage goes, "there's more than one way to skin a cat."

## **Gifts of healings**

What we commonly refer to as the "gift of healing" is in fact not singular but plural in the original Greek from 1 Corinthians 12. A more accurate rendering would be "gifts of healings." This means that the gift comes in different forms, and possibly that there are gifts which may be specialized for certain infirmities. For example, a believer might have a special gift and proficiency for ministering healing to people with cancer. Another believer might have a gift for people with another kind of infirmity.

Moreover, the gift can come in different outward forms or "packages." We have studied how Peter's gift worked through his shadow. There are some believers who may have another form of the gift of healing. All they need to do is to pray to the Lord and ask Him to heal the sick person. No exercise of authority or commanding is involved. The Lord answers the prayer by stretching forth His hand to touch the person. Not many believers have such a gift. When most of us pray for the sick in such a way, usually nothing happens. The person might recover, but unusually quickly or miraculously. But when people with the gift pray, things can happen dramatically.

Still another form of the gift is found in some people who have a ministry of public praise and worship. When they worship or lead a congregation in worship, healings may take place among the people. He is not exercising his authority or speaking to diseases and demons, simply worshipping the Lord. But as he does, God's hand moves directly to heal the sick. Such is the operation of the gift of healing.

In some gatherings of believers, praise and worship can be very deep and powerful. In such a setting, the "presence of God" can be felt. There may be an "anointing" for infirm people present at the meeting to be healed by the Lord's sovereign hand. These are manifestations of the gift of healing for the benefit of those who attend the meeting, who are of course mostly believers.

I Corinthians Chapter 12 teaches about spiritual gifts, and I Corinthians 14 contains instructions on how such gifts can be exercised in an orderly fashion when believers come together to worship. As we have seen above, there can be manifestations of the gift of healing in some worship gatherings. But most people who attend worship services are believers. How are the lost going to witness the healing power of the Lord as proof that He

is the only true God? They usually do not attend church. Can miraculous healings happen outside of church?

This is the very purpose of the believer's authority to heal. A believer, now matter how devout, will usually spend much more time outside of church than in church. Much of his time is spent at work, for example, "in the marketplace." In such a setting there is no deep worship, no felt "presence of God" or "anointing." How can miraculous healings take place in such surroundings to draw the lost to Jesus Christ? It will be through the believer exercising his or her authority over disease. Many of the miraculous healings in the gospels and Acts did not take place in a worship gathering or church, but rather outside "in the marketplace."

### **"Slain in the spirit"**

There may be several other forms of the gift of healing, but we would to address the phenomenon known in charismatic circles as "being slain in the spirit." Within the body of Christ controversy swirls around this manifestation. Because it is not specifically found in Scripture in the context of healing, many evangelicals do not accept it or are not comfortable with it happening in every service. Some charismatic believers have no problem with it. We will address this matter in greater depth later in this volume.

However, at this point let us simply examine the following scenario: a believer lays hands on an infirm person and prays. That person then falls backwards, forwards, or straight down in an entirely involuntarily way. No pushing is involved, nor does the person simply fall by herself. While the person is down, she is healed of her infirmity. When she gets up, she tests herself and realizes she is actually and completely healed of her infirmity. She gives glory to God. This is likely the operation of the gift of healing. No exercise of authority was involved.

Often, however, pushing is involved, as well as people falling backwards by themselves. It is my opinion that these are not manifestations of the gift of healing. And if the person is genuinely "slain in the spirit" but still not healed of the infirmity, that is also not a manifestation of the gift of healing. Perhaps it is a manifestation of some other gift.



## **"Quick & easy" miracles to demonstrate publicly that Jesus is the Son of God**

There are some miracles that we have found are not difficult to perform when in the context of proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the lost, for example, in an evangelistic meeting. One need not have the gift of healing or limit oneself to meetings in primitive Third-World countries to witness such miracles. To learn how, we can look at two more outstanding miracles done by Peter and Paul in Acts.

Acts 9:33 There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. 34 "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. 35 All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

Acts 14:8 In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. 9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed 10 and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

In the first two of these three cases, the miracles were a deciding factor in souls receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Although such miracles certainly cannot guarantee that people will turn to Him---as in Paul's miracle---they do draw attention to Him and multiply the likelihood that they will believe on Him.

Even though it is not a simple matter to do miracles of such great magnitude, there are similar miracles of "lesser" magnitude that are not difficult. We have witnessed them in our meetings. We have found that there are many people with difficulty getting up and walking because of arthritis, knee and joint pain, hip problems and various pain in their legs. They can be elderly and when they limp forward to be healed their infirmity is obvious to everyone.

The purpose of the healing done in the name of Jesus Christ is to prove to the lost that He is the only way to the Father in heaven.

The very first step is not present in the above three miracles done through Peter and Paul, but may be appropriate for believers who are new to healing

the sick. This step involves laying hands directly on the infirmity, for example, on arthritic knees. Then *with utmost authority and mountain-moving faith* rebuke the infirmity or arthritis in the name of Jesus. *Authoritatively command* the knees to be healed in Jesus' name.

The second step involves commanding the person to get up or to walk in Jesus' name, as did Peter and Paul. You can even help the person up as did Peter in Acts 3 and lead them forward by the hand. Usually the person will experience immediate improvement and walk much better than before. Often I will tell the person to run, and people who were previously unable to run will run in a way that they have not done in a long time. In this way the name of Jesus is exalted, believers are encouraged in their faith, and unbelievers are drawn to Christ. (If after the first time of ministry the person senses improvement but their healing is not yet complete, lay hands on them again and minister as before.)

Perhaps such miracles are "easy" to perform because the Lord is very willing to do them. With such infirmities in particular, the healing is very visible and obvious to all, and no one can deny the power of the name of Jesus Christ after having witnessed the miracle firsthand.

## Ministry to Believers in the Context of the Body of Christ

Our emphasis in this study has been within the evangelistic context of proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the lost. Now let us take a look at the other context, that of building up the body of Christ. This context is primarily non-evangelistic. Our goal in this context is not to bring new souls to Jesus Christ, but to ministering healing to infirm members of the body of Christ.

James 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them **pray over** him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

The elders of the church are to “pray *over*” the infirm believer and anoint him with oil. This is the only instance of this phrase in the entire Bible. There are twenty-seven verses in Scripture where “pray *for*” is found. There may be a significant difference between the two.

The Greek word “epi” (pray ‘over’) is a preposition that is almost always found to describe the relative physical position between two objects: “upon, on, at, by, before, of position, over, against, to, over, across.” For example, to “lay hands on the sick.” The phrase “pray over” could also be translated “pray upon” or “pray on.” What does it mean exactly in practice? For some help, let’s look at the next verse.

15 And the **prayer of faith** will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.

What is “the prayer of faith?” There is no doubt about the outcome following this type of “prayer.” The sick *will* be saved, which in this context means healed. The Lord *will* raise the person up from the infirmity. This does not seem to be the conventional type of prayer for the sick which ends with “if it be Thy will.” There is no wavering with this prayer of faith. We are reminded of the faith of God, or mountain-moving faith. We speak to the mountain and *do not doubt* that what we say to it will come to pass. Perhaps this is the type of faith signified in “the prayer of faith.” It is not only faith *in* God, but also faith *of* God. When we give commands to a mountain, we speak with the faith *of* God. This helps us to understand what to “pray over” might actually mean. It can mean speaking *over* someone with mountain-moving faith. It can mean speaking to the person’s infirmity and commanding it to leave in Jesus’ name. Seen in this light, praying over someone the prayer of faith is precisely the approach that we have been teaching in this volume.

Normally the Church does not differentiate between praying *over* and praying *for* someone. Because of that when we minister to infirm believers through prayer, we use the conventional type of prayer by which we ask the Father to heal the infirm person in the name of Jesus. But with this approach we see that very rarely are people healed according to "and the prayer of faith *will* save the sick and the Lord *will* raise him up." Does this verse refer only to spiritual salvation and not physical healing? No, this would be stretching the meaning of the verse. We would agree that infirm believers are just as saved as healthy believers. Why is it, then, that believers are so rarely healed when we apply James 5:14 by the conventional understanding of praying *for* the sick believer?

It is likely because the Church has misunderstood the meaning of "praying over" and made it to be the same of "praying for." However, if we can understand "praying over" as ministering to the sick exactly as Jesus and his early disciples did, then we will begin to see miraculous healings more in line with "the prayer of faith *will* save the sick." Why should it be that the way Jesus and the disciples ministered to the sick in the gospels and Acts is so different from the way today's Church ministers healing to its own? There is no good reason aside from the doctrine of cessationism, which teaches that the age of miracles has ceased. In contrast, Jesus promised us that those who believe in him will do the works that he did. That should include doing the works *in the same way* that he did them.

### **The problem of sin in the believer**

When ministering healing in an evangelistic context, sin in a non-believer does not necessarily hinder the healing. On the contrary, God wants to do the miracle for the very purpose of convincing the person to repent of sin by following Jesus. There may be exceptions to this. If a non-believer comes for healing but has absolutely no intention at all of repenting from sin and following Jesus, then there will be difficulty. This is especially true when the sin is witchcraft and sorcery. Now with believers in Christ, unconfessed sin will definitely be an obstacle to healing.

And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Confess your trespasses to one another,

Before we pray over the sick believer, he must confess his trespasses to the Lord and to other believers. Sometimes this is not as easy as it sounds. Many believers have been hurt by others and carry within them the poison of unforgiveness and bitterness. Such things can be difficult for a believer to

face. There may be of course other unconfessed issues as well that must be brought to the surface before the Lord. Only then can the prayer of faith result in physical healing. How can we know about these other issues in the believer?

and **pray for** one another, that you may be healed.

As we pray to the Lord *for* the infirm believer, He can reveal to us supernatural knowledge about the condition of the believer. For example, the Lord might reveal to us that the believer had in ignorance consulted a fortune teller. He would need to confess this sin to the Lord and ask for forgiveness. Or the Lord could reveal to us that she has unforgiveness. We would then counsel her to forgive those who wronged her from her heart, and to repent of the unforgiveness before the Lord. Unforgiveness which is not confessed can result in torture from an infirmity. In the parable of the unmerciful servant, the master had forgiven him of his big debt. But afterwards he refused to forgive the small debt owed to him by a fellow servant.

Matthew 18:32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

After we pray *for* the infirm believer, the Lord can reveal important information to us and lead us to resolve outstanding issues through further prayer or counselling as well as confession by the believer. Only then can we pray *over* the sick person the prayer of mountain-moving faith; only then will the disease obey our command to leave in Jesus' name. It has no more grounds or authority to remain.

Even when ministering healing to believers in the context of evangelism, for example in a Crusade, infirm believers may need to confess their sins before their healing can take place.

## Spirits of Infirmary

There are spirits which can cause infirmities. There are also infirmities that are physical and not demonic in origin. If someone trips and breaks their leg, the condition of the leg is obviously not demonic. (Some might, however, suspect demonic involvement behind the fall itself.) There are also physical conditions that are directly caused by unclean spirits.

Luke 13:10 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, 11 and a woman was there who had been **crippled by a spirit** for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all.

Here is a woman whose hunchback condition was the direct action of a spirit. She was literally "having a spirit of infirmity eighteen years" in her body that caused her condition.

12 But when Jesus saw her, He called her forward and **said** to her, "Woman, **you are set free** from your infirmity." 13 Then He **put his hands on her**, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Note that since the spirit had caused a physical infirmity in the woman's body, Jesus treated it as such. He laid his hands on her and with authority declared that she had been set free. It does not say that Jesus also rebuked the spirit.

### Dumb demons

Luke 11:14 Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When **the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke**, and the crowd was amazed.

The action of the mute demon was to cause the man to be unable to speak. After Jesus drove the demon out, the man was able to speak. It appears that this demon did not cause any physical change in the man. Thus the man did not need physical healing, but simply the demon to be drive out. Contrast this to the hunchback woman above whose backbone experienced marked physical change because of the spirit. The woman needed physical healing, whereas the mute man needed deliverance from the demon.

## **Deaf demons**

Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, **he rebuked the evil spirit.** "You **deaf and mute spirit,**" he said, "I command you, come out of him and **never enter him again.**"

Here is a spirit which causes deafness in addition to dumbness. Jesus drove the spirit out, and the boy was able to hear and speak again. Note that Jesus commanded the spirit never to enter the boy again. This is a scriptural precedent for us when we arrive out demons.

## **Blind demons**

Matthew 12:22 Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was **blind** and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.

This man was likely not "demon-possessed" in the way most people understand demon possession. Rather the action of the demon rendered him blind and mute. Jesus healed him, but it is not recorded exactly how. Presumably Jesus drove out the demon and opened the eyes that had been physically blinded by it.

## **Do not be afraid to drive out demons**

Some believers may initially be reluctant to drive out demons. Frightening scenes from exorcism movies play in their imaginations. But this is to be rejected. To those whom Jesus sends out to proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost, he gives authority to drive demons out of people.

Luke 9:1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Luke 10:17 The seventy(-two) returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." 18 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 I have given you

authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

Believers who are witnesses for Jesus have been given authority to trample on snakes and scorpions, and nothing will harm them as they do so.



## Why Do Infirmities Sometimes Return?

There are occasions when a person has been miraculously healed of an infirmity as a believer exercises authority over it in the name of Jesus Christ, yet the infirmity reappears a short time later. Scripture offers an explanation for this. As we have seen in the previous chapter, demonic spirits can cause infirmities. Disciples of Jesus Christ have been given authority to drive them out. When happens when an evil spirit comes out of a person?

Luke 11:24 "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, '**I will return** to the house I left.' Then it says, '**I will return** to the house I left.' 25 When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. 26 Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there." And the final condition of that man is worse than the first."

The person in which the spirit of infirmity lived can be considered its "house." When the spirit is driven out, the person is healed. In Luke 11:14 after Jesus drove a mute demon out of a man, the man could speak. In such a case the demon is now "homeless," and it will look for another person to indwell and afflict. Apparently this is not an easy matter for the evil spirit, and so it may want to return to its original house. If when it arrives the house is in order but left alone and unguarded, it will go back in along with several strong friends. The affliction returns with greater severity than before. It will be more difficult than before to drive out the demons.

The point to be made here is that evil spirits, just like human beings, will want to return to their home after they have been evicted. Home is home. If the spirit is a spirit that causes an infirmity, the physical infirmity will understandably return along with the spirit.

Now of course there are steps that can be taken so that the spirit cannot return. If the person healed is not a follower of Jesus Christ, he should make up his mind to do so. His sins will be forgiven and washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ. His spirit, soul, and body will no longer be the possession of the kingdom of darkness and the evil spirit, but now redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. The spirit will not have the legal right to re-enter the person's body. He should be baptized in water and filled with the Holy Spirit. He should be discipled and follow Jesus faithfully. He should have a strong relationship with the Lord in prayer, worship, and daily obedience as a living

sacrifice. All this makes it difficult and even undesirable for the spirit to return.

However, it does not guarantee that the spirit will not *try* to come back. This is especially true if the person has deep, long-term involvement with idol worship or witchcraft. The spirits which used the person so effectively for their master Satan will not let go or stay away easily. Even though technically they have no legal right to return---the person is now purchased or redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and has a new "owner"---they will not honor the law. They are outlaws who believe they have "squatters' rights." They are angry and feel betrayed by their former slave. What can be done when they try to return? In the case of a spirit of infirmity, it means that the symptoms of the infirmity reappear in the person. If the symptoms return, action should be taken immediately.

James 4:7 ...**resist the devil**, and he will flee from you.

Just as the spirit was rebuked and driven away in the name of Jesus at the outset, so it should be violently resisted in the same way when it tries to return. We should once again exercise our authority over the spirit with the faith of God. It will leave again. If it tries to return a second time, resist it again in Jesus' name, and so forth. Eventually the spirit will tire of being rebuked and will not return. It is very unpleasant for the spirit to be rebuked with the name of Jesus.

On the other hand if the person healed refuses to accept Christ as Lord and Savior, the evil spirit will almost certainly return and that person's condition will be worse than before. This should be made clear to the person who is healed. By refusing to surrender himself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, he remains in the kingdom of darkness and the spirit has a perfect legal right to return to his house. And the condition of the house will be more pitiable than before.

### **The sinful nature also tries to return**

We have a sinful nature that is put to death when we follow the Lord Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection as his disciples. However, this sinful nature can and does attempt to come back to life to tempt us to sin. In this way the behaviour of our sinful nature is similar to that of spirits which have been evicted from a person. Both will try to return. What does Scripture instruct us to do when the sinful nature tempts a believer to sin?

Matthew 5:29 If your right eye causes you to sin, **gouge it out** and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Obviously Jesus is not teaching us to mutilate our bodies when our sinful nature causes us to sin. It is not his physical eyes that cause a man to lust after a woman, it is his sinful nature. The consequences of sin are so terrible that, metaphorically speaking, it would be better for us to lose our right eye than for our whole body to be thrown into hell. Thus we must take *violent* action against the eye: "gouge it out and throw it away." What does this mean in practice?

Romans 8:13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit **you put to death** the misdeeds of the body, you will live...

We are taught to *put to death* the sinful nature. This is certainly a most violent figure of speech---we are instructed to *kill* it. This means to resist it. It is not a physical resistance, but a spiritual resistance similar to resisting and rebuking demons in the name of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ our sinful nature has been put to death and is thus under our authority. As we resist spirits when they attempt to return to their original house, we also resist our sinful nature when it attempts to re-assert control over us.

### **Physical infirmities may also try to return**

Physical infirmities have something in common with evil spirits and the sinful nature. It is clear that all three are related in some way. For one thing, most would agree that disease came into being because of man's sin and sinful nature. It is our sin and sinful nature moreover that give demons authority to control and afflict us. And just as spirits and the sinful nature have a tendency to return, physical infirmities can have the same characteristic. Cancer, for example, has been known to return even after the person has been declared to be cancer-free. In John 5, Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.

John 5:14 Later Jesus... said to him, "See, you are well again. **Stop sinning** or something worse may happen to you."

Although this verse does not explicitly say so, there is the possibility that if the man did not stop sinning, his infirmity could come back. What should we do if an infirmity tries to return to a person who has been healed in the name of Jesus Christ? We should again exert our authority over the infirmity as we did at first. The infirmity will leave. As often as it tries to re-appear we exercise our authority over it, rebuking and resisting it. Eventually it will no longer try to return and our healing will remain.

## **Believers can lay hands on themselves**

Although this is not found in Scripture, there is a biblical principle for it. We can say that the authority to heal is "located" within a believer's spirit. A physical infirmity, by contrast, is in the person's body. Thus a believer can exercise her authority over an infirmity in her own body. She can lay hands on herself to minister healing. However, it is better and more scriptural to have another believer do this. But it is not absolutely necessary in every case, especially when the infirmity is not severe.

Ministering to oneself is especially helpful for maintaining one's healing from infirmity or deliverance from evil spirits. If the infirmity or spirit attempts to return, the believer can immediately take action to resist it with authority in Christ's name. At times this may be more convenient than having to call for other believers to come every time there is a need.

## Keeping the Proper Balance

Throughout this study we have focused on our authority and power to do miraculous works for the sake of the gospel. It is now time to bring balance to complete the teaching.

Matthew 7:15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, **by their fruit** you will recognize them.

A tree is recognized by the fruit that it bears. If it bears bad fruit, it will be cut down and thrown into the fire. The tree is judged by the quality of its fruit.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

In this study we have been teaching about driving out demons and performing miracles in the name of Jesus Christ. Yet to many who in fact had the authority to perform such miracles Jesus will deny knowing them personally. It is thus essential that we understand what the Lord means here.

Not everyone who says, 'Lord, Lord,' and who can perform the miracles is going to enter life. Only those who do the will of the Father in heaven will enter life. Thus it is clear that the outward evidence of a true disciple of Christ is *not* having the authority to heal the sick and cast out demons and to prophesy. This may seem astonishing at first. However, even one of the original Twelve disciples to whom Jesus gave power and authority over disease and demons was not a true disciple. This disciple was sent out with the other eleven and all of them healed the sick and proclaimed the Kingdom of God. His name, of course, was Judas Iscariot. Therefore we cannot judge if someone is a false disciple or a true disciple simply by looking at the miracles that the person has performed in the name of Jesus. The Lord

commanded us to “watch out for false prophets.” How can we tell that someone is a false prophet? He must be doing the will of the Father. The person will be doing the will of the Father *if he bears good fruit*.

Matthew 7:20 Thus, **by their fruit** you will recognize them.

What does “fruit” mean?

Galatians 5:22 But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

We can recognize someone who truly belongs to Christ by the fruit of the Spirit in the daily life and behavior of the person. We recognize true disciples of Christ not by their supernatural power and authority, but rather by their humility, holiness, and Christ-like character. They have successfully crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

There will be many who have failed to do this. Jesus said, “Many will say to me on that day...” There are many so-called disciples and servants of the Lord who have a powerful anointing for the miraculous and can even bring many souls to Christ, but they do not belong to Christ. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. They come not to serve and equip the sheep, but to fleece them. They may look wonderful at the pulpit, but they are full of pride, conceit, and envy.

### **Who are these false prophets?**

Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”

Money is such an important consideration to human beings that Jesus compared it to Almighty God Himself. In our hearts, it will compete with Him for our love. *We can choose only to love one of the two; we will hate the other*. No believer can fail to understand the strong polarization involved in the choice Jesus calls us to make.

The problem is that when we focus on financial miracles, it is possible to deceive ourselves. Instead of loving God, we can end up loving Money and the comfortable if not luxurious lifestyle it can afford us.

Of course poverty is an extremely serious problem in some countries and the Church should not ignore it (James 2:16). Yet the poor were also present in the time of Jesus, and the miracles he did were *not* primarily financial in nature for helping the poor get on their feet. Rather, his miracles as recorded in the gospels were overwhelmingly healing the sick and driving out demons. In Matthew 26:11 Jesus told his disciples, "the poor you will always have with you." The same can be said today about the poor. So what is the scriptural justification for the *fascination* with and *emphasis* on financial miracles that we see in some ministries? There would appear to be none. The apostle Paul tells us:

1 Timothy 6:3 If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, 4 he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions 5 and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and *who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.*

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 *People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.* 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

We know that we must love God instead of Money. We insist that despite our emphasis on financial miracles we still love God instead of Money. But only God knows whether or not this is true. Jeremiah warned, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

It is entirely possible that some in the Church have unwittingly crossed the line and believe in the Lord primarily to secure His financial blessings. God has become the means and the blessings have become the end. These people are no longer serving God. They have slid down the slippery slope, however slowly and imperceptibly, and have become servants of Money.

These are the false prophets, the ferocious wolves in sheep's clothing in the Church. Jesus tells us to watch out for them.

False prophets look and sound like sheep. They preach the gospel and win souls for Jesus Christ. They can even prophesy, drive out demons and perform miracles in the name of Jesus Christ. But their ability to minister in the supernatural does not mean that they are true servants known by the Lord---even Judas Iscariot as one of the Twelve was given authority to heal the sick and drive out demons. It is well known that Judas had a problem handling money. False prophets will have to account to the Lord for how they have handled the matter of money. The Greek word translated "ferocious" in Matthew 7:15 literally means "rapacious" or "ravenous" as when describing an extortionist or a robber. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "rapacious" as "excessively grasping or covetous" and "living on prey." *Wolves prey on sheep to satisfy their excessive covetousness.*

It is important that we do not become false prophets after serving God fruitfully as we preach the gospel to others. The apostle Paul had this very concern.

## **Conclusions**

1 Corinthians 9:26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

What should we do such that after we have preached to others, we ourselves will not be disqualified for the prize? We learn something from Jesus' words to the disciples after they returned from a mission trip. In Luke 9 Jesus had given them power and authority over disease and demons and then sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God. So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere. Later in Luke 10 Jesus sent the seventy-two out on a similar mission.

Luke 10:17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

They returned to Jesus with great joy to report about the miracles they had done in his name. They were very excited about the amazing authority that they commanded over demons. What was Jesus' reaction to their exuberance?



20 "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but **rejoice that your names are written in heaven.**"

We should not be overly joyful at the authority the Lord has given us. We should not place undue emphasis on it. Let us not become obsessed with miracles, lest they become an idol for us or tempt us to become proud. Our well-being should not be in our ability to do miracles, but rather in our relationship with Jesus Christ. That alone results in our names being written in heaven; it is not related to our ability to heal the sick.

Because of our human nature, we will have a tendency to think more highly of ourselves than we ought when the Lord begins to use us in great power. Suddenly we have a name and reputation to maintain. We have a huge ministry budget to meet. If the miracles continue in our ministry, our name and ministry will thrive. In such a way, the miracles can become an idol for us. We forget that the power and authority comes *from the Lord* to proclaim *His Kingdom* and is for *His glory*. We have become a "superstar."

We must resist this and instead find our joy and meaning in our relationship with the Lord and in the life eternal He has purchased for us.

How can we successfully resist this and other such temptations to sin?

## How to Resist Sin Successfully

First of all, let's look at the consequences of causing someone to sin.

Matthew 18:6 But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. 7 "Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!

The consequences of causing believers to sin are unimaginable. We must deal very harshly with those things that cause us to sin.

Matthew 18:8 If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

On another occasion, Jesus taught his disciples again about things that cause people to sin.

Luke 17:1 Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. 2 It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. 3 So watch yourselves.

Then Jesus taught that it is within our power to forgive our brother who has sinned against us.

"If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. 4 If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' **forgive him.**"

Jesus commands us to do something that is entirely against our human nature. If someone hurts us even once, it is difficult enough to forgive that person even if he repents and asks for forgiveness. We like to remember what he did. It is virtually impossible to forgive that brother seven times in a single day. This would be a mountain that is simply too huge to move. Two thousand years ago, the apostles realized this. They asked Jesus for more faith to move the mountain of unforgiveness into the sea.

Luke 17:5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" 6 He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you. 7 "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? 8 Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? 9 Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?

In response to the disciples' plea for more faith, Jesus spoke of commanding a mulberry tree to be uprooted and planted in the sea. It is against the very nature of a mulberry tree that lives only on fresh water to be planted in the sea which consists of salt water. But Jesus taught the disciples that it can in fact be done if one had faith as a mustard seed. Even though the mustard seed is among the smallest of seeds, it will grow up to become one of the largest garden plants.

It is clear that the faith to command and move a mulberry tree into the sea is very similar in nature to the faith required to command and move a mountain into the sea. Therefore Jesus is essentially teaching here the same faith which is required when exercising authority to heal the sick---the faith of God. When with the faith of God we command something under our authority to move, it will *obey* us. What is it that obeys us? Our *servants* obey us. And Jesus goes on to teach us about the relationship between a master and his servant.

Two thousand years during the time of Jesus, a master would not have spoiled or coddled his servant. This is not how a master exerts his authority over his servant. Eventually a spoiled or coddled servant will begin to disobey his master's orders. We know that we as believers have been given authority over diseases and demons in the context of proclaiming the gospel to the lost. We exercise this authority with spiritual violence. Scripture teaches that we also have authority over our sinful nature.

Romans 8:13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live...

The apostle Paul teaches that we have authority to put to death our sinful nature. Just as we rebuke disease and demons, in the same way we also have authority to rebuke our sinful nature in Christ's name. We can put it *to death* by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus when our sinful nature tempts us to sin, we do not coddle it by entertaining its suggestions, but rather rebuke it harshly.

## Illustrations of Resisting Sin

When someone hurts us (whether once or repeatedly) and comes back to us asking for forgiveness, our old nature would tell us not to let the person go so easily. He suggests to us quite convincingly that bitterness against that person is very much in order. However, Jesus teaches us not to coddle our sinful nature when it whispers such things into our ears. Rather we are to put it to death and rebuke it as if we were coming against a disease or demon. This is the only way to accomplish something which is ordinarily against our own nature, like making a mulberry tree to plant itself in the sea. We must *master* it and it must become our servant.

When someone sins against us, we are naturally hurt. For example someone in our church gossips about us or slanders us. Our sinful nature, who is our servant, may come to us and whisper in our ear: "What a terrible person she is. She has hurt you so much. You are innocent of what she said about you. You should never forgive her for hurting you so. You should hate her and get revenge."

What ought we to say to our servant our sinful nature at that moment? We are naturally tempted to say, "What a wonderful suggestion! You are such a good servant. You're so right about that horrible woman. Let's sit down together and eat. Tell me more."

But Jesus teaches us not to coddle or spoil our servant. Instead, we are to treat him very strictly and order him around. We should rather say to him at that moment *with authority and mountain-moving faith*, "I rebuke you in Jesus' name. Be quiet and leave me." In such a way, we can resist bitterness and overcome the sin of unforgiveness. We can do that which is against our human nature; we can do the miraculous. Our sinful nature will obey us.

Let's take another illustration---the temptation posed by pornography, especially on the internet.

A poll was taken from the men attending a Promise Keepers meeting. One-half of the men admitted that within the past week they had looked at pornography. According to an article by Kenny Luck on the website Pastors.com, over 9 out of 10 men at a Christian men's retreat revealed that they had a problem with pornography or fantasy lust although they knew that it was not pleasing to God. Over 500 men were surveyed at the retreat. According to a separate survey taken by the magazine Christianity Today, 40% of the pastors surveyed have visited a pornographic website. Over half

acknowledge that they can be tempted by internet pornography. *Shockingly, 37% of them are now struggling with pornography.*

We can overcome this temptation by applying Jesus' teaching. Let's say you are struggling in this area but can usually keep your head above water. When you are checking your email one day, you accidentally type in the wrong address and suddenly you find yourself on a pornographic website. Seemingly irresistible images jump out at you from your monitor to draw you in. Your servant, your sinful nature, picks that very moment to approach you.

"Ohhhhh! It's OK, don't be afraid. One look won't hurt you. It's the second look that's bad. Just look at that woman! Stay for a moment...don't worry. The Lord is merciful and very patient; He will forgive you again. Remember that He died to bear your sin and cleanse you from all sin and unrighteousness. Just confess your sin to Him later. That link down there looks especially interesting...just click on it."

At that very moment, we must know what to do and what to say to our servant. If we invite him to sit down and serve him food, if we receive him with open arms, we are in trouble. We will fall into the sin of fantasy lust and pornography again. Yes, if we are contrite afterwards and ask the Lord to forgive us, indeed He will. But there will be a price to pay for failing to be strict with our sinful nature and to exercise our authority over it. Among other things, we may once again need deliverance from the spirit of pornography. And this time it may be more difficult. Luke 11:26 tells us that when the unclean spirit returns, he brings with him seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and our final condition will be worse than the first.

Instead of coddling our sinful nature when it tries to seduce us, we should immediately rebuke it, commanding it authoritatively with mountain-moving (or mulberry tree-moving) faith to be quiet and to leave in Jesus' name. Our sinful nature will back off, and we will leave that pornographic website and escape from temptation. Just as we rebuke diseases and demons, we should also rebuke our sinful nature.

There are of course other many other ways besides unforgiveness and fantasy lust with which our sinful nature can tempt us to sin. Some are the temptation to anger, greed, covetousness, fornication, adultery, pride, and jealousy. Whatever our sinful nature says to us, we must immediately take authority over it with mountain-moving faith. Like a servant, it will obey us.

This principle is found also in the Old Testament in the second generation of man as recorded in Genesis. There we are taught to *master* our sinful nature

or else it will have us. This is how the Lord counselled Cain when he was hurt and became furious at God's favor upon Abel.

Genesis 4:4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must *master* it."

Because Cain was unable to master his anger and sinful nature, he became the first murderer in human history.

But there is yet another temptation we might face even when we have successfully exercised authority over our sinful nature and over disease and demons.

Luke 17:10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"

Our sinful nature may tell us to become proud and think that we deserve preferential treatment because having overcome our sinful nature we are now so holy. Because we have successfully exercised authority over disease and demons, our ministry has become big and well-known. Now we are special in God's sight. Now we may need a personal bodyguard to keep the "riff-raff" from touching "God's anointed." We require being picked up in a limousine and insist on being accommodated only in very expensive hotels when invited to minister out-of-town. We will charge a certain minimum "fee" (likely exorbitant for "an unworthy servant") for ministering as a guest preacher, and rationalize it by explaining that it helps us to limit our busy ministry schedule. The argument can be very persuasive and even based on Scripture. Jesus teaches us to resist and rebuke such temptations severely as we would a lazy servant.

When we are tempted especially to lust and to commit adultery in all its various forms, we should treat it as a life-threatening cancer.

Matthew 18:8 If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and

throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

1 Corinthians 9:27 No, I *beat my body* and *make it my slave* so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Yes, to sin is entirely in accord with our sinful nature, which would rule over us. But like the apostle Paul we must beat it and make it our slave. The reason for this ruthless course of action is not to be taken lightly---that after we have preached to others, we ourselves will not be disqualified for the prize. Whatever "being disqualified for the prize" may mean, it is certainly not worth suffering this disqualification in exchange for the temporal pleasures of sin.

When we understand our authority over our sinful nature---our servant---we will be able to succeed in doing that which is impossible for our human nature.

In the context of this chapter there are three things that are under our authority as servants---the sinful nature, disease, and demons. It makes no sense for us to serve them. What will happen if we disregard this scriptural injunction and coddle our servants? They will end up ruling over us and making us miserable.

Proverbs 19:10 It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury— how much worse for a slave to rule over princes!

We who have been given authority over our sinful nature, disease, and demons must rule over them ruthlessly. This is not only to safeguard our own salvation and well-being, but to bring lost souls into the Kingdom of God as the gospel is preached with signs following.

The believer who can successfully exercise authority over his sinful nature is prepared to exercise authority over disease and demons fruitfully and safely.

## **What you sit under is what you will get**

There are various gifts and supernatural manifestations from the Lord available to the body of Christ. Some are found liberally in Scripture; others have relatively weak support in the Word of God. But God can be behind both. Those more strongly supported in Scripture can generally be more accepted by the Church, while those weakly supported are less accepted. For example, it is abundantly clear from the gospels and Acts that Jesus and His disciples did not pray for the sick. Instead they healed the sick by exercising their authority in issuing authoritative commands to infirmities and unclean spirits. In the spirit of John 14:12, those who believe in Jesus in this age will do these same works. They will be able to minister to the infirm in the same way that Jesus and His disciples did. Thus if a believer ministers to the sick in this way, it should be generally acceptable to the body of Christ.

However, there are supernatural manifestations from God that occur within the body of Christ which are not found in Scripture. For example, the manifestation commonly known as "being slain in the Spirit" is not seen anywhere in Scripture in the context of a supernatural healing. Yet undoubtedly people have been physically healed in such a way. (We are not including in this discussion instances of people being pushed down or falling down by themselves during "courtesy drops.") Such manifestations have caused controversy and division in the body of Christ. Some believers and churches accept them without reservation; other more conservative ones from the other side of the doctrinal spectrum either reject them or urge extreme caution. I would conclude that such a manifestation has been a mixed blessing for the body of Christ as a whole even though some individual believers have been powerfully touched by the Holy Spirit in this way. One of its unintended aftereffects has been disunity in the body of Christ.

One can reasonably ask how a genuine manifestation from God can have negative consequences for the Church. To answer this question we should look at God's people instead of questioning the manifestation. In the ministry of the Apostle Paul, handkerchiefs that had come into contact with his body could bring healing when applied to the infirm (Acts 19.12). I personally would advise against such a practice on a widespread scale today because ultimately uncomprehending people will buy and sell the cloths and misuse them in other ways as well. If a practice or manifestation---even though it is originally from the hand of the Lord---cannot be received by the body of Christ in such a way so as to build it up but rather tends to tear it



down or divide it instead, it would be better not to have such a manifestation on any regular basis.

We would do better to follow the Apostle Paul's strategy: "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). Perhaps the same wisdom should be applied also to building up the body of Christ as well. There is also another point to be considered here as well. Unity in the body of Christ can only be based upon Holy Scripture, which along with the Lord Jesus Himself is the basis for our unity. If a manifestation or practice is not soundly supported in Scripture, it may be wise not to pursue it actively in one's ministry. It should not become the manifestation that we are known for.

Then what should one pursue? I believe it would ultimately be more fruitful to pursue giftings (and their resulting manifestations) that are strongly supported in Scripture. Such a gifting would have a far greater likelihood of being a blessing to the overall body of Christ. God has given us sound minds. *With that sound mind we should exercise wisdom regarding under whom we will sit and be taught.*

Luke 6:40 A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

A believer will to some measure receive the "spirit" or "anointing" or "gifting" of the one whom he chooses to be his earthly teacher. Thus it is not necessarily and completely up to God's sovereign will what kind of gifting we will receive. We have a measure of freedom---and dare I say the responsibility as well---to choose with wisdom and good judgment.

1 Corinthians 12:31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts...

1 Corinthians 14:5 ...so that the church may be edified.

We are commanded here to desire and seek the greater gifts. Therefore we have some say in what we may receive from the Lord. *The implication is that we can also choose **not** to desire gifts that turn out not to edify the Church as a whole.*

## **The End of an Era and the Beginning of a Greater One**

In March 2006 a world-famous evangelist came to Jakarta, Indonesia for a historic Crusade. During one of the evenings, a crowd estimated at 400,000 people---the largest in the history of Indonesia---gathered to hear him speak. Great miracles of healing were witnessed, giving glory to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in Muslim Indonesia. As great as this event was, it signaled perhaps the end of an era and the beginning of an even greater one.

At the 2006 Resurrection Day service at Abbalove, one of Jakarta's most vibrant and thriving megachurches, Pastor Eddy Leo brought up a significant point. Crusade sponsors calculated that about 400 people were healed at the historic meeting. Percentage-wise, we could conclude that one-tenth of one percent of the people who attended the meeting received a miraculous healing. (Of course it is understood that not everyone who attended the meeting was infirm.) These are the results achieved at an evangelistic meeting where one person does all or most of the ministry. I call this type of ministry one-man-show, superstar evangelism.

God has begun to do something new and better which involves the body of Christ ministering instead of just one individual. This takes the focus away from the celebrity evangelist and puts the spotlight on the body of Christ---alone the true representative of Christ on earth. When no one person or ministry can "take the credit" for the miracles, God receives more glory.

For example, at an evangelistic healing service I witnessed in April 2006 in Manado, Indonesia where the gospel was shared, there were approximately 2,000 people present. After the gospel was proclaimed, trained believers representing the body of Christ came forward to minister healing to the infirm according to Luke 9:1-2 and 10:1, 9. The purpose of this was to demonstrate to the lost that the gospel of the Kingdom of God is indeed true. The number of people who immediately afterwards came forward to give public testimonies of their healing was estimated to be at least fifty. About a half dozen of these involved tumors and growths that shrank and disappeared. A simple calculation shows that the percentage of people attending the meeting who were healed (and testified) was at least 2.5%. Comparing this to the 0.1% of the people who were healed at the historic meeting in Jakarta, we see that the percentage of people healed in Manado as seen in this light was at least twenty-five times greater than the number healed in Jakarta.

Now God is certainly glorified whether 0.1% or 2.5% of the people are healed. But when far more people are healed, God certainly receives more glory. And when the body of Christ is involved in healing the sick in Jesus' name instead of simply one individual evangelist, God receives more glory. The "superstar" is Jesus Christ instead of the renowned evangelist. (Great fame and the often accompanying lifestyle of the wealthy can be a personal stumbling block to the "unworthy servant" of God.)

In a much smaller evangelistic Crusade later the same month in predominantly Hindu North India, there were a bit over 100 people present. Those who gave testimonies of their healing after the trained believers ministered to them exceeded twenty in number. Thus in this case up to perhaps 20% of those attending were healed in Christ's name. The miracles along with the preaching of the gospel resulted in at least 50 Hindu people (comprising nearly all of the Hindus who were present at the meeting) deciding to follow Christ as their Lord and Savior that evening.

These are not isolated incidents. Whenever believers are taught to heal the sick the way Jesus and His disciples did in the Scriptures, similar results are witnessed when these believers are actively involved in ministering to the sick at evangelistic events.

In a January 2004 Crusade in Eastern Rivers State, Nigeria, the host pastor reported to me that 2,000 infirm people had been healed over four nights of meetings. He said the attendance was 5,000 people.

Only when the Church wakes up and stops depending on the one-man-show evangelists will she fulfill the Great Commission. Jesus Christ has already given to every believer authority to heal the sick and cast out demons for proclaiming the Kingdom of God (John 14:12; Mark 16:15-18). At this time the Church can in fact be taught how to use this authority to heal the infirm as Jesus did. The age of the superstar evangelist is fading away; the age of the nameless, faceless believer has begun.

## **The Restoration of the Kingly Anointing to the New Testament Church**

The favored approach to miraculous healings in many New Testament churches and gatherings today is actually from the Old Testament. It is adapted from 2 Chronicles 20 where Jehoshaphat and his men took an unusual stance toward a vast army advancing against them.

2 Chronicles 20:21 After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever." 22 As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

As they moved in a priestly/prophetic function by praising the Lord, God Himself moved against their enemies. Christian gatherings today similarly rely on the priestly/prophetic anointing in order to bring about miraculous healings and deliverance. In such gatherings believers praise the Lord while dancers worship Him in song and dance. The Lord is pleased and responds by healing the infirm and delivering people from demonic oppression and so forth.

Such an approach is indeed based on Scripture. However, even in the Old Testament it was an exception to the rule---most of the time Israel's armies had to engage their enemies in actual and direct combat. Neither is it the predominant approach utilized by Jesus and the early disciples as found in the gospels and Acts. Their miraculous signs and wonders were the direct result of Jesus and the disciples exercising their "kingly anointing" over disease and demons. Instead of the Father responding to praise and worship by stretching forth His hand from heaven to heal the sick, Jesus and the early disciples healed the infirm directly by exercising the authority given to them over disease and demons for the purpose of proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the lost. They laid their hands on the sick and *with authority commanded diseases and demons to go*. This is a manifestation of the kingly anointing which is being restored to the Church today.

Today there are only a few specially-anointed ministers of the gospel who understand how to move in the kingly anointing in order to heal the sick and cast out demons. But we are in the end times and the Lord is restoring the

kingly anointing to His entire Church. Part of Jesus' promise in John 14:12 is being fulfilled---anyone who believes in Him will do the works that He did.

The priestly/prophetic approach of Jehoshaphat will continue to be utilized *in the context of building up the body of Christ*. But the kingly approach of Jesus and the disciples for healing the sick and casting out demons will ultimately come to take its place as the most effective and scriptural way *to prove to the world that our God is indeed the only true God* and that Jesus is the only way to Him. The former is for the body of Christ in a meeting of believers; the latter is an evangelistic weapon to be used outside the walls of the Church to win the lost in the world. It is especially crucial for the Church to understand this distinction today, for throughout much of the world we are now being challenged by the very powerful spirit of Islam.

### **How should the Church respond to the spirit of Islam today?**

Unless decisive action is taken, Iran is poised to put nuclear weapons in the hands of the followers of Mohammed. To me it is clear that this is the time at which fundamentalist Muslims want to realize the restoration of the former golden age of Islam. Their approach is dictated by the spirit of Islam--by the spirit that drove the prophet Mohammed to proselytize his religion in the Sixth Century through the power of his sword. It is the same today: Islam is to be promulgated by physical force, war, and conquest. Recall the two kidnapped western journalists who were released after they "converted to Islam."

For some, World War III has already begun---the "clash of civilizations" of the last days. What should be the response of the Church of Jesus Christ? The Church has encountered the enemy in different incarnations in its long history. The enemy of the Church during these endtimes is the spirit of Islam, the ultimate spirit of anti-Christ. Our response should obviously not include physical war---that is the responsibility of our nation's government and military---but our response is war in the realm of the spirit. *However, I am not talking about the kind of spiritual warfare with which the Church is already familiar*. I am not talking about prayerwalks and prayer gatherings in public places. I am talking about the war that Jesus commanded us to prosecute until He returns.

Luke 10:9 Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'

The only way that Muslims will take the gospel seriously is for them to consistently witness powerful miraculous signs done in the name of Jesus

Christ. Otherwise they will continue to view our gospel as a corrupted religion. The Church must take the gospel in the power of signs and wonders to public places where the world can see the visible proof that Jesus is the only way to the Father.

John 10:37 Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does.  
38 But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

This is the warfare that two thousand years ago Christ commanded the Church---not just a few anointed superstar evangelists---to wage until He returns. *So far the Church has disobeyed this command and failed to execute it.*

But in these last days the Lord is restoring the spirit of power and boldness to the Church for real war.

In Scripture we find different ways by which the Lord heals infirmities through His people. Two of these ways can be classified as the authority to heal on the one hand, and the gift of healing on the other hand. These two have different functions. Luke 9 describes the function of the authority to heal.

Luke 9:1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them *power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases*, 2 and he sent them out *to preach the kingdom of God* and to heal the sick.

The power and authority to heal and to drive out demons is given specifically for the context of preaching the kingdom of God to the lost. For those who do not yet believe, seeing miracles can be an aid to faith in Christ. In contrast, the gift of healing is given primarily to build up the body of Christ, that is, those who already believe in Christ. The Apostle Paul, referring to the function of the gifts of the Spirit for the body of Christ, taught:

1 Corinthians 12:7 Now to each one *the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good*. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, *to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,*

In Chapter 14, continuing to teach on the purpose of spiritual gifts, Paul adds:

1 Corinthians 14:26 What then shall we say, brothers? *When you come together*, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. *All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.*

It would appear that the primary venue for the manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit is in gatherings of believers. In such meetings believers are ministered to, strengthened, and blessed in various ways. Among other benefits, believers can be healed from their infirmities as the gift of healing is manifested. For example, as believers worship the Lord in a gathering, the presence of the Lord may appear and the sick are miraculously healed.

We see then the difference between the gift of healing and the authority to heal.

Let's take the analogy of the United States of America. When America is threatened by foreign enemies, she sends out her armies to fight. The American military has unparalleled power. Through displays of "shock and awe" it is able to defeat the enemy. This is analogous to the Church sending out believers to proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost, heal the sick, and cast out demons. Awesome power is released as they exercise their authority over disease and demons by rebuking them and commanding them to go in Jesus' name. The sick are instantly healed and testify of God's healing grace. The message of the gospel is confirmed by the miraculous signs and precious souls enter the Kingdom of God by putting their faith in Jesus Christ. The Church is indeed capable of putting on such displays of "shock and awe"---that is, signs and wonders---to defeat the enemy. We have seen this happen time and time again after disciples of Jesus are taught to exercise their authority to heal the sick.

The normal picture back home in America, by contrast, could not be any more different. Soldiers and tanks and incredibly destructive weapons are not needed in the streets. There is no need for displays of military might or "shock and awe" in our neighborhoods---those are reserved for our nations' enemies. Instead, we enjoy our peace and prosperity. We celebrate our blessings at various holidays throughout the year. We like to give one another gifts, especially around Christmas time, to bless and encourage one another. This is analogous to believers blessing one another with *gifts and manifestations of the Spirit* during their gatherings.

However, if we take an honest look at the Church, we see that there is not yet a healthy balance between "military" and "civilian" activities. (Writers in the past referred to these as *sodalities* and *modalities*, respectively.) Most of the activity of the Church today consists of "civilian" gatherings of believers where they are built up through the word of God and manifestations of spiritual gifts. Rarely does the Church send out believers as a well-trained and well-equipped "military" force to engage the enemy kingdom. Rarely do we hear of armies of believers going out to the lost to heal the sick, cast out demons, and save souls through the preaching of the gospel. The awesome "signs and wonders" that the Church is capable of displaying against the enemy kingdom is yet to be seen.

However, there is now in some quarters of the Church an awareness of the necessity of *going out* to engage the enemy. For some reason it does not consist of the visible "shock and awe" of miraculously healing the sick and proclaiming the Kingdom boldly in public as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ. So far it consists of spiritual warfare "in the heavenlies" through prayer gatherings in public places and during prayerwalks. (We may note without passing judgement that there is debate within the larger body of Christ concerning the scriptural nature of such warfare against demonic beings.) But it must not end there. We must obey what Jesus commanded us to do *in the earthly realm*:

Luke 10:9 Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'

As the recent war in Lebanon clearly showed, air bombardment alone cannot win a war. Ground troops must be committed. During these last days the Lord has revealed to us how to train and equip foot soldiers to win the war on the ground and take actual territory for the Kingdom. We are now able to equip believers to heal the sick the way Jesus and his disciples did to demonstrate to the world that the Kingdom is near. Souls actually escape from darkness and enter the Kingdom of God by putting their faith in Christ. It can no longer be simply theoretical; the victories *must* be seen here in reality.

John 14:12 Truly, truly, I say to you, He who believes on Me, the works that I do he shall do also, and greater works than these he shall do, because I go to My Father.



## **Toward a Mass Movement of Muslims to Christ**

In some Muslim countries, it is either very difficult or outright illegal to preach the gospel to Muslims. It may be illegal as well for Muslims to change their religion and formally become Christians. How can we bring Muslims to Christ under such circumstances? Even more ambitiously, how can we bring about a *mass movement* of Muslims to Jesus Christ? Clearly the Church will not complete the Great Commission to the Muslim world if we continue our present methods by which we see painfully small numbers of Muslims enter the Kingdom of God. For the fulfillment of the Church's mandate from the Lord Jesus Christ, we must have a *mass movement* of large numbers of the followers of Mohammed to Christ.

In areas where it is forbidden to preach the gospel in a direct way to Muslims, for example Peninsular Malaysia, it may be permissible to do works of compassion for them---to feed or clothe them, to provide free medical treatment for them. It is hoped that these works of compassion done in Christ's name will open their hearts to him. However, there is one work of compassion which Christ did in his time which the Church has not dared to attempt.

Matthew 14:14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Rarely if ever has the Church healed infirm Muslims to demonstrate the compassion of Christ to them. Now is the time to do these works that Jesus did. For example, in addition to holding a medical clinic we will hold a "healing clinic." Infirm Muslims will come to the clinic and trained disciples of Jesus Christ will lay hands on them in the name of Isa Almasih (Jesus Christ in Arabic) and heal them as he commanded us. But in accordance with local law, the gospel will not be preached to them in the usual manner.

Those Muslims who are healed in the name of Isa---and there will be many--will wonder how they were so wondrously set free from their infirmities. They may wonder who is this Isa whose name is so powerful that their infirmities have completely vanished. They may even be told exactly who this Isa is according to Scripture. But they will not be asked to repent and believe on him, since that will be contrary to the law of the land.

But since Isa is mentioned and honored in their holy book the Koran, these Muslims will not be adverse to seek to know more about him. The Lord will graciously reveal himself to them in his own way as they seek him. Perhaps

the Lord will give them dreams (as has happened on occasions), or they will read the Bible on their own to learn more about him.

However, they will not be invited to attend a Christian Church. Neither will they be invited to renounce Islam and to formally become Christians. That will invite persecution and prosecution and imprisonment. However, did Jesus ever command his disciples to "go to church?" No. Did Jesus ever command his disciples to become "Christians?" No. He simply commanded us to follow him and to be discipled.

As more and more Muslims are healed of infirmities and set free from unclean spirits in the name of Isa, that name will gain increasing currency and favor within the Muslim community. It is important during this time that Muslims are not renouncing Islam and converting to Christianity, for that will result in backlash and setback to the advance of the gospel. Eventually Muslims will have a measure of freedom to become followers or disciples of Isa, the one honored in their holy book. After all, they are still Muslims outwardly; they have broken no law. But in their hearts they are now Muslim disciples of Isa. As a precedent, within the Jewish community there are already "Jews for Jesus." The most important thing is not their religious label or their outward bearing.

Yes, we do not deny that they must undergo significant change if they are truly to follow Isa. But the Holy Spirit, not we Christians, will teach them and convict them of these things as they study Scripture. Yes, there will be false teachings in such a Muslim "denomination" for Isa. Are there not some false or questionable teachings in existing Christian denominations as well? At any rate the situation will certainly be better than it is at present, with Islam overtly hostile against the Church of Jesus Christ and very few willing to convert.

Romans 2:28 A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. 29 No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

For there to be a mass movement of Muslims to Isa, the gospel must be contextualized. Western cultural considerations and other non-essentials must be stripped away and the gospel expressed in only its essential components: follow Isa alone as Lord and Savior. The compassion work of healing the sick must be done to demonstrate to them His authority to forgive their sins and take them to the Father.

## Reaching the Unreachable

In late 2003 The Elijah Challenge held a Seminar and Crusade for the purpose of reaching the world's largest unreached people group consisting of a single tribe of forty-five million souls. This people group living in the 1040 Window was known to be very gospel-resistant when approached with traditional evangelistic methods. Their religion is known to be antithetical to Christianity. In the Seminar we trained the servants of God how to heal the sick in the name of Jesus Christ to prove to this unreached people group that He is the only way to the Father. At the ensuing evangelistic healing meeting, a number of these unreached people came to hear the gospel and to witness the many miraculous healings done in the name of Jesus Christ. Some of them were healed and they also testified.

As a result, over one-half of these unreached people attending the meeting made the decision to follow Jesus Christ as their only Lord and Savior. They were not asked to renounce their own religion (and culture) in a formal way and then to convert publicly to the organized religion called "Christianity," also known to their community as the "foreign, white man's religion." They remained outward adherents of their religion, but as born-again followers of Jesus Christ. They worshipped God and were discipled according to the teachings of the Bible not in a church building, but in homes.

In this way, those who were trained in the Seminar have now reached eighteen villages of this unreached people group for the Kingdom of God. Even higher-ranking religious leaders of this people group are now becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. They are initially drawn by the manifestations of miraculous healing power that Jesus Christ gives to His disciples to be effective witnesses.

John 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Luke 10:9 "Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'"

Someday soon this "unreached" people group will be re-classified by missiologists as "reached." No, they will not have been "christianized," something Christ did not necessarily intend. Rather, they will have in their midst---their own community---a powerful body of believers that can potentially fulfill the Great Commission to them.

1 Corinthians 9:19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

## How to have a Happy and Successful Evangelistic Ministry

I may have stretched the title a bit to get your attention, but nevertheless I would like to share some things I have learned from the Lord during the first twenty-nine years of our full-time service for Him. The Lord has graciously blessed the work of our hands beyond what we have asked or imagined since the year 2000. For some years before 2000 we were in the position of Moses, taking care of some sheep on the back side of the Sinai desert; like young David following and watching the flock in his father's pasture. Perhaps you are in the same position right now. Perhaps what I have to share will be helpful to you.

The apple of God's eye is His Church (Deuteronomy 32:10). Whatever we are called to be, whether apostle, evangelist, prophet, pastor, or teacher, we should be building up the body of Christ. It pleases the Lord when we expend our efforts to equip His Church for works of service.

Ephesians 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...

Thus when we minister, it should not be simply as a one-man-show, drawing attention to ourselves and our ministries through our great anointing when we preach. Rather we should spend more of our efforts equipping the Church to do what the Lord has taught and anointed us to do. Many now preach, but few teach and equip. **You must decrease** and Jesus Christ must increase.

John 3:30 He must become greater; I must become less.

And Jesus is now represented by His body, the Church. In the world we must become less and the Church must become greater. Don't just preach to the Church, *teach and equip the Church so that it will become greater like Jesus*. Preaching, on the other hand, is primarily for the lost.

Secondly, our ministry and its practices should be centered on that which is strongly supported by the word of God. Let me define what this means to me. There are various practices which appear to be referred to or implied in Scripture, for example the practice of spiritual warfare waged directly against powers and principalities. However, we do not see in Scripture anyone actually doing this. It is not recorded in Scripture that any servant of God actually spoke *directly to Satan or demonic principality* to rebuke them.

(*Prayer to God* asking Him to war against such spiritual entities is of course a different matter.) When a practice is not *explicitly* found in Scripture--- there is no instance recorded of a believer actually *doing it*---it would be better not to practice it or at least not to emphasize it. It should be kept on the periphery. Such a practice might actually “work” and appear at the time to bring glory and souls to God. However, outward “success” is not necessarily the stamp of God’s approval and His will. Since it is not found clearly in Scripture, it would be better not to emphasize it or make it a focus of our teaching. There are reasons for this.

When we engage in practices not explicitly supported by Scripture, we might run the risk, however slight, of going “beyond what is written.”

1 Corinthians 4:6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, “Do not go beyond what is written.”

When we do this, we might be going beyond what we have been authorized by the Lord to do. And when we go beyond our authority, we can be open to eventual counterattack and payback by the enemy. It is as if we step out from the umbrella, however gradually, that the Lord has put over us. It can be a “slippery slope” that we go down without even being aware of it. Now although we are indeed called to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ, none of us wants to suffer unnecessarily. If we go beyond what is written, we might be inviting tribulation not according to the Lord’s will. There are believers who are suffering in this unfortunate way. Thus it is safer to be conservative in our interpretation of Scripture and practices. This does not mean that we cannot live “risky” for the Lord. If we want to be bold and take risks for the kingdom of God, let it be with wisdom and proper understanding of Scripture.

There is yet another reason for taking care not to major in what I call “peripheral” and thus non-essential practices.

The Lord clearly desires unity for His people. What is the basis for this unity? It is the Lord Jesus Christ and the word of God which is the Bible. All born-believers stand in agreement that the word of God should be our rule for doctrine and practice. There are doctrines and practices that are universally (or nearly so) accepted by the body of Christ; these are those that find strong support in Scripture. If in our ministry we emphasize teachings and practices that are not strongly supported in this way, we will run the risk of being rejected by some part of the body of Christ even though we may be embraced by another part. There will be some believers who say that what we are presenting is not scriptural. And we will not be able to answer them

satisfactorily from the word of God even though what we teach may actually “work.” When this happens we might in effect be encouraging division in the body of Christ despite our good intentions. This hurts the Lord. We are all part of His body for whom He suffered and died.

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or *to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.* 22 *So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.*

Therefore we ought not to focus attention on food or other non-essentials that do not lead to peace and edification to the body of Christ. “Whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.”

Rejection always hurts. We will of course face rejection from the world. But rejection from other sincere, God-fearing disciples of Christ is another matter entirely. If we minister in our own limited circles, we can be free to teach peripheral doctrines and engage in peripheral practices. If you feel this is what the Lord has called you to do, that’s fine. But what if we desire to minister to the greater body of Christ around the world, or if we desire to promote the unity that the Lord so desires for His whole Church? We ought to take care to limit ourselves to those teachings that find strong support in Scripture. In this way, rejection and controversy within the body of Christ will be minimized, and unity in the Church maximized and encouraged.

I am not advocating compromising God’s word. I am saying that we should major on that which is major in God’s word and minor on that which is minor. This healthy balance will result in a healthy church which will advance the Kingdom of God in the world.

- *The Lord will be blessed* because His body is being built up and united.
- *The Church will be blessed* because believers of every stripe are being equipped by you for fruitful ministry and no longer chained to a Sunday morning pew. Believers are getting tired of being preached to; they long to step onto the battlefield and to fight the Lord’s battles.
- *And you will be blessed* because you will be “happy and successful.” When you correctly divide the word and teach it according to the Lord’s highest purpose for His Church, you will prosper in His hand and find favor in the

eyes of His people. More opportunities will be opened for you, the Lord's unworthy servant, to bless the greater body of Christ around the world.

This final chapter is based on the Word of God, the Spirit behind the Word of God, and on our own personal testimony.



## **Testimonies and Reports**

### **Rick & Kris Freeman Jubilee House of Praise, Houston, Texas**

"Rick and I want you to know that your teaching at Jubilee House on May 6th and 7th, 2006 was VERY fruitful. The people who are becoming committed to working with us have listened well. We have become confident about how to separate prayer from healing like Jesus did, including me. We want to share some things that have happened in the last 2 weeks.

People are starting to come in for prayer and healing. The first week after you left, two ladies came in for prayer. One of them got saved and the other we haven't seen again.

Then last week lots of people started coming in, most of them for healing. One lady (a believer) had an injury to her back from a recent automobile accident. Several of us prayed for her and then commanded her spine to be made straight and whole. As soon as the command was spoken, all of us could hear her back popping back into place. I had my hand on her spine and I could feel her backbone moving as it popped. God completely healed her. It was incredible!

The same lady had her 30 year old son (Tyson) with her that is suffering from multiple personalities. He walked around like an prowling animal and rambled when he talked making no sense at all. Rick and I and one of our prayer warriors have had experience with deliverance so we knew what to do. We let him talk and we listened as the Holy Spirit started giving us discernment about what spirits to call out. After about 1 1/2 hours of this, he became noticeably calmer. They left and came back for another session that evening and he was noticeably different. He is still rambling but there appears to be much improvement. We are going to continue this deliverance every week.

Rick and I now realize that we are not going to have healing services as we had originally scheduled on Wednesdays from 12 - 2 pm and 7 - 9 pm. This last Wednesday we started at 12 noon and it continued until 9:30 pm! People are starting to tell others about their healing and they are bringing others in. We are so excited!

Rick and I have known for the last 3 to 4 years that God is going to perform miraculous healings and raise people from the dead through our ministry

because like you, we (nameless, faceless believers) are going to teach others that God is going to use them to do the same thing."

### **June 2006 Update**

"We have been so busy with our Healing Room that I haven't been able to send you an update. Praise God! People are coming off the street for prayer. Others are being referred to us. Even a *Muslim* who owns a health food store has started referring people to us. He doesn't really know what we are doing but he has a very kind heart and wants to help people. Yes, he is on our salvation prayer list.

We are ministering to people almost every day! Even a pastor and his wife of a large church in our area came to us for ministry and prayer. Meeting them has become a wonderful blessing to us and them. The Healing Room is now open from 12 noon to 9 pm on Wednesdays. Praise God!"

### **August 2006 Update: Congregation doubles in size**

"There has been so much going on here... Let us start by saying that we have been very busy since you were here. You came to Jubilee House of Praise on June 3rd to teach us "Healing through Evangelism." Since then, which was three and a half months ago, our fellowship has *doubled in size* and we have led over forty people to Christ. This may not sound like much to a larger church, but it's huge to us. We have been a very small fellowship for the past three years but suddenly that is changing. We haven't had this much success with anything else we have tried. We feel that what you are teaching is exactly what God wants all churches to be doing NOW. We know we are living in the last days and there are MANY lost souls in this country. We will continue to pray and encourage other pastors to see the vision of "The Elijah Challenge." IT WORKS!"

## **Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo**

### **November 2006**

We first equipped some of the area's full-time servants of God how to heal the sick and cast out demons to prove to the lost that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father. At the final equipping session held in the Church of God there were 256 of God's servants in attendance. After the training we had them apply what they had learned. We held an evangelistic healing meeting outdoors just in front of the Church of God where it faces the road. A makeshift platform was erected outside the front doors, facing rows of benches and chairs.

All that day I had been fighting a cough. When I arrived at the venue shortly before 4 PM, it was raining. I was shown to a seat next to the platform, completely exposed to the rain. I mounted the platform after being called up to speak and immediately informed the people that the One True God had sent us to proclaim His Kingdom. I announced that we would ask Him to heal the sick to prove that His Kingdom was near (Luke 10:9). When I asked who wanted to be healed, many people, both seated and standing in and around the area, raised their hands. Around that time, the rain completely stopped.

I then invited the trained servants of God to form one long line in front of the platform. They would heal the infirm in Jesus' name. After prayer to the God of Heaven in the name of Jesus Christ, those with infirmities streamed to the front to be healed. There was a boy who came on crutches. He had been injured in an accident and could not walk. The trained servants of God laid hands on the sick and exercised their authority over disease and demons in Jesus' name.

After a few minutes, many people were being healed and began climbing up the stage to testify that they had been healed. So many came up that I was seriously concerned that the temporary platform might collapse under their weight. The boy who came on crutches was able to walk on his own unaided.

After everyone testified and left the platform---I was relieved that it had not collapsed---I shared about the Kingdom of God. All the miracles had demonstrated that the Kingdom of God was near. When I invited people to leave the kingdom of darkness and to enter the Kingdom of light by believing in Jesus Christ, an estimated 150 to 200 people streamed forward. Souls gathered before the platform to receive eternal life by making Jesus

Christ their Lord and Savior. They prayed and asked the Lord to forgive their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross.

**What is the significance of this event?**

*Most exciting of all* is that the local servants of God have been equipped to hold similar meetings on their own in the future. The Lord had used *them* to perform all the miraculous healings; I only preached from the platform. Moreover, the rally had hardly cost anything. I didn't have to bring any funds to help. This means the local servants of God are no longer dependent on outsiders---either on the ministry of a foreign evangelist or on outside funds. They can get the job done on their own. I believe this is God's perfect will in order for the Church around the world to fulfill the Great Commission. We do not come to *bring them fish*; we teach them *how to fish*.

I am told the host of our meetings, World Vision of Goma, will be following up on what the Lord just began. They will encourage the servants of God to use the talents that have been entrusted to them.