



Biblical Healing *in* African Context

Edited by:

S. O. Abogunrin
J. O. Akao
D. O. Akintunde
G. N. Toryough
P. A. Oguntoye

**Biblical Studies Series
No. 3**

*A Publication of The Nigerian Association
For Biblical Studies (NABIS)*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor's Preface

List of Contributors

1.	Healing in African Context - <i>Samuel O. Abogunrin</i>	1
2.	Healing in the Old Testament and in African Context - <i>David Tuesday Adamo</i>	32
3.	Prophet Isaiah and the Healing of King Hezekiah in the African Context - <i>Caleb O. Ogunkunle</i>	51
4.	Healing in the Inter-Testamental Literature in the African Context - <i>Paul Alabi Oguntoye</i>	64
5.	Interpreting the Healing of the Man Born Blind in the African Context: An Exegesis of John 9:1-41. - <i>S.O.E. Onofa</i>	83
6.	The Healing of the Blind Man in Luke 18:35-43: An African Perspective - <i>M.I. Oguntoyinbo - Atere</i>	96
7.	The Story of the Healing of Lepers in the Synoptic Gospels and Its Relevance to Contemporary Nigerian Society. - <i>S.O. Omowole</i>	104
8.	Healing of Simon Peter's Mother-in-Law and Tabitha (Dorcas) in the Context of Healing in The Christ Apostolic Church, Nigeria - <i>Dorcas Olubanke Akintunde</i>	123

9.	The Gentiles in the Healing Miracles of Jesus in the African Context - <i>R.M. Owanikin</i>	137
10.	Exorcism in the Ministry of Jesus and Demonology in the African Context - <i>A.O. Igenoza</i>	145
11.	Mental Health: Demonic Possession in Mark and African Traditional Belief - <i>J. Enuwosa</i>	159
12.	Faith Healing and the Spirit of Beelzebub: A Critical Appraisal of Pentecostal Practices in Nigeria - <i>Don O. Akhilomen</i>	170
13.	The Healing Miracles of Jesus in the African Context - <i>A.M. Okorie</i>	186
14.	Healing Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles and Contemporary Miracle Workers - <i>Oladosu Samson Bisi</i>	201
15.	Healing Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles: A Safeguard for Pentecostal Propaganda - <i>Chris A. Obi</i>	214
16.	The Therapeutic Techniques in the Acts of the Apostles in the Context of the Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria - <i>A.O. Idamarhare</i>	236
17.	The Miracles of Peter and their Relevance to the Contemporary Church - <i>Adamolekun Taiye</i>	257
*18.	A Study of the Inter-Play Between the Divine and Scientific Healing Strategies - <i>L.B. Akande</i>	268

19.	Divine Healing in the Orthodox Churches - <i>Adebayo Oladunjoye</i>	276
20.	Biblical Healing as a Metaphor for Forgiveness: The African Experience - <i>Efe M. Ehioghae</i>	286
21.	Biblical Healing: The Craze in Contemporary Nigerian Society - <i>Celestina Omoso Isiramen</i>	300
22.	The Relationship of Healing and Sin in the Understanding of The Apostolic Faith Church, Nigeria. - <i>Olalekan A. Dairo</i>	310
23.	A Theological Discourse on the Pentecostal Emphasis on Miracle From the Nigerian Perspective - <i>Pius Oyeniran Abioje</i>	321
24.	Healing Miracles and their Impact on Church Planting and Church Growth: A Case of Selected Examples of Nigerian Church Planters. - <i>Godwin Nyijime Toryough</i>	332

A STUDY OF THE INTER-PLAY BETWEEN THE DIVINE AND SCIENTIFIC HEALING STRATEGIES

BY

AKANDE, L.B. (MRS)

INTRODUCTION

Healing is an age long practice and a way of making an individual a happy and comfortable person. Thus, the practice of science and divine healing today have become a common and appreciable phenomenon in the society. Church (1988) says of divine healing that it means "God stepping in a very definite way and many times in a miraculous way to definitely heal a person of some physical affliction or diseases". In this case an individual must be sure of this scriptural foundations. Faith must ever rest on the divine word. At this juncture, it should be borne in mind that science and divine healing could still interact favourably. Most scientists in the medical field still believe that their actions are guided by God as stated by Tyavvar (1994), that: "God made man: man made science therefore, cannot oppose the Source of its maker."

DIVINE HEALING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

From the Old Testament, sickness was considered to be of spiritual origin. Thus, healing was equally considered as an act of God's intervention. To be healthy therefore, and materially prosperous are all divine gifts from God. Hence, when one is struck with diseases, the patient could only look unto God for quick recovery and healing. However, prophets as intermediaries between God and men occasionally give series of advice and intercede through prayer on behalf of the sick. The following are cases of divine healing in the Old Testament. King Hezekiah in his illness, the prospect of death filled him with distress, he cried unto God

and he was divinely healed. Another instance is in the story of Abraham and Abimelech, (Genesis. 20:17, 18). The healing of Naaman is another significant act of divine intervention. He was asked to wash in the river Jordan seven times and was miraculously cleansed.

Job 1 and 2, which is said to be one of the oldest record of history says that Satan was the source of Job's sickness. But God miraculously healed him. Also, in the case of the man of Uz, there was no human remedy, but he only looked unto God who eventually healed him.

Psalm 103:2,3 says; "Bless the Lord O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgives all thine iniquities who heals all thy diseases". The Psalmist looks to heaven directly for healing as he does for pardon and that in the same breadth made him to cry: "who forgives all thine iniquities? Who heals your diseases?"

But Asa had a diseased feet and he sought not the Lord, but physicians, and therefore died. Here is a story of a King who began his reign well with absolute trust in God, and this won him the most glorious victories of history. He formed an alliance with Syria and lost the help and favour of God. He also refused to take the warnings of the prophets when eventually he became sick, he turned not to God but to man; unfortunately for him he died.

DIVINE HEALING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, record many of the healing miracles through the intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ, who healed many of the sick ones through the word of mouth. On an occasion, he made use of clay made from spittle. For instance, Luke's Gospel records five of the healing miracles which were not recorded by the other evangelists. These are the Woman bent double (Luke 17:11-13), the man with dropsy (Luke 12:1-40), the ten lepers (17:11-19), Matus' ear (22:50-52) and the raising of the son of the widow at Nain (7:11-15).

Only Matthew's Gospel records the healing of the two blind men (Matthew 9:27-32), while Mark alone records the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26). All other healing miracles of Jesus were recorded by the three synoptics such as the healing of the leper (Matthew 8:2-3) Mark 1:40-42, Luke 5:12-13. Peter's mother in law (Matthew 8:14-15, Mark 1:30-31, Luke 4:38-39) and many others. Only the fourth Gospel records the raising of Lazarus from the dead and three other miracles of healing.

However, the amount of faith these apostles demonstrated in the healing episodes could not be quantified. After the Pentecost, they were sent out by Christ to preach and they performed many acts of healing. These include, the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:6-8), the sick on the streets healed through Peter's shadow (Acts 5:15), Aeneas, the paralytic healed by Peter (Acts 9:32-39), a crippled healed of dysentery by Paul (Acts 28:8).

HEALING IN THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA SOCIETY

Healing and protection constitute the greatest attraction for most Nigerians, who not only seek for healing from various diseases, but also protection from them. Healing puts the whole man back to form. It is, according to Ityavyar (1994), "making the person wholly sanctified". The above involves restoring the physical, psychological and spiritual condition of the sick as well as re-establishing his social, spiritual and physiological relationships, as opined by Dubos, (1965): that:

Health means a healthy mind in a healthy body and can be achieved only by governing daily life in accordance with natural laws which ensures an equilibrium between the different forces of the organism and those of the environment.

Therefore, the various arms of the government, some churches and a few individuals in Nigeria today establish maternity homes, medical centres, dispensaries and hospitals. In addition, the continued increase in the number of patent medicine stores, pharmaceutical stores, chemist shops, traditional healing homes and such health enterprises have continued to meet the health needs of people. When one is in good health, he is able to meet the moral, social aspiration of the society. An adage says, "Health is wealth". This means that nothing good can be achieved with ill-health.

To the traditional man, he employs the available forces of nature to prevent diseases, restore and preserve health. It is preventive and curative. In this case, he does not only treat a person's disease, but also shows concern about his social economic and psychological therapy through the use of vegetables, herbs, animal and mineral substances as medicine for cure. As Ityavyar (1986) puts it:

"The traditional healer employs his culture knowledge and the Community's norms and values to explain the cultural, social magical and the physical environment of the patient p.68

Though one is not ignorant of the problems associated with African traditional medicine such as lack of standardization and hygiene, wrong diagnosis and treatment, but since it is still one of the popular method of healing employed by many Nigerians, we should not condemn it without examining it carefully. After all, many of the natural plants and herbs like dongoyaro, bitter leaves, citrus, Bahamas, etc., made by God are also used by science to make drugs for human consumption. However, the use of orthodox medicine for healing in the society provides good medical care but it is not adequate due to lack of adequate facilities in our health institutions; Yahaya (1994) has this to say in support of the above view:

Orthodox medical science has certainly gone far in discovering scientific remedies for physical unfitness based on the study of the physiology of the human body (p. 120).

Also, the development of antibiotics and other new drugs has helped to control many infectious diseases. Studies in anatomy and physiology have led to amazing new surgical techniques and invention of life saving machines that can work on organs like lungs, kidneys and hearts.

Although, modern medicine has been very effective, it is not always so in the treatment of non-biological illness. As earlier stated, it has been discovered that, many diseases are non-biological. They sometimes cannot be cured through medical care. It is the Holy Spirit that could reveal whether or not such sickness is caused by evil forces. This is why Ephesians 6:12-alerts us that:

*We struggle not against flesh and blood,
But against the powers of this dark World and
he Spiritual forces in the heavenly realms.*

Therefore, in the contemporary Nigeria society, divine healing is practiced mainly by the Protestants and Aladura Churches like the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement (C&S) and the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), even though, their methodologies differ. Some of the curative things used by few of these churches in carrying out divine healing include: water, olive oil, bathing in the stream, laying of hands lighting of candles and incense. From the foregoing, it could be said that, the divine healing takes into account the total man which of course has enabled individuals to appreciate God's influence in the affairs of men Lugwuanya (2000) Nightly says:

Sudden, inexplicable healings have a power to make us aware of God's presence than few other events do. No doubt one of the reasons is not simply the wonder element but the love within it. Healing is therefore, of the spirit of love of God's love at work in our midst (p.96)

ORTHODOX MEDICINE AND DIVINE HEALING

From our discussion so far, it could be said that, orthodox medicine and divine healing should be allowed to complement each other. They should not be separated as both seek for the total well being of individuals. Although, science tackles the manifestation and causes, divine healing on its own seeks a person's total well being physical, spiritual and physiological.

The Bible does not condemn the use of drugs for healing. It is a part of the gifts of God. The Lord has given every good gift for the use of man, and "the knowledge of God is the beginning of science" hence science is in need of divine intervention in its mission, and divine healing also needs science for its fulfillment. Many functional disturbances have been associated with unconfessed guilt. Some scientists have also testified to the fact that some long standing cases of insomnia, palpitations, headaches, disorder of the digestive organs and hypertension have disappeared all of a sudden, after confessing some wrongs. This is why divine healing adequately caters for the spiritual, mental, moral and physical well being of man.

Divine healing is more effective than scientific healing in cases of in-organic disease, whereas scientific healing is more reliable than divine healing in case of organic diseases (p. 12)

In every case both divine healing and modern medicine should complement each other.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

All said and done, it must be emphasized once again that, healing either through science or divine intervention of God must go pari-pasu.

Therefore, in Nigeria, our hospitals should be made to emulate the good examples of Britain and America by employing and attaching Reverend Fathers and Sisters to hospitals in order to meet the spiritual needs of patients, as medical doctors meet the physical needs. This kind of situation would improve and create a better rapport between the health workers and religious minister. This in turn will lead to a better care for the sick both physically and spiritually. We now conclude with the words of Norman that:

In all the investigation I have made into successful cases of healing, there seem to be certain factors present. First, a complete willingness to surrender oneself into the hand of God. Second a complete letting go of any error such as sin in any form and a desire to be cleansed in the soul. Third, belief and faith in the combined therapy of medical science in harmony with the healing power of God. Fourth, a sincere willingness to accept God's answer whatever it may be and no irritation of bitterness against His will, Fifth, a substantial unquestioning faith that God can heal (p.6)

END NOTES

1. Alama, O.E. (1996) Did Jesus Heal by Psychotherapy? In centre point. A Journal of intellectual scientific and cultural interest. Ilorin press.
2. Awolalu, J. and Dopamu P.A. (1979) *West African Traditional Religion* Ibadan: Onibonoje Press and Book Industries.
3. Boer J.H. and Ityavyar (1994). *Wholistic Health Care: Medical and Religious Dimensions* Jos: Chan Wholistic Health care Project.
4. Church, J.R. (1988). *Divine Healing* Kenturkey: The Herald Press.
5. Dopamu, A. (1965). *Health and Healing within the Traditional African Religion context, In Orita Vol. XVII*
6. Dubos, R. (1965). *Msan Adapting* Yale University Press.
7. Hornby, A.S. (ed) (1972), *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of current English*, London: University College.
8. Igun, U.A. "Traditional and Western Type Medicine in Nigeria: Possible Patterns of Co-existence, Zaria: A.B.U. Sociological Association Conference paper.
9. Longman *Active Study Dictionary (2002): England: Pearson Education Edinburgh Gate.*
10. Lugwuanaya, L. (2002) "Medicine Spiritual Healing and African Response: (1957-1924), Concernsof Christianity in Africa in the 21st Century, in African Theological Journal Vol. 23, No.1
11. Mcmillen, S.I. (1994). *Holistic Medicine: Harmony of Body, Mind and Spirit* London: Christian Medical Fellowship.
12. Normal V.P. *The Power of Positive Thinking*
13. Ojo J.O. (1988) *The Life and Ministry of Apostle Joseph A. Babalola* Lagos: The Prayer Band Publications.
14. Osume, C.E. (1989) *The Place of Religion in Traditional Medicine Among Okpe-Urhobo People of Nigeria: In Journal of Arabic and Religious Studies* (ed) Ilorin: University of Ilorin Press.
15. Thompson, E. (1975) "The Christian in Surgical Practice" in *The Christian Physical* (NP)
16. The New Bible Dictionary (1962), Lekester. Inter-Varsity Press
17. The Holy Bible (1962), Revised Standard Version.
18. Yahaya, M.T. (1994) *The Muslim Approach to Health, Sickness and Health Care from a Wholistic Perspective* Jos: CHAN Wholistic Health Care project.
19. Word Book Encyclopedia (1960) Grand Rapids: W.M.B Eerdmans Publication Co.