

The Healing Mission of the Church. Coonor Conference, March 7-18, 1967 [CMC, Genf, 1967].

Rev. Thomas A. Droege, Ph.D., Central Affirmations of the Coonor Conference, Introduction.

Forty men and women met in Coonor, South India, after a year-long study program, to re-examine the church's involvement in healing. There was a wide diversity of background and training represented at the conference: physicians, nurses, hospital administrators, chaplains, theologians, missionaries, and church administrators. Yet this was in no sense a consultation for people different viewpoints. All of these attending the Conference were engaged in one way or another in the church's mission of healing, and in this study program and Conference they were giving serious reflection to the meaning of that healing mission for the twentieth century.

This Conference on the healing mission of the church was an exercise in self-understanding. The vast majority of the participants in this Conference were medical mission personnel of the Lutheran Church. They represented, as very few others could, the church's most self-conscious investment in healing. They were assembled in Coonor in order to understand themselves as a church that has a commission to heal. As such, they represented the whole church. Their effort to understand themselves was an effort by the church to understand itself. The whole church could not participate in this study, but the whole church was represented by those who did participate.

An exercise in self-understanding must always be the first step in renewal for the church. It must precede a concern for logistics, clear-cut | principles of administration, long-range goals, re-examination of existing facilities, guidelines for relating to other healing agencies – all these are necessary if the church is to carry out its healing mission in any kind of tangible way. However, these were not the concerns of this Conference. An exercise in self-understanding for the healing church must also precede a dialogue with any other healing profession or agency which understand itself differently, be that medicine, social work or a government hospital. Such dialogues are necessary if the church is to live in the world and not in some isolated holy bubble. However, this Conference has not such a dialogue. Rather the Conference was concerned with the prior question, namely, how the church is to understand itself as a healing community.

The study program and Conference can also be described as a search for renewal within the church. Renewal is a term that describes a pervasive mood within the church today as it seeks to rediscover its essential nature and function. Nowhere is the need for renewal more evident than when we seek for the meaning of the church as a healing community. That the church should be involved in healing was taken for granted by the Conference. Much more fundamental to its concern was the meaning of that involvement for the church today and the forms that it ought to assume. It is obvious that healing was of vital importance to the ministry of Christ and the early church. It is equally obvious that the intervening centuries have made it neither possible nor advisable to simply resurrect ancient healing methods, e.g., anointing with oil. Needed instead is a new vision of the healing church for today that could include the insights of the past along with the most advanced medical practices of the twentieth century. If the Conference | was correct in its basic assumption, that the church is mission and one aspect of that mission is healing, then renewal of the healing mission is essential. It was this concern for renewal that dominated the minds

and hearts of the participants, a renewal that has its roots in the past and particularly in those events through which Christ brought healing into the world, but a renewal that has its growing edge in the present.

There is no renewal apart from participation in the healing which Christ brought. It was for this reason that the daily Bible studies, devotions, and particularly the daily celebration of the Eucharist were so central to the work of the Conference. It is particularly difficult to interpret this aspect of the Conference because it was so close to the life of this community, and one does not easily capture the experience of a people with words, and especially not the words of a reporter. Perhaps the best that one can say is that there was a strong sense among the participants that only a healed community can become a healing community, that there can be no renewal in the church apart from the renewal of that comes through feeding on Word and Sacrament. Put another way, Word and Sacrament are the central healing resources of the church, and no renewal of the healing church dares become separated from or more important than these healing gifts.

There were many different topics discussed at Coonor, such as the nature of illness and the nature of healing. There was an effort to probe for the uniquely Christian resource that can be brought to the need for healing. The nature of man was another topic, the assumption being that you cannot talk about the nature of illness or healing without talking about the nature of the man who undergoes both. A concern for the context of healing | was also evident in the Conference, more particularly in a topic devoted to that subject but more generally in all of the discussions. The great majority of those attending the Conference, were engaged in medical mission work within cultures totally different from the West and were thus very much aware of the importance of the cultural context for healing. Throughout all of the topics, and again in a special topic, consideration was given to the biblical foundations for the healing work of the church. It was felt that no affirmation should come from the Conference that could not be firmly grounded in the biblical witness. Another topic under consideration had to do with the methods employed by the healing church, with the central issue being the relationship between the methods employed by Christ and the early church and the methods employed by the church today. Finally, and perhaps most important, the Conference addressed itself to the future of the healing mission. What are the implications of the Conference findings for the future work of the church? |

Findings

The need for healing

The problem

Sickness, tears, brokenness and death – the whole creation groans in its need for deliverance. A study of the Biblical view of illness and of Christ's ministry of healing forces us to see this need in the broadest of terms.

We have often failed to recognize that the sickness which pervades every man and every thing in the world is the same sickness. We have generally understood the need for healing within the context of a sharp dualism between material and spiritual reality, and have thereby failed to do justice to either a Biblical or a contemporary view of illness and healing. The Incarnation and Christ's suffering are a participation in man's total suffering. Our concern and involvement with illness dare never remain an optional activity. Our concern and involvement must be that of our Lord's – a concern and involvement which is of the Gospel itself.

Notwithstanding the Church's long history of involvement in the ministry of healing and acts of mercy, we have tended to view physical suffering as ultimately irrelevant. We have grown accustomed to thinking of man's spiritual sickness as divorced from his physical and social ills. We have been vitally concerned about the one, and only derivatively concerned about the other, and we have sometimes yielded to the temptation of using one solely as a means of getting at the other. This is less than total concern.

Our failure to view illness in terms of man's total predicament accounts for our inability to adequately see man's illness in a communal context. We have not understood man's illness as a malfunction of his total existence, which includes his communal relationships and his relationship to God. Unless we see man in his total predicament, we have no basis for seeing ourselves as a healed community *and* a community of healers.

The Christian faith affirms life in the midst of death and defeat. Only in total defeat can we understand the full glory, hope and power of the Resurrection. An improper understanding of the nature of illness and a diluted understanding of death are related. If we fail to face the reality of death as a total defeat of all that we as sinful men can ever hope to be of ourselves, we misunderstand our true state of utter and complete dependence on God, our only Healer. |

A fuller understanding of the nature of illness and the need for healing

The world is sick with a sickness that pervades everyone and everything. God did not intend that it should be so, as the "very good" of Genesis affirms. Man was created to share and to reflect God's life and love in complete freedom. Man and the cosmos existed in integrated wholeness under God, in God and for God.

When man misused his freedom, he cut himself off from God and brought disintegration and disruption to the whole created order. Not only did man come into conflict with God, but with himself, with other men, and with his environment. Where wholeness and health had reigned before, destructive forces of evil were unleashed, bringing chaos, malfunction and illness.

When God acted in Christ to reconcile the world to Himself and brought healing where illness and brokenness reigned, He did so in a way which prevents us from seeing physical and spiritual illness as two unrelated entities. Jesus' ministry reveals that He saw sin and physical illness as one – and healed accordingly. The Incarnate Christ healed *all* brokenness and disease by enduring it in the body of His flesh on the Cross and overcoming it in His Resurrection.

A proper understanding of the Christian ministry of healing calls for a broader definition of illness than has been common either in medicine or theology. It is as inadequate to talk about the need for healing in purely physiological terms as it is to speak of this need purely in spiritual terms. Rather, it is necessary to see man's plight in all dimensions of his being, recognizing in every dimension the same disintegrating forces.

There are many different interpretations of the nature of illness, depending on the perspective of the viewer. The theologian, the physician, the psychologist, the sociologist, and others may each view the illness of the same patient from a different perspective. It would be an error to assume that anyone understanding of the illness of that individual is exhaustive or rules out another. On the contrary, the respective understandings complement each other. The Christian physician and nurse meet a need at one point. They may not have all the resources to meet that need fully, but they must be able to see that the need as they encounter it is of the same piece as the need identified by other perspectives. |

Illness must be seen as a dynamic process, a conflict involving constructive and destructive forces. It is never static. Nor is it ever isolated from the larger configuration of life processes. Illness is a process that goes on within the individual, within the community and within the cosmos as a whole. Individuals are linked with other individuals in community in much the same manner as parts of the human body are organically linked with each other. We must understand illness in terms of the whole network of inter-personal relationships into which the individual is bound. Furthermore, the entire network of inter-personal relationships is bound together with the individual's relationship with the whole creation and with God.

We therefore identify illness as disorder and disintegration. Disorder or disintegration is the basic evil against which all the forces of healing need to wage a common war. This includes disorder at the physiological level as well as disorder in terms of man's relationship to God, the former being, in a sense, an incarnation of the latter. We cannot claim to be a healing community as long as we see ourselves (and live) as a community concerned only about man's religious response and life after death. The sickness of man and the world is of one piece, and Christ bids us to reach out in His Name to heal, even as He met illness and brokenness in all of its manifestations.

The meaning of death

We have described illness in terms of disintegration, or forces that bring about disintegration, disorder or brokenness in the individual, the community, and the cosmos. Death, then, represents the victory of the forces of destruction within the individual, community and cosmic organism – a victory which may be judged as partial or complete, depending on the context within which it is being viewed.

Death reminds man as nothing else can of his limitations, his weaknesses, his failures, and above all, his finitude. The meaning of death was the same for Christ as it is for us. It meant failure, defeat, loneliness and isolation from all His followers, and even from His God.

The Resurrection proclaims that failure and defeat are transformed into victory. To expect to avoid the reality of death and all the defeats, failures and frustrations which death represents is to place hope in a false optimism and to court ultimate defeat. The Christian hope is rather in victory | through defeat, life through death – in short, Resurrection through the Cross. It is in the context of the full reality of death that the highest affirmation of life is made. The Cross and the Resurrection belong together.

The nature of healing

The illness from which man must be healed is his brokenness, with its resultant agony, sickness and death. It flows from the Fall as a river of pain and suffering, pouring out its destruction and death upon all men. Into this chaos, God extends His redemptive hand to save and to heal.

Healing in Christian understanding is inseparably related to and dependent upon the events of Good Friday and Easter. Here is the reconciling, healing act from which all healing flows. Christ's death and resurrection are more than an appeasing and atoning act. It was the Lord of *all* creation who participated in our agony, sickness and death, gaining the victory for the whole of creation.

Man's present condition is a tragic modification of God's intent for him and is only temporary in nature. Healing, here and now, must of necessity be incomplete but it points to that great day when God's ultimate purposes will be consummated, and when there shall be no more tears and no more sickness.

The three dimensional nature of healing

Healing is three dimensional because man lives in three dimensions, all of which are under the effects of the Fall. Man lives in relationship to God. Man lives in relationship to himself as a person. Man lives in relationship with his brothers.

The total resources of God's healing are available to man and are limited only by man's acceptance of them. These resources range from a cup of cold water, penicillin, the touch of a hand or open heart surgery to union with Him. He utilizes both Bennett respirators and the Eucharist. Both are His healing gifts to His created and cherished family.

His healing is not only directed toward a selected few. It is His deepest desire that the entire family of man be reached and understand itself as the family of God. Every act of healing is directed toward that end – the hypodermic injection (even improved fertilizers) as well as the use of Word and Sacrament.

The United Nations Disarmament Conferences, civil rights movements, marital counseling – all may be seen in the light of His healing intent.

The unity of man and healing

Until recently healing has been viewed as the unique concern of medicine. Man was thought to be divisible, and that part known as “body” was the domain of the physician. Similarly, the emotions were seen as the primary concern of the psychiatrist and social maladjustments as the realm of the sociologist and social worker. Classrooms were filled with minds whose presence was facilitated by bodies, whereas churches were filled with “souls”. Small wonder, that the Psalmist and his fellow sufferers down through the ages expressed their agony in the cry “no man cared for me”.

Healing is directed at all dimensions of man's existence and is most effective when its resources are concerted towards this goal. This is to say that man, rather than his parts, is the object of healing. Even Socrates understood this. He was asked by his nephews why medicine in a neighboring province was manifestly more successful than in their own. His reply was: “because there they treat the person and thus heal his parts.” As this is being written a room boy brought breakfast to my room. Noting that I had not gone to the dining room, he asked with obvious concern if I was sick. His concern for me was relieved only when I explained that I was busy and not ill. His smile of relief spoke eloquently of his awareness of me as a person and it relieved both my loneliness and my anxiety. The appropriate descriptive word for what took place in that simple act is “healing”.

The burden of correction is on the Christian Church. Today's Biblical scholars have rediscovered the holistic nature of man. Parallel discoveries are coming to light in other disciplines – medicine, social work, psychiatry, to name but a few. Perhaps never in the history of man has the time been more propitious for the potential acceptance of the Christian definition of man and healing. Most disciplines today accept in theory at least a concept of man's wholeness. Yet the Church alone can say, and say with authority, that wholeness is realized only when our lives are in reality “hid with Christ in God”. It is His wholeness which is offered and made available to us through the Word, Baptism, and the Eucharist.

The role of the congregation in healing

The congregation occupies a position of centrality in God's healing purposes. To the congregation is committed the Word of Reconciliation. It proclaims that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself”. While this has been too frequently

interpreted as a promissory note, which would become a reality only in the Resurrection, it is in fact a present actuality. He is today calling, gathering, enlightening, sanctifying and bringing us into union with Him.

The congregation has been prone to think of itself alone as the recipient of the healing which issues forth from the pulpit, the altar and the font. The congregation is more than that; it is *mission*, not merely *mission field*. It should be the community of the healed and the healing. It is often only an assembly of strangers who recognize no active healing relationship to each other, or to the broad community. The “lonely crowd” is often found in the church pew. The congregation can become a community only when its members, through the healing power of Christ, become one with Him and therefore one with each other. The congregation, however imperfect, then realizes itself to be the Church, the Body of Christ, and healing takes place. Until this identification of the congregation with Christ and His healing power is accepted, or acknowledged, healing will be seen primarily in terms of crisis and will remain the domain of the professional.

Life in the congregation should be a most profound experience in the healing community. My fellows, baptized into the same faith, carrying the same ultimate commitment in their lives, hearing the same reconciling word, having partaken of the same Sacrament of His Presence should love me. If they love me, I will be healed. And in my love for them I will participate in their healing. I will no longer have to hide behind masks and pretense, fearing that if they know me they | will not love me. Nor will I find it pleasurable to spread abroad findings of the unlovely which I may discover beneath the masks of others. My love for them, in Christ, will be healing.

Perhaps peace can be defined as the realization that being known, we are still loved. We experience God's healing and His peace when we see and understand that God knows us through the instruments of brothers who are His agents and His incarnational presence.

This peace is not to be interpreted in “spiritual” terms, with dualistic implications. When Christ said “My peace I give unto you” He conferred a total whole peace; that peace was hammered out in the agony of the Incarnation, of Gethsemane, of Golgotha and the Resurrection. It had to do with the flowing blood, His forsakenness by the Father. Apprehended, it is a peace from His totality to my totality. It operates in my thinking, my feeling, my body chemistry, and it influences the character of my relationship with my brother.

Though this peace is never fully realized in our relationship with each other, and marks of imperfection do remain, a part of the glory of the Redemption is that we are acceptable even in our imperfection. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.”

In God's peace there comes further assurance still. His peace transforms the greatest enemy, death, into the greatest victory. I dare not die alone. And I need not. I may die in Him. This power over death is mediated through my brothers. If death is the “goal” of disease, life is the goal of God's total healing. Healed, I cannot die, for “death has been swallowed up in victory”. “Because He lives, I too shall live.” St. Francis expressed it, “For it is in dying that we are born unto eternal life.”

“Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.” |

The healing of man

Man, an object of special concern

In surveying the vastness of the universe the Psalmist exclaims in wonder to God, “What is man that thou are mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for

him?" (Ps. 8:4). Even though man seems but an insignificant speck of dust among the galaxies, he is a special object of God's concern and has been called to participate with God in subduing the earth and having dominion over it (Genesis 1; Ps. 8).

Man in brokenness

And yet this man is in trouble from every point of view. Christians believe that this trouble dates back (in man's experience), to man's rebellion against his Creator, which broke the relationship God had intended. This rebellion introduced, among other things, chaos, sickness, and death into man's life (Genesis 3). The brokenness of man is real, no matter how he is viewed. A physician sees man invaded by disease, broken by injury, or failing by age. A psychotherapist sees man at war with himself and others, distorting gifts which were intended to enrich his life so that they become instruments of destruction instead. Sociologists see broken relationships between individuals, sexes, races, and classes, to name a few. Instead of living in a community of love and mutual support, men wreak havoc with aggressive acts or build barriers between each other. Philosophers see man exploiting knowledge and prostituting it to purposes which vitiate rather than build up hope for the redemption of creation groaning in the travail of its brokenness.

Definition:

- Secular: that which has its basis in natural phenomena and endowments without reference to revelation
- Religious: that which men associate with religion, whether good or bad
- Spiritual: that which can be associated with the Spirit of God with special reference to revelation the moral dimension, as distinct from the mental and emotional |

Inadequate efforts to heal brokenness

The modern world reveals many secular and religious attempts to heal this brokenness and to help men to live more constructively. As we survey these attempts we see that they suffer from a fatal flaw – they do not take into account the complexity of the problem. For instance, an individual man cannot be considered in isolation from his fellowmen. The life of each individual is deeply affected by what his fellows do, and conversely, what he does affects the whole of society. Man is inseparably bound up with his fellowmen. And even within the individual himself, there is a complex interdependence of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual factors.

Secular efforts to heal man are often concentrated on improvement in physical, mental and emotional life without taking into account the role of the spiritual which God means to pervade all of man's existence. Secular efforts, made in ignorance of the spiritual dimension, leave man with insufficient power to cope with sin in its various forms. They also leave him without an adequate purpose in life, without resources to meet death, and without the hope and assurance of eternal life.

Religious efforts to heal men have often been characterized by a tendency to belittle the reality and importance of man's physical nature and to concentrate instead on the "soul" even to identification of the body with evil. Along with this attitude has also come a deprecation and stifling of wholesome enjoyment of life. In addition, many religious efforts in both non-Christian and Christian circles are affected by other weak – even harmful – forms of thought and practice. Such things as extreme forms of mysticism, emotionalism, or asceticism, are far from spiritual according to God's standards.

The unity of man

All of these efforts – whether secular or religious – are further complicated by the fact that the secular and religious efforts to heal man in the modern world have often been carried on in separation and isolation from each other, in negation of the basic unity of man. Even in its best form this secular and religious compartmentalizing of man is contrary to Biblical teaching which points to a close connection not only between man's physical and psychic experience, but also between his | physical, psychic and spiritual experience. Man's bodily functions are affected by his joys and sorrows. The status of his physical and mental health often reflects the moral defeats and victories in his life. The terms “body” and “soul” are sometimes introduced as if they could be regarded or treated as separate categorical entities. Even though the Biblical writers use such words as body and soul in reference to human experiences, (also mind, heart, bowels) they do not conceive of the soul or the body as something separate and distinct from the man himself, or as parts of the larger whole. When the “soul rejoices” it is the whole man who rejoices; when the “body suffers”, it is the whole man who suffers. Whatever man experiences in his body or his soul is the experience of man's whole person, the self. He cannot be divided or fragmented.

The Church's concern for the whole man in the present context of brokenness

In spite of heroic efforts to heal man, man is still living far below his potential. Something is radically wrong.

In the spiritual dimension vast numbers of individuals and societies are burdened with a sense of past failure. This sense of guilt prevents them from dealing energetically and creatively with the opportunities of the present. Others have no aim or goal in life and are weighed down with a sense of frustration, despair and fear, especially in view of the inescapability of death. Still others are struggling with demonic forces in themselves and the world against which they do not have sufficient resources. They are caught in the midst of temptation without sufficient powers of discernment or resistance.

But in Christ and His Church there is a solution to these problems – a way to cope with feelings of guilt – a worthy ideal – deliverance from the fear of death – a sense of purpose and destiny for life – power to overcome destructive forces in the individual and society – the assurance of final victory. The holding up of Christ before man in his brokenness is a unique and necessary act of healing.

In the physical dimension the Church has much lost ground to recover. The belittling of man's body and the material world found in many philosophies and religions, has also crept into the thought and action of the Church. This has resulted in suspicion of science and an insufficient concern for the | physical problems of man and society – problems such as disease, poverty, the population explosion, and the irresponsible use of natural resources.

The first step to be taken by the Church in this area of concern is an affirmation of the goodness of God's creation in all of its living and material forms. The goodness of creation, including man's body with its various natural drives such as hunger and sex, is affirmed by God's declaration of Genesis 1 “and it was good”, as well as by Paul's statement to Timothy “For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. 4:4). In an even more convincing way, the historical events of the Incarnation and Resurrection testify to the goodness of life in the body. In Christ we see that the body is a worthy vehicle for the accomplishment of God's purpose both in this world and the world to come.

The second step demanded of the Church by concern for the physical dimension is an affirmation of the worthiness and usefulness of Christian involvement, as well as affirmation of the necessity for Christian action in the physical dimension. The physical needs of man are not areas of optional concern for Christians, but are the very arena in which true religion expresses itself (Compare the description of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25 and see James 1:27). Christ in His life of ministry is the personification of concern for the hunger and sickness of men.

The third step which the Church is called to make is the joyful, energetic, and courageous entrance into the physical/social problems of men in both research and application. Many human maladies, both individual and societal, are still awaiting the discovery of effective treatments, while many other maladies, for which treatments have been found, continue to break men's lives for want of people who care enough to apply these treatments in difficult situations. Again, Jesus is the pioneer who leads the way, having worked so energetically that people thought he was "beside himself" – "who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12).

In the area of the emotional dimension of man's life, failure to sufficiently appreciate the value and place of wholesome emotions given by God has sometimes driven creative men of the world of art, music, and letters out of the Church, and sometimes even out of society itself. Thus, both the | Church and the world have been deprived of the beauty and variety of expression in life. Often ostracism of artists has ended in extreme personal agony and tragedy for people with sensitive natures. As in the case of the physical dimension, God calls the Church to reaffirm the creative goodness of the natural emotions and artistic temperament of man and to reaffirm the value of expressing these gifts in art and other cultural forms.

Finally, in the dimension of the mind, there is evidence of both understressing and overstressing intellectual processes. The Church has often felt threatened by the scientific method and has regarded the intellect as the enemy of faith instead of its ally – thus making intellectuals and people with analytic gifts of mind feel uncomfortable. The Church must be reminded that Christ does not demand a blind faith based on ignorance or on rejection of reason; but, rather, that He does invite experimentation. In His words and actions He provided the materials. Christ said, "Taste and see", "Take and learn". Paul admonished "Test all things; hold fast that which is good." Some things, accepted in faith, may be beyond verification at present, but this does not mean that they are to be considered as contrary to reason. Even in the field of science there are unknowns. Until the unknowns become known, either in this age or in the age to come, the complexity of man and the world in which he lives is a challenge to man to muster and apply all his gifts of mind to research, inductive and deductive reasoning, planning and administering.

In the area of overstress on intellectual processes, the Church's emphasis on knowledge of Biblical or doctrinal teachings has often been stressed to the exclusion of regard for the importance of the roles of the emotional and the physical in carrying out acts of healing. Christ points the way to both science and religion when he shows impatience with knowledge which remains only theoretical.

Conclusion

In the foregoing various facets of man's brokenness have been considered, and some of the attempts to heal this brokenness have been described. Attention has been directed to some special attitudes and actions for the Church to consider. In Christ, God has given the Church resources to help man attain the wholeness which he needs in order to fulfill his role in God's creation. |

The context of healing

Basic factors in the context of the healing mission

The context (i.e., the total environment, including such things as religions, philosophies and cultures) in which the healing mission of the Church is carried on is so diverse as almost to defy description within the compass of one brief statement. In general, it can be said that the healing ministry is not performed in a vacuum but is directed toward people, people who are profoundly affected by the milieu in which they live. Thus, the Christian minister of healing has the responsibility to know as much as possible about that environment and his own relationship to it so that he may truly enter into the patient's situation with love.

One of the basic factors to be pointed to in the context of the healing mission is the attitude of people, in their religion and culture, toward the world. For example, whereas Christianity, on the basis of the belief in the Biblical accounts of creation and the Incarnation, is world affirming, some other religions and cultures are negative in their attitude toward the temporal, regarding it as only transitory or unreal, and therefore of little importance. Thus, in the classical Hindu view there is reality only in the supreme world soul, which view eventually robs this life of real meaning. Yet other faiths, such as Islam on the one side, and extreme forms of animism on the other, as well as certain types of secularism, are strong in affirmation of the world. These attitudes make a great deal of difference in the way in which adherents of these religions understand themselves and receive the Church's ministry of healing.

Another factor in the context of the healing mission is man's understanding of the relation of the physical and the spiritual in the cause and treatment of illness. Whereas a Biblical understanding of man views him as a unity, Christians have often tended to break this unity into a duality of physical and spiritual elements. Science has also destroyed the unity by giving its attention to the physical and either neglecting or denying the spiritual. On the other hand, many societies in which the Church seeks to practice its healing ministry hold together the physical and the spiritual regarding disorder in the latter as the cause for physical disorders. In such a culture, a healer who deals with man's body must also take into account what the patient believes about the influence of the spiritual. |

Related to the above factor is man's understanding of God, an understanding which may lie anywhere between the extremes of absolute atheism and a completely personal concept of God who is actively immanent in the life of man. Any, who make an attempt at total healing, must take this into consideration.

The development of different systems of medicine in the various parts of the world is yet another part of the context in which the Church's ministry of healing is set. Although the measure of success may vary greatly, some of these systems have developed to a high degree of sophistication and have produced desirable results. Above all, it is to be borne in mind that these systems and their practitioners generally have the respect of the people within their purview, a fact which deserves consideration even though the systems themselves may appear to be overlaid with superstition and magic, and may often include distinctly harmful practices and effects.

Yet another aspect of the context which requires the attention of the Christian healer is the economic factor. History tells us that an excessive affluence may lead to a loss of spiritual values, or an excessive poverty may lead to dehumanization. Both of these situations call for healing.

The implications of the Incarnation for the context of the healing mission

It is obvious that the Church has not always been cognizant of, much less has it adequately understood, the context in which it has sought to practice its healing ministry. A lack of understanding of the implications of the Incarnation has been one factor in the Church's failure to take seriously the context of its healing mission. In the Incarnation Christ came within creation as a creature to recreate it. As His body, the Church is the instrument of His recreating activity. The Gospel is incarnate in Jesus Christ and becomes meaningful in a particular situation insofar as it relates to that situation. When these implications of the Incarnation have not been understood, there has been: (1) a tendency to equate Christianity and its healing ministry to Western culture, thought patterns and expressions; (2) a dichotomy of the world into sacred-secular; and (3) a failure to see God at work in history or in agencies commonly called "non-Christian". |

The importance of the cultural context for the healing mission

The Christian ministry of healing cannot be limited to any particular cultural context. In Western heritage the necessity to relate Christianity to culture is almost taken for granted. Christian beliefs are continually being restated in relation to each situation. However, when Christianity is taken to another culture, specifically Western cultural heritages are all too often uncritically exported with the Gospel. The Christian healer, in whatever ministry he is engaged, has two obligations: (1) to know himself, and (2) to know the world about himself. We have to know what is basic to our Christian belief and what is mere expression of these beliefs in their cultural context. In a new situation, we have to know the people of the world about us and their cultural heritages in order to understand their expressions of belief, their hopes and fears.

The equating of Christianity to Western thought and culture has led to culture clash in our ministry of healing. Whereas the village healer deals with a patient in the context of his environment, the Western pattern is usually one of separation from that environment. The quality of our healing ministry has to be evaluated in terms of its total beneficial results instead of in terms of scientific excellence alone.

Additional attention should be given to: (1) the ways in which every healer can be led into a deeper understanding of the patient's cultural background; (2) the sympathetic investigation of the relationship between Western scientific medicine and the indigenous medical practices with the aim of preserving that which is of value in indigenous systems, while rejecting that which is harmful.

The distortions of a sacred-secular dichotomy in the cultural context of the healing mission

The Christian ministry of healing is directed toward the whole person in community. Whereas in many cultures there is a concept of wholeness in the world view, in Western cultures a division between sacred-secular has been generally accepted encouraging medical practitioners to treat physical disorders mechanistically and pastors to treat spiritual disorders independently. The Biblical view of the priesthood of all believers must lead us back to the understanding that every Christian must have a concern for the total person. |

This dichotomy between sacred and secular has been transmitted into other cultures in the tidy division of form (ordained and lay) and function (he can preach but not distribute Communion; he can cure but not witness with a Christian concern and love). The division between sacred and secular has left the impression that one can serve Christ only by serving in a Christian institution. The necessity for every member

of the Body of Christ to be Christlike in the peculiar situations and with the peculiar opportunities that he has in his role as an individual is overlooked. The ministry which a Christian doctor fulfills is just as much the healing ministry of Christ whether carried out in a Church institution or in a “secular” institution.

Principles of cultural appropriation for the healing mission

Those engaged in the ministry of healing should see God at work in all history. We tend to view God in action only in the particular organization of which we are members. Behind this viewpoint lies a failure to realize that Christ in His Incarnation worked in the context of the world into which He came, that He has continued to work through history and that we meet him in people. When we have this limited view, our actions are liable to take one of two extreme forms: either we tear down everything which is not specifically Christian (e.g., pagan temples); or we uncritically amalgamate elements of natural religion with Christianity. Christ was incarnate in a particular situation at a particular time. Though He spoke out unequivocally against any attempt by man or religious systems to control or manipulate God, He did draw on the cultural heritage and religious thought of the times to form the frame of reference for His ministry of healing.

The validity of appropriation of elements from other cultures and systems of thought will rest on the extent to which such elements serve, or could be made to serve, as vessels of the sacramental presence of God in the world. We cannot, however, prepare a list of do's and don'ts which will relieve the person engaged in the healing ministry from searching, prayerful, and discriminating thought. Christianity is not a collation of general rules, but is rather a life in Christ, responding in His Spirit to every situation. One of the most trying privileges of the Christian life is choice, God's gift of freedom, His gift of responsibility for discerning thought and action.

Generally, we tend to cite as evidence of indigenization such external things as architecture, liturgy, and language. | But the healing Gospel, in its formulation and in its practice, must go deeper, it must be relevant to the basic situation and culture in which it finds itself. The healing ministry of the Church must be carried out always in the light of the Incarnation, by men, to persons in their own situations. These three factors – Incarnation, self and community – have to be examined continually in order that the ministry of healing may remain relevant and not become clouded by archaic, foreign and meaningless mumbo-jumbo.

Conclusions

An examination of the context of the Church's healing mission in the light of the Incarnation, leads to the following conclusions:

- a. That all who are engaged in the healing ministry, should become increasingly sensitive to the fact that the man whom they seek to heal may live in an environment which is based on an understanding of the world, of matter, and of man's relation to both of these, which may be entirely different from that of Christian understanding.
- b. That there is a need to come to a fuller understanding of God's total relationship to the total world of His creation, to be attuned to what God is doing in all areas of life, and to refrain from categorical elimination of the possibility that God is active in the healing process which is taking place when healing is accomplished through non-Christians, or through so-called unscientific methods.
- c. That healing must be accomplished within the context of the cultural situation

where the person lives and within the stage of his personal development. |

The Christian congregation as healing community

We believe and affirm the following aspects of the Christian congregation as healing fellowship and community:

The local congregation as God's healing community

As the local and present manifestation of the life of Christ in the Church, a congregation owes its existence to the summoning and gathering call extended by God through the proclamation of the saving Gospel. This proclamation creates, sustains, and sends forth the Church on Christ's mission. The fulfillment of this mission is accomplished by preaching, teaching, edifying, nurturing, worshipping, witnessing, ministering and administering. We believe and affirm that healing in its fullest, dynamic, and eschatological sense is an ongoing ministry of the Church. Christ leads us toward health as we continue to be healed and to heal in His Name amid the mutually reinforcing and supporting ministries of His Church.

Wherever and whenever the people of God assemble in Christ's Name, Christ is present. There is no diminution in the gifts of the Spirit as they are localized and made specific in Christ's work in and through the congregation assembled around Word and Sacrament. On the contrary, here is where these corporate gifts take on particular and effective power in expressing that unity which the Triune God has bestowed on His people of every place and every age. There is healing in this unity and continuity.

The beginning point of the congregation may be where two or three are gathered together in Christ's Name. The Christian family can be a congregation. Since the call to faith and life in the congregation may often mean rejection, temporary or permanent, by relatives and friends, it is important to be reminded that both, structured and unstructured, formal and informal, sub-groups or cells within the congregation – all may be important vehicles and channels of healing. In Christ Jesus, there is no self-made or self-sufficient individual. Man's health and ultimately his salvation is determined by the quality and nature of his relationship to his fellowmen and to God.

The corporate nature of the healing community

To live in Christ means to work and serve in a congregation. This is synonymous with "living in the Spirit" and with | "the life of God". Such a life is enjoyed as fellowship with all "other members of the body of Christ, and is manifested in particular by the practice of forgiveness, long-suffering, and subordination of oneself to the needs of others. A congregation, "therefore, is no mere aggregation of individuals. Interpersonal relationships are also the object of God's redemptive intent. There is healing in such a life of fellowship. Within this fellowship healing may be found, moreover, in acknowledging loneliness, pain and suffering as a way of participating in the sufferings of the Lord.

Worship in the healing community

In her sacramental life, healing is made available within a congregation by the kind of worship that mediates and celebrates those saving events to which the Scriptures testify: the Incarnation, the Cross and the Resurrection. By baptism the individual is incorporated into that new humanity which Christ came to create, the redeemed and redemptive community. This provides an experience of solidarity. The Eucharist

creates an awareness of continuity with the saints of all ages. Both the solidarity and the continuity of the worshipping congregation offer the means of overcoming the fear of lostness and aloneness as her members are healed and heal. Through sacramental worship and sacrificial giving, self included, the life of the congregation is to be fostered as one that is joyful and full of thanksgiving.

The totality of healing within the Christian congregation

In the light of the proclamation of the Gospel by the congregation, all aspects of healing made available through the medical profession and its allies, be they preventive or therapeutic, counseling or comforting, are understood as evidences and demonstrations of God's gracious intent toward all men: forgiveness of sin, life, salvation. At the same time, inability to eliminate death is seen as a reminder of man's limitations. As every illness, even inevitable death, is an instrument of God's judgment over sin, so, too, death itself serves as the gateway to victorious and unending life with Christ.

The healing mission of the Christian congregation

Living as the body of Christ in a given location at a certain time, a congregation comes into being not for the purpose of withdrawing from the common life but for invading and penetrating the surrounding community, in order to carry forward the victory won by Christ on the Cross and certified by His Resurrection. Having been called by the Lord to service and to sharing, a congregation finds its fulfillment and wholeness in losing its life for others.

The congregation is the summoned and gathered community sent into the common life of every day. Where the individual Christian is, there is the vital growing edge of the fellowship. Under the Cross the servant Church follows Christ in the pattern of His Incarnation. Healed by Christ, the Church heals as He did and finds life by losing it. The individual Christian, as a little Christ, is to be a man or woman for others. The Christian congregation is to be a fellowship reaching toward, and open to those not of the household of faith, for the Christian Church is a minority sent to the whole of humanity.

In its sacrificial life with and for others, a congregation assumes the burden of ministering to individual men in their totality on the conviction that no area of life lies outside the scope of God's redemption and restoration. Accordingly, members of a congregation view their assembly as an exhibit of the kind of reconciliation God intends for the total universe. There is healing for those who are participants in this grand design, and the whole congregation thus redeemed, restored and reconciled, rejoices and gives thanks both in being healed and in acting as God's healing agent.

Working within a given community, the congregation has the responsibility not only of proclaiming the Gospel but also of teaching God's law, its imperatives and its demands. In this activity, a congregation assumes the burden of prophetic ministry. The Church insists on personal and social justice and freedom with responsibility for all men. The Church condemns every form of injustice and servitude and declares and defends the inalienable rights of man as a creature of the Triune God, thereby witnessing on behalf of the goal of wholeness for all of society.

The eschatological nature of healing in the Christian congregation

A congregation in Christ has at work within it the powers of the age to come. Healing is one such power, whether manifested by the congregation, acting corporately as a community of believers, or through any of its individual members. Whatever | the

healing experienced in this life, it can be received as a guarantee of that ultimate perfect health and restoration in the Resurrection life.

Sharing in the victory of Christ over death, a congregation leads men to see death as the last and greatest enemy of the living God that was effectually overcome in the Resurrection. By corporate concern for members who are ill, as expressed, for example, in public and private prayers, by visitation, and in the use of the Eucharist, a congregation creates the kind of supporting context that offers healing by helping to dispel loneliness and fear, even the fear of death. The congregation which creates this kind of supporting context is a viable community which demonstrates that strength can multiply strength.

The ministry of healing

Misconceptions concerning ministry

One of those familiar words that needs constant correction for deepening our understanding of the healing mission is “ministry” (*diakonia*). The popular conception of ministry as a function of pastors only happily is yielding in some quarters to a wider understanding.

The word “diakonia” is translated into English sometimes as “ministry” and sometimes as “service”. Misconceptions which arise out of this double translation are present in the widespread dichotomy between the “ministry” of the Word by pastors and the “service” of social workers. It is as though “ministry” were something sanctified, or “spiritual”, and “service” were something mundane, or “secular”, still Christian, but of a somewhat lower order, because it is usually concerned with the “body” rather than the “soul”.

Another misconception that may influence our thinking is the historical development in the Church of an “order” of | deacons whose business it was to exercise diakonia. It is evident that the New Testament knows nothing of “orders” and “offices” but only of gifts and services and functions within the body of Christ, and that all who are called to the service of Christ are called to *diakonia* (1 Cor. 12:4-13).

The unity of the ministry of Christ

As is the case with many Biblical nouns, to find a solid base for understanding “ministry” or “service”, one must first go to the verb. And in this case, as in many others, the fundamental expression of this is in the revelation we have in Jesus Christ.

The Son of Man (Matt. 20:28) “came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many”. He was among His disciples not as one who sits at table, but “as one who serves” (Luke 22:27). It is evident that of all the characteristics of the promised Messiah, Jesus deliberately chose to fulfill the role of servant.

In His life of ministry to men we find a seamless robe of word and act: teaching, preaching, healing, feeding, washing feet, warning, comforting, loving, calling, empowering, challenging, uplifting, rehabilitating, forgiving, self giving for all men. This is *diakonia*, audible and visible.

This is seamless, unitary, integral. There were times when Jesus spoke; there were times when He healed. However, at no time, according to Scripture, did He heal without speaking. His acts of healing were an integral part of His proclamation of the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14f.; Luke 11:20). Indeed, the word used for His service of proclaiming (*keryssein*; noun: *kerygma*) means not merely “to preach” as it is commonly understood (mere verbalization as over against action), but

to speak with a power that brings about that which is proclaimed. This can be seen in Luke 4:18, where Jesus, at the beginning of His ministry in the synagogues at Nazareth, quotes Isaiah's prophecy concerning the coming Anointed One: "He [the Spirit of the Lord] has sent me to *proclaim* release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind... to *proclaim* the acceptable year of the Lord." It is not merely religious information He proclaims, but the Word itself in action, bringing about that which it says.¹ | Christ Himself is the proclamation (Luke 11:30. 32). His words are proclamation, His acts are proclamation (Matt. 11:20; 12:28), and above all, His Cross and empty tomb are proclamation. This unitary proclamation of Himself, His words, and His deeds, is His ministry to men for which His Father sent Him into the world.

His "sentness", His *mission*, reveals, expresses, and brings about the purpose of His Father for men, to save the world through Him (John 3:16f.). This is the basic determinant of His proclamation, of His ministry. When we speak of *proclamation*, as it has just been defined, we are speaking of the communication, the application to men of the content and meaning of God's purpose. When we speak of *ministry*, we are speaking more generally of the whole setting, the way and manner, the self-revealing, self-giving attitude, the relationship to men in which He did His proclaiming and thus carried out His Father's mission. He served by proclaiming. He proclaimed by serving, up to the zenith point of giving His life as a ransom for many. This was His mission.

The pattern of the ministry of Christ

In this short dissertation on the meaning of "ministry" as we see it in the life of Jesus, we find that His mission of ministry is a seamless robe in which word and act are indivisible parts of His proclamation, because He is indivisible, and His purpose is indivisible. But though the robe is seamless there is a pattern woven into it.

We learn something about the determinative effect of the purpose of His mission upon the pattern of His ministry in the incident in Mark 1:35-39, where Jesus was presented with a serious problem of priorities and took it to His Father in prayer. It must have torn His heart of love to turn His back on people waiting for His healing touch, but His answer is unequivocal: "'Let us go to the next towns, that I may preach there also [complete proclamation, as above]; for that is why I came out.' Then he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues *and* casting out demons." And the next story in Mark tells of Jesus healing a leper. He did not stop healing, but He put physical healing in its proper perspective. *Physical* healing remained an integral part of His ministry, but His ultimate aim was *total* healing (e.g., ten lepers). Physical healing was not an ultimate good in itself but was integrally connected with his ultimate purpose. Physical healing was bound inseparably to the ultimate aim because both | were motivated by love for men. Divine compassion cannot help helping in the face of human need of any kind, and it is an essential part of the nature of divine love that this help is given freely, with no kind of compulsion, with no strings attached. But it is also an essential part of the nature of divine love that it cannot rest with curing outward symptoms only or with anything less than full healing for the whole man. How can healing with no conditions be combined with healing for an ultimate purpose? The answer is found in Jesus Christ, Who is love personified.

¹ It is interesting to note that in Hebrew and in Greek, from the Christian usage, words for "word" can also denote "thing" or "act". This is of a piece with the understanding of the creative Word of Genesis 1, the effective Word of Isaiah 55:11, and the Incarnate Word of John 1.

The ministry of the Church, the Body of Christ

The Church, as His body and the instrument through which He continues His work of healing love, must reflect both His impulse and His purpose with discretion, never over-emphasizing the one at the expense of the other, nor, for that matter, trying to find a mediating synthesis. In a sense, the ministry of healing love is the ministry of every Christian. But it is also true that there are varied gifts of the Spirit in the one Body, and the ministers of the Word and of healing may have to concentrate on one or the other aspect of the unitary ministry of Jesus. But there are never two ministries, two mutually exclusive alternatives to approach men: there are only two aspects, two parts, of *one* ministry.

We fail in our total ministry in the degree that we fail to keep the impulse and the ultimate aim in fruitful tension in a unitary ministry. This happens when either the impulse or the ultimate aim is elevated to the status of an absolute principle at the expense of the other. For example, trying to state the justification for medical mission in either of the following ways:

- a. Medical mission must be done out of pure unconditional love with no ulterior purpose, as an expression of the love of Christ.
- b. Medical mission is a wedge, an opening, a bait for the real work of evangelism.

To overemphasize one of two complementary, though apparently contradictory, truths held together in balanced tension invariably results in unbalanced truth and action.

It is the whole congregation as a servant community that is called by the Lord and entrusted with His total ministry. | While we must be ever thankful for special gifts of ministry, we must remember the lesson of the interacting members of the body in 1 Cor. 12, and never let the prominence of any special ministry detract from the importance of each ministry in the community. What gives each ministry value is not the particular function itself, but the love that informs the function. This is the essential ingredient in the healing ministry of every member, whether, it be expressed in a casual word or a carefully prepared sermon, in performing a major operation or tending the children during the operation, in washing feet or writing a book of theology. Each member needs to be brought to realize that he cannot be whole unless others around him are whole, and so he needs progressively to be healed of his blindness in order to see with Christ's eyes, and to meet with His love, the overwhelming opportunities for ministry in every situation. When that love increases more and more the understanding and insight of the Christian, then he will be able to meet the needs of people at the place where they are with the word or act that they need.

It is Jesus' ministry as a whole that furnishes the example and determines the ways in which we are to exercise our ministry. It is the post-Crucifixion, Resurrection and Pentecost Spirit of Christ Who calls and heals us and furnishes the impulse and inspires our ministry. It is here, and not in specific commands, that our ministry finds its basic impulse. Even if we did not have Matt. 28:19, "Go ye therefore..." Christianity would still be a missionary religion. Specific commands are reminders and guideposts, to be taken in their setting, and not as universal determinants (Matt. 10:5-8; James 5:13-16; cf. e.g. Matt. 19:21). The Spirit, not the verbal command, is the determinative impulse.

It is the Spirit Who is the source of all gifts of ministry and of the supreme gift of love that should inform them. The Spirit implants these gifts in men and nurtures them by fixing the attention of men upon the Servant-glory of the Savior, thereby changing them "into His likeness from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:17f.). And that

glory is His glory, Who came not to be served, but to serve, the glory that enabled and moved Him to wash feet, to love till death, the glory of the One Who was completely and sovereignly free to love, to serve, to create, to restore, to heal, to make straight, to cleanse, to build up, to save, to make free. The freedom to exercise creative love, with Christ, in Christ, like Christ – “this comes from the Lord Who is the Spirit.” |

The methods of healing

The healing methods of the Church

All methods of healing, employed by Christians within the framework of the Christian community, point beyond themselves to their source in Christ. Traditionally, there has been a tacit assumption within the Church that only those healing methods employed by the institutional Church (e.g., Word, Sacrament, prayer) are sanctified or holy. We must acknowledge the positive function of these means of healing both within their historical context and within the contemporary life of the Church. However, the assumption that these are the *only* means of healing of the Church leads to problems in the Church's understanding of its mission. First, in an attempt to take seriously once again the commission of Christ to heal the Church has attempted to resurrect ancient methods of healing and to establish them as the *only* valid response to that commission. Healing services, anointing with oil, and laying on of hands are among the early practices which are being reintroduced into the twentieth century with little thought to what has happened during the intervening centuries. Secondly, the tendency to regard the institutional methods of the Church as sanctified and all other methods as secularistic has meant that the healing practices of Christian physicians, psychiatrists, social workers, etc., have been regarded as outside the framework of a Christian ministry to the sick.

Although we in no way question the healing power which is resident within those methods that have been identified with the institutional Church, we strongly urge that these methods be employed only in the closest possible relationship with the practice of medicine and its ancillary professions. Secondly, we urge further exploration into ways by which the work of healing carried on through various helping professions may be recognized by the Church as a “sanctified” work and so included within the Church's frame of reference.

The inter-relationship of various healing methods

All of the healing methods of the Church (including non-institutional methods) are characterized by emphasis or concern for the whole man and by acknowledgement that total healing comes from God. In the past, the Church has regarded its special province as that of the soul, and has thus chosen and | evaluated methods solely in terms of its understanding of man's relationship to God. Thus, both pastor and physician have seen the *pastoral* ministry to the sick as essentially passive, as one of comfort and encouragement rather than of healing. The recent renewal of interest in the mission of healing within the Church is an encouraging sign that the commission to heal is being interpreted currently as inclusive of all healing. This renewal dare not lead to a competition between the Church's mission and other recognized and acknowledged methods of healing. The Church's ministry must be set within a framework large enough to include all those who perform valid healing functions. All valid healing finds unity in the oneness of God, Who is the source of all healing. Team ministries, which include healers from various helping professions, are to be

encouraged particularly within those institutions of healing (e.g., hospital, congregational clinic) where various healing functions are carried out under one roof.

The congregation as the integration center for various healing methods

The Christian ministry of healing belongs to the congregation as a whole, and only within that framework should specialized methods of healing be considered. Concentration of attention on the sophisticated methods and dramatic results of professionals has blinded us to the fact that healing for the majority of people, occurs outside of the professional context of either organized religion or medicine. We must broaden our understanding of the healing mission of the Church so that every member of the Christian community will be able to see himself within it. The congregation has the responsibility to provide opportunities for its members to participate in the healing ministry through the organization of volunteer programs such as visitation of the sick in hospital and community. At the same time we must find ways to draw into the Church's ministry the talents and skills of those who are specialists in healing – physicians, psychiatrists, social workers, etc., and, of course, pastors. Such specialists have received unique gifts of healing from God and the use of these gifts within the larger context of the healing community should be encouraged.

The relation of the method to the person of the healer

The method of healing must always be considered as related to the person who employs it. Both medical schools and theological seminaries have been guilty of distorting the healing | process by too great an emphasis on the method of healing. Often physicians, pastors and other practitioners of the healing arts have found escape from personal involvement in the healing process by hiding behind their healing methods (e.g., scientific objectivity or ministry of Word and Sacrament). A method can become destructive rather than healing in the hands of such a person. Recently, emphasis on the importance of pastoral care and on provision of clinical training for pastors has done much to foster more helpful relationships in pastoral visitations to the sick, pastoral counseling, etc. It is important now to guard against a tendency within this movement to put so much emphasis on the person that the methods of healing (Word, Sacrament, prayer, etc.) are neglected: a proper balance must be maintained. Serious attention should be given to the person of the healer in the curriculum of medical schools and in the practice of medicine. Joint meetings of pastors and physicians are one way to force attention away from methods and toward the persons of the healers, so that the importance of person-to-person relationships and personal rather than impersonal involvement might be better understood.

Training for the healing ministry of the Church

The precise function of healing methods within the total context of the Church's mission can not be set down. Every Christian has responsibility in the ministry of healing and should be given training appropriate to his participation in that ministry. Materials for training courses should be made available for use in Bible classes and other organizations of the Church. Such courses should include not only theoretical instruction concerning the scope of the Church's healing mission, but also practical training in visitation of the sick, rehabilitation of the mentally ill, involvement in community outreach, etc. At the same time, special courses of training in the healing mission of the Church should be provided for those who function as professional

healers. Seminaries should be encouraged to develop courses that will provide a thorough survey of the Church's healing ministry along with periodic visitations to general and mental hospitals. A minimum of three months of clinical pastoral education should be a requirement for graduation for every seminary student. Furthermore, training courses in the healing mission of the Church should be made available to medical students and to doctors, as well as to members of ancillary professions, either during or shortly after their professional training in order to facilitate their self-understanding as healers in the name of Christ.