

UNIT 3B: PASTORAL AND ASCETICAL THEOLOGY

72: Healing and Deliverance

Note: This lecture with its three appendices is quite long and is intended as a resource for reflection and practical implementation. The audio lecture podcast on Ancient Faith Radio covers pages 1-14 and 20-22.

For the Orthodox Christian, the confrontation with both physical and spiritual illness requires healing and deliverance of both the body and the soul of each person. The demarcations between what is physical and what is spiritual, what is of the body and what is of the soul, what is healing and what is deliverance have been drawn at different points in different ages. Even today there is still considerable disagreement within both the wider Christian community and the explicitly Orthodox Christian community about the practice of healing and deliverance, as well as the theology of illness.

There are no easy answers to these ambiguities of demarcation and shifting cultural attitudes. Each Orthodox Christian should exercise their free will in deciding how to approach healing and deliverance, but hopefully their decisions will be informed by prayer and a critical awareness of the experience and perspective of Jesus, the early Church, the saints, the wider contemporary Christian community and the Orthodox Church today.

1. Christ the Great Physician

Jesus began his public ministry with a combination of teaching, preaching and healing. As St Matthew phrases it:

Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering

with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. Large crowds followed him....¹

The unity of this initial three-fold ministry in which teaching and preaching and healing was taking place constantly was to be typical of the ministry of Jesus, as was the attention that he attracted. Of particular importance was the manner in which the body, the mind and the soul were healed together.

Jesus was indeed implementing the advice of Proverbs 3:5-9:

Trust in God with all your heart,
and do not be excited by your own wisdom.

In all your ways make her [i.e. wisdom] known,
that she may make straight your ways,
[and your foot will not stumble].

Be not clever in your own eyes,
but fear God and turn away from every evil.

Then it will be a healing to your body
and treatment to your bones.

Honour the Lord from your just labours,
and offer him of your first fruits of righteousness....²

Jesus was also demonstrating that He himself was the Word sent from the Father, healing and delivering people when they "cried out to the Lord in their trouble (Psalm 107:19-20)."

In the story of healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law, St Matthew indicated that the power to heal which Jesus exercised was a direct fulfilment of the prophecy given in Isaiah 53:4 of how the suffering servant would bear "the griefs (or "sorrows") and "sickness" (or "pain") of the people of Israel:

¹ Matthew 4:23-24; cf. 9:35.

² Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (Eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 625; trans. of the Psalms by Johann Cook. Full translation of Septuagint (OT) from Greek to English available free online at: www.ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/

When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him. When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. This was to fulfil what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: 'He himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.'

Here, as often in both the Old and New Testaments the causes of illness, whether natural or spiritual, are not indicated nor perhaps known, but stress is placed upon the reality of the healing that has been effected by the power of God. There is often a deep sense that the very act of turning away from evil (Proverbs 3:7) opens the person to healing, because of a general awareness in both the Old and New Testaments that "diseases often result from sinful living."³

If Jesus was to be recognised as the Messiah, it was imperative that He be seen to heal the sick. This was what the people of Jesus' home village of Nazareth expected; and the people were outraged when Jesus told them:

No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.' And He said, 'Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown.'⁴

By pointing out to the Israelites in Nazareth that he would not be healing them, just as Elijah and Elisha had not healed their own people, but strangers, Jesus was telling them that were living in a sinful manner (Luke 4:25-30). Intriguingly, this phrase that Jesus quoted as a proverb, "Physician, heal thyself," does not appear anywhere in the Old Testament, but must have been part of the oral tradition at that time. It has come to mean that one should consider one's own faults, rather than criticize others.

³ Note on Isaiah 53:4 in New American Standard Bible, p. 1,031.

⁴ Luke 4:23-24

At this time when Jesus had been healing many people outside of Nazareth, John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus to find out if Jesus really was the Messiah. The reply from Jesus was:

Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the Gospel preached to them.⁵

Jesus was telling John and his disciples that “the clearly observable evidence” indicated that the ministry of the Messiah predicted by the prophet Isaiah was now happening.⁶ That evidence was primarily acts of healing. This was an early example of evidence-based evangelism. Both John and Jesus knew that an important sign of the coming of the Kingdom of God was that healings would happen, primarily for the Israelites.

If you were living in Galilee early in the first century, you would have come to know that there was this strange man from the obscure village of Nazareth who was wandering around the area, often sleeping rough and healing Israelites. That was His main activity—healing Israelites, first in the synagogue in Capernaum (Mark 1:21-28), then Simon Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31), then anyone ill “in the whole city” of Capernaum (Mark 1:32-34), then in “synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons” (Mark 1:38-39), then the leper who humbly told Jesus “If you are willing, you can make me clean” (Mark 1:40) and then the paralytic whose friends broke open the roof and lowered the stricken man down to Jesus (Mark 2:1-12).

As St Mark makes clear in his Gospel, it was only after all of these healings that Jesus began to call His disciples (Mark 2:14 f.) and heal on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-3.6). Soon Jesus would send the twelve disciples out with “authority over unclean

⁵ Luke 7:22.

⁶ See New American Study Bible note for Lk 7:22.

spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness” (Matthew 10:1). The disciples were told to preach, with a primary instruction to say: “The kingdom of heaven is at hand, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons” (Matthew 10:7-8). There is no doubt that Jesus saw Himself as engaged in a war with Satan, whom He described as “the strong man” who must be “bound” before his house could be plundered (Mark 3:27). As Mark reports after the very first healing in the synagogue in Capernaum, the people were “all amazed”, by this “new teaching [given] with authority! He [Jesus] commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him” (Mark 1:22-27). Today we can share that amazement at the power from God that Jesus demonstrated in many healings. So that is the perspective of Jesus: He healed to indicate that the Kingdom of God had come among us, that the kingdom of Satan had been bound, and that we needed to recognise this change in spiritual authority in order to gain physical and spiritual health.

The ultimate form of healing that Jesus offered humanity was to conquer death, to link humanity to eternal life (John 6:50). With the healing of Lazarus, which provoked the high priests to seek the death of Jesus, the extent of the authority that Jesus possessed became clear (John 11). Through His crucifixion and resurrection—which must be considered as a unity—Jesus indicated that he was going to prepare a way for us (John 14:2-3). That way was essentially that our physical bodies would, at least for a time until the Second Coming, become spiritual bodies. The healing that Jesus offered in first century Palestine remains available to us today.

2. The Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Church

How did the early Church continue to exercise this authority to heal which Jesus had demonstrated in His life, death and resurrection? Jesus sent out both the twelve

(Mark 6:7-12; Matthew 10:1-15; Luke 9:1-6) and the seventy (Luke 10:1-20) with specific orders to heal the sick. All of these disciples found, often to their surprise, that they had considerable power over both physical and spiritual sickness. After the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the risen Christ appeared to the eleven and concluded His commission to them with the words that they would “lay hands on the sick and they will recover” (Mark 16:18). These apostles continued to pray for specific people in need, such as the lame beggar at The Temple, who asked for money, but to whom Peter (with John) replied: “Look at us! I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk! (Acts 3:4, 6).

Furthermore, Peter made it clear to the Israelites who gathered round him that this healing had not taken place by his “own power or piety” (Acts 3:12). Rather, faith in Jesus Christ was responsible:

...on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.⁷

It was this healing that next day concerned the Sanhedrin “as to how this man has been made well” (Acts 4:9), but the Jewish authorities simply noted “that a noteworthy miracle has taken place” (Acts 4:16); and the early Christians were much encouraged to extend their “hand[s] to heal” (Acts 4:30).

This God-given power that Peter was exercising in the Temple precincts excited much attention in Jerusalem “to such an extent that [people in Jerusalem] even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them;” and people from near-by cities “were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed” (Acts 5:15-16). Clearly, in Jerusalem, the Apostolic Church was continuing the practice that Jesus had

⁷ Acts 3:16

implemented of healing those who were sick either spiritually or physically. Then, as Peter began to travel in his ministry, he was instrumental in healings to Aeneas in Lydda (Acts 9:32-35) and to Tabitha in Joppa [Jaffa] (Acts 9:36-43), as was Paul to the lame man at Lystra (Acts 14:8-11), to many in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-12), to Publius and others in Malta (Acts 28:7-9), and to Eutychus in Troas brought back to life after falling asleep and dying from a fall from a window (Acts 20:8-10).

These many examples make it clear that Paul Meyendorff is right to stress that "healing lies at the very centre of the Church's ministry."⁸ However, as Dr Meyendorff points out, both the healings of Jesus and those later in the early Church are linked to faith and repentance and "must always be seen in the context of Jesus' ministry, which is to reconcile the world with God."⁹ Just as "the healings of Jesus often aim[ed] to reintegrate the sick person into the community of faith," so the Apostolic Church performed healings "as signs of the kingdom" with "a focus on the life of the community, on the Church as the body of Christ..."¹⁰ The early Church certainly recognised that:

The very purpose of the Church is to heal us, to restore the rift between God and humanity which is caused by our sin and leads to death. This is achieved precisely when we are united to one another and to God in the body of Christ, which is the Church.¹¹

Thus to place an excessive stress on individual miracles of healing (whether of body or soul) is somewhat misleading, because the Church as a community seeks to heal ALL of its members.

As will be considered in later sections of this lecture, many of the Church's sacraments, especially baptism/chrisation and the Eucharist, have important roles to play in this process of healing. The early Church recognised the importance of these sacraments, but in the book of James, probably (along with Galatians) one of

⁸ *The Anointing of the Sick* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir Seminary Press [SVSP], 2009), p. 13.

⁹ Meyendorff, p. 15.

¹⁰ Meyendorff, pp. 16-17.

¹¹ Meyendorff, p. 19.

the earliest books of the New Testament, emphasis was placed on how the elders of the Church were to pray for the sick, anoint them with oil, and to then be confident that “the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick....” (James 5:14-15). As Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky points out, what is being affirmed here is not “a special ‘gift’ of healing”, but rather “a definitive form [and norm] which was to enter into the custom of the Church.”¹²

There is little information about precisely how this Anointing of the Sick (or Rite of Unction) was carried out in the Apostolic Church, but it was an act of some significance. The earliest evidence about the use of healing oil in the Post-Apostolic Church is found in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus (c. 170-c. 236) in which the bishop prays:

O God, as you make this oil holy, bestow your holiness upon those who are anointed with it. This is the oil with which you have anointed kings, priests, and prophets; grant that it may bring comfort to those who taste it, and health to those who use it.¹³

Unlike the position for both baptism and the Eucharist, in the Post-Apostolic Church, there is “no evidence of a formal liturgy of anointing the sick,” but the oil blessed in church (probably after the Eucharistic service) was most likely “taken home, kept in the ‘medicine cabinet,’ and used as needed.”¹⁴ Medical terminology was often applied to penance and confession, because of the view that: “The task of the confessor is to apply the proper medication to heal the penitent from his or her sin.”¹⁵ St Serapion, a fourth-century Egyptian bishop and friend of St Athanasius who

¹² *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: A Concise Explanation*, 3rd ed. (Platina, CA: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2005), p. 308. Note that Father Michael Pomazansky acknowledges some holy people do exercise “the gift of healing” as a sign that “the Church glorifies [them] in a special way.” P.317.

¹³ Cited by Meyendorff, p. 33.

¹⁴ Meyendorff, pp. 36, 34.

¹⁵ Meyendorff, p. 40.

had earlier been a monk and companion of St Anthony¹⁶ collected prayers over the oil, one of which concluded with the affirmation that blessed oil was “a medicament of life and salvation, unto health and soundness of soul and body and spirit, unto perfect well-being”.¹⁷ In the context of healing, it is important to note that the Hebrew word, “Messiah”, and the Greek word, “Christ”, both mean “the Anointed One.”

It was this search for what Sister Benedicta Ward has called “the full life of the Spirit of God” or what St Serapion called “perfect well-being” which prompted a significant number of Christians—viewed by Romans as “atheists because they did not worship the gods of the [Roman] city”—to leave the cities and move into the desert itself or monasteries on the edge of the desert.¹⁸ Among these committed monks and ascetics, their striving was more for deliverance from demons than for healing.¹⁹ For example, the struggling young monk Moses, who was afraid to return to his cell, was taken “out on the terrace” by his mentor, Isadore, and told:

‘Look towards the west’; he [Moses] looked to the west and saw hordes of demons flying about and making a noise before launching an attack. Then he [Isadore] said, ‘Look towards the east’; he [Moses] turned and saw an innumerable multitude of holy angels shining with glory. Isadore said, ‘See ... Those who are with us are more in number than those that are against us.’²⁰

Moses then “gave thanks to God, plucked up his courage and returned to his cell”. The same challenge confronts us today in “the cells” of our homes and places of work, but we have lost much of the awareness of demons which was assumed by those who chose to live in the desert or its edges, rather than in the cities.

¹⁶ St Anthony, in his will left “one of his two sheepskin cloaks to Serapion and the other to Athanasius”. F. L. Cross & E. A. Livingstone (Eds.), *Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), p.1,484.

¹⁷ *Prayer Book of Serapion*, cited by Meyendorff, p. 34.

¹⁸ See Benedicta Ward, “Introduction,” *The Desert Fathers: Sayings of the Early Christian Monks* (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. viii-ix.

¹⁹ See the numerous references to demons in Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1984).

²⁰ Ward, “Introduction”, p. xiv; *The Alphabetical Collection*, p. 138.

3. The Testimony of the Saints

Like those Christians who chose to live in the desert, the Church Fathers were deeply aware that both people and places required deliverance from demons and evil spirits. There was a general awareness that “gifts of healing” could be given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9)²¹ and that the bodies of saints would often be preserved incorrupt for centuries (although these bodies were not embalmed in any way), as a sign that they had in some way conquered death.²² In a retreat on “Sacraments of Healing”, Metropolitan Kallistos has reflected that “our vocation is to spiritualise the material, without thereby dematerialising it;” and healing is an important part of this process of making God’s presence shine through both the human body and the world.²³

The challenge posed by Metropolitan Kallistos is substantive and personal: “How am I to understand my unity as a person? What models do I have when I think of the healing of my total self?”²⁴ His response is to turn to the Patristic model whereby the microcosm of the human person mediates with the universe, as

²¹ The New American Standard Bible (NASB) notes that the emphasis on “gifts” in the plural “may suggest different kinds of illnesses and the various ways God heals them” p. 1,678.

²² See Joan Carroll Cruz, *The Incorruptibles: A Study of the Incorruption of the Bodies of Various Catholic Saints and Beati* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1977). An early example documented with firm evidence is that of St Cecilia, the patroness of musicians, who was killed in Rome in AD 177 (pp. 43-46). St Bede relates in *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (Book 4, Chapter XIX) that when the grave of St Etheldreda (630-679) was opened sixteen years after her death, in the presence of the doctor who had tried to save her, not only was the body incorrupt, but the doctor found that “the incision which I had made, healed up; so that, to my great astonishment, instead of the open gaping wound with which she had been buried, there then appeared only an extraordinarily slender scar” (quoted in Cruz, pp. 50-51). Thus God’s power to heal can extend to the bodies of those who have died after living holy lives.

Visitors to the “Sacred Made Real” exhibition of Spanish painting and sculpture at the National Art Gallery, London, 21 October-24 January 2010, will recall seeing a life-size representation of the body of St Francis of Assisi (d. 1226), which was found completely incorruptible standing up in his tomb 223 years after his death. The astonishment of those who found the standing St Francis is on p. 25 of the exhibition catalogue and on p.13 of the 30 pages of the downloadable pdf: “It was a strange thing, that a human body, dead for so long before, should be in that manner in which it was: for it stood straight up upon the feet...The eyes were open as of a living man, and moderately lifted up to heaven.”

²³ “Glorify God with Your Body”, *In Communion: Journal of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship of the Protection of the Mother of God*, Spring 2001, p. 9.

²⁴ Metropolitan Kallistos, p. 8.

proposed by Origen (c. 185-c. 254) and St Gregory Nazianzen, the Theologian (c. 329-c. 389). In an important sense [and I quote] “the great universe is not the world around us, nor the galaxies light years away from us. The great universe is the inner space of the heart which incorporates the material universe.”²⁵ The healing of the total self takes place only when we recognise that “we need, if we are to be truly human, to come to terms with our own body—with its rhythm, its mysteries, its dreams—and through our body then to come to terms with the material world.”²⁶

St Athanasius (c. 296-373) insisted that Adam and Eve “were endowed with a corruptible nature”, yet they were created “for incorruptibility.”²⁷ This possibility of incorruptibility was “due solely to divine grace”, or as St Athanasius phrased it, Adam and Eve “were of a corruptible nature, but by the grace of participation in the Word [they could] escape the condition of their nature [since] because of the Word present with them, the corruption of their nature could not approach them.”²⁸

²⁵ pp. 9-10. Metropolitan Kallistos notes that: “The fact that we are degrading the world around us in a very alarming manner shows a terrifying failure to realize our vocation as mediators... Our vocation is ...to render the world transparent—diaphonic, or rather theophonic—to make God’s presence shine through it [i.e. the world].” p.10.

²⁶ Metropolitan Kallistos, p. 10. For a contemporary scientific presentation on the importance of the body, see Guy Claxton’s *Intelligence in the Flesh: Why your mind needs your body much more than it thinks* (London: Yale University Press, 2015).

²⁷ *On the Incarnation of the Word*, V.1, 2; cited by Jean-Claude Larchet, *The Theology of Illness*, trans. John & Michael Breck (Crestwood, NY; SVSP, 2002), p. 20; originally published in French as *La Théologie de la Maladie* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1991). It should be explicitly recognised that the story of Adam and Eve is part of “spiritual history” and “does not belong to the time of sensible realities (*chronos*).” Therefore, “the teaching of Tradition about human origins is neither more nor less compatible with our present knowledge of human palaeontology than is the faith of the Church in the Eucharistic transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ with the findings of chemistry, or faith in the Ascension of Christ with the findings of physics and astronomy. In each of these cases, we are dealing with two different modes of apprehension that cannot be reduced one to another. Each concerns different modes of being and becoming. Faith and spiritual knowledge correspond to a domain in which the laws of nature are transcended and to a mode of existence that is, in the proper sense of the term, ‘super-natural.’” Larchet, p. 23 n.

²⁸ V.1-2; cited by Larchet, pp. 21-22.

Although the Fathers supposed that “this primal condition was similar to that of angels,”²⁹ it is important to recognise that:

... since man was created with freedom, whether or not he preserved this state of grace depended on his free will. It was his responsibility to remain in a condition of incorruption and immortality which grace bestowed upon him, or, to the contrary, to lose it by rejecting that grace.³⁰

That same possibility—that same necessity to decide whether to accept grace—applies to each of us today, just as it did to Adam and Eve. To what extent do we choose to heal our total selves “by the grace of participation in the Word”?

It is the very possibility that we can live today the life of Christ, rather than the life of Adam and Eve, that is the Patristic model of healing. In formulating the two natures and one person of Jesus Christ, as adopted by the Council of Chalcedon (451), St Leo the Great (d. 461) explained the manner in which spiritual and material realities come together to frame the prospect of healing:

The great mystery of the Incarnation is that true man is in the God whom no suffering can touch, and true God in the human flesh that is subject to pain and sorrow. By this wonderful exchange man gains glory through shame, immortality through chastisement, life through death. For unless the Word of God were so firmly joined to our flesh, that the two natures could not be parted even in death, we mortals would never be able to return to life. But when the Lord became man and died for our sake, death lost its everlasting hold over us; through the nature that undying in Jesus Christ, the nature that was mortal was raised to life.³¹

²⁹ Larchet, p. 22; citing St John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis*, XVI.1.

³⁰ Larchet, pp. 23-24; citing Saints Athanasius, Maximus and John of Damascus.

³¹ *Sermon XIX on the Passion*, cited by Anne Field, OSB, *The Binding of the Strong Man: The Teaching of St Leo the Great* (Ann Arbor, MI: Word of Life, 1976).

As St Leo, recognised, achieving this “exchange” between Christ and the sinful nature of humanity,³² required a confrontation with and a binding of the devil, “the strong man” of Luke 11:21-22.

This spiritual battle that takes place against evil, both in the person and in the world, requires, as St Ignatius (c. 35-c. 107) phrased it, that we “let [our] baptism serve as a shield.”³³ That is why at the beginning of the service of baptism, there are three exorcisms of the devil, after which the catechumen (or sponsor for an infant) is challenged three times to respond “I renounce them” to the question: “Do you renounce Satan and all his angels and all his works and all his service and all his pride?”³⁴

The exorcisms and the challenges and responses are necessary, because it is essential for every Christian to “put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:10). However, throughout the ages, and certainly today, many Christians have been puzzled as to what it means that:

... our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.³⁵

The reading from Romans 6:3-11 in the service of baptism and chrismation is inserted to stress that:

³² The Methodist missionary to China and founder of the China Inland Mission (now OMF), James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905), built his theology and his life around what he termed “the exchange relationship”—that it is possible to exchange our fallen human nature with that of Christ. See Jim Cromarty, *It is Not Death to Die: A New Biography of Hudson Taylor* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2001). Hudson Taylor was convinced that: “Many Christians estimate difficulty in the light of their own resources, and thus they attempt very little and they always fail. All giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His power and presence to be with them.”

³³ Ignatius to Polycarp, 6, in Jack N. Sparks (ed.), *The Apostolic Fathers* (Minneapolis MN: Light and Life, 1978), p. 118.

³⁴ Isabel Florence Hopgood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church* (Englewood, NJ: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 1996), p. 271-274.

³⁵ Ephesians 6:12.

We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and that we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For He who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

Unquestionably, Paul Meyendorff is right that baptism “is the sacrament of healing par excellence.”³⁶ But precisely how is this confrontation with and rejection of the devil to lead to “newness of life”?

4. The Contemporary Christian Scene: Seeking “a Monastic Sense of Ease”

There are many approaches to healing and deliverance within contemporary Christian communities. A good starting point is the talk, “The Health that Conquers Death” that Archimandrite Vasileois, Abbot of Iveron Monastery, Mount Athos, gave to a medical convention in Thessaloniki.³⁷ The Abbot began by telling the doctors that he experienced what he called “a monastic sense of ease” and “took courage” for his encounter with the doctors when he realised that Hippocrates, the father of medicine, viewed “spiritual and physical being and health ... as a whole” in the context of each person’s search for purity and holiness.³⁸ The Abbot suggested that the search for holiness “has to do with the sacred relationship [of each of us] with God as a precondition for purity of life.” Precisely because of this personal search for holiness, the implication is that:

So the whole of your life, with its pains and its joys, is a study of yourself, a cultivation of yourself. It is a study of [humanity] as a whole and of the science of healing. You sacrifice the whole of your life, you bind it, in order to live its deeper meaning and manifest that meaning, as a blessing, by your art (your medical knowledge), and ultimately to interpret it by your very presence. You

³⁶ p. 21.

³⁷ Montreal: Alexander Press, 2004.

³⁸ Abbot Vasileios’s opening words were: “I don’t know why I was asked to say a few words at this medical convention. Nor do I know why I was persuaded to accept the invitation. When, however, I approached Hippocrates” p. 7.

go forward with awe toward God, toward yourselves, towards other people and the relationships between you.³⁹

That challenge applies just as much to each of us as it does to any doctor. Each of us needs to “bind” certain parts of our lives “in order to live its deeper meaning and manifest that blessing.” We do that by going forward “with awe” toward a deeper understanding of four entities: God, ourselves, other people and the relationships between us. We seek to transform physical and emotional illness into spiritual blessings.

How can we do that? Three approaches are helpful—from (the Anglican) Dr Kenneth McAll’s *Healing the Family Tree*, from (the Baptists) Frank and Ida Mae Hammond’s *Pigs in the Parlor: A Practical Guide to Deliverance*, and from (the Roman Catholics) Matthew Linn, SJ, Shelia Fabricant [Linn] and Dennis Linn’s *Healing the Eight Stages of Life*.⁴⁰ None of these approaches to healing and deliverance inflicts any attitude or precondition upon another person, but each encourages a person to exercise insight and free will in seeking to become a whole person and to draw closer to God. The demarcation between deliverance and healing is often ambiguous, but Dr McAll and the Hammonds’ are primarily concerned with deliverance, the Linns’ with healing. The manner in which Christians can understand and heal their family trees is outlined at the end of this lecture in Appendix 1, deliverance and spiritual warfare in Appendix 2, and healings within the eight stages of life in Appendix 3. All three of these approaches outlined in the appendices can be carried out within an Orthodox Christian perspective on healing and deliverance.

Within this broad ecumenical perspective, it should be noted that there is considerable danger in relying on the charismatic movement with its “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and “born again” experience as a foundation in itself for healing

³⁹ p. 8.

⁴⁰ The respective publishers are (London: Sheldon Press/SPCK, 1986) for McAll, (Kirkwood, MO: Impact Christian Books, 2014) for Frank and Ida Mae Hammond, and (New York: Paulist Press, 1988) for Linn.

and deliverance. As John Warren Morris has explained, “the theological basis for Pentecostalism and its daughter, the Charismatic movement, is found ... in the teachings of John Wesley [who] ... taught his followers to believe in a ‘second blessing’” after one’s initial acceptance of Christ.⁴¹ This approach leads to “an undue emphasis on personal religious experience as an end in itself” so that one’s “spirituality becomes self-reliant and highly individualistic.”⁴² The late Metropolitan Philip, former Head of the Antiochian Church in the United States, has written that “what we seek is not an ‘experience,’ but God himself.”⁴³

There are significant reasons why the charismatic movement is not a helpful influence for Orthodox Christians. Wesley’s ‘second blessing’ is contrary to the Orthodox dogma that “the believer receives the Holy Spirit immediately after baptism through chrismation”, that is “through the Church, not merely as a result of an individual desire to receive the Spirit of God as the charismatics teach.”⁴⁴ As Morris explains:

⁴¹ *The Charismatic Movement: An Orthodox Evaluation* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1984), p. 6. John Warren Morris notes that: “Pentecostalism began in earnest on New Year’s Day, 1901, at Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas. There, the students of Charles F. Parham, a Holiness preacher, had spent the fall term searching the Holy Scriptures for the marks of the ‘second blessing’ taught by Wesley ... In Houston, a black Baptist Holiness preacher, William Seymour, joined the growing revival. Seymour carried the movement to Los Angeles in 1906 where at the Azusa Street Mission the phenomenon gained national publicity. Within a few years several independent Pentecostal churches such as the Assembly of God, the United Pentecostal Church, and others arose. Characterized by highly emotional services, the Pentecostal bodies all teach that one must receive the ‘second blessing,’ which they call the ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit,’ and which is verified by the ability to speak in tongues” (pp. 6-7).

⁴² Morris, p. 21.

⁴³ Metropolitan Philip Saliba and Father Joseph J. Allen, *Out of the Depths Have I Cried* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1979), p. 8; cited by Morris, p. 16. For an extensive development of this theme, see Father Dumitru Staniloae, *The Experience of God*, Vol. 1: Revelation and Knowledge of the Triune God; Vol. 2: The World: Creation and Deification; and Vol. 3: The Person of Jesus Christ as God and Savior, trans. & ed. Ioan Ionita & Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1994, 2000, 2011).

⁴⁴ Citing Father Dumitru Staniloae’s *Theology and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 1980), Morris presents the following penetrating analysis: “The charismatic division between Christ and the Holy Spirit is a reflection of the influence of the filioque clause on Western Christendom. Due to the influence of the Roman addition to the Symbol of Faith, Western Christians have neglected the Holy Spirit and have even at times implied a subordination of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. This had led to an artificial separation between Christ and the Holy Spirit that is the basis for the charismatic insistence on the necessity of two separate spiritual experiences, one becoming a Christian, justification; and the other, the reception of the Holy

By implication and practice Neo-Pentecostalism espouses an essentially Protestant ecclesiology that defines the church as a formless body of believers united by a common desire to follow Christ. At the same time, the movement ignores or rejects the great tradition of Orthodoxy and instead champions the beliefs and practices of a small sidestream of American Protestantism. Thus, the ultimate source of authority for Neo-Pentecostalism is not the common experience of the Church throughout the ages, as Orthodox Christians believe, but one's emotional experiences through the Charismatic movement. Indeed, the movement ignores the great questions of doctrine and attempts to unite Protestants, Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians into what is essentially a new pseudo-church.⁴⁵

The crux of the problem that Orthodox Christianity has with the charismatic movement is:

According to Orthodox dogma, the Church is not merely a loose association of men and women seeking a closer relationship with God. It is the mystical body of Christ, filled and guided by the Holy Spirit, that actually unites men [and women] with God.⁴⁶

Some charismatics do recognise that their fellowship in Christ does not constitute a Church, but the lines between fellowship and Church are often blurred.

A further difficulty with the charismatic movement is that its roots and fruits are much constrained by the limitations of many forms of Christianity in the United States:

Spirit, baptism of the Holy Spirit. This Western division between Christ and the Holy Spirit is found in Romanism [sic] and more traditional forms of Protestantism such as Anglicanism and Lutheranism which separates baptism from confirmation, the Western equivalent to chrismation, into two different experiences, one taking place in infancy and the other during adolescence" (p. 32) [emphasis added].

⁴⁵ Morris, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁶ Morris, p. 11.

The ecumenical nature of the Charismatic movement which attempts to deemphasize one's doctrinal beliefs, and the very real differences between the churches by drawing all, regardless of personal beliefs, into a common experience is a new form of the American civil religion of doctrinal relativism in the name of toleration. At the same time the implied promise of instant spirituality by charismatics is a reflection of the concern of contemporary American society for immediate self-gratification.⁴⁷

While it was a good Brit, John Wesley, who sowed the seeds of the charismatic movement, its fruits, both good (e.g. drawing nominal Christians to a deeper faith in Christ) and bad (e.g. fudging doctrinal beliefs with relativism), have been experienced world-wide. On balance, it is not appropriate for Orthodox Christians to approach healing and deliverance primarily from a charismatic perspective.⁴⁸

Having looked briefly at some of these different approaches to healing and deliverance within contemporary Christian communities, which ones can lead to "a monastic sense of ease"? The answer will differ among individuals and among Christian communities. While some Christians may find understanding and healing their family trees or a church-oriented experience of deliverance very helpful, others will not find this necessary. While some may find a Christian interpretation of the eight stage of life very helpful, others will also not find this necessary. Links with the charismatic movement are especially problematic.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Morris, p. 37.

⁴⁸ Roman Catholics have also begun to recognise some of the dangers inherent in a charismatic approach to healing. See Léon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens [1904-1996], *A Controversial Phenomenon: Resting in the Spirit* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1987). For example, one priest who "practised this newly-discovered method of healing occasionally, for a few years, at priests' retreats," found that if he lay hands on fellow priests, they often fell to the floor, but he abandoned this practice because "today he feels that the power in question is a natural psychic force which might sometimes, and exceptionally, be used by grace but ought not to be ranked among the supernatural charisms" (p. 31). As a bishop, Cardinal Suenens himself sought to exercise pastoral oversight over the charismatic movement and to prevent "the supernatural from deviating into supernaturalism" (p. 80).

⁴⁹ Cardinal Suenens concluded that "the bishops, as the spiritual guides of the People of God ... have a "duty to invite the Church's best theologians to offer and share with Christians of good will the treasures of wisdom of our mystics and of the great spiritual tradition of Western and Eastern Christendom. The gifts of the Spirit, like the moral virtues, must be lived not in the

St Paul offers a helpful guide in relation to the resurrection of the dead: "It [the body] is sown a physical body. It is raised a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:43). Two rather different interpretations are possible for this Biblical text; and both are relevant to healing and deliverance. First, Paul can be viewed as exhorting us to prepare to move from an earthly to a spiritual life, when he concludes: "Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we will also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Corinthians 15:49). Such an interpretation is perhaps excursive—a bit off Paul's main point, but still helpful in that if some specific practice of healing or deliverance empowers us to move from physical or emotional illness to a spiritually grounded "monastic sense of ease" then that practice is appropriate for that person and that Christian community in the framework of appropriate Orthodox Church doctrine.

A different interpretation of Paul's words from Abbot Vasileios is also illuminating: Ultimately, not even bodily health saves us; and not even illness destroys us. It is our good fortune to acquire the health that is made perfect in weakness (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:9) and the life that in death becomes eternity—to live in Christ Jesus, the life that has sprung up from the Tomb and continues to do so. Then we enjoy both this life and the next, which has already been given us liturgically.⁵⁰

The Abbot's interpretation is perhaps equally excursive, but he has caught an important aspect of the Orthodox approach to deliverance and healing—its sacramental quality.

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abstract, but in the concrete mobility of particular situations. In this respect we are called to a renewal which, springing from the source, the Holy Spirit, adapts itself to the nature of the soil and the diversity of the terrain" (p. 79). The Cardinal was trying to affirm "spiritual tradition" while still accepting the call to "renewal" which was being promoted by the charismatic movement. Whether this is possible will be considered further in Lecture 85: Christian Education.⁵⁰ "The Health that Conquers Death," p. 21.

Just as the sacramental role of baptism and its link with deliverance is emphasized in the Orthodox perspective, a similar stress is placed on the role of the Eucharist and its link with healing:

Humanity is created to be in communion with God, and the Eucharist is the realization of this communion. And true healing, as we have seen, is precisely the restoration of communion with God, the restoration of the proper relationship between God and humanity. Every time we receive communion, we receive the grace of healing. As with baptism, this healing affects the entire person, with salvation, our entrance into the kingdom, as its ultimate goal.⁵¹

The liturgies of St John Chrysostom and St Basil the Great both contain numerous petitions for the healing of the sick. Of particular relevance is the litany of thanksgiving after communion from the Liturgy of St Basil (which was the regular Sunday liturgy until the tenth century and is now used primarily during Great Lent and Feasts of St Basil):

We thank you, O Lord, for the participation in your holy most-pure, immortal and heavenly mysteries, which you have granted us for the good and sanctification and healing of our bodies.⁵²

Clearly, Christ's healing ministry continues when we participate in the Eucharist.

In addition to Baptism and the Eucharist, a third key aspect of the Orthodox approach to healing is the sacrament of confession. In *The Forgotten Medicine: The Mystery of Repentance*, Archimandrite Seraphim Aleksiev (1912-1993), a Bulgarian monk and theologian, sets out why confession is an essential preparation for receiving the Eucharist and drawing near to Christ.⁵³ His theme follows St

⁵¹ Meyendorff, p.24.

⁵² Cited by Meyendorff, p. 25

⁵³ Wildwood, CA: St Xenia Skete Press, 1994.

Augustine's *Confessions*: "Thou makest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it reposes in Thee." Father Seraphim's key point is:

We can save our souls only in two ways: either by not sinning at all, or by repenting from our sins. Since among men [and women] there are no sinless ones, if we want to be reconciled with God Whom we anger with daily transgressions of His holy will, there is only one thing left for us to do: to repent sincerely and openly [and show that repentance by going to a priest for confession]. Otherwise, we will not see the face of God, because nothing impure will enter the radiant heavenly city.⁵⁴

Powerfully, he reminds us of the words of St Mark the Ascetic in Volume 1 of *The Philokalia*: "We are being condemned not because of the multitude of our evils [or our sins], but because we do not want to repent."⁵⁵ Few Christians today are aware that their crucial problem is not their past (or present) sins but their refusal to repent.

Thus the sacrament of confession "can rightly be called 'the Forgotten Medicine' because it heals the person from sin."⁵⁶ Father Seraphim's "Rules for a Saving Confession" conclude with a quite practical summary:

We see then what the rules are for a saving Confession: first, before we go to the confessor, we must examine well our conscience; second, when we are with the priest, we must confess sincerely, with a broken heart, and without shame and excuses; third, when we leave the priest, we must carry out our penance, put an end to the hostility [to any other person], give up our impure life, and return that which is not ours.⁵⁷

However, he warns that:

Those who confess without feeling, coolly and formally, do not receive benefit from Confession. Superficial, cold, and slack confession does not save.

⁵⁴ p. 27.

⁵⁵ p. 24.

⁵⁶ p. 23.

⁵⁷ p. 57.

Humility, brokenness of heart, tears, and deep regret for our having been friends with the demons and in enmity toward God, are needed.⁵⁸

Furthermore, the sacraments of the Eucharist and confession are inexorably linked, because receiving communion is “a two-edged sword.... Only those who have confessed beforehand benefit from it. Those who approach it carelessly are greatly harmed”⁵⁹ (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:27-31). Although this emphasis upon confession before each Holy Communion is quite Slavic and not essential within other Orthodox traditions, the link between confession and communion is sound: “Confession cleans the sinful wound of the soul, and Holy Communion puts ointment on the wound.”⁶⁰

The sacraments of marriage and holy orders are often not linked to healing and deliverance, but it is argued in Appendix 3 below that finding one’s vocation is an important part of the healing that Christ wants each person to experience during their lifetimes. In that context, either marriage or holy orders may empower personal healing and deliverance; however, another sacrament that is highly significant for healing and deliverance is the Rite of Anointing of the Sick. It is appropriate then to conclude this lecture with a brief description of its purpose, theology and importance in a parish setting.

The full 60-page Rite of Anointing of the Sick, as well as a 10-page Abbreviated Rite of Anointing, have been set out by Paul Meyendorff in *The Anointing of the Sick*.⁶¹ In the full contemporary rite, an abbreviated short cathedral vigil and psalms similar to those used at the conclusion of matins have been linked to a blessing of oil, an anointing, absolution (in which the Gospel book is placed over the heads of those who are sick) and a dismissal. In Greek practice, the most common celebration of

⁵⁸ p. 64.

⁵⁹ pp. 68-69.

⁶⁰ p. 69.

⁶¹ (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2009).

the Rite of Anointing is primarily on Holy Wednesday in Holy Week;⁶² and in Slavic practice the Rite is rarely performed because it is viewed as a harbinger of death; however, now in North America and Western Europe there are different traditions, and “for the most part, the understanding of the sacrament as extreme unction has been replaced with a broader understanding that it benefits all who are sick.”⁶³

The theology of the Rite of Anointing confronts important questions about the nature of suffering, the significance of sin, and the Christian understanding of physical and spiritual illness. The Orthodox perspective is not that “each of us is guilty of Adam’s sin, and thus that each of us deserves punishment,” but rather:

The Orthodox see the fall as a kind of infection that has, through original sin, spread to all humanity, and, through humanity, to the whole world. In each of us, the process of disease, decay, and ultimately death begins from the very moment that we are conceived. When we sin, moreover, we contribute to a process that is already underway in each of us. This is the state of the world in which we live, and this is the sad reality that the Son of God came to overcome. Ultimately, the result of Adam’s fall [and] the result of our own fall when we choose sin, is alienation—alienation first of all from God, but also from others, from the world, and even from ourselves. This is something we experience in our own lives, sooner or later.⁶⁴

Thus the experience of sickness has both a spiritual and a physical dimension: “Just as sin can cause sickness and death, so also sickness can lead to sin.”⁶⁵

⁶² Meyendorff notes that in Greek parishes this single service is often viewed as “a replacement for confession[especially] in North America, where private confession is all but unknown in the vast majority of Greek parishes . . . because Greek faithful in Greece typically confess to a monastic elder, and not to their parish priest. Unlike Greece, America has few monasteries, and this has led to the virtual disappearance of confession among Greek Orthodox Communities.” p. 56.

⁶³ pp. 61, 92.

⁶⁴ p. 69.

⁶⁵ For further study of the theology of illness and healing, see Jean-Claude Larchet’s *The Theology of Illness* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2002).

In the Rite of Anointing we pray for both physical healing and for spiritual healing which is linked to forgiveness:

As part of the spiritual healing, we pray for the reintegration of the ailing person into the body of the Church, into the fullness of life, whatever the ultimate course of the physical disease. This is because the ultimate aim of Christian healing is nothing less than the restoration of full communion with God, which is the aim of all human existence. The ultimate goal is the kingdom of God—that is the meaning of salvation.⁶⁶

Within this framework of seeking salvation, and within the Rite, “physical and spiritual healing are woven together so closely that it is impossible to distinguish clearly between them”, nor can healing and forgiveness be separated.⁶⁷

Meyendorff stress that the Rite of Anointing is “a cosmic event” in which “sin, sickness, and death are conquered, made powerless through the operation of Christ and the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁸ However, the very limited implementation of the Rite at present throughout the Orthodox world requires substantive renewal at the parish level which should begin with an awareness that “it is the responsibility of the entire Church,” not simply the pastor, “to care for its ailing members.”⁶⁹ Visiting the sick and shut-in, bringing the infirm to church, holding services in long-term care and nursing facilities are all viable options that help empower the priest to lay hands on the sick and anoint them.⁷⁰ The crux of the challenge is for “the Church to gather wherever the sick may be, to break through the isolation” and alienation of many aspects of contemporary life, and to trust in the power of the sacraments to heal, spiritually and physically.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Meyendorff, p. 78.

⁶⁷ Meyendorff, pp. 80-81.

⁶⁸ p. 83.

⁶⁹ p. 93.

⁷⁰ p. 95 f.

⁷¹ p. 97.

For Orthodox Christians, both lay and clerical, who already live the sacramental life and want to deepen their closeness to God, Abbot Vasileios offers the following advice on how to become “real doctors;” and this same advice applies to how to become “real Christians”:

Suppose you reach the certainty that trust in Him, who is love alone, saves us even when it seems we that we are done for; He is with us, even when it appears that He is abandoning us. Suppose you reach the point of not finding fault with anyone or with anything that happens in your life. Suppose you thank God for everything, the pleasant and the unpleasant. Suppose you realise that it is from the unpleasant and painful things that the strongest consolation comes. Suppose you accept from your heart the words of St Gregory Palamas where he says that everything, not excluding even death, is good—everything except sin. Suppose that, like St Isaac the Syrian, you feel joy kindle in your heart when you think of death. Then you are real doctors [or real Christians], and you enjoy your life and are a comfort to others.⁷²

May this deeper understanding that we share as Orthodox Christians about the possibilities of healing and deliverance empower us to grow as Christians, to live within God’s will for each of our lives and to be effectual servants of the Lord and others.

Appendix 1: Deliverance through Healing the Family Tree

In *Healing the Family Tree* the starting point of Dr Kenneth McAll is that:

Many emotional problems have their roots in a purely biochemical imbalance which requires medication, and this can be remedied easily enough when once identified, although it is not always easy to discover. But many deep emotional hurts need a different kind of therapy and the supportive love of a Christian community. We cannot ignore any means by which the full healing of an individual can be achieved.⁷³

⁷² Archimandrite Vasileois, “The Health that Conquers Death.”

⁷³ (London: Sheldon Press, 1986), p. 5.

From this starting point, he outlines three forms of illness that can be caused by “the possession syndrome:”

A relationship between two people, begun happily and voluntarily on both sides, may reach a point at which one partner becomes passive and totally dependent upon the other. Frequently the passive partner is unaware of the loss of his [or her] own identity and eventually is completely unable to break away from the other’s control. This state has been termed the “possession syndrome” It is essential to make a differential diagnosis in each case [of the possession syndrome] and to classify the possession syndrome into one or more of [three] defined categories. The bondage of the living to the living is the most obvious to diagnose. The bondage of the living to the dead, whether to ancestors, to those not related, to still-born aborted or miscarried babies,; or to those who once inhabited a particular place now occupied by the living, can present considerable difficulties in diagnosis. The bondage of the living to occult control is, perhaps, the most dangerous evil to unravel.⁷⁴

Within this framework of first seeking medical remedies and listening to how a person is hurting, deliverance is effected in three steps: “First, it is necessary to cut the known bond to the controlling person, alive or dead, then to forgive wholeheartedly, finally, to transfer control to Jesus Christ, making any essential environmental changes to support these steps.”⁷⁵

Dr McAll is following Orthodox Christian guidelines in his focus on praying for the dead in the tradition of the early Church fathers.⁷⁶ He stresses that whenever appropriate any indication of occult forces from within or outside of family trees should be dealt with by deliverance through the Eucharist or exorcisms of the church

⁷⁴ pp. 6-7.

⁷⁵ p. 7.

⁷⁶ He cites the examples of Tertullian, Origen, Ephraim, Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory the Great. The conviction of St John Chrysostom is noted: “When that awe-inspiring sacrifice lies displayed on the altar, how shall we not prevail with God by our entreaties for the dead?” (Homily 3 in Ephesians and Philippians n. 4). pp. 89, 93.

of the patient.⁷⁷ Furthermore, there is a firm warning that it is “in absolute contravention of God’s law ... to make direct contact with [the dead].”⁷⁸ We pray *for* the dead, not *to* the dead, referring “them to the Lord for him to deal with.”⁷⁹

Ideally, deliverance occurs with the support of a committed Christian spiritual director familiar with how spirits, both evil and good, operate. However, individual Christians, preferably with prayer support, can break the hold of an evil spirit on their own lives. A good place to begin is to draw up a family tree⁸⁰, reflect on that tree with appropriate family and/or friends, then identify persons for whom to pray at a Eucharist. The key message that Dr McAll seeks to communicate is: “The celebration of the Eucharist where Our Lord is always present is the central act in the process of deliverance and healing.”⁸¹ Any point in the family tree where a relative has died and not been prayed for (especially abortions, stillbirths and miscarriages), any criminal acts, any lingering resentments linked to persons either dead or alive, any persons or situations where there has been or still is great fear—all of these points require healing and deliverance. Then a decision is made about whom to invite to the Eucharist—with an attempt made to “try to have the living persons who need prayer actually [present] so that they can ask for guidance and, most importantly, learn how to continue to pray on their own at future Eucharists.”⁸²

There may or may not be dramatic events, but simply having a Eucharist in the church tradition of the suffering person consistently leads to healing:

Healing comes to the patient through a commitment to Jesus

⁷⁷ pp. 70, 84.

⁷⁸ p. 97.

⁷⁹ p. 97.

⁸⁰ “The core of our thinking as we draw up Family Trees for the Eucharist must be an active, ever-present readiness to listen so that we may become more aware of our Lord taking his next immediate steps in our lives (Gal 2.20) [“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me”], p. 43.

⁸¹ p. 12.

⁸² p. 22.

Christ as his loving release is accepted.... In all cases of bondage the best efforts of psychiatry should be utilized to integrate the personality, but it is essential that they are used in conjunction with prayer and the Eucharist service which has the power both to break the destructive bondage and to form life-giving bonds with Jesus Christ.⁸³

In Dr McAll's view there are "four distinct stages or movements in the manifestations of [God's] healing power which correspond to different prayers" that are offered: (1) in praying "Deliver us from evil" from the Lord's Prayer and in taking communion "old covenants with the evil one" are broken; and we "enter into the New Covenant with God;" (2) in the many prayers for forgiveness throughout the Eucharist, "through Jesus Christ we not only forgive the dead but we ask them to forgive us;" (3) in placing the paper with the family tree on the altar with the elements of bread and wine, the life of Christ comes to each person prayed for, living or dead; and (4) with the final blessing and the laying of hands "on the heads of those who are especially seeking healing ... the minister may make the sign of the cross (sometimes with oil) on their foreheads, thus focusing the healing of Jesus Christ."⁸⁴ This approach may not appeal to all Orthodox Christians, but it has brought healing to many persons for many years.

Appendix 2: Spiritual Warfare

In *Pigs in the Parlor: A Practical Guide to Deliverance*, Frank and Ida Mae Hammond urge that both "the church and the individual believer must get beyond the concept of personal deliverance to the concept of spiritual warfare against ... the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).⁸⁵ Their approach is based upon the conviction that "deliverance is a process" and that "sin opens the door for

⁸³ p. 21.

⁸⁴ pp. 22-34.

⁸⁵ Frank and Ida Mae Hammond, *Pigs in the Parlor: A Practical Guide to Deliverance* (Kirkwood, MO; Impact Books, 2016), Foreword.

demons to enter” a human being; and those demons must then be identified and thrown out.⁸⁶

The Hammonds’ approach is Biblical, grounded in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Their focus is primarily on the necessity of personal prayer and worship, linked to the conviction that: “Before the Kingdom of God can ever become a reality in your life or mine, the forces of hell that beset us must be faced and overcome.”⁸⁷

Pigs in the Parlor is quite American, written by a couple from East Texas, with close links to the charismatic renewal. However, its approach is quite practical and straight-forward focused on such issues as how demons enter a person, how to determine the need for deliverance, steps to deliverance, retaining deliverance and intercessory prayer warfare. The ministry of the Hammonds’ was deeply influenced by the British pastor and Bible scholar, Derek Prince,⁸⁸ who himself exercised a powerful ministry of deliverance. It is the prayer of Derek Prince that is used, insisting on confession and renouncing of sins, and stating firmly: “I forgive all others as I want you to forgive me.”⁸⁹ Reliance is placed on the verse from Acts 2:21: “Whosoever that calls on the name of the Lord shall be delivered”⁹⁰ and the person seeking deliverance (or those acting on his or her behalf) pray:

⁸⁶ p. 57. It is noted that demons often operate in groups; and some 53 common demon groupings are identified, such as the controlling demon of jealousy is often linked to envy, suspicion, distrust and selfishness.

⁸⁷ p. 150. [Page numbers are drawn from an earlier edition.]

⁸⁸ See Derek Prince, *War in Heaven: God’s Epic Battle with Evil* (2003); *Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose* (1998); and Stephen Mansfield, *Derek Prince: A Biography* (2005). All three books are published by Derek Prince Ministries in Baldock, Herts.

⁸⁹ Hammonds’, p. 107.

⁹⁰ Derek Prince has translated the Greek word, *sōzō*, as “delivered,” rather than “saved”. *Young’s Analytical Concordance* translates the meaning as “to make or keep sound or safe”. Peter is citing

I call upon you now. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me and set me free. Satan, I renounce you and all your works. I loose myself from you, in the name of Jesus, and I command you to leave me right now, in Jesus' name. Amen.⁹¹

It is appropriate to raise the question: Is such an approach Orthodox?

There is a strong tradition of deliverance and exorcism in both the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Church, as noted in the main text of this lecture. However, many Christians today of all denominations are not as aware as members of the early Church were of Peter's warning: "Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). An important underlying principle has been succinctly stated by the 5th century hermit, St Mark the Ascetic:

He who has been baptized into Christ has already been given grace. But this grace acts in proportion to the degree that he follows the commandments. Although this grace never ceases to help us in secret, it lies in our power, in our will, to do or not to do good.⁹²

The Orthodox perspective is often to link spiritual warfare with a personal search for purification from the passions of gluttony, unchastity, avarice, anger, dejection, listlessness (or envy), self-esteem and pride.⁹³ In this perspective, "since the forgetting of God is the ultimate cause of the passions, their healing must begin with faith."⁹⁴

Joel 2.32: "Then everyone who invokes the Lord's name will be saved" in which the Hebrew word is (palatah) פליטה which the *NIV Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament* translates as "delivered one", so Derek Prince's personal translation appears to be sound.

⁹¹ Hammonds', p. 107.

⁹² St Mark's *Texts for Those Who Think to be Justified by Deeds*, cited in *The Teachings of the Holy Fathers on the Passions*, (Richfield Springs, NY: Nicodemus Orthodox Publication Society, 1986), p. 41.

⁹³ See Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodox Spirituality: A Practical Guide for the Faithful and a Definitive Manual for the Scholar* (South Canaan, PA: St Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary Press, 2002), pp. 77-118.

⁹⁴ Staniloae, p. 81.

Father Dumitru Staniloae focuses on healing rather than deliverance, but he does note with approval the analysis of Diadochus (mid-5th century) on how the Holy Spirit makes the “small shadowy attacks (baits) of the demons evident, but also weakens them, by this holy and glorious light.”⁹⁵ Father Dumitru also notes St Mark the Ascetic’s advice on the danger that “as soon as [the mind] leaves the heart, it allows the devil to attack and ... get to the place where [the mind] welcomes his evil whisper.”⁹⁶ While Father Dumitru acknowledges the need for “the chaining of demons,” his solution to conflict with the devil focuses primarily on meekness and humility.⁹⁷ Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky is more explicit in insisting that in Orthodox tradition “the origin of sin comes from the devil;” and the New Testament is clear that “Satan and the evil spirits are constantly attracting people to evil,” and “the evil spirits rush into the souls and even into the bodies of men [and women].”⁹⁸

The manner in which the battle with the passions involves spiritual warfare with demons has been traced in considerable detail in *Unseen Warfare*.⁹⁹ This work of Lorenzo Scupoli, a Roman Catholic priest, originally published in Italy in 1569, has been thrice edited for Orthodox Christians—for Greek readers in the eighteenth century by the Athonite monk, Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, for Russian readers in the nineteenth century by St Theophan the Recluse, and for Western readers in the twentieth century in three books by Jack Sparks.¹⁰⁰ Thus for some three hundred years, Orthodox Christians have been urged to follow the advice of the monk from Mount Sinai, St John Climacus (c. 570-c.649) to “flog the foes with the name of our Lord Jesus,” and to pray and to partake of the Eucharist.¹⁰¹ Although Scupoli’s

⁹⁵ p. 164, citing *On Spiritual Knowledge* 29.

⁹⁶ p. 164, citing *On Baptism*, PG 65.1016B.

⁹⁷ p. 180.

⁹⁸ *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, pp. 153-154.

⁹⁹ London: Faber & Faber, 1952.

¹⁰⁰ *Victory in the Unseen Warfare; Virtue in the Unseen Warfare; and Prayer in the Unseen Warfare* (Ben Lommond, CA: Conciliar Press, 1993, 1995, 1997).

¹⁰¹ pp. 114, 225. See also Father John Mack, *Ascending the Heights: A Layman’s Guide to the Ladder of Divine Ascent* (Crestwood, NY: SVSP, 2000).

treatise in its numerous editions sees spiritual conflict as a continuing process in the life of every Christian, it is certainly concerned with healing and deliverance. An icon portrays vividly the human battle with demons as linked to *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* which:

... depicts many people climbing a ladder; at the top is Jesus Christ, prepared to receive the climbers into Heaven. Also shown are angels helping the climbers, and demons attempting to shoot with arrows or drag down the climbers, no matter high up the ladder they may be. Most versions of the icon show at least one person falling.¹⁰²

It should be noted that none of these three cited Orthodox sources—Fathers Dumitru and Protopresbyter Michael and the edited Father Scupoli—deal explicitly with deliverance, although there is considerable concern with the role of evil spirits and the necessity for healing.

The difference with the approach of the Hammonds' and Derek Prince to a traditional Orthodox perspective is essentially one of terminology. What the Hammonds' call "deliverance" the Orthodox would generally call "exorcism." The three exorcisms which begin the Orthodox sacrament of baptism are quite explicit:

The Lord layeth thee under ban, O Devil ... I adjure thee by God ... Be thou under ban.... Fear, be gone and depart from this creature, and return not again, neither hide thyself in him (her), neither seek thou to meet him (her), nor to influence him (her), either by night or by day....

O Devil ... [God] doth command thee, with all thy confederate hosts to depart hence, from him (her) who hath been newly sealed in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our true God.

¹⁰² See: http://orthodoxwiki.org/The_Ladder_of_Divine_Ascent

O Lord of Sabaoth,¹⁰³ the God of Israel, who healest every malady and every infirmity: Look upon thy servant; prove him/her and search him/her, and root out of him/her every operation of the Devil. Rebuke the unclean spirits and expel them, and purify the works of thy hands...¹⁰⁴

Thus the contemporary practice of deliverance is essentially an attempt to ensure that the exorcisms of baptism are fully implemented in the life of an Orthodox Christian.

In the Chrismation which follows baptism, the opening prayer from the priest includes: "Keep him/her in thy sanctification; confirm him/her in the Orthodox faith; deliver him/her from the Evil One and from all the machinations of the same."¹⁰⁵ It is only after this prayer that the newly baptised person is sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit—an important point in the context of exorcism and deliverance, because the evil spirits are thrown out before the Holy Spirit is then called into the person—a practice that should be followed in all exorcisms or prayers of deliverance in all Christian traditions. Furthermore, in both the Gospels and in Acts there are many explicit examples of healing and deliverance (or exorcism), as in Acts 19:12 when the handkerchiefs (or aprons) of Paul were "carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out." Thus the approach of *Pigs in the Parlor* is in keeping with Orthodox tradition, especially in the context of exorcism.

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Appendix 3: Healing the Eight Stages of Life

¹⁰³ "Sabaoth" means "armies" or "hosts" and is cited in Isaiah 1:9, Romans 9:29 and James 5:4 as well as elsewhere in the OT.

¹⁰⁴ All three exorcisms are drawn from Isabel Florence Hapgood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Church* (Englewood, NJ: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 1996), pp. 272-273.

¹⁰⁵ Hapgood, p. 281.

In their book *Healing the Eight Stages of Life* and numerous other studies,¹⁰⁶ Matthew Linn, SJ, Dennis Linn and his wife, Shelia Fabricant Linn, have linked the work of the psychologist, Erik Erikson, especially his *The Life Cycle Completed*,¹⁰⁷ to their faith as Christians and their confidence in the power of prayer. As the Linns' explain, Erikson's emphasis upon striving for mature social relationships (rather than sexual fulfilment) offers a framework in which childhood hurts can be healed within a process of lifelong human growth "with ever new opportunities to discover gifts of loving."¹⁰⁸ For the Linns and for many other Christians, "the Holy Spirit is always renewing us and leading us to a fuller life;"¹⁰⁹ and this "fuller life" is enhanced by the healing of childhood hurts.

Erikson suggests that there are eight stages of life in which key conflicts must be faced and resolved to live life fully:

<u>Stage and Age</u>	<u>Crisis to Be Faced</u>	<u>Virtue to Be Gained</u>
1. Infancy (until age 2)	trust vs. mistrust	Hope
2. Early childhood (2-3)	autonomy vs. shame & doubt	Will
3. Play age (3-5)	initiative vs. guilt	Purpose
4. School age (6-12)	industry vs. inferiority	Competence
5. Adolescence (12-18)	identity vs. identity confusion	Fidelity
6. Young adult (19-35)	intimacy vs. isolation	Love
7. Adult (35-65)	generativity vs. stagnation	Care
8. Old age (after 65)	integrity vs. despair	Wisdom

¹⁰⁶ 1988. All books, New York: Paulist Press. See also their *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life* (1995), *Good Goats: Healing Our Image of God* (1994), *Healing the Purpose of Your Life* (1999) and *Simple Ways to Pray for Healing* (1998).

¹⁰⁷ New York: W. W. Norton, 1982.

¹⁰⁸ Linns', pp. 14-16.

¹⁰⁹ Linns', p. 15.

¹¹⁰ See Linns' p. 23 and Erickson, pp. 32-33. For each stage, Erikson links the conflict to a "radius of significant relations" i. e. 1=Maternal Person; 2=Parental Persons; 3=Basic Family; 4=Neighbourhood, School; 5=Peer groups and outgroups; models of leadership; 6=Partners in friendship, sex, competition and cooperation; 7=Divided labour and shared household; and 8="Humankind" or "My kind [of people]."

Strikingly, if we fail to resolve some crisis at one stage of our life, we can still experience healing later “to the extent we let [our hurts] be touched by unconditional love.”¹¹¹

The theology underlying this approach to healing is that of Romans 8:28: “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God’s purpose.” For the Linns’, the implication is clear: “God has a special purpose for each of us, and ... God will use our hurts and mistakes to accomplish that good purpose.”¹¹² This is in keeping with the Roman Catholic theologian, Bernard Häring’s idea that “it is only when we grasp our unique identity that we can make a fundamental option for God’s will in our lives.”¹¹³ The contemporary Presbyterian author, Frederick Buechner, suggests that we find this unique personal vocation, this “place God calls you ... where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”¹¹⁴

This approach to healing requires considerable personal reflection on one’s strengths and weaknesses. The Linns stress “the examen” or “examination of conscience” (linked to the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola), in which a person or a small group end the day by lighting a candle, becomes “aware of God’s loving presence” and ask two questions about the day: “For what am I most grateful? For what am I least grateful?”¹¹⁵ As Matthew Linn explains, the aim is highly practical:

¹¹¹ Linns, *Healing the Purpose of Your Life*. This perspective in which problems can be faced and resolved after they have long been present is also relevant in the context of personal relationships at work when “the problem itself became the catalyst for the creation of even greater trust” as people tackled “the issues head-on and worked through the difficult problem in a way that restored confidence.... Transparency is an essential tool in this process”. See Stephen M. R. Covey and Rebecca R. Merrill, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), pp. 305-306.

¹¹² *Healing the Purpose of Your Life*, pp. 64-65.

¹¹³ Cited in *Healing the Purpose of Your Life*, p. 18.

¹¹⁴ Cited in *Healing the Purpose of Your Life*, p. 32.

¹¹⁵ Linns, *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*, pp. 3, 6-8, *passim*.

I need the examen to help me notice not only what goes wrong but also what goes right. Each night I first get in touch with what I am grateful for from the day and I give thanks. Then I ask what I am not grateful for, I name it, feel it, and appreciate that I am not denying it and God is with me in it. Healing occurs to the degree I welcome all my feelings and let myself be loved in them. In this way I honestly acknowledge pain and I take in love. Then I can usually fall asleep with a grateful heart.¹¹⁶

There is the further benefit that whatever one is “thinking about when falling asleep continues to be processed in [the] unconscious during the night” and is often resolved by the morning.¹¹⁷

The manner in which the Linns have taken Erikson’s understanding of the life cycle and placed it within a Christian perspective is attractive. However, their reliance upon the *examen* as a means of guidance in finding one’s personal vocation is somewhat subjective. For those interested in reflecting further on the question of how to find their personal vocations, the eight essays gathered by Ann Mitsakos Bezzerides in *Christ at Work: Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Vocation* are most helpful.¹¹⁸ The Linns’ would certainly agree with her definition that “vocation is one’s ongoing and unique way of being in the world that is a response to Christ’s call to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength, and one’s neighbour as oneself.”¹¹⁹ There would also be general agreement in many Christian communities with the Orthodox perspective that vocation is “our *response* to God’s initiative in first creating and loving us, and in offering his only begotten Son for the salvation of our souls” and this “response of love ... engages the entire being: heart, soul, mind and strength.”¹²⁰

Bezzerrides adds:

¹¹⁶ Linns, *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*, p. 10.

¹¹⁷ Linns, *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*, pp. 11, 65.

¹¹⁸ Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006.

¹¹⁹ Bezzerides, “Introduction,” p. 10.

¹²⁰ p. 10.

...God-given vocation is borne out in community because it is a response to the call to love the neighbour. Vocation must entail discovering how each of us will uniquely love our neighbour: both the neighbour within the same socio-economic or faith group, and also the neighbour that is not of the same 'tribe,' ethnic group, socio-economic class or geographic region—especially the neighbour in need.... The ongoing process of discovering this unique response requires careful, ongoing discernment that may be guided well by the Orthodox cycle of feasts and fasts, and prayer, repentance, confession and Communion, all of which invite us to a rich life in Christ....¹²¹

This confrontation with “the neighbour in need”—whether the need is physical, emotional or spiritual—can be linked to the sacramental life, which then helps Christians to find their unique personal vocations.

Whether any of the three approaches to healing described in these appendices work for a particular person—either as a healer or in being healed—is essentially a matter of experience. Each approach is sufficiently Biblically-based and Orthodox that each can be tasted and tested, preferably with the support of a pastor or friend. Just as one icon speaks to one person and another icon communicates to another person, so personal healing and deliverance are unique experiences that we each can mould into our own relationships, prayer lives and sacramental opportunities.

¹²¹ p. 11.