

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN HEALING SICK PERSONS

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Miriam and Dan Fountain



Miriam's illness

- A wonderful marriage of 52 years
- Diagnosis of myelodysplasia Oct. 2009
- Malignancy of bone marrow stem cells
- Low platelets, much bruising
- Chemotherapy for 12 months; no response
- Much prayer by hundreds of people
- Inner healing, but no physical response



Final course

- Chemotherapy stopped December 2010
- Rapid decline
- Great weakness
- Loss of appetite and 50 lbs of weight
- Progressive loss of mental functions
- In Hospice for 16 days
- Went safely 'home' March 4, 2011 as I held her hand, anointed her and prayed

Where was God?

Many promises of God without fulfillment

- “I am the Lord who heals you” – Ex. 15:26
- “He forgives all your sin and heals all your diseases” – Psalm 103:3
- “If you ask anything in my name, I will do it” - Jesus in John 14: 14

God and me

- I insisted that God keep his promises
- I pled with him, even shouted at him
- God was very patient with me
- He quietly spoke to my heart through Scripture and by his Holy Spirit
- “Teach me your ways, O Lord.” He did
- Here are thoughts that came from him

Ground rules of Eden

- Order, fruitfulness, and responsibility
- Union with God
- Open communication with God
- Complete trust in God, and God trusting us
- Abundant life and health
- Peace, joy, and harmony
- No disease, aging, or death in Eden

Rebellion against God

- Rebellion against the order he established
- Disruption of all relationships
 - Spiritual – separation from God, despair
 - Emotional – guilt, fear, tension, powerful negative feelings
 - Social – between genders, relatives, and throughout society
 - Physical – with nature

Ground rules of the world

They changed radically

- Aging, death
- Diseases: infections, organ failures, malignancy
- Our DNA became distorted → genetic and hereditary disorders, malformations, malignancies, etc.
- Nature: earthquakes, violent weather, soil degradation, polluted ecosystems

Disruption of Nature

- Land (soil) lost fertility
- Much land became barren
- Diminished production of food
- Many diseases of plants and animals
- All of this affects our health

Three types of illnesses

1. Illnesses common to man
2. Diseases of the Egyptians
3. Diseases related to principalities and powers of evil

**What is the role of the church
in each of these areas?**

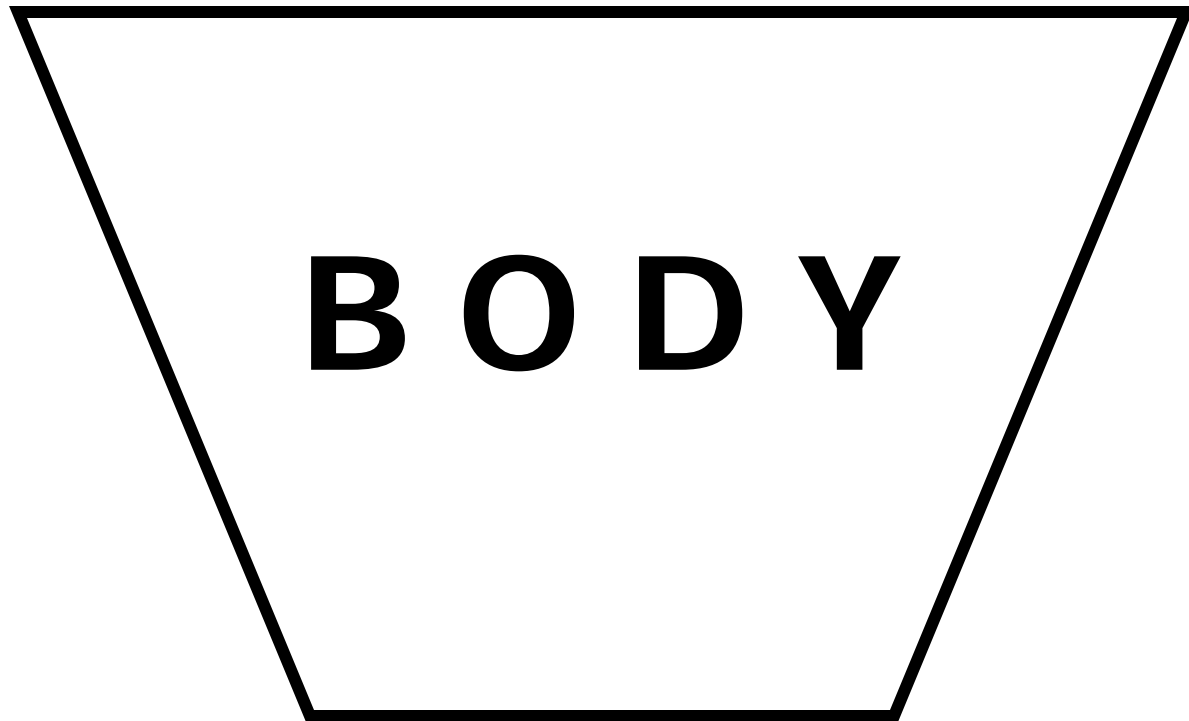
Three dimensions of life

- Physical body
- Soul: conscious mind, feelings, emotions, desires, memories, heritage
- Spirit

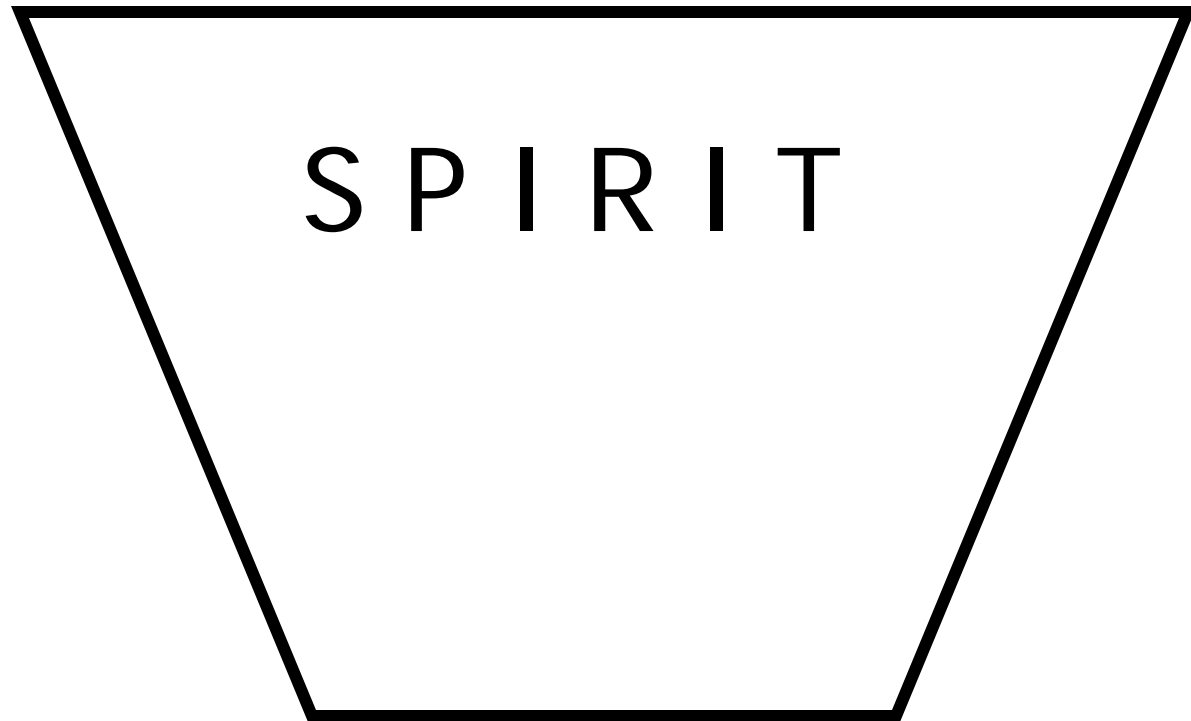
PERSON



Medicine treats this



Churches provide care for



What is missing from this?



Who cares for the soul?

- The broken heart and wounded spirit
- Not psychology – reductionist
- Not psychiatry – uses pharmacology
- Not churches – no mechanisms for doing this
- Can churches respond to this challenge, knowing it came from Jesus himself?

THIS COURSE



1. Diseases common to man –

Psalm 73: 5

- Aging, degeneration, physical death
- Infections
- Trauma
- Many malignancies
- These come to everyone – believers and non-believers
- We are all susceptible to them
- My wife ‘died’ of a bone marrow malignancy

Role of medicine

- Treatment of treatable diseases
- Research
- Control of many incurable chronic illnesses
- Support, palliation and comfort
- Miriam had the best in medical treatment and care, and we are grateful

Role of the church

- Providing social and spiritual support
- Listening and answering questions
- Prayer and spiritual care
- Helping people understand the limits of this life and our ultimate destiny
- Offering eternal salvation
- Physical support to those who are needy
- Many churches do well here

2. Diseases of the Egyptians

Exodus 15: 26 NIV

“If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, If you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am Jehovah Rapha – the God who heals you.”

Diseases of the Egyptians

- Diseases coming from immoral behavior
- Diseases related to life style
- Diseases coming from abuse – personal abuse or abuse by others
- Diseases coming because of the immoral behavior of others
- Miriam's disease was not an 'Egyptian' disease

Stress and Health

“75 to 90 % of all physician office visits have stress-related components.”



American Psychological Association



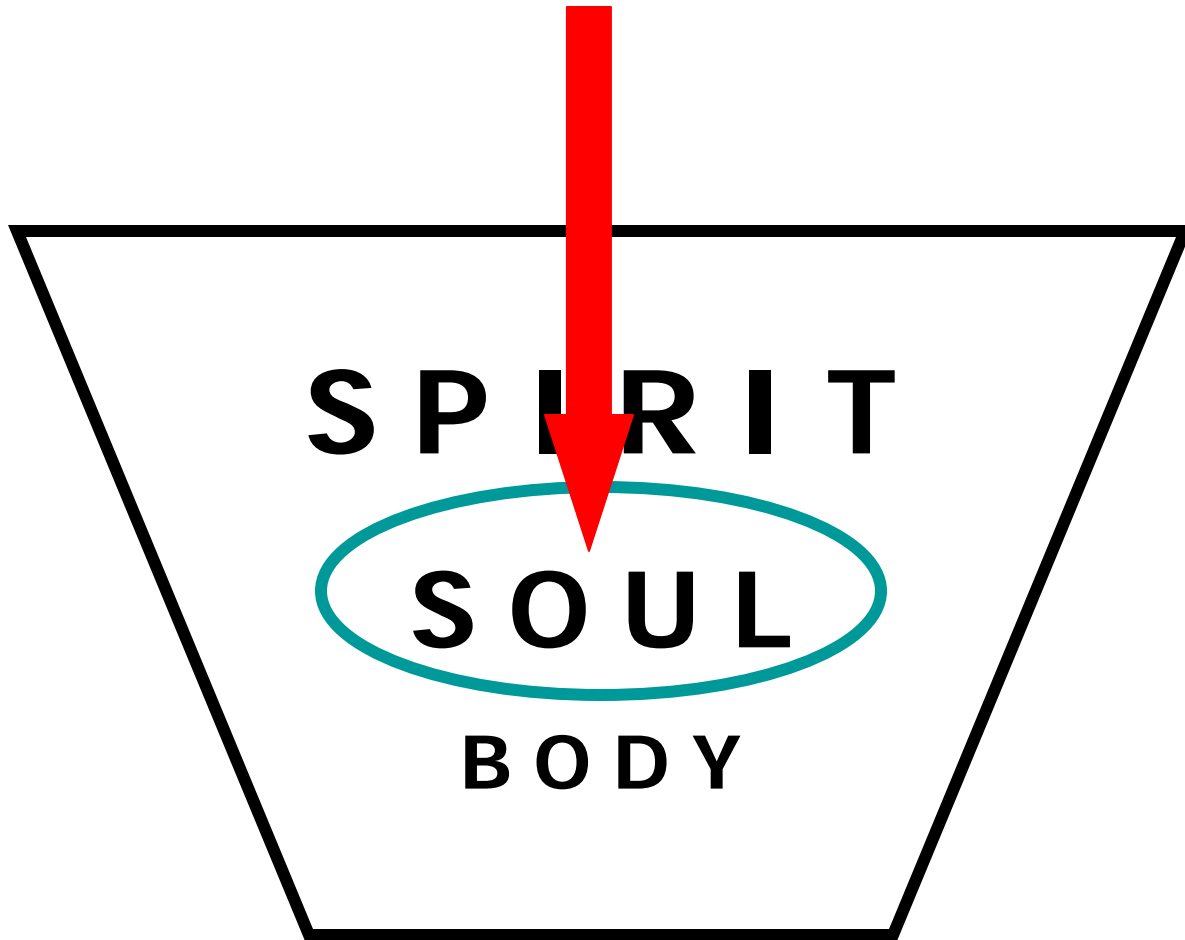
Stress-related diseases

- Cardio-vascular diseases
- Chronic inflammatory syndromes
- Auto-immune diseases
- Obesity and its complications
- Certain malignancies
- ? Asthma, adult diabetes, lupus

Role of medicine

- Limited, because medicine restricts itself just to the physical dimension of illness
- ‘Egyptian’ diseases have strong psycho-social-spiritual components
- Medicine without ‘cure of the soul’ can palliate but not heal these diseases

The bailiwick of the church



What the church can do

- Inner healing is of great importance
 - The resolution of inner personal conflicts, compulsive thoughts and behavior, destructive feelings and emotions, and compulsive immoral thoughts and behavior
- This improves health – Proverbs 14: 30
- Will your church take on this role?
- Prayer is of great support
- Teaching on healing and on health
- Healing services **if counseling is provided**

3. Spiritual diseases

Ephesians 6 : 12

- Satanic strongholds in the deep mind – lust, fear, anger, jealousy, bitterness
- Demonic occupation of areas of the mind
- ? Certain psychoses or neuroses
 - Research here is badly needed
- Sorcery and the occult – very common in the US as elsewhere
- We prayed much about this and felt that none of this applied to Miriam

The role of medicine

- None, because medicine does not recognize this category of illness and so cannot deal with it

The role of the church

- Studying the Bible and social and psychological sciences
- Training and equipping of special teams of counselors
- Much discernment and prayer
- Helping people resolve inner conflicts by the power of Christ
- Then dealing with any demonic forces

Discussion

- How can my local church respond to the need of large numbers of people in our church and community who need 'inner healing'?

