

## Biblical Health Care

For many years I have been challenged by the scripture from Ephesians 1:21, 22

*"He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*

The world of health care is part of "all things", so it is under the feet of Jesus. He is head over all things, and through His body, fills all in all. Christ through His body, His people, fills all things. I am challenged that this means not only in "the church" but in the whole of our lives including our work. This is one of the primary places where His Body is manifested in our communities. It is through us, His people that He can fill all in all. In health care, the challenge is to go into the world and bring His Kingdom into our workplaces that they would be places where He is acknowledged as the one who brings healing and wholeness. Earlier in Ephesians 1, Paul prayed that God may "give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him". I pray the same for those who read this, that you may "know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance".

### Background to this project

In 2001, Dr Arul Anketell from Healthcare Christian Fellowship International convened a prayer summit in Sri Lanka with the theme "Come to Hebron- to Crown Jesus Lord of Healthcare" - a time of prayer, fasting and planning for leaders in Christian health care organisations in Asia and the Pacific.

God's purpose was to give direction about advancing the Kingdom of God in health care. The Prayer summit gathered leaders in a similar way to David calling the leaders to Hebron in 1Chronicles 12:38. At that time, David was only King of Judah and the nation was divided. At Hebron, they made David king over both Judah and Israel, uniting the nation and ushering in a period of God's blessing for many years. Symbolically, this is what God brought about during the days of prayer, fasting and planning in Sri Lanka. We were gathered together as people from many nations, cultures, denominations, backgrounds, professions and organizations. But we came with one purpose, to make Jesus Lord over the health fields of Asia and the Pacific, to crown Him Lord of health care.

Transformational revival has been taking place in many communities around the world and has been documented and featured in the "Transformations" videos, <http://www.glowtorch.com>. George Otis Jnr. and others have taught on the principles which underlie these dramatic changes. He says that in every city where transformation has been documented there have been a number of common factors including:

- Humility
- Relational unity
- Fervent sustained prayer
- Persevering leadership

In the 3 days of prayer and fasting in Sri Lanka, God required these things of us as a representation of what He is to do in health care in a wider sphere. In an amazing

way He led us in repentance and humility to deal with issues within ourselves and between groups. This diverse group was led to become one in Him. Being part of a team was such a privilege as the Lord brought us into unity with our brothers and sisters in humility and sustained prayer. Something happened in the spiritual realm in that place of relational unity, which was significant for the transformation of the city of health care.

After the gathering at Hebron, 1Chronicles 13 describes the preparations for bringing the Ark back to Jerusalem. In Sri Lanka, we felt that God was guiding us to the next step, "to bring the ark of God back into health care". The ark represents the presence of God, the place where He dwells. I believe this represents the bringing into being and outworking of a truly Godly and Biblical way of health care and healing, which will indeed be inhabited by the very presence of God, transformed health care.

In 1Chronicles 13, there are a number of principles that we need to note.

- Word was to go out to the brethren to join us in bringing up the Ark (v2).
- The purpose is to enthrone God, the Lord (v6).
- It was to be accompanied by great praise, worship and rejoicing (v8).
- It is a thing of great fear and awe, and must be done in God's way, not man's (vs 9-10, Uzzah was killed because he touched what was holy and because the Ark was being carried up in man's way, not God's).
- Where the Ark of God is, there is great blessing (v14).

When the Ark was brought up to Jerusalem (1Chron15) it was brought up in God's way, by the Levites who were chosen and appointed by God to carry it. It is a holy thing that must be brought up by those whom God has chosen and who are consecrated for the task.

Twelve months later, a conference, "Celebration of Biblical Christian Healthcare", was held at the Christian Medical College, Vellore, India with the theme of "Bringing Back the Ark of God into Healthcare". We gathered with a sense of awe and anticipation in that amazing place that has such a strong Godly heritage. CMC Vellore has been a leading centre of medical practice and teaching in India for over 100 years.

Those present experienced a feast of teaching and revelation covering many topics with the focus on bringing the Ark of God back into healthcare, bringing His manifest presence into healthcare. Dr Chris Steyn, who was then the Healthcare Christian Fellowship Int. Coordinator for Europe, brought revelation in the area of Biblical Christian Healthcare. He gave a series of addresses challenging us to be truly Biblical health care givers, in a world of secular medicine. He spoke on the dominant philosophies and worldviews of the day and how they are the core beliefs in our health care training and understanding. If we are to be serious in our pursuit of Christian health care, we will have to be radical in our reformation of Biblical health care and go way beyond being "secular with a little bit of Christian sauce on top". Although this process must have an academic basis, science and academia must not be God, but they must be subject to God, His Word, truth and righteousness. If we are to see health care transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, it will be through His work in His people, which will bring the very presence and glory of God into the midst of the health care workplace. Ps 72: 19, 85: 9, Hab 2: 14.

As we prayed at the end of the celebration for the leaders of CMC Vellore, it appeared that God had a special role for this institution to release a new expression of Biblical health care. It appeared that, what we had only had inklings of in the Spirit previously, was beginning to have possibilities within a major institution. Plans were also made to establish some resource centres in the Asia/Pacific region that would be committed to facilitating endeavours related to Biblical health care and committed our respective organizations to supporting these aims.

We also felt that we should invite people in other regions and organizations to join with us in this aim of "bringing the Ark of God back into health care". We believe that this is something on God's heart to see the fullness of His redemptive purpose in health care, to bring His healing to people and the nations and to see a greater manifestation of His Kingdom in the whole realm of health care practice.

### **Bringing the Ark of God Back into Health care**

This concept led to the prayer summit mentioned above in 2001. In the context of the prayer summit, where we were meeting to "crown Jesus Lord of health care, much of 1 Chron 13 seemed to have parallels with the current situation in health care. Some of the parallels which appeared to me are outlined below as they contain principles, to which, we must adhere if we are to unfold what God desires.

*"Let us bring up the ark of our God back to us, for we did not enquire of it during the reign of Saul."* 1Chron13:2-3

Health care is in a similar state to Saul's reign; we seek only human wisdom. Health care does not acknowledge that God is the healer or seek His truth or wisdom. This is one of the chief sins of medicine and the health care professions. God has been cast aside and human knowledge and achievement exalted. We have not enquired of God for a long time, whereas we are called to seek God for truth rather than simply human understanding. We are called to bring up the ark. This includes continuing to enquire of God at all times, in whatever type of health care we practice.

Verse 7-10. They moved the ark on a new cart with Uzzah guiding it. They were celebrating, but the Lord's anger burned against Uzzah for touching the Ark, God's holy thing, and he died. It was brought up in the way of man, on a cart, rather than being carried by the priests and Levites, as specified in the Torah (Num 4:15, Deut 10:8, 31:9). It is an awesome thing to deal with the holiness of God, and we need to understand it is a fearsome thing to not do as God has said. The holy things of God have to be done by people dedicated and appointed by Him for the purpose and purified by the blood (of Jesus). It has to be done in His ways in obedience to Him or it will bring judgment.

Verse 14. In the house of Obed Edom - This man and His household were blessed by the presence of the Ark, as those who are in the presence of God will always be blessed. However, it was not the ultimate place for the Ark; God intended for it to go up to Jerusalem. Similarly, God has an ultimate purpose for health care. We are called to bring health care into its full redemptive purpose in the Kingdom of God. This is an awesome call and responsibility in God.

In 1Chronicles 15, the Ark was finally taken up to Jerusalem. David (vs 1) had now prepared a place for the Ark and pitched a tent for it. Similarly we need to prepare a place for God in our hearts and minds. He wants to lead us into a new Biblical

foundation in health care.

The singers sang, the musicians played, the people sacrificed, they brought it up with shouts of praise, music and rejoicing (verses 16-28). Praise must be part of our bringing up the Ark, it must be soaked with worship. It must be central in our lives so we continue to commune with God in all we do, including in our work.

### **What was the Ark?**

The Ark was a box made of acacia wood covered with gold. Its purpose and nature were given to Moses on Mt Sinai with the rest of the Law. It was covered with the "mercy seat" and over the Ark were the cherubim – angel figures. It was placed in the "holy of holies" in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. It was the place where God dwelt in a special way (Exodus 25).

In the Ark were:

- The 2 tablets upon which were written the 10 commandments
- A pot of manna from the time of God's miraculous provision of food in the desert
- Aaron's rod that budded

I feel these represent 3 foundational principles to us:

1. **The Tablets** – The Torah was given to Moses – God's living word, truth and law. This must be the basis of any system of health care which is an outworking of the Kingdom of God. We must be obedient to His Word.
2. **The Manna** – that was given to feed the Israelites in the desert. It speaks of God's wondrous provision and supply to His people. In Hebrew the word manna means "What is it?" When we see the outpouring of Biblical, Kingdom of God health care, I can imagine that people will be saying "what is it?"
3. **Aaron's Rod** – the symbol of God's power and authority in our hands to see the sick raised up, the blind see and the oppressed set free – including in hospitals and health care settings.

### **How can we see God's greater glory and presence in the midst of health care?**

How can we see this in the midst of what is currently a very secular and humanistic system? This is the worldview we have been taught in our universities and colleges and in our world generally. Our mindsets and worldview have to change because the mind is the major area of spiritual warfare. (2Cor.10:4-6)

I believe God first wants to convict us of our unbelief and show us how much we think and act from a humanistic worldview. In medicine, we trust in Man's knowledge and skills, not in the power of God. If we are to be Biblical health carers, we must learn to live and work in Him. We must live and work in faith and trust, which will allow the Holy Spirit to move in power in our daily work. I believe He wants to reveal to His children a much greater outworking of His Kingdom in health care, if we will but hear and obey.

### **What then shall we do?**

In Exodus 25:22 where God told Moses to make the Ark, He said, "I will meet you there and give you all my commands." God will meet with us as we come before Him and listen and He will give us His commands for our lives and the areas of health care in which we work.

In Leviticus 9:6, the Lord said to Moses, "This is what you are to do that the glory of God will appear to you". He then goes on to command Aaron to offer the sin offering, the burnt offering and the grain offering. In verses 22-24 the glory appeared to all the people and the fire consumed the offerings. In Hebrews 9:1-15 the writer speaks of how much greater the blood of Jesus is than those of bulls, and how much greater the glory we have in Him. How much more of His glory should we see in our lives and work as we sacrifice them to Him for His glorious Kingdom. We need to lay down our lives in health care so that He can transform it to His glory.

### **Where do we start?**

In 2Kings 22, in the time of King Josiah, the high priest, Hilkiah found the "Book of the Law in the house of the Lord" (verse 8). It is now as though we need to find the Book and read it with new eyes, with eyes of health carers looking for God's truth, righteousness and power as it applies to our health care world. When they found and read the Book they discovered that the people of Judah had not been obedient to all that was written. They then came with humble and repentant hearts and God heard them (verse 19). As they continued to read and rediscover the Book, they re-established what God had previously commanded, that is the Passover celebration. As we continue to read and rediscover, we can re-establish Christ, the Passover lamb as the source of all healing. His shedding of blood brought full healing and wholeness and redemption. This will be part of establishing Biblical health care, based on the truth of His Word.

I believe that we also need to start with repentance. A number of years ago the Lord led us to consider Isaiah 2:6-11 from the point of view of health care. That scripture seemed to epitomize some of the sins of health care.

Verses 7&11 speak of the wealth and pride of medicine. Many of us go into medicine for its status and the potential wealth that can be accumulated. In many areas, business interests now have the major say as to how medicine is practiced. Even if we do not see these things as our primary motivation we are still influenced in many ways by them, and it is very easy to be caught up in the priorities of others.

Verse 8 speaks of the belief we have in the work of our own hands. If we include the work of our minds, scientific intellectualism, we have the basic belief system of medicine, which began with the ancient Greeks. Science can be a pure search for truth to serve God's purposes, but if it becomes the only or overriding source of truth in which we believe, above all else, it has become an idol. It therefore needs to be brought under subjection to the Lordship of Jesus.

Verse 6 speaks of the idols which have been brought from the East. If we look at the spiritual and philosophical roots of medicine, we find that those are primarily from the time of Hippocrates and the Ancient Greeks. Hippocrates is referred to as the father of modern medicine, due to his scientific observation and recording of many diseases. He also proposed that to understand disease, one had to understand the

natural realm, rather than seeing disease only as supernatural, the primary belief system of the day. However he was also an Asklepiad, a follower of the Greek god of medicine. The Caduceus of Asklepios is still the symbol of medicine to this day. Therefore there is a strong influence of Greek pagan worship in our medical history.

Thus I believe we need to repent for ourselves, and also on behalf of medicine and health care for:

- Unbelief especially in not acknowledging God, His Word and His Son as the source of healing
- The pagan roots of medicine
- The selfish wealth and pride of medicine
- The idolizing of science

I believe as we repent, renounce, cut ourselves off from these roots and be delivered from their effects, we will be released from their powerful effects in our lives. We need to lay down our lives and our professions at the foot of the Cross, as a sacrifice to Him, for Him to raise up whatever He will. We will then be free to receive all He has for us in the Kingdom of God in health care, and join together to "bring the Ark back into health care".

*Ken Curry*