

A Biblical Worldview of Health Care

"And God placed all things under His feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way." Ephesians 1:22,23

What does it mean in the context of health care that Jesus Christ is "head over everything", that He "fills everything" and that "all things are under His feet"? If we truly believe that Jesus is the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (1Tim. 6: 15, Rev. 19: 16), this must have profound implications for our understanding of every aspect of the world, ourselves and the community around us.

If He is Lord of all, then He is the rightful Lord, not only of individuals, cities and nations, but of every aspect of our communities and society. This must include health care in all its aspects and diversity. What does it mean for "Jesus Christ to be Lord of health care"? The first step in finding what this may mean to us must be to try and come to a Biblical understanding of health care. I encourage all health workers to make a study of the scripture especially with respect to what is most relevant to their own discipline. I would like to share some general themes below.

God is the Healer

Any Biblical understanding of health must acknowledge that God is the healer. *"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not His benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases" (Ps 103: 1-3)*. Although health workers may attempt to facilitate healing in many ways, He is the healer. All life flows from God, who is the creator of all things. We must trust Him to bring about healing and wholeness in us and those whom we serve through the health professions. It is only through the redemption of Jesus that we can come to wholeness in our body, soul and spirit, as only His cross has brought freedom from sin and sickness (1Peter 2: 24). If our faith is in God and we are walking in obedience to Him as we work, allowing the Spirit to work in and through us, it is a privilege to be His vessels bringing His healing power to those we work with each day.

There are a number of Biblical themes which are very relevant to health issues. Firstly we find in the Law of Moses many references to diagnosis and management, particularly of infectious diseases. The priests were the people assigned to diagnose diseases and confirm healing. There were many laws relating to what we might call hygiene or public health issues which were far ahead of other peoples of the time. In Ex 15: 26 God told Moses that *"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 the Lord, who heals you."* I would think that this would partly be due to the fact that obeying the Law assists in keeping us healthy, but also that obeying God brings blessing (Dt 28: 1-14), whereas disobedience brings cursing which includes diseases (Dt 28: 20-22).

Secondly, we find a few references to the use of remedies for ailments, which we might say is akin to the practice of medicine today. One instance would be Isaiah's, advice to Hezekiah to put a poultice on his boil (2Kings 20: 7) after which he recovered, but it is interesting to note that this came only after Hezekiah's repentance and Isaiah's prophetic word of healing. Paul advises Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach and frequent ailments (1Tim 5: 23), and we are told that the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations (Rev22: 2).

However, the vast majority of scriptural references to healing are to a direct intervention by God in response to prayer and faith, eg. Abraham (Gen 20: 17), Elijah (1Kings 17: 17-24), Elisha (2Kings 4: 29-37), Peter and John (Acts3: 1-10) and Paul (Acts 20: 9-10). The greatest number of healings came through the ministry of Jesus, which He claimed as proof of His Lordship (Lk 7: 22). James directs that the elders should pray over the sick and they will recover and infers that repentance is a necessary aspect of healing (James 5: 14-16). I believe that Scripture says that to be Biblical health workers we must seek God as to how we can incorporate these aspects of the "healing ministry" into our practices. We cannot ignore these areas and practice purely according to our secular training if we are to bring the Kingdom of God into health care.

How can we see Him filling our lives and practices?

Here are some ideas:

1. Individually our lives and practices must be totally committed to the Lordship of Jesus. Let us examine ourselves and repent of areas which have not come under His Lordship, where we are acting in unbelief and pride, especially the pride of our professions. Those of us who are doctors especially need to repent of medicine being an idol and the attitudes of pride and superiority found in our profession. Medicine has found much truth and value but this must rightly be submitted to the Lordship of Christ to be Kingdom medicine. We all need to examine our practices and repent of and separate ourselves from anything which God shows us is not of Him. We need to seek Him for His will and His ways as to how we should practice, and obey as He leads even if this may involve making difficult decisions or sacrificing previous aspirations.
2. Corporately in our practices we need to support, encourage and uphold one another, and to seek God's corporate will for the practices and health facilities in which we work. We all need at least one other person to share and pray with, to "stand back to back" and to "go out two by two". If you do not have such a person, ask the Lord to show you who the person is. Seek for another Christian in your work environment, with whom you can share and pray. If there is a prayer group in your hospital or facility, join it, and if there is not, start one. We need to intercede for each other, our patients, and our workplaces and seek and bring into being God's strategies for them. Our workplaces are just as much a place of spiritual warfare as anywhere else in the community and the battle will only be won in the Spirit (Eph 6: 10).
3. In our disciplines God is seeking us to be prophetic in raising a new standard of truth and righteousness. God has a redemptive purpose for healthcare and each of its myriad of parts. He is Lord and wants to give revelation to His people that we would be a blessing to our nation and the nations of the earth. Whether we are involved in clinical work, education, administration, management, research or some other area or combination of areas, God has a plan which is part of his greater end time purposes for bringing in the harvest and the restoration of all things (Acts 3: 21).

We are living in exciting times, of God pouring out His Spirit on the earth. He is calling us to be His prophetic people in health care. Will we take up the challenge?

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