



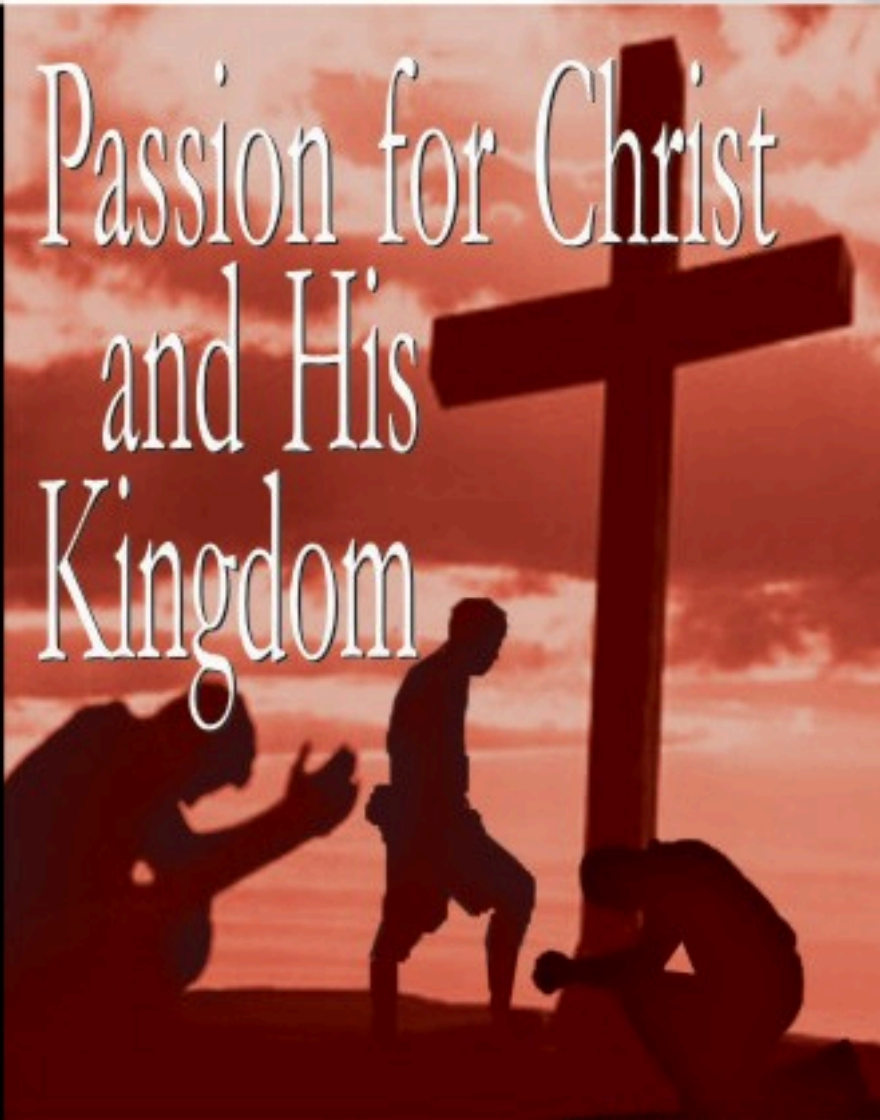
"Did not our heart burn within us
as He talked with us on the road
and while He opened the
scriptures to us"



HEALTHCARE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
INTERNATIONAL (SOUTH ASIA) MONOGRAPHS



Passion for Christ and His Kingdom



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For Healthcare Christian Fellowship International, South Asia

Passion for Christ and His Kingdom in the Health Fields

“Thy Kingdom Come!”

“Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit “

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Introduction

God, through Jesus Christ, is drawing people to Himself from different walks of life and through different avenues. Healthcare is no exception. Since healing was part of the earthly ministry of Jesus, as healthcare professionals, we are subtly misled to assume that all that we do under the banner of health care is fine and acceptable to God. As long as people are cured physically, our responsibility is considered to be over.

The intention of this booklet is to critically examine our health care practice in the light of godly standards as we understand them. Are our values aligning with the pattern of the Lord Jesus and contributing effectively to His Kingdom purposes? Are we passionate about exalting the Lord Jesus in our healthcare practices and institutions? What can be possible responses to the apparent variations that we observe?

The unhealthy dichotomy

An integrated approach to health was the norm till the 17th century. Paintings at the Ospedale di Santa Maria Della Scala, a hospital established by the church in Italy to care for pilgrims going to Rome depict a wounded man being attended by a nurse who cleans his feet, an assistant who covers his nakedness and a team of surgeons who care for his injury. What a beautiful way of integration of medical science and the Christian tradition of compassionate care!¹

Sadly, over the centuries, with the Enlightenment and the subsequent movement of medicine into the science stream, medical care became out- of-bounds for the church. The state took upon itself the responsibility for scientific enquiry and the church was politely told to care only for the spiritual issues. This divide has adversely affected the practise of medicine from a *imago dei* model (every person made in the image of God and needing restoration in total) to a reductionistic **biophysical model** where man is matter and composed of parts which need to be repaired.

The present health care scenario:

Health care has moved, over the years, from being a calling and service to a marketable commodity. Man and sickness is often seen as a source for greedy exploitation rather than as an opportunity to serve. With the rapid advancement of medical technology and millions of dollars spent on research, the need

¹David Chaput de Saintonge - Whole person medicine

to recover costs with profit is critical. The “Indian healthcare services Industry” is expected to be worth about Rs.3200 billion (US \$ 80 billion) by 2012² and newer ways of marketing, like medical tourism and health tours, are actively promoted. Pharmaceutical and diagnostic companies vie with each other to “bribe” doctors to prescribe and promote their products. Medical seats are sold in private medical and nursing schools for exorbitant amounts for which there are sufficient takers, who anticipate a windfall after their studies.

In this rat-race, the poor are neglected, ethical issues compromised and money becomes the bottom-line in all dealings. It is sad to see healthcare professionals caught in this web and patients bearing the brunt. God and godly standards appear to be overlooked.

God's Heart

God's original plan was for man to enjoy fullness of life in every respect. With the entry of sin this plan was disrupted. However, the heart of God still longs for His children to be restored to 'Shalom' which is often translated as 'wholeness', 'completeness', etc. Jesus Christ came into this world to redeem what was ruined by sin and restore hurting humanity back into the Kingdom of God. In His 'Nazarene manifesto' in the Gospel of Luke³, Jesus speaks of *preaching the good news to the poor, proclaiming release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and setting free those who are downtrodden*. He was ushering in the Kingdom into the world and lives of people.

Being a God of justice, he also desires that there is fairness and

²<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-141604403.html>

³Luke 4:18

⁴Lev 25: 10-11 and 35,36

equitable distribution of resources and services without exploitation of the needy⁴.

What should be our response?

The prophet Ezekiel was given a vision of the glory of God departing from the threshold of the temple when the people of God refused to acknowledge Him and continued in their sinful deeds⁵. This is indeed a sad situation. This can very well happen to our health care fields when Jesus Christ is refused to be acknowledged as Lord. I fear for this if we go in our own ways with 'each man doing what is right in His own eyes'. The health fields rightfully belong to Jesus and we are invited and given the privilege to work alongside the Great Physician in His healing ministry.

As His people, what can we do?

May we be filled with righteous anger and sorrow!

When our Lord Jesus saw the temple at Jerusalem which was meant to be a house of prayer converted into a den of robbers (place of merchandise in some versions), he was furious and took corrective action. Today when healthcare, a noble vocation meant for restoration of people, is made a commodity for merchandise, should we remain silent spectators? May the fire of God burn in our hearts and we passionately desire a transformation to happen in our health care fields!

Nehemiah, on hearing about the condition of the remnant and the city of Jerusalem, sat down and wept for days. His heart was broken as he understood the situation of his people and subsequently took steps to see a change in their situation. **May we be given hearts that agonise and weep to see a difference!**

⁵Ezekiel 10:18

May we cry out to the Lord in repentance!

On reading about the desolation of Jerusalem, the prophet Daniel decided to seek the Lord God by prayer and supplication with fasting, sackcloth and ashes⁶. In his confessional prayer, he also takes personal responsibility for the sins committed by the people of Israel. He considers their sins as his also, “**we** have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly...”.

We are often quick to point fingers at others but can we take responsibility for the situation in the health care fields? We, the Christian health care professionals, and the church will need to own up responsibility and seek the Lord’s forgiveness for our pride, indifference and complacency.

God’s heart is searching for a man who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before Him⁷. **Can some of us make ourselves available to stand in the gap and intercede to see health care being restored to God’s purposes?**

May we act justly and live holy lives!

The prophet Micah beautifully summarises what the Lord requires of His people: “**to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God**”⁸. God is glorified only when His people walk in integrity and holiness. Peter in writing to God’s people⁹ exhorts them to “be diligent to be found in Him in peace, spotless and blameless”. Paul reminds Timothy that “God has saved us and called us with a holy calling in Christ”¹⁰. God who dwells in unapproachable holiness exhorts His people

⁶Daniel 9:3

⁷Ezekiel 22:30

⁸Micah 6:8

⁹2 Peter 3: 14

¹⁰2 Timothy 1:9

to “be holy just as He is holy”. I consider medicine as a gift given by God to mankind to relieve pain and sufferings. However, it is often misused to amass wealth for the health care providers and fill the coffers of the institutions. There is a disproportionate distribution of health care services favouring the “haves” and neglecting the “have-nots”.

We need to consider each patient as created in the image of God and do what is best for him or her in full integrity. Justice involves making health care available to the needy in situations where their needs are unmet. This may involve some of us moving out of our present positions and seeking to respond to the needs in obedience to the will and purposes of God.

When the prophet Isaiah “overheard” the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send...?”, his immediate response was, “Here am I. Send me”. It was an instant step of obedience to the heart cry of God which was pained at the situation of His people and God’s desire to see them restored into a loving relationship with Him. May our ***“hearts also be broken by the things that break God’s heart”***.

May the will of God be our primary objective!

Jesus, when referring to His mission on earth, said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish His work”¹¹. He had no agenda other than to do what His Father wanted Him to. On another occasion He went to the extent of saying “The Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing...”¹². It is indeed surprising that the Creator of the whole universe ‘by whom and for whom all things were created’ made Himself so ‘helpless’ to do only

¹¹John 4:34

¹²John 5:19

¹³Matthew 3: 17

what He heard and saw His Father do. No wonder the Father could boldly declare “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”¹³.

It is necessary for us, as healthcare professionals, to examine our own lives to see where our priorities lie. The “worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things” often distract us from the pure will of God. C.S Lewis once remarked that ***“there are 2 kinds of people .. those who say to God, Thy will be done....and those to whom God says .. All right then, have it your way”***.

At the end of our life’s journey may we long to hear the words: “Well done, good and faithful servant” rather than the harsh words “I never knew you, depart from me...”.

May we yearn to see fullness of life in our patients!

‘More than ever, our times carry the marks of the brokenness of humanity and of creation as a whole. Social, political and economic injustice, war and environmental disruption, self-destructive life-styles, distorted identities and mental and physical ill-health together expose a violated creation in conflict with the will of the Creator everywhere.’¹⁴

Jesus said, “I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly.”¹⁵ Most patients who come to our clinics are hurting and live reduced lives. As witnesses to His love and salvation, it is our responsibility to point them to the source of abundant life. With the pressure of work and our busy schedules, we often only do the minimum to alleviate their immediate need and overlook

¹⁴Mogedal and Bergh, International Review of Mission, Vol. LXXXIII, No 329

¹⁵John 10:10

the other dimensions of their lives that also equally need attention.

When Jesus saw the multitudes He was ‘moved with compassion because they were like sheep without a shepherd’. When we see the large crowds in front of our outpatient departments, are we irritated or moved with compassion?

Should we be satisfied with sending them ‘partially full’ when Jesus desires to give them full life? Our hands might be full with work but can we facilitate teams within our institutions who will address the other areas of need? ***Could we desire and long for more of the good news being preached to the poor, captives being released, blind recovering sight and the downtrodden set free in our practices and health care institutions?*** Only then are we in line with the purpose for which Jesus came into this world.

May we earnestly desire ‘God’s Kingdom to come’ in our health care fields!

We often anticipate the Kingdom at a future day, when the Lord returns. We do not expect a visible manifestation of the Kingdom now and postpone it to a later date. But the Word of God has a different perspective. The Lord’s Prayer as it is commonly referred to has a section which says, “Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.”. It is obvious that the Kingdom has to permeate every aspect of human life and existence in the present and that includes health care. All through church history, saints have prayed and worked for ‘a glorious Church that would gain much ground in many nations’ and were prepared for the struggles it would entail.

What rightfully belongs to God has been hijacked by Satan and his forces. It is now our responsibility to see the Kingdom force-

fully advancing against all opposition. This includes praying, standing up for Kingdom values and investing our time, resources and abilities to facilitate this. We need to work together with the Holy Spirit to advance the Kingdom of God in the present time and also look forward to the full establishment of His Kingdom on earth in 'all its final, unpolluted glory' when the Lord Jesus returns.

Jesus referring to the Kingdom of heaven says that the Kingdom of heaven suffers violence (or is forcibly entered) and violent men take it by force (or seize it for themselves). It may indicate the truth that the going will often not be smooth but may involve times of conflicts and struggles before we see changes happening. We are called to persevere and not give up when there are set-backs and losses because the Kingdom will ultimately triumph! The gates of hell cannot prevail against it!

David Livingstone emphasised His commitment to the Kingdom by saying ***"I will place no value on anything I have or possess except in relation to the Kingdom of Christ"***.

Can we have a similar motto for our lives that the Kingdom of God is given first place?

May we join hands and work together for His Glory!

In his High Priestly prayer¹⁶, Jesus fervently prayed to the Father, ***"that they may all be one ..."*** It was His desire that His people would display love and unity without a spirit of competitiveness. How much would it grieve His heart when we act otherwise!

We are only His co-labourers working with the "Lord of the harvest" to see His purposes accomplished and His Kingdom estab-

¹⁶John 17;21

lished (not ours or that of our organisations’).

Can we break down our ‘narrow personal and institutional dividing lines’ to join hands and work together for our common Master? Only then, I believe we would see a mighty move of God in our health care fields for His Honor and Glory because God says, “My glory I will not give to another”¹⁷.

May God give each of us humble and broken spirits to encourage, bear and support each other in our common journey and destiny.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the task and journey ahead of us may appear demanding, difficult and often ‘impossible’! We might feel weak and helpless looking at our strength and feeble resources. We should move from a ‘victim mentality’ to a ‘victory mentality’. Can we hear the voice of God saying to us what Gideon heard when he was hiding: ***“Go in the strength you have”*** and also that this battle cannot be won ***“by might or power” but “by His Spirit”***?

Henry Varley once said, ***“the world has yet to see what God will do with a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to the Holy Spirit”***. God often looks at our availability and not our ability because it is after all His work ...and we are only called to be co-workers in the great task that God is accomplishing. It is a great privilege and may we respond to His invitation and ***‘serve Him with gladness’***.

¹⁷Isaiah 48:11



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"This booklet presents an overview of the present healthcare scenario and contrasts it with God's heart for healthcare. The writer then calls for a passionate, Bible based, Cross centered, Jesus driven, seven fold response from us in healthcare. The writer carries a Spirit given burden for true renewal in the Health Fields of South Asia. Dr. Manoj C. Jacob is a beloved Physician from India, who has worked in the Mission field. From April 2010 he will be taking up the responsibility of being full time General Secretary of Evangelical Medical Fellowship, India."

In whom (Christ) are hidden all the treasures
of wisdom & knowledge -Colossians 2:3 (NKJV)

Then the Lord replied:

Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. -Habakkuk 2:2,3 (NIV)