

Abstract

This dissertation attempts to construct a theological and pastoral model for the ministry of healing. The background to the study is experience of bad pastoral practice and the desire to formulate a view of healing which has sound theological foundations and good pastoral wisdom. After an introductory chapter, chapter two explores healing in the context of Scripture. The goal is to understand what Scripture communicates about healing and identify pastoral lessons that can be applied to ministry. The outcome of this initial study was awareness that while supernatural healing was very common in the New Testament church (particularly in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles), there was lack of clarity about whether it was seen as a normal part of the Christian's experience. Chapter three examines healing over the course of church history to discover whether the kinds of healing which took place in the ministry of Jesus and the apostles was continued. This study included an overview of healing in antiquity, the Middle Ages, modernity and the present day. Chapter four has a directly theological focus and outlines three key positions in relation to the church's understanding of healing: the view that the miraculous does not occur popularised by Rudolf Bultmann; the signs and wonders theology of John Wimber; and the cessationist perspective of Reformed Christianity. These positions are outlined but no judgments are made. The concluding chapter is my attempt to reach conclusions from my research and formulate a theological and pastoral model for the healing ministry.

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