

The Healing Of Jean Neil - 'Something To Shout About'?

In an article printed in an Australian Christian magazine, this ministry made a brief reference to modern day 'healers' and their lack of evidence for claimed healings of organic diseases. A reader, in response, wrote: *'Dear Bro. Terry Arnold, you are stepping on dangerous ground criticising Reinhard Bonnke...My spirit was deeply grieved when you categorised Reinhard Bonnke in the class of the others...to class Reinhard Bonnke as evidence is not true.*

If you would take the challenge to view the video of Jean Neil's Miracle, ['Something to shout about - the documentation of a miracle'], who was documented and videod in an England hospital as a vegetable by her family, and showed the connection at Reinhard Bonnke's Crusade, then her life two years afterwards, you will have tears in your eyes as you witness the miracle. Yes, Terry, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Having witnessed true miracles in a leprosy colony in India and at our crusades, I know He still heals. You see Terry, healing is gradual and a miracle is instant healing, which God does for only one reason - to bring people to Himself...Terry, God wants to show Himself strong and alive to a lost and dying generation. Sure there are frauds in the body of Christ, but Reinhard Bonnke is not one of them. To say so would be very dangerous ground. Perhaps you may consider viewing our video...

...Please do not categories Reinhard Bonnke with fraudulent claims. He is God's servant. [A] man who God uses to bring literally millions of Africans to Himself, does not make fraudulent claims. Having viewed his video in Africa, the miracles are real or 100,000 to 150,000 people would not turn up.

My brother, lift your eyes above the man on the platform and recognise the creatures of God he [Bonnke] serves...The reason why today you will not find many miracles in Western countries is because of religious ideas of God's healing power, and unbelief. Jesus could not do miracles in his home town because of their unbelief. May your faith rise brother, so God can use you in the healing power of Jesus....

...Reinhard Bonnke fasts 40 days to move in the realm he does before his crusades to release God's power...God will not move through religious, theological people but men and women of faith. Roman 14:4. I would be happy to discuss this further with you, if you are willing to listen'.

This ministry attempted to contact the writer above and obtain the video but with no success.

We make it clear to the reader of this article that there are several false assertions in the above letter.

Firstly, We do believe God heals. However, in *all* instances in which we have examined the claims of healings of organic diseases by leading Charismatic/faith healers, we have found them to be either fraudulent or non-miraculous.

Secondly, Biblical miraculous healing was not '*gradual*' but instant and *immediate*. In the Gospel of Matthew alone it is clear that Jesus healed '*all*', (Matt. 23:24; 8:16; 10:1,8; 12:15; 14:36; etc.), '*every sickness*', and all that came to him were immediately and *completely* healed, (12:13; 20:34) - whether they had faith or not!

Thirdly, the miracles are not proven real on the basis that 100,000 people were present. Was Adolph Hitler right because this many people showed up?

Fourthly, what is so wrong with '*theological people*'? Was not Paul theological in the true sense of the word? If not, then why did he continually teach *doctrine* in his writings?

Finally, the use of Romans 14:4 is *misused*. The passage teaches not to judge in matters of *food* and '*doubtful disputations*'.

This ministry managed to obtain elsewhere a copy of the video '*Something To Shout About*'. The video is a very popular tool used by *Christ For All Nations* (CFN) ministries, and is perhaps the best documented 'healing' in modern times. It is difficult to view this video and not be impressed with the testimonies and evidence from doctors and from Jean Neil herself. *It was simply the most convincing documentation of a miraculous healing of an organic disease we had ever seen!*

As confirmation, we contacted a ministry in England who sent a research paper by a Christian doctor - Doctor May, who investigates alleged miraculous healings. The following are excerpts from his paper:

'...I invited readers of the Southampton Evangelical alliance Quarterly Bulletin to submit claims to miraculous healing to me for investigation and comment on. By far the most striking of the responses received was a video recording of what was presented as the miraculous healing of Mrs Jean Neil at a meeting led by the German evangelist, Mr. Reinhard Bonnke. The video which is entitled 'Something To Shout About - The Documentation Of A Miracle' shows Mrs Neil attending the meeting in a wheel chair. Mr Bonke laid his hands on her after which she stood and to the astonishment of the assembled crowd, ran around the auditorium and appeared completely healed of what she described as a spinal injury. The video went on to show a written report from an orthopedic surgeon, and an interview with her GP...Mr Bonnke concludes the video by claiming her healing is 'an outright miracle.'

The claim: (From the video cover) *'Mrs Jean Neil...was a hopeless case - spinal injury, Angina Pectoris, a hip out of joint and one leg two inches shorter...She underwent 14 operations, spent 4 years in hospital, suffered 3 heart attacks, and was treated with traction and plaster jackets. Mrs Neil was confined to a wheelchair, used 3 respirators, applied heart patches and took 24 tablets daily..now she has a brand new story.'*

Findings: *Mrs Neil could not have been more helpful...She claims to have been healed of seven diseases: a short leg, an out of joint hip, a spinal injury, heart disease, a Hiatus Hernia, Bronchitis and poor vision.*

1. Short leg: *The orthopaedic report from Dr...makes no references to differences in her leg lengths. Legs are notoriously difficult to measure...there is no mention of such x -rays or suggestion of a...problem with her legs...*

2. Hip out of Joint: *Mr. [A Doctor] reports that an x-ray taken on 23 Dec. 1987 (3 months before her healing) showed that her hips appeared 'quite normal'.*

3. Spinal injury: *Of the 14 operations, 4 were on her spine...The 4 years spent in hospital...she had 10 admissions in about a year for chest infections...The spinal operations included removal of her Coccyx in the 1960's, removal of a prolapsed disc in 1973, a Laminectomy in 1975, and a further disc removal in 1981...Since that time it seems that she walked with a stick until January 1987 when she again developed low back pain which persisted until her healing 15 months later in March 1988. It was mainly during that 15 months period that she made use of a wheelchair. According to her GP's referral letter to the orthopaedic surgeon, dated 23 Sept, 1987, 'She remains in some pain, has to use two walking sticks to get around, or a wheelchair for longer distances.'...It does not appear at any stage that she was confined to a wheelchair.*

...In Sept. 1988, 6 months after her healing, she was reassessed by the orthopaedic surgeon. [Only] Two paragraphs of this 3 paragraph report were shown on the video. The first paragraph...reported that 'she has a full range of completely painless spinal movement.' The third paragraph which was not shown reads: 'x-rays have been repeated today and these conform that there is absolutely no change from the x-rays taken prior to this evangelical healing.'

Clearly she had improved dramatically subjectively, but there was no objective evidence of any change in the condition of her spine.'

4. Heart disease: *Mrs Neil believes she has had 3 heart attacks...writing 6 months before her healing her GP stated that her chest pains 'after vigorous investigations were felt not to be cardiac in origin.'*

5. Hiatus Hernia: *Mrs Neil reports that about 8 years ago she had an x-ray which showed her to have an Hiatus Hernia. This has not been repeated since...*

6. Bronchitis:...The treatment given for suspected Angina (which she didn't actually have) caused her 'Bronchitis' which settled when the treatment was withdrawn.

7. Poor vision: *Apparently her vision deteriorated seriously while she was taking another anti-anginal drug...her vision subsequently improved dramatically after she discontinued the drug, but she does continue to need spectacles.*

Conclusion:..*The claims made on the video [1st edition]...seem to be seriously incorrect and misleading...The case of Mrs. Neil illustrates many of the problems that are uncovered in the search for truth in claims of miraculous healing...On one hand...the amazing improvement in her sense of well being and enjoyment of life...the nature of her disabilities was not easy to evaluate...This is nearly always the case with back pain in particular....other conditions...no less than four may have been wholly or in part...caused by treatment...The doctors...report...is difficult to excuse.*

...The video...showed deaf people who were watching sign language...Is it something in the nature of God that causes Him to be concerned about short legs and back pains while seeming to ignore the blind, the deaf, the paralysed and the dead? Did they not have enough faith? And why do the Gospels record Jesus healing exactly such conditions, those which never seem to be healed today?

(A copy of this report was sent to Mr. Bonnke with a request to withdraw the video)

...That is not to say that He [God] cannot heal secondary cancer, Downes Syndrome or a club foot, but it is to say that such a change in the very nature of things is not His normal way of working. And if I have not been able through wide enquiries over a long period to find one such example that withstands scrutiny, such healings must anyway be very rare indeed.' (Underlining ours)

(Dr. Peter May is a Christian GP in Southampton, Eng.).

The above report highlights how even the best and most convincing evidence of a healing can be anything but miraculous. Yet today there is a flood of such stories, seemingly to convince the unsaved (or Christians?) that Jesus is real.

In an edition of 'Outreach' - a *Christian Outreach* publication (July/Aug/1999), a testimony was given of a healing of a 32 year old man from the Solomon Islands. The story relates how this man suffered much pain in his legs and took 'pain killers, had x-rays and blood tests. The results always came up negative...' *'Blood tests couldn't pick it up; it wasn't in the blood. Early x-rays had no chance because the holes in the bones were so tiny...'* (Underlining ours)

This man was called out by the pastor at a meeting: *'There is a man with holes in his bones...your legs are paralysed!...your left leg you can't walk...there are holes in the bones from your knees to your hip...'*

The man was apparently completely healed that night. The report goes on to say: *'The doctors were stunned. Five x-rays every two weeks for ten weeks showed a complete healing.'*

The obvious question is: *How can it be a complete miraculous healing and x-rays after the event be negative when the x-rays and tests showed nothing wrong in the first place?*

The examples shown in the above articles highlight a fact found in many investigations of modern healings - *an incorrect initial diagnosis*.

Another sad fact is that in many cases after the 'healing' the medical condition *returns*. Many have *died* as a result of false healings from faith healers such as Benny Hinn. (1)

Charles Trombley, a 'healing evangelist', wrote a best selling book in 1974 titled, *'Kicked Out Of The Kingdom'* about his expulsion from the Jehovah Witnesses because he believed his son was healed. The book includes many stories of miraculous healings including his son's accident. Trombley writes of how his son had cheated death. Trombley had been reading Kenyon's book, *'Jesus the Healer'* and he decided to *'stand on Gods Word regardless of the circumstances'*. He began to speak to his son: *'Jesus has healed you'*, and apparently God healed his son *'completely'*.

However, the Sarasota Hospital in Florida has issued a statement that the boy was in fact readmitted another four times for further treatment and survived because of the operation. (2) This brings us to question the other claimed healings in this book. If the book has one lie or gross exaggeration then what of this author's credibility? As a young Christian I was greatly influenced by such books. Added to this, the author, Kenyon, that Trombley refers to, taught heretical teachings from the cult of *Christian Science*. In modern times Word-Faith teachers such as Hagin and Copeland have plagiarised word for word and re-taught these same works.

One author writes: *'It is not enough to claim that certain undiagnosed diseases have been 'cured' while the sufferer was in a highly emotional condition which so often characterises 'healing campaigns' today. Such cases of 'healing' should be sent to the local doctor for a certificate even as Christ sent the leper to the priest. My youngest sister and her husband worked for fifteen years among the lepers of India. Never, throughout that period did a 'Pentecostalist' venture to demonstrate the reality of his claim to share in the commission of Matthew, and so far as we have knowledge no healing campaign has ever been organised by Pentecostalists among lepers. We ask 'why'? And the answer is evident...the raising of the dead is also included in these gifts, but there is no accredited instance where such a power has been possessed or exercised.'*(3)

Sadly, when we in this ministry have investigated healing claims, the *delusion* of the modern healing and signs and wonders movement becomes more frightening. The major signs and wonders leaders have failed to produce real evidence for their claims of healing of organic diseases. Jesus' offer in the cross of Calvary has no emphasis in healing but rather in the deliverance from the horrific consequences of sin. The offer is not the redemption of our bodies in this life (Rom.8:23; Eph.1:14), but eternal life through the imputed (credited) righteousness of Christ.

Terry Arnold

- (1) See 'Signs & Wonders - Exposed' No.3 (video) for photographs, etc.
- (2) Source: 'New Life', 3/6/1999, P.11
- (3) 'An Alphabetical Analysis' - section on 'healing'.