

EXPLORING NARRATIVES IN SUPERNATURAL HEALING
AT GRACE CHURCH OF GOD, BROOKLYN, NY

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING NARRATIVES IN SUPERNATURAL HEALING AT GRACE CHURCH OF GOD, BROOKLYN, NY

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This dissertation provides insight into Grace Church of God's current practice in supernatural healing. Grace is a Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) congregation ministering to the needs of an immigrant population of Caribbean, Central/South American, and their African American descendants. The research uses a narrative methodology to collect, by way of interviews, 15 initial stories of supernatural healing which are then analyzed to select the 7 thickest and richest. The final group of testimonies did comprise of 3 stories from Brownsville and 4 from elsewhere.

A Local Advisory Team (LAT) supported me as pastor in further pulling apart these supernatural healing stories comparing the group of 3 to the group of 4, and all to Biblical narratives in divine healing. Some themes that emerged providing meaning to the lives of the storytellers were broadened and deepened with recommendations for touching lives in the community regarding healing of the spirit, soul, and body.

Two of the 21st century divine healing stories were paired with similar Biblical stories and used to conduct two Bible studies. A pre and post test showed that these stories had an impact on the 22 people who attended the classes. The research concluded that Grace has a collection of testimonies in supernatural healing to bring hope and healing to the community. It discovered specific themes and processes that Grace can apply to make its mission and ministry more effective in serving the community.

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INTRODUCTION

Grace Church of God's reputation in supernatural healing was spreading to the community when people came seeking healing especially during Lent when the church engaged in a season of prayer and fasting. By collecting 7 twenty-first century stories of supernatural healing, pulling them apart, and exploring emerging themes, Grace could determine whether her mission and ministry offered hope to the community. The testimonies or narratives were also compared with Biblical narratives of healing looking for continuity as found in Hebrews 13:8 that, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

This research was a means of evaluating the church's fruit-producing process in supernatural healing backwards from the fruit of healing to the root system. It used a narrative methodology that functioned like a farmer analyzing a crop's process afterwards and backwards from the picked fruit of testimonies back to the seed, root, and shoot of healing ministry, so as to see what to do to improve effectiveness.

The narrative research collected the data long after the personal, unexpected, critical incident of illness and healing occurred. This kind of reflection based on retention tests the story's impact on both the storyteller and audiences who heard it. It is this impact that was analyzed to determine its present and future value to the community. Leonard Webster in giving guidance to narrative research stated in his book, *Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method: An Introduction to Using Critical Event Narrative Analysis in Research on Learning and Teaching*, "Over time, the mind refines

and discards unnecessary detail and retains those elements that have been of changing and lasting value.”¹

The research drilled down into the collected narratives 1) for didactic lessons to foster hope for the hopeless, 2) to further reveal Grace’s identity and “light...under the bushel basket,”² and 3) to serve as “stones of remembrance”³ rooting Grace in its history, identity, theology, ministry, and community. Findings from this research may also have provided insight for the church’s current pastoral transitioning plan, determining whether an expanding ministry of healing was viable, and if so, how to go about making it sustainable to help the community.

Grace’s ministry is located in Brownsville, Brooklyn which has the lowest income housing project in New York⁴ and suffers from poverty’s related systemic social ills. This neighborhood was “home to Murder, Inc. and its mobsters, including Lucky Luciano...”⁵ and recently the highest “stop and frisk” area in New York City with 31.1 stops per 100 residents.⁶ Posted on the wall of Grace’s sanctuary is the vision statement, “Grace is heaven’s outpost for Christ-centered ministry that transforms lives.” So Grace’s

¹ Leonard Webster and Patricie Mertova, *Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method: An Introduction to Using Critical Event Narrative Analysis in Research on Learning and Teaching* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2007), 74, Kindle.

² Mt 5:15 (New King James Version).

³ Jn 4:20-24.

⁴ Matthew Bloch, Ford Fessenden, and Janet Roberts, “Stop, Question and Frisk in New York Neighborhoods,” *New York Times* July 11 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/07/11/nyregion/20100711-stop-and-frisk.html?_r=0 (accessed September 11, 2013).

⁵ Julia Vitullo-Martin, “Is Brownsville Brooklyn Ready or its Jane Jacobsonian Comeback?” *Untapped Cities: Rediscover Your City Blog*, entry posted January 17, 2013, <http://untappedcities.com/2013/01/17/brownsville-brooklyn-ready-for-comeback/> (accessed September 11, 2013).

⁶ Bloch, Fessenden, and Roberts, “Stop, Question and Frisk in New York Neighborhoods.”

transformational mission is for the all-sufficient God to send resources to help alleviate the grievance of abandonment, what the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan called, “benign neglect.”⁷

Grace’s sanctuary is a converted Jewish synagogue with the Star of David intentionally replaced by symbols of the empty cross, “a meaningful symbol that expresses a multitude of aspects, ideas, and emotions...”⁸ It is situated a few blocks from Legion Street, a hotbed for crime and a name that makes one wonder if it is living out its Biblical etymology.⁹

Grace’s charismatic ministry operating in the supernatural world and punctuated with elements of spiritual warfare is controversial because it stretches beyond what Hwa Yung in *Mangoes or Bananas?* considers Western “rationalistic,” “naturalistic,” “humanistic,” “materialistic” and “individual[istic]” mindset.¹⁰ Recently, 2 of Grace’s church members shared their testimonies of supernatural healing with some pastors whose responses proved to be debatable. Sociologist, professor, and author, Margaret Poloma observed “mainline churches whose touch of charisma ... was deliberately quenched by dissenters.”¹¹ Sandy Gunther Brown, a religious studies professor, researcher and author explores supernatural healing and the tension between science and

⁷ Deborah Wallace and Wallace Rodrick, *A Plague on Your Houses: How New York Was Burned Down and National Public Health Crumbled* (New York: Verso, 1998), 22-24.

⁸ Carl Gustav Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Random House, 2012), Kindle Electronic Edition: Part 1, Location 1335-1336.

⁹ Lk 8:30, “Jesus asked him, saying, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Legion,’ because many demons had entered him.”

¹⁰ Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas?: The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 3.

¹¹ Margaret Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing & Reviving Pentecostalism* (New York: Altimira, 2003), 203.

the supernatural. What crucible is there in theological and biblical research that tests authenticity, clarifies misunderstanding, and offers an apologetic that is winsome and defends faith in supernatural healing?

Scripture inspires and edifies us with narratives of supernatural healing of the body, soul, and spirit. These accounts awaken in us an awareness and connectivity of God's deliverance healing down through the ages, from Biblical times: a) Israel coming out of Egyptian slavery; b) Moses lifting up the serpent for healing in the wilderness; c) Judges saving Israel from enemies; and d) Jesus's healing ministry, His praying restoration for Peter from the sifting hands of Satan as an example. In the gospels, Jesus empowered and anointed His disciples, sending them out to heal and cast out unclean spirits.¹² The disciples came back as storytellers, and Jesus, as story broker and coach, debriefed them on what to celebrate.

This dissertation explores whether Grace aligns with best practices today in supernatural healing and whether the historical incarnate Jesus is today the resurrected, ascended, and exalted Christ who ministers as the Balm in Brownsville. It is in this "hermeneutics of a lived religion"¹³ that healing narratives were explored. The apostle James practiced a bottom-up faith in God after arguing "faith without works is dead."¹⁴

James questions and recommends two methods of healing:

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will

¹² Mt 10:1, 8.

¹³ R. Ruard Ganzevoort, "Forks in the Road When Tracing the Sacred: Practical Theology as Hermeneutics of Lived Religion (presidential address at the conference of International Academy of Practical Theology, Chicago, IL, March 8, 2009) <http://www.ia-pt.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/presidentialaddress2009.pdf> (accessed November 6, 2013).

¹⁴ Jas 2:20, 26.

raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.¹⁵

Here James used two different prayer structures which were often referred to as prayer circles to describe the practice of healing in the first century Jerusalem church to meet the needs of people. In the first prayer circle, the request for healing was responded to by the local elders who anoint the sick with oil and pray by faith for deliverance. While anointing, these church authorities invoked the name of Jesus for the application of Jesus's authority, healing virtue, compassion, and conquering power. The second circle was the practice of healing among laity, where members show care for one another and mirror what the elders did.

This research was a steppingstone exercise, building upon a foundation for imparting the gifts of healing to younger leaders and laity through the "laying on of hands,"¹⁶ and what Poloma calls "democratization of divine healing."¹⁷

Studying healing narratives "mixes human content with academic theory,"¹⁸ humanity with divinity, and therefore serves as a model for how I would practice a scholarly pastoral ministry after completing my Doctor of Ministry concentration in Practicing, Mind-Body-Spirit-Healing for Congregations and Clergy. Consequently this research analysis will be spiced with some synthesis of proposition and opposition, applying in a postmodern context, Tertullian's historical, apologetic question against

¹⁵ Jas 5:14-16.

¹⁶ 1 Tm 4:14; Heb 6:2.

¹⁷ Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, 200.

¹⁸ Mark Kramer and Wendy Call, *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers' Guide from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University* (New York: Penguin Group 2007). Kindle Electronic Edition: Preface

Athenian philosophy when he asked, “What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?”¹⁹ A narrative research method has been intertwined with John C. Flanagan’s five-step Critical Incident Technique to facilitate the exploration of the unpredicted, critical issues within the testimonies, their impact on storytellers, and how such “past activities are viewed in a new light through reassessment and selective recollection.”²⁰

A Local Advisory Team (LAT) of 9 people was formed to narrow and deepen the research focus on the supernatural to act as a focus group creating scripted interviews and to explore the narratives. The LAT was comprised of 3 non-members, an anthropologist who chaired the process, a Christian educator who acted as a consultant, and our district judicatory leader. The remaining LAT members were from Grace including me as pastor and doctoral candidate.

In total, 15 people were interviewed, 7 persons from Brownsville and 8 from beyond to gather their testimonies of divine healing. Their stories of healing were transcribed and 7 of the richest, 3 from Brownsville and 4 from beyond, were chosen using a prepared list of selected criteria. The criteria for selection included an analysis of 1) the ways in which the stories give meaning to people’s lives, 2) if they connect people to God, 3) if there is any indication that the stories stirred hope, 4) if they give faith to those troubled by doubt, cynicism, and skepticism, 5) if they provide ways of liberation to those stuck in life, and 6) if these stories point toward a continuance of the healing ministry of Jesus and the apostles in Biblical narratives.

¹⁹ Tertullian, “On Pagan Learning, c. 220 CE,” Ancient History Sourcebook, Fordham University, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/200Tertullian-pagan.asp> (accessed October 22, 2013).

²⁰ Webster and Mertova, *Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method*, 76-77.

Two didactic lessons were prepared using two of the 21st century stories alongside comparative Biblical narratives, respectively. Two LAT leaders facilitated the lessons within a focus group of about 22 people using the inductive method, a pre and post exercise to gather feedback and impact.

Finally, the LAT performed a thorough analysis and synthesis of the narratives and make recommendations for Grace's mission and ministry. The entire exercise was "a method or way of understanding or analyzing theology in practice"²¹ and served as a means "to strengthen common aims across sub-disciplines,"²² namely, healing experiences, scripture, church practice, spiritual formation, discipleship, pastoral theology and care. From the outset the research team anticipated finding ministry treasures in this exploration.

The following terms as defined below were key to this research.

1. *deliverance*: a synonym for salvation, and is primarily used to describe God's rescue of people from evil influence to enable their reconciliation and intimacy with God. Deliverance connected with healing means benefactors experience freedom from inner and outer oppression, bondage, distress, and whatever hinders their walk with God. Deliverance is the saving, double-action, move of God. For example, "He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in."²³ Deliverance

²¹ Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, ed. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2012), 5, Kindle Electronic Edition.

²² *Ibid.*, 3.

²³ Dt 6:23.

is a divine process or a saving act of God resulting in you experiencing the well-being or “abundant life” Jesus promised.²⁴

2. *healing*: relief, restoration, and wholeness brought about instantly or over a period of time by spiritual intervention such as pastoral counseling, teaching, and prayer.
3. *story-broker*: one who gathers the story, deconstructs, and reconstructs it to a preferred narrative without altering the salient elements of the story.
4. *legion*: derived from Latin denoting an army of around 6,000 troops, comprising foot soldiers, horsemen, and 60 centurions. Franz Annen contributing to the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* explains how the Roman Empire’s “occup[ying]” force in Palestine was both “hate[d] and fear[ed]”; so use of the term legion in the New Testament “underscores directly the power of ... good or evil spirits, and indirectly indicates the power of Jesus [over them or] at His disposal.”²⁵

²⁴ Jn 10:10.

²⁵ Horst Baltz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., “legion,” s.v., in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 345.

CHAPTER 1

EXPOUNDING A HISTORICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR SUPERNATURAL HEALING

In this research the scriptural basis for divine healing is found in John 10:10 when Jesus declared, **“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.”**

[Emphasis is mine] Jesus had experienced vehement opposition for miraculously healing a man born blind on the Sabbath. Jesus connected the divine healing story with a parable to deepen meaning, broaden its scope, and show its significance to Jesus’ mission. Jesus then used the illustration to utter these words in the context of pastoral care, discipleship teaching, missional focus, and kingdom warfare. So interpretation of this text in relation to supernatural healing has implications for glorifying God according to Jesus. Neither the man nor his parents committed sins to cause blindness, but he was born “blind” in sin. Original sin inherited from Adam affects everyone, so Jesus came to bring eternal and abundant life to all; to impact the total wellbeing of every person; body, soul, and spirit.

Bible scholar Joachim Jeremias in *The Parables of Jesus* sees John 10:10 as “an allegorical interpretation”¹ of the parable Jesus had told in John 10:1-6. In this parable Jesus focused on tending sheep; and used vehicles such as the door, the shepherd, the hireling, wolf, thief and robber to bear out meaning. Jesus is the pre-eminent subject of the discourse in “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more

¹ Joachim Jeremias *The Parables of Jesus* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall 1972) 86

abundantly;”² in I am the Door³ the pathway to salvation; and in I am the Good Shepherd⁴ sacrificing His life to protect and redeem the sheep.

The Greek word Jesus used for life is “zoe” which Ethelbert W. Bullinger in *The Companion Bible* explains to mean “life in all its manifestations; from the life of God down to the lowest vegetable. It is, life in activity, and thus especially is opposite to death,”⁵ as in resurrection life. Fred Francis Bosworth, an evangelist of the Christian Missionary Alliance (abbreviated CMA) declared in *Christ the Healer* that “John 10:10 tells us that [humanity] was to have a right to an abundance of a new kind of life, “God’s own Life.”⁶ Bosworth argues that when we embody this Godly life it reproduces itself and we live victoriously. Bosworth claims that a taste of “zoe” creates a “chain of blessings:”⁷

“It is by filling us with His own Life that God Himself becomes our life, our peace, our righteousness, our purity, our strength and our health. He becomes the Preserver of “our whole spirit, soul and body,” our zeal, our joy, our faith. Through His Life, He is our Guide, our Teacher, our satisfaction and our “everything that pertains to life and godliness.”⁸

² Jn 10:10

³ Jn 10:9

⁴ Jn 10:11

⁵ Ethelbert W Bullinger ed. *The Companion Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications 1999), 191.

⁶ F. F Bosworth *Christ the Healer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group. 2001), 227. Kindle Electronic Edition.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 160-161

⁸ *Ibid.*

Jesus applied “zoe” to heal the Gentile man from physical and spiritual blindness, confirming Jesus is the Life-Giver John had already depicted in John 1:4: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

Jesus the Vine is attached and giving life in different ways to 5 branches of narratives happening at the same time in this one healing illustration. Firstly, there is the story in plain view of the man born blind, whom Jesus miraculously healed and gave physical and spiritual sight. By understanding the significance of this specific miracle you can classify all interventions by Jesus in divine healing as Jesus the Christ giving life to restore total wellbeing and transforming lives.

Secondly, is story of the Gentile born in sin and being “born again.”⁹ This spiritual rebirth healed his soul and spirit; resulting in repentance and a new life. This man’s inner spiritual healing is greater in importance than his outer physical healing; and is evident by his ability of using his renewed mind to teach the Jews about Jesus. The story shows Jesus’ willingness and ability to heal holistically, body, soul, and spirit.

Pastor Casey Lute introduced a “But God” theology in his book *But God...: The Two Words at the Heart of the Gospel* to bear the contrast of what someone such as this man experienced before and after Jesus intervened. Lute uses Ep 2:1-5 to explain this dynamic:

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, **2** in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, **3** among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. **4 But God**, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

⁹ Jn.3:7 Jesus had instructed Nicodemus on this transformational truth.

Lute explains “the life of the unbeliever consists of death and sin, while the believer experiences life and grace, and the difference-maker is “But God.””¹⁰ .Implicit in the John 10:10 text and in every supernatural healing story is a “But God” theology. “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. [**But I**] have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”¹¹ “But Jesus” contrasts the affliction the thief does on the left side of the statement and the healing Jesus does on the right side creating life out of death.

Lute looks at the broader story of Jews and Gentiles who were “dead in trespasses and sins”¹² “but God who is rich in mercy” has made many spiritually alive by Jesus. Others continue to deceive themselves that they are already alive and can see. Jesus in John’s Gospel later declared Jesus’ essential role as the Door to salvation: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”¹³ Anyone who entered by any other means Jesus identifies as a thief and robber.

Thirdly, Jesus sums up His own missional story as Savior and Messiah coming to earth to give abundant and eternal life to all who believe in Jesus the Son of God dying on the cross to save them. Jesus would sacrifice His own life as the Good Shepherd to accomplish this mission. Failure to believe in Jesus means you have already condemned yourself.¹⁴

¹⁰ Casey Lute, *But God...: The Two Words at the Heart of the Gospel* (Hudson, OH: Cruciform Press, 2011), 82-83, Kindle Electronic Edition.

¹¹ Jn 10:10.

¹² Ep 2:1

¹³ Jn 14:6

¹⁴ Jn 3:18-19

Fourthly, is the story of Jesus enfolding, empowering, and commissioning disciples, sending them out to proclaim the gospel, healing supernaturally, and casting out evil spirits in Jesus' name. In the fifth narrative Jesus is giving sight to those Satan has spiritually blinded.¹⁵ Jesus steps into the blind man's life at the most crucial moment of his sickness and affliction and gives him total well-being.

Kingdom Warfare

At kingdom level Jesus the Son of God has come to oppose the Kingdom of Satan whose strategy is "to steal, kill and destroy." John later stated it more clearly in one of his letters: "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."¹⁶ "But God" theology becomes Christology structured in the mission of Jesus sent to destroy the works of the enemy, resulting in stories of healing and transformation. Sociology professor Thomas O'Dea calls these divine interventions, "point[s] of ultimacy" and "breaking points" which "often appear in the context of experienced uncertainty, of adversity and suffering..."¹⁷ Lute further cast light on this contrasting intervention of God by His love and grace:

To the left of "But God" in Scripture appear[s] some of the worst human atrocities, characterized by disobedience and rebellion. To the left of "But God" is hopelessness, darkness, and death. But to its right, following "But God," readers of Scripture will find hope, light, and life. Following God's intervention, the story of Scripture becomes one of grace, righteousness, and justice.¹⁸

¹⁵ 2 Co 4:4

¹⁶ 1 Jn 3:8

¹⁷ Thomas F. O'Dea, "Five Dilemmas in the Institutionalization of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, no. 1 (October 1961): 30, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1385174> (accessed November 10, 2014).

¹⁸ Casey Lute, *But God...: The Two Words at the Heart of the Gospel* (Hudson, OH: Cruciform Press, 2011), 5-6, Kindle Electronic Edition.

Lute characterizes Jesus coming to our world as “God’s relentless, merciful interventions in human history. It teaches us that God does not wait for us to bring ourselves to him, but that he acts first [by grace] to bring about our good.”¹⁹

Jesus used the metaphor “thief” as a vehicle to expose all those who oppose God’s Kingdom. The obvious absence of evil spirits being evicted in this healing story can cause many to miss Satan’s influence present in all those who oppose Jesus. Jesus identified His opposition: “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.”²⁰ Then Jesus described Satan as “a liar and the father of it” and “a murderer from the beginning” referring to when Satan ruined Adam and Eve’s lives.

Jesus did teach that his words are life and spirit²¹ and Paul did teach that “the letter [of the law] kills, but the Spirit gives life.”²² So in the healing illustration contrast is made between the narrative of Jesus giving life on one side and those who administered death by a) valuing the law of Sabbath-keeping over healing the human need for sight, (b) being negatively critical opposing Jesus’ life-giving ministry; c) by excommunicating the man, and d) by self-aggrandizement and self-deception in assessing themselves as being able to see when they were spiritually blind. Jesus the Life-giver was rejected and crucified, and John expressed Jesus’ rejection this way:

“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:11-13

¹⁹ Ibid., 6.

²⁰ Jn. 8:44.

²¹ Jn 6:63

²² 2 Co 3:6

Rejection is one of the darkest tools often used by Satan to grow roots of hatred, resentment, and bitterness in human beings. The door was shut in this man's face using excommunication. Jesus provided God's "love [which] is not rude," became the Door no one can shut; and provided both access to a new good life, and acceptance among the beloved in the sheepfold of God. Wright was emphatic that "Rejection will lead us on a desperate search, striving for the love that will complete us. This love cannot be found in people, places or things, but only in God!"²³

In Kingdom warfare scripture supports using contrasting "allopathic remedies"²⁴ for healing, that is, using a remedy completely different or opposite to the sickness. Other allopathic means are light against darkness, humility against pride, love against hate, and spiritual weapons against carnal attacks. Satan torments people with fear causing them to be sick emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. John witnesses Peter's healing and restoration from fear by Jesus using love and later declares, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear..."²⁵

So Satan is responsible for afflicting the well-being of people as happened to Job in Job 2:4-7. Walter Wink, theologian and professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary calls Satan "an agent provocateur."²⁶ Here, Wink considers the many subverted ways the invisible enemy entices, torments, accuses, deceives, harasses,

²³ Wright, *A More Excellent Way* Kindle Electronic Edition, Location 2227-2228.

²⁴ Groesbeck, "The Archetypal Image of the Wounded Healer," 122-123.

²⁵ 1 Jn. 4:18

²⁶ *Walter Wink: Collected Readings* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 6, Location 1661-1662.

enslaves, and afflicts people. Biblical scholar, expositor, radio teacher, and worldwide evangelist Derek Prince prefers the term “slanderer” on this basis:

Satan is given this title because his primary activity is to slander—that is, to defame a person’s character. First and foremost, Satan defames the character of God Himself. He did this in the Garden of Eden, when he suggested to Adam and Eve that God was not treating them fairly by withholding from them the knowledge of good and evil. Second, Satan defames the character of all those who in any way represent God. This is his primary weapon against the servants of God.²⁷

Sin and Satan contribute to some of the causes of human sickness and death.

For humans to resist Satan’s temptations, spiritual warfare strategies and tools must be an integral part of sustaining their well-being and recovering good health. “To fight the good fight of faith”²⁸ is to obey and apply the Word of God as a sword-like, deep piercing weapon²⁹ against the attack of the enemy. This prevention against sin and Satan entering your life is better and easier than the cure of fighting disease or to evict deeply rooted evil spirits.³⁰

Knowing that every human is up against evil forces, Jesus returns to heaven and instead of leaving His people defenseless, “orphans,”³¹ Jesus:

1. Empowers each believer with the indwelling Holy Spirit who “judge[s]... the ruler of this world,”³² and is “greater than he [Satan] who is in the world.”³³

²⁷ Derek Prince, *They Shall Expel Demons: What You Need to Know about Demons--Your Invisible Enemies* (Ada, MI: Chosen Books, 1998), 15-16, Kindle Electronic Edition.

²⁸ 1 Tm 6:12.

²⁹ Heb 4:12.

³⁰ Eph 6:12.

³¹ Jn 14:18. The NKJV uses “orphan” and the KJV uses “comfortless” to describe the woeful human condition in the absence of another Advocate in the Holy Spirit.

³² Jn 16:8-11.

³³ 1 Jn 4:4.

2. Distributes to believers through the Holy Spirit a three-prong reservoir of “speaking..., serving..., and signifying gifts;”³⁴ out of which helpers draw for supernatural healing.
3. Equips the church with spiritual weapons that are “mighty in God for pulling down strongholds;”³⁵ such as “fervent love ... [that] cover[s] a multitude of evil”³⁶, and “cast[s] out fear;”³⁷ humility which resists the enemy; one’s identity in Christ as the body, i.e. the church, for “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”³⁸
4. Anoints His devoted followers with “power to thread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy.”³⁹
5. Teaches diligence to watch out for the enemy and the counterfeit in supernatural healing by checking for Jesus’ fingerprints in:
 - a) The laying on of hands for healing and callings to offices of “apostolic succession.”⁴⁰
 - b) The exercise of spiritual power and authority as commissioned by Jesus,⁴¹
 - c) The functioning unction whether it is the work of the same Holy Spirit that anointed Jesus to heal the broken-hearted and liberate captives.⁴²
 - d) The lasting impact of the fruit of healing, to see if it remains and is life-giving, since it came from Jesus the Vine.⁴³
 - e) The helpers and agency facilitating the healing, also the clients who experience healing.⁴⁴

³⁴ Barry L. Callen. *Following the Light: Teachings, Testimonies, Trials and Triumphs of the Church of God Movement, Anderson*. (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 2000), 88.

³⁵ 2 Cor 10:4.

³⁶ 1 Pe 4:8.

³⁷ 1 Jn 4:18.

³⁸ Mt 16:16.

³⁹ Lk 10:19.

⁴⁰ *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, vol. 1, s.v. “apostolic succession,” Erwin Fahlbusch et al., eds., (MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans 2003), 845.

⁴¹ Mt 28:18-20.

⁴² Lk 4:18.

⁴³ Jn 15:16.

⁴⁴ He 5:14.

Lute wants us to remember that even when persons do evil against us, “But God theology” applies when God turns evil to good and cites Joseph’s message to his brothers: “As for you, you meant evil against me, **but God** meant it for good.”⁴⁵

Supernatural Healing

Divine healing is one common thread that runs through the Wesleyan tradition of which Churches of God, Pentecostal, and other charismatic Evangelical churches historically belonged. Appendix K shows a dissension flow within the Wesleyan holiness tradition of those groups that practice the infilling of the Holy Spirit, revival, and divine healing.⁴⁶ The doctrine of divine healing presented here is seen through an Evangelical perspective of which Grace Church of God belongs.

Michael S. Stephens recently traced in *Who Healeth All Thy Diseases* the history of divine healing in the Church of God Reformation Movement from its inception to the mid-twentieth century. Stephens saw the development of “four arguments for divine healing dominating the Church of God,” namely:

- 1) “healing as a gift to the faithful”⁴⁷ based on Ja 5:14-16
- 2) “Healing direct from Jesus”⁴⁸ for He.13:8 declares “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, forever.”
- 3) “Healing as part of the Great Commission”⁴⁹ according to Mk 16:15-18 in which signs following those who believe including healing and casting out demons.

⁴⁵ Lute But God... *The Two Words at the Heart of the Gospel*, 101 Kindle Electronic Edition. Lute quotes Ge 50:20.

⁴⁶ Bob Jones, IV, “Fundamentalist Internet Notes,” *Christian History Magazine*, no. 55 (1997): 32-34. A depiction of the Church of God, Anderson and its outgrowth selected and redesigned from Jones’ larger drawing of the Fundamentalist Movement.

⁴⁷ Stephens, *Who Healeth All Thy Diseases*, 93.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

- 4) “Healing in the atonement”⁵⁰ supported by Mt 8:17; Is.53:45 and 1Pe 2:24; that Jesus bore both sins and sickness in His body on the cross.

Stephens combined healing through entire sanctification to atonement, but his earlier argument linking healing to holiness is enough for it to stand as a doctrine on its own. Stephens said, “The descriptions of sanctification as a healing [of the soul] led to increased interest in miraculous physical healing ...of the body [which] were mutually reinforcing.”⁵¹ Sanctification as God’s way for purifying one’s soul, body, and spirit is scripturally supported by 1Thes.5:23 “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Sanctification would be first in order of healing practices embraced in the Church of God. Stephens affirmed entire sanctification as the core doctrine of pioneers of the Church of God; for “early leaders of the Church of God brought Wesleyan holiness doctrine of salvation – commonly known as “entire sanctification” or the “double cure” – with them into the new movement.”⁵² Some see entire sanctification as an event a second work of grace similar to rebirth or regeneration; and others believed “Sanctification was not the end, but rather the beginning of Christian development in holiness.”⁵³

Sanctification gets to the root of sickness caused by inherent sin and rids the body of both sin and sickness. Henry Wright, a pastor who researches diseases and practices

⁴⁹ Ibid., 96.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 98

⁵¹ Ibid., 68.

⁵² Ibid., 37.

⁵³ Ibid., 40.

supernatural healing, in his book *A More Excellent Way* affirms this point: “I consider all healing of spiritually rooted disease to be a factor of sanctification. I believe all disease has a spiritual root that is a result of lack of sanctification in our lives as men and women of God.”⁵⁴

Henry Wright surmises that “disease may be the result of sin not dealt with,”⁵⁵ so helpers need to first seek to correct sin through forgiveness and repentance enabling healing to take place instantly or gradually. He argues that “about 80 percent of all diseases have a spiritual root with various psychological and biological manifestations.”⁵⁶

Guy Duffield and Nathaniel Van Cleave confirm sin as the root cause in *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*:

Death is sickness matured. Death is the result of sin. Therefore, sickness must also be the result of sin, since the greater (death) contains the lesser (sickness). This means that if there had been no sin in the world there would have been no sickness.⁵⁷

Wright emphasizes dealing with sin committed and inherent through the event of justification and process of sanctification.

Stephens could have also listed separately “gifts of healing” distributed by the Holy Spirit according to 1 Co 12.9, as supporting supernatural healing. Stephens cited Enoch E. Byrum editor of the Gospel Trumpet publication as having “gifts of healing” that included healing the sick and casting out evil spirits. The Apostle Paul helps us

⁵⁴ Henry W. Wright, *A More Excellent Way: Spiritual Roots of Disease Pathways to Wholeness* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2008), Kindle Electronic Edition. Location 1097-1098.

⁵⁵ Wright, *A More Excellent Way* Kindle Electronic Edition, Location 282.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 323-324.

⁵⁷ Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (San Dimas: CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), 367.

understand these doctrines from a Trinitarian perspective in 1 Co.12:4-6 which clearly shows the different roles of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. In argument 1 above, God our Father out of His love and His hyphenated identity as Jehovah- Rophi⁵⁸ answers our prayers and gives life for healing.

In Israel's deliverance history God's self-disclosure as Healer did arise after He assured Israel He will not put any of Egypt's diseases on them: "I am the Lord who heals you," and "I will take sickness away from the midst of you."⁵⁹ It is out of God's being that God speaks healing and life to our well-being. Everyone in Israel at the time of the kings knew the one answer to the questions David posed about healing in Psalms 103:3-4: "Who forgives all your iniquities?...Who heals all your diseases?...Who redeems your life from destruction?...Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies?"

Such supernatural healing proves not only God's ability but also His character. God loves, is merciful, gracious, forgiving, compassionate, "longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."⁶⁰ Like Father, Jesus the Son of God in healing reveals Jesus' character before charismata, for "Jesus [is] always moved with compassion"⁶¹ before Jesus heals.

In arguments 2, 3, 4 and 5 of Stephens Jesus Christ as head of the church operates giving life to those whom Jesus calls, appoints and anoints to spearhead ministries in disciple making, evangelism, prayer, visitation and hospitality to name some. In the sixth basis for divine healing today, the Holy Spirit is empowering individual Christians with

⁵⁸ Ex 15:26 "The Lord who heals you."

⁵⁹ Ex 15:23-26; 23:25, Dt 7:15.

⁶⁰ 2 Pt 3:9.

⁶¹ Mk 1:41; Mt 9:35-38; 14:14; 20:34.

spiritual gifts to help those who are sick in church and community. He [The Holy Spirit] is also sanctifying persons as they conform to the image of the full stature of Christ.

In all of the divine interventions in this research's collection of narratives, God reveals His unique identity as the ultimate source of healing. God saves. God heals. God changes lives. Medical doctors, magicians, witchdoctors, shamans, pastors, psychic and faith healers all claim to be agents of healing, but the question to be answered is, "Who is the source of the healing?"⁶² The term supernatural or divine healing in this research is defined as occurring when agents of healing acknowledge that "the excellence of the [healing] power [is] of God and not of us."⁶³

From the COG's inception, divine healing has been understood as the attractive, experiential witness of God's presence. Proof of this emphasis was in the invitation to the first ever COG revival camp meeting: "Come, O [you] lame and halt and blind and deaf, for the power of the Lord will be present to heal all who believe on him. Come, O [you] sufferers, and give yourselves up to the mighty God and be made whole."⁶⁴ Hundreds of persons were healed and their testimonies published in the Gospel Trumpet. As scientific methods improved over the years, consulting medical doctors increased and emphasis on divine healing decreased in the Church of God.

Today Grace Church of God which is central to this research sees divine healing primarily as part of the discipleship process, secondly as arising from the practice of prayer according to Ja 5:14-16 to the God who loves us and heals us; and through gifts of

⁶² Richard Mayhue, *The Healing Promise: Is it Always God's Will to Heal?* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 1997), 48, 56.

⁶³ 2 Cor. 4:7.

⁶⁴ John W. V. Smith, *The Quest for Holiness and Unity* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1980), 64.

healing distributed by the Holy Spirit. Our faith in supernatural healing based on Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross, that is, the atonement is our foundation of faith. Those healed by the power of God are encouraged to testify according to Psalm 107:2 and Revelation 12:11 respectively: "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy;" and "they overcame by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony."

Bosworth an evangelist with CMA preached this doctrinal truth and saw thousands healed and saved. It was God's will for Jesus Christ to die on the cross for the saving of souls and healing of the body. Bosworth supported substitutionary atonement in the collection of sermons he printed in his book *Christ the Healer*. *Bosworth argued:*

- 1) "Our Substitute [Jesus] bore both our sins and our sicknesses that we might be delivered from them."⁶⁵
- 2) All the promises of God, including all His promises to heal, owe their existence and power to the substitutionary work of Christ for us....⁶⁶
- 3) "We must know what the benefits of Calvary are before we can appropriate them by faith."⁶⁷
- 4) "It is important that the mind of those seeking healing be "renewed" so as to be brought into harmony with the mind of God."⁶⁸
- 5) "Since disease is a part of the curse, its true remedy must be the cross."⁶⁹
- 6) Sin and sickness have passed from me to Calvary— salvation and health have passed from Calvary to me.⁷⁰

Bosworth cited Jesus' use of the key OT type of Atonement to link Jesus' sacrifice on the cross to supernatural healing. Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent

⁶⁵ F. F Bosworth *Christ the Healer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group. 2001), 18. Kindle Electronic Edition.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 218. Kindle Electronic Edition.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 18. Kindle Electronic Edition.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 15. Kindle Electronic Edition.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 37. Kindle Electronic Edition.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 25. Kindle Electronic Edition.

in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:14-15

Pastoral Care

John 10:10 is written in the context of Jesus the Son of God and Son of David as the Good Shepherd tending His flock. The term pastor used today instead of shepherd is a humble-exalted position getting significance from God as Jehovah-R’ah. Pastor comes from the Hebrew *r’ah* and the Greek *poimen* and is applied to a rural sheep owner who tends, feeds, and rules his flock.⁷¹ Mary Jane Gorman a teacher and retreat leader in her book *Tending Body, Heart, Mind, and Soul* on self-care looked at the way “Jesus took care of his entire being: body, heart, mind, and soul”⁷² and took seriously the command of Jesus to Peter “Tend My sheep” (Jn 21:16). She argues that the way Jesus took care of His own body should help us understand the way Jesus does and pastors ought to take care of themselves and the body of Christ.

Gorman defines shepherding and gives some key insights of Jesus tending sheep:

- “Tending... is an act of caring. It reflects a commitment to meet the needs of something or someone. The word suggests more than a dutiful act; it is extending tender attention.”⁷³
- “Tending toward wholeness is a pilgrimage with God that accepts our starting points, our limitations, and our woundedness in body, heart, mind, and soul.”⁷⁴
- “Looking at Jesus helps us learn how to care for ourselves—body, heart, mind, and soul. His healing ministry was directed toward the whole person.

⁷¹ Balz, Horst et al, ed *Exegetical Dictionary of the N.T.* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990)

⁷² Mary Jane Gorman, *Tending Body, Heart, Mind, and Soul*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), Kindle Electronic Edition, Introduction, Kindle Location 98.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Kindle Locations 106-107.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Kindle Locations 2586-2588.

He healed broken bodies and broken minds. He healed wounded hearts and wounded souls.”⁷⁵

- Jesus is a model for practicing what he preaches, lifting the burdens of others, and exemplifying humility. Jesus feeds the hungry and heals the sick. He forgives others. He is not anxious about his life. He prays in private. He loves God, and he loves his neighbor as himself.⁷⁶
- “[Jesus] in healing those with mental illnesses, leprosy, blindness, and other physical problems, he accomplishes both the easing of burdens and the removal of barriers.”⁷⁷

Nathan Stone gives a clear understanding of the name Jehovah in the hyphenated name: “Jehovah is derived from the Hebrew verb ‘havah’ "to be," or "being." This word is almost exactly like the Hebrew verb, ‘*chavah* to live," or "life." One can readily see the connection between being and life.”⁷⁸ Another similar Hebrew word, *quavah* is used for hope and means to wait patiently, to be confident, to expect the best, to endure; and also has the root meaning line, or bind together.⁷⁹ In a sense, hope is a life-line holding us together against the tension around of stealing, killing and destroying that can sometimes happen with us. Hope reminds us “those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.” (Isa 40:31) When life sends us downers, or opponents, hope-the-rope connects us to Jehovah-R’ah who pulls us up and out whole. Hope “is a tree of life” (Pr.13:12) a connecting link with God and others who mean well for us.

Jesus the Good Shepherd demonstrated His love and care for “when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and

⁷⁵ Ibid., Kindle Locations 2592-2594

⁷⁶ Ibid., Kindle Locations 1424-1426

⁷⁷ Ibid., Kindle Locations 1427-1428

⁷⁸ Nathan Stone, *Names of God*, (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute,1944)

⁷⁹ R. Laird Harris, ed. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. (Chicago: Moody,1980)

scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.”⁸⁰ Jesus’ compassionate attitude and approach towards practical ministry in healing the sick and casting out demons prompted Matthew to conclude that Jesus fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy: “He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.”⁸¹ Jesus gave His life for His sheep just as Isaiah had prophesied: “He *was* wounded for our transgressions, He *was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”⁸² God has used every humiliating, shameful detail of Jesus’ stigmata suffered on the cross as graceful marks for healing and hope. Jesus the quintessential wounded-healer is healing persons and sending them with their scars to minister healing to others.

Missional Focus

Jesus’ statement “I have come” in Jn 10:10 is Jesus’ response to being sent by God the Father with power and authority to accomplish the mission. In the miracle story of healing the blind man, Jesus commands him to “Go wash in the pool of Siloam;” the name which John interprets as “Sent.” (Jn 6:7) Jesus empowers and authorizes missionaries within His command of “Go” and accompanies the generative “zoe” with this power and authority in the one “sent.” Jesus demonstrated that “zoe” was released when the man executed the commanding task. “He went, washed and came back seeing” is proof of the power of Jesus to heal when one functions in the scope of Jesus’ command and commission.

⁸⁰ Mt 9:36

⁸¹ Mt 8:16-17

⁸² Is 53:5. Emphasis is mine.

After the Resurrection Jesus was given all authority in heaven and earth and then Jesus imparted “zoe” and authority to all His disciples, commissioning them with these commands: “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you,”(Jn 20:21) and “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Matt 28:19-20. Jesus encourages us with His promised presence and also fruitfulness in Mark 16:17-18: “these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Stephens discovered divine “healing was ancillary to the mission of the Church of God movement.”⁸³ Supernatural healing “was once a defining mark”⁸⁴ and “functioned as a legitimization of leaders”⁸⁵ called and sent by God. Faith in God to heal was fundamentally practiced in calling the elders of the church for healing; for to seek help otherwise was frowned upon as “lack[ing] sufficient faith”⁸⁶ in God to heal.

The COG pioneers used their Gospel Trumpet publishing company in their missional focus to reach the lost and heal their sin sick souls and bodies. They published many testimonies of healing; printed books, and teaching material that focused on divine

⁸³ Stephens, *Who Healeth All Thy Diseases*, xv.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, xviii.

⁸⁶ Stephens, *Who Healeth All Thy Diseases*:149.

healings. Enoch E. Byrum witnessed many cases of ministers casting out evil spirits.⁸⁷

Here is a sample of reading material in the early life of the movement:

- *Divine Healing of Soul and Body*, 1892, by Enoch E. Byrum
- *The Grace of Healing*, 1899, J. W. Byers
- *Two Hundred Genuine Instances of Divine Healing*, 1911, A. L. Byers
- *Divine Healing*, 1945, Warren C. Roark

Discipleship Teaching

Jesus often used parables as didactic tools to teach truths to His disciples which remain hidden to others present. Some teaching points on supernatural healing arise from this discourse surrounding John 10:10. A key lesson is *the role of judgment in supernatural healing*. Jesus stated, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind." Judgment forces one to choose a side: either disconnect from the victimization of stealing, killing and destroying; and join the life-giving victorious side of Jesus or do nothing. Christian psychiatrist M. Scott Peck supports the dualistic view of separating from evil and attaching to good and cited C. S. Lewis as saying, "There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan."⁸⁸

Jesus is making a critical difference at every juncture of history and in personal lives requiring all to select either condemnation or commendation; coming to the side of Jesus or standing against Jesus. We learn that by rejecting Jesus and His teaching the

⁸⁷ Enoch E. Byrum *Divine Healing of Soul and Body* (W.Va: Gospel Trumpet 1892), 118.

⁸⁸ M. Scott Peck *Glimpses of the Devil: A Psychiatrist's Personal Accounts of Possession, Exorcism, and Redemption* (New York: Free Press 2005). Kindle Electronic Edition. Locations 104-105.

Scribes and Pharisees had already judged and condemned themselves. Elsewhere Jesus said, “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.”⁸⁹

For you to see and identify what is rooted in God and what is not, discerning of spirits is an indispensable gift we need the Holy Spirit to distribute generously to the church. Wright cites He 4:12-13 to argue the importance of discernment and the Word of God in helping us penetrate deeply into the core spirit and soul of persons to uncover what is hidden. Wright then supposes, “If an evil spirit had a hold of your life, then you would need ...discerning of spirits. What good is it to discern a spirit if you cannot get rid of it? Discerning of spirits involves eviction of spirits from God's precious people.”⁹⁰ Wright goes on to share how essential it is to organize and train “teams who can teach churches how to heal the sick and cast out devils”⁹¹ similar to what Jesus did with His disciples.

Jesus told His disciples the healing was to glorify God. This happened after Jesus revealed Himself as the Son of God to the man whose immediate response was to worship God. Enthusiastic authentic worship is often directed towards God when connection is made between the healed and the God that heals you. The apostle John who was present learning from Jesus as a disciple can reflect on what Jesus said to the woman

⁸⁹ Mt 12:21

⁹⁰ Wright, *A More Excellent Way* Kindle Electronic Edition, Location 2685-2687.

⁹¹ Ibid., 2659.

at the well in Jn 4:24 “God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” Paul adds to this praise, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.”⁹²

To be a true disciple of Jesus calls for the practice of spiritual disciplines to sustain following Jesus. When Jesus gave the command “Go wash in the pool of Siloam” Jesus sent healing embodied in that Word confirming Ps 107:20 “God sent His Word and healed them.” The man had to heed to Word using faith’s obedience so as to benefit. Bosworth says, “the promise of healing is in God’ Word, (Ps 107:20, Ex 15:26) and such truth needs to be planted and watered in one’s mind and heart... It is the Word of God, planted and watered and steadfastly trusted, which heals both soul and body.”⁹³

Bosworth proposed “it is God’s will that you be healed so agreement with God’s will is needed. A changed heart and “renewed mind” (Romans 12: 2), makes steadfast faith possible.”⁹⁴ In addition to heeding the message of God’s Word, Bosworth also advised persons to follow the method for healing instructed in Pr 4:20-22 (NRSV) “*My child, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh.*” Bosworth’s instructional summary of the text calls for us to have an “attentive ear,” “steadfast eyes” and an ‘enshrined heart.”⁹⁵ Become less fixed on the disease and its symptoms; focus on God and God’s word of healing, meditate on it so as to produce good fruit. Later in this research you will see that storyteller 7 in

⁹² 2 Co 5:19

⁹³ Bosworth *Christ the Healer*, 17- 18. Kindle Electronic Edition.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16. Kindle Electronic Edition.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-22. Kindle Electronic Edition.

Appendix 3 followed this method meditating on Ps.107:20 “He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction.”

In the following chapters, the research does what Jesus advises in Matthew 7:20 to test the fruit of supernatural healing for “by their fruits you will know them.” Though I am aware of the power of suggestion, the placebo effect, hypnosis, and what André Kole a world renowned magician and author characterizes “[a]s not divine healing, but magical trickery,”⁹⁶ this research stays focused on what is of Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith in Hebrews 12:1.

I am also conscious of opposition to claims of supernatural healing by “cessationists”⁹⁷ who believe and teach that the days of healing and miracles ceased in the age of the apostles. Richard B. Gaffin, Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, states, “All that Christ came to suffer and die for, short of his return, reaches its climax in his baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire.”⁹⁸

This paper takes a “continualist” view, which says that Jesus’ miraculous work continues in every era. As pastor of Grace Church of God I believe “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Richard Mayhue, *The Healing Promise: Is it Always God’s Will to Heal?* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 1997), 38.

⁹⁷ Wayne Grudem, ed., *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?: 4 Views, Counterpoints: Bible and Theology* (Nashville: Zondervan, 2011), 374-375, Kindle

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 374-375.

⁹⁹ He. 13:8.

CHAPTER 2

EXAMINING PRIOR RESEARCH IN SUPERNATURAL HEALING

In approaching a literary review of supernatural healing, I decided to gain insight from a range of critical thinkers. I included practitioners serving in a similar charismatic ministry as Grace Church of God, those who have written about their teachings and experience as well as theorists in fields of sociology, psychology, and religion. It is important to keep in mind that this review is built on a Biblical framework that sees humanity as spirit, soul, and body. A holistic spiritual underpinning is vital for understanding human disease beyond a purely physiological and psychological aspect of body and mind respectively. Any proper research into supernatural healing needs to address the realms of the spirit and approach the task from the root of any disease.

A primary source for my study is Christian sociologist, researcher and professor, Margaret Poloma who researched the revival that took place from 1994 to 1997 at the Toronto Airport Vineyard (TAV) Church. The pastor of TAV had invited Poloma to be an academic “fruit inspector”¹ of the revival. She agreed to the assignment as an ethnographic researcher. Poloma relished the role of “fruit inspector” because it followed Jesus’ admonition in Matthew 7:16 to test the fruit of ministry: “By their fruit you shall know them.” Poloma’s “fruit testing” role was similar to mine as participant-observer. Poloma functioned as participating pilgrim and ethnographer, bridging the divide between spirituality and science while searching for meaning within this charismatic revival setting.

¹ Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, 239.

My interest in Poloma's work is her inclusion of "the intricate interweaving of soul, mind, body and spirit."² We also share a similar self-reporting of healing "acknowledging the interdependence of spiritual, emotional, mental and material agents."³ In her research she concluded, "God is healing men and women — making them whole in mind, body, spirit and in our relationships — and then sending them forth, empowered by the Holy Spirit to share what they have been freely given."⁴

It is worthy to note that Poloma compared the particular revival she researched with religion as lived among Pentecostal/charismatic (P/c) churches from a historical-sociological perspective. In so doing, Poloma traced divine healing back to its foundation in the earlier Holiness Movement of which Grace Church of God is affiliated. She acknowledged that, "The practice of divine or faith healing has had its greatest... most lasting and extensive... influence among the spiritual descendants of the Holiness and Pentecostal churches."⁵ Thus, Poloma's work gives social location to Grace Church of God in context and identity.

In developing an investigative method I used my strength in subjective, narrative, and qualitative research. Poloma's method is mixed, evenly distributed between qualitative, objective, scientific, and quantitative tools; the latter not being my strong point. She conducted a 1995 pre-survey of 918 worshippers at TAV and gathered data related to total revival experiences. Then in 1997 she followed up 715 attendees of the

² Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, 87.

³ Margaret Poloma and Lynette F. Hoelter, "The 'Toronto Blessing': A Holistic Model of Healing," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no. 2 (June 1998): 259, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1387526> (accessed March 9, 2013).

⁴ Margaret Poloma, "Inspecting the Fruit of the 'Toronto Blessing': A Sociological Perspective" *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 55.

⁵ Poloma and Hoelter, "The 'Toronto Blessing,'" 259.

same group who were willing to verify any lasting impact of the revival. The goal was to see whether reported blessings had been sustained.⁶ In the survey that Poloma constructed, she researched among other variables the following that are relevant to my research:

- 1) Healing – Respondents had to score from 1, strongly disagree to 4, strongly agree to one or more statements in each of four categories of healing below:
 - a) Spiritual healing : “I experienced a fresh sense of forgiveness from God.”
“I experienced deliverance from Satan’s hold on my life.”⁷
 - b) Inner (emotional) healing: “I experienced inner emotional healing.”
 - c) Mental healing: “I experienced healing from a clinically diagnosed mental problem.”⁸
 - d) Physical healing: “I experienced healing of a physical health problem.”⁹
- 2) Prayer – Respondents had to score the actual number of times they received prayer at TAV.¹⁰

Findings on Healings

Poloma received written testimonies of healing among surveys from 24% of those who responded to the surveys, and she collected additional testimonies through interviews. Poloma interweaved in her analysis and understanding of the meaning of these stories a “polyphony of voices” the validity of whose narratives are supported “by theories ...including anthropology, sociology, psychology, neurology, and musicology...to make sense of the revival.”¹¹ Below are excerpts of some self-reported healings Poloma used to support her model of Christian healing indigenous to Pentecostal and charismatic groups. These narratives or cases are similar to those I collected for my

⁶ Ibid., 264.

⁷ Ibid., 265.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 264.

¹¹ Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, 237-238.

project, and for emphasis I added related themes or topics that are not cited in the

PNEUMA journal:

Spiritual Root with a Physical Symptom

During... teaching on forgiveness, the Holy Spirit showed me the root of my high blood pressure. It was about my (deceased) father's intense hatred for me. I was able to forgive him, and I knew the blood pressure had returned to normal. It was confirmed on the next visit to the doctor. (Case #050).¹²

Inner Healing from Depression & Suicide

I spent eight months hospitalized for clinical depression with suicidal tendencies. I got better through counseling, but I was only coping. Since I have experienced this move of the Spirit, I am healed of all pain of my past. It is gone! What counseling could never do, God did in a matter of minutes on the floor (Case #1501).¹³

Healing Process – A Continuum of Cause-Course-Cure-Celebration-Change

I began to weep, as I never purposively desired to blame God. I loved God with all my heart. I repented and asked for His forgiveness. Almost immediately my body started rocking and shaking. I felt like something was coming from my belly. I grabbed a pillow as I felt like something was coming out of my mouth. Then this strange language ("tongues" as I understand it) came forth with uncontrollable sobbing. I cried and talked in this strange language. I laughed and laughed. I couldn't understand how I could be sobbing and then laughing. This went on for hours... The first words in English that finally came out were 'Thank you, Lord. I love you Lord. There really is a Spirit of God. He is alive!' I was ecstatic. But you know, the most wonderful thing is that for the first time in my Christian walk, I feel victorious — not defeated. I am joy-filled, no longer negative. I have a desire to share the love of God with everyone and anyone. That was two years ago. And it has never died. I am alive in Christ (Case #264).¹⁴

It would be excessive to cite other testimonies Poloma collected in her research and published in *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing & Reviving Pentecostalism*.

Here are some other key findings about healing from Poloma's research and analysis:

- 1) Spiritual healing or right relationship with God is the primary fruit produced through deliverance from "personal sin and demonic influence." "91% of the respondents claimed that one of the "fruits" of the Toronto Blessing was

¹² Poloma, "Inspecting the Fruit of the "Toronto Blessing," 60.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

- coming to know "the Father's love in new ways" and 89% said they were "more in love with Jesus than ever before in their lives."¹⁵
- 2) 87% of those surveyed spoke in tongues which historically is the key distinctive of the Pentecostal church; but "the belief and practice of divine healing may prove to be more central to its identity than is tongues."¹⁶
 - 3) Healing is holistic connecting holiness with health; inter-relating all forms of healing, for "measures of spiritual healing were significantly related to the measures of inner, mental, and physical healing in our analyses."¹⁷
 - 4) TAV's "cathartic ritual"¹⁸ of worship organized with music, a master of ceremonies, preaching followed by prayer, fostered an atmosphere that gave space for the free flow and outpouring of the Holy Spirit, healing, spiritual empowerment, and service.¹⁹

At the TAV revival, Poloma observed an important administrative strategy in the "democratization of spiritual healing, taking it out of the hands of a few and placing it in the reach of the masses, is the stance on healing taken by leaders" who set up prayer stations in the sanctuary. This contributed to their positive responses to prayer in the survey.

Findings about Prayer

Here are Poloma's research findings on prayer:

- 1) Prayer, both personal and group played a pivotal role in healing at TAV.
- 2) "[T]hose who were prayed for more often were also likely to report a greater number of somatic manifestations;" that included "roaring like a lion, holy laughter, dancing in the Spirit, jumping up and down, drunk in the Spirit, deep weeping, ...uncontrolled shaking of an arm or leg, deep bending from the waist, rolling on the floor, thrashing on the floor, uncontrolled jerking of bodily limbs, and other."²⁰ These were signs that the Holy Spirit was at work delivering individuals while in some subjects Satan was resisting.²¹

¹⁵ Poloma and Hoelter, The 'Toronto Blessing', 269.

¹⁶ Ibid., 257-272.

¹⁷ Ibid., 269.

¹⁸ Ibid., 262.

¹⁹ Ibid., 261-264.

²⁰ Ibid., 266.

²¹ Poloma, "Inspecting the Fruit of the 'Toronto Blessing,'" 51.

- 3) Those who were prayed for often were also more likely to report a physical healing than were those who did not.²²
- 4) The time when people are within their prayer groups “is often regarded as the time during which the Blessing is most likely to be bestowed.”²³ The Father’s Blessing is God’s love and grace touching persons, healing and enabling those who have freely received to freely in turn share with others. It is when one “moved on from simply *receiving* the blessing to *being* a blessing.”²⁴
- 5) God “transmitted” “extraordinary powers” through ordinary prayer teams of “unnamed persons” at every service, thus making the extraordinary normal, or the supernatural natural.²⁵

For additional support of the efficacy of prayer and its relationship to healing I draw from Candy Gunther Brown, author, researcher, and professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University. Brown conducted scientific research on proximal intercessory prayer (PIP) as practiced by Western charismatic groups in Mozambique, Brazil and the United States. Brown published her findings of one such clinical study in Mozambique, in the *Southern Medical Journal*. Results were also included in her book *Testing Prayer: Science and Healing*; and the subject of a peer review in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*.²⁶ The prayer teams from Iris Global Ministries spent less than 15 minutes praying for 24 successive subjects (19 males, 5 females). Thirteen possessed hearing impairments, 10 possessed visual impairments, and 1 possessed both. Her research included a team of medical doctors who used an audiometer and vision charts to pretest and confirm that the subjects were sick with hearing and visual problems and a

²² Poloma and Hoelter, “The ‘Toronto Blessing,’” 269.

²³ *Ibid.*, 260.

²⁴ Poloma, “Inspecting the Fruit of the ‘Toronto Blessing,’” 65.

²⁵ Poloma, “The ‘Toronto Blessing,’” 257-271.

²⁶ Margaret Poloma, “Book Review, *Testing Prayer: Science and Healing* by Candy Gunther Brown,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51, no. 4 (December 2012): 825–827, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.drew.edu/doi/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2012.01691.x/citedby> (accessed September 22, 2014).

post-test after prayer to confirm healing. These subjects were prayed for on the spot by prayer practitioners from Iris Global Ministries. They laid hands on the subjects and anointed them with oil according to the Christian practice of Jesus that was later reinforced by the Apostle James:

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.²⁷

Here are Brown's pre and post PIP-test research conclusions:

- 1) "Both auditory... and visual... improvements were statistically significant across the tested populations after PIP."²⁸
- 2) "The greater the hearing or vision impairment pre-PIP, the greater the post-PIP improvement."²⁹
- 3) "The magnitude of measured effects exceeds that reported in previous suggestion and hypnosis studies."³⁰
- 4) Having medical doctors record the evidence that a medical condition of illness was present before and absent after PIP is documented proof of the effectiveness of prayer for healing.³¹
- 5) "Although science can never prove nor disprove the so-called healing power of prayer, empirical perspectives can reveal a great deal about prayer for healing— just as attunement to religious perceptions can illumine much about the nature and practice of science."³²
- 6) Future study seems warranted to assess whether PIP may be a useful adjunct to standard medical care for patients with auditory and/or visual impairments, especially in contexts where access to conventional treatment is limited.³³

²⁷ Jas 5:14-15.

²⁸ Candy Gunther Brown, et al, "Study of Therapeutic Effects of Proximal Intercessory Prayer (STEPP)" *Southern Medical Journal* 103, no. 9 (September 2010): 864-869.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Poloma, "Book Review: *Testing Prayer*, 825–827.

³² Ibid.

³³ Brown, et al, "Study of Therapeutic Effects of Proximal Intercessory Prayer (STEPP)," 864-869.

Brown defined PIP as “direct-contact prayer, frequently involving touch,” and categorized it as one of the many “complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies.”³⁴ Brown’s quest was to see PIP treated by United States health officials like other accepted techniques such as Touch, Electrical, Attunement, and Radiation therapies. Just as some approved therapies are linked to Western and Eastern religions, PIP is another unique technique relying on the energy of the Holy Spirit and healing virtue of Jesus.

Brown reported that the team prayed with their eyes open in order to monitor demonic activity. At times when demonic presence was detected, over 1 hour of prayer was necessary to uproot and evict demonic spirits. I can imagine this prayer group engaged in spiritual warfare healing similar to the encounter Jesus and His disciples faced with an unclean spirit that caused speech and auditory impairment. In Mark 9:25-26, “[Jesus] rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him.”

Brown’s research re-enacted the healing process at Grace Church of God absent of documented empirical proof. Her findings on the efficacy of prayer give foundation and meaning to my qualitative project in Grace’s healing ministry. Many medical doctors give support for prayer as an efficacious spiritual tool towards divine healing. I am baffled by the hesitancy of authorities to take off the scientific only fig leaf. John R. Peteet, MD argues this point:

...the conviction that we live in a closed system governed only by naturalistic processes is an expression of faith in a world view rather than a conclusion logically demanded by the scientific

³⁴ Ibid.

method. While the secular world view is characteristic of our age it is by no means shared by all scientists.³⁵

Larry Dossey, MD reported on experiments done on fungi, yeast, and bacteria in England and verified by “Daniel J. Benor, M.D., an American psychiatrist working in England.”³⁶ Dr. Benor and Dossey conclude that positive “results suggest that the effects of spiritual healing can be completely independent of the “psychology” of the subject.”³⁷ One of the effective experiments that Dossey cited gives parallel interest to water prayed over by the minister in the 21st century healing story collected in this research of storyteller 2, the Wall Street administrator. She testified: “I began to feel thirsty so the minister got me water, prayed over it and gave it to me.” (See Appendix B) Dossey writes this short test:

In a similar experiment, two healers held a bottle of water in their hands for thirty minutes. Samples of the water were then added to solutions of yeast cells in test tubes. After incubation the amount of carbon dioxide given off by the yeast cultures was measured, indicating the level of metabolic activity. Statistically significant increases in carbon dioxide production were observed by the yeast cultures given the “treated” water in four of five tests.³⁸

Peteet, Dossey, Brown, and many others cite the important finding on the study Christian cardiologist, Randolph Byrd conducted on 393 patients regarding the efficacy of prayer.

British research David Aldridge cites this study also:

Although initial clinical research into the benefits of prayer was inconclusive, more recent studies from a broader medical perspective and with larger study populations have shown that

³⁵ John R. Peteet, “Proximal Intercessory Prayer,” *Southern Medical Journal* 103, no. 9 (September 2010): 853.

³⁶ Larry Dossey, *Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 11, Location 3254-3255.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 3227-3230.

intercessory prayer is beneficial. In one study in a coronary care unit, patients in the prayer group had an overall better outcome, requiring less antibiotics, less diuretics and had a lower incidence of intubation/ventilation than the control group.³⁹

Dossey concluded about Byrd's study "If the technique being studied had been a new drug or a surgical procedure instead of prayer, it would almost certainly have been heralded as some sort of "breakthrough.""⁴⁰

This tension between the spiritual with the scientific rang true to Tertullian's historical question posed against Athenian philosophy, "What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?"⁴¹ Poloma believed "the instruments of science" cannot "discern... true from false religion or distinguish... between natural and supernatural...but social science can take a mediating position that regards such religious experiences as natural and true."⁴²

³⁹ David Aldridge, "Spirituality, Healing and Medicine," *British Journal of General Practice* 41, (1991): 425.

⁴⁰ Dossey, *Healing Words*, Kindle Electronic Edition Location 3057-3058.

⁴¹ Tertullian, "On Pagan Learning."

⁴² Poloma, "*Main Street Mystics*, 19.

CHAPTER 3

ENGAGING NARRATIVE RESEARCH TO OPEN UP TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SUPERNATURAL HEALING STORIES

Rationale for a Narrative Research Method

Architect Louis Sullivan's well known saying that "form follows function"¹ is applicable whenever structures and methods are needed to fulfill desired purposes. From the outset, I pursued a method that lined up with the purpose of the research project and structurally enabled rather than hamstrung the process. I asked, "What method best collects supernatural healing stories and facilitates analysis so as to determine their impact on Grace's healing ministry and community? What form applied to the stories helps determine: 1) ways in which they give meaning to people's lives, 2) if they connect people to God, 3) if there is any indication that the stories stirred hope; 4) if they give faith to those troubled by doubt, cynicism, and skepticism, 5) if they provide ways of liberation to those stuck in life, 6) how they compare to Biblical narratives, and 7) whether they allow new themes and relationships to arise during the interviews.

I elected to utilize a qualitative, narrative method fused with John Flanagan's Critical Incident Technique (CIT) as recommended by Leonard Webster and Patricie Mertova in their book *Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method*. They call this combination "critical event narrative analysis."² Flanagan's CIT framework fits in well to

¹ Frederick L. Greene, "Does (the) Form Follow Function?" *Annals of Surgical Oncology* 14, no. 5 (May 2007):1523-4, <http://www.annsurgoncol.org/journal/10434/0/5/9349/0/> (accessed August 25, 2014).

² Webster and Mertova, *Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research*, 76.

collect a “record of specific behaviors from those in the best position to make the necessary observations and evaluations.”³

My narrative approach is structured in Flanagan’s CIT five-step process:

1. Determining the [purpose] of the study ...;
2. Planning and specifying how the actual incidents will be collected;
3. Data collection [through an interview questionnaire and process];
4. Data analysis [thematic, theological, and life changing turning points];
5. Interpreting and reporting on the requirements of the incidents being studied.⁴

This research by design takes into account some important strategies namely, 1) allowing the storytellers to exercise agency and be the primary, subjective experts sharing their lived experience, using much of their own language instead of the researcher’s words; 2) capturing from their stories various crisis factors that Webster and Mertova listed as: a) the “traumatic component,” b) how they “attract excessive interest,” c) “risk in the form of personal exposure: illness,” d) “the impact on the people involved,” e) any “life changing consequences;”⁵ and 3) getting the pastor as researcher to do what William Presnell and Carl Savage in their book *Narrative Research in Ministry* call taking a “kenotic (self-emptied), [unknowing] curious, exploratory stance”⁶ to enhance meaningful reflection.

The narrative method can also switch from research to therapeutic mode and this flexibility is beneficial if post traumatic conditions arise as persons share and relive past

³ John C. Flanagan, “The Critical Incident Technique” *Psychological Bulletin* 54, no. 4 (July 1954) posted with permission from American Institute for Research on American Psychological Association website, <http://www.apa.org/pubs/databases/psycinfo/cit-article.pdf> (accessed September 15, 2014).

⁴ Webster Mertova, *Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research*, 76.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 73-75, 83.

⁶ Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville, KY: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 81.

distressing experiences. The research team gathering these stories may sometimes be called upon to serve as counselors wisely listening, praying, discerning; being “caring, understanding, and non-judgmental,” and giving space so “people can and do talk themselves into healing and wholeness” as they “externalize their stories.”⁷ In the interview process Presnell forewarns that the interviewer’s “own existential wounds and trauma memories”⁸ require the researcher to play the Christ-like role of wounded healer as stories intersect.⁹

Karl Simms, in his book, *Paul Ricoeur*, sees life itself as a narrative for “through the work of interpreting our lives we turn them into narratives, and life understood as narrative constitutes self-understanding.”¹⁰ Everybody has a story of value that needs to be told and heard within the collective consciousness of the human experience and understanding; thus making narrative both subjective and democratic. Story-telling has always been the way to pass on to future generations various cultural values and skills which are then put into human action. Presnell sums it up this way, “Our identities are a fluid, ever-changing amalgam of our life experience.”¹¹

This narrative research is like a surgeon doing exploratory surgery, discovering the unknown, and unlike scientific research in which the surgeon starts cutting away at a specifically known diseased part. An investigation into one incident or experience starts

⁷ William Presnell, “Getting the Idea of Narrative: Story-based Thinking *About Ministry*,” (class handout, Drew Theological Seminary, Madison NJ, May 13, 2013).

⁸ William Presnell, “Short Term Narrative Strategies for Pastoral Care,” (class PowerPoint Presentation, Drew Theological Seminary, Madison NJ, August 2, 2013).

⁹ Groesbeck, “The Archetypal Image of the Wounded Healer, 122-145.

¹⁰ Simms, *Paul Ricoeur*, 80.

¹¹ Presnell, “Getting the Idea of Narrative.”

with little data, then deepens and expands into various themes of human interactions, beliefs, values, abilities, and identities. The common aim is to find hope and healing.

Some stories contain behaviors, metaphors, and other symbolic language unique to persons in their context; so a narrative method of research was selected in hopes that it would capture some phenomena and meaning that cannot be rationally defined as in a pure scientific method. The term “method” is itself a technique within each story for the curious mind wants to know how healing came about, and how this lines up with the healing manner used by Jesus Christ. For example, in scripture Jesus functioning as healer of a blind man stirs up curiosity in an observer who asks the healed man this methodological question: “How did [Jesus] open your eyes?”¹²

To implement this narrative method of which I have spoken, I first carefully chosen LAT to work alongside me.

The Local Advisory Team

The purpose of the LAT was “to inform, advise, and participate”¹³ in the entire research project. I chose five leaders of Grace including 3 ministers and 3 non-members of Grace to make up the team. The non-members brought an outside perspective, offering different points of view. They included a seminary consultant in Christian Education, a research expert in social work and anthropology, and our denomination’s district leader respectively. The sociologist/anthropologist chaired the team, but I remained diligent observing and co-managing relationships and tasks as the LAT went through its own group developmental process towards productivity.

¹² Jn 9:10, 26.

¹³ Savage and Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry*, 27.

The Grace leaders in this LAT were chosen based on their demonstration of skillsets and personalities needed to maximize research proficiency and to create synergy. Their selection was done using data from a 2008 in-house Ministry Match Assessment that was already done among 42 leaders at Grace through The Center for Church Effectiveness in Aurora, Colorado. The tool is designed to ferret out “different constructs including temperament, motivated role, leadership style, participation style, ministry gifts, [and] ministry values.”¹⁴ According to Ministry Match interpretations, I chose these leaders because they are independent thinkers avoiding group-think and for their strength in fighting for the well-being of the whole church over the individual. Two of the 5 Grace leaders love details, 2 prefer big-picture perspective and 1 is good at both when approaching projects. Three of them lead with their heads by taking an objective logical approach to decision making, and two lead with their hearts, taking an empathetic, relational, subjective approach. They are all gifted in faith, have different kinds of leadership skills, and do preach and teach. Two of these leaders are experienced in supernatural healing first as patients then as prayer warriors helping others, three love counseling, and all value disciple-making.

As pastor-researcher, I enlightened the LAT taskforce to the purpose and process of the research project and the philosophy and strategies of the narrative process. I imparted skills of story-craft, and divided up the responsibilities for implementing the project, analyzing the data, interpreting it, and making recommendations. I instructed interviewers to allow story tellers to give their version of what happened rather than let

¹⁴ MinistryMatch is a multiple construct tool used to evaluate and place people in ministry. It was designed by Bob Gilliam and Steve Johnson. The tool is provided by the Center for Church Effectiveness. http://www.gompn.com/ministry_match.php (accessed August 29, 2014).

the interview script dictate; to empower them to spontaneously verbalize to capture their words and allow themes which the LAT might not have considered to emerge.

My role in this narrative inquiry was to function as researcher, “story broker”¹⁵ and “fruit tester,” examining over 12 years of practical pastoral healing at Grace summarized in people’s healing stories, which reflect also a part of my own story and legacy. In addition, the research is intended to inform the weekly worship and the preaching/teaching that uses narratives indigenous to the ministry context. Insights from this narrative research could help me in Bible study, when I have to open up a treasure trove of stories involving creation, love, miracles of healing, history of the church, patriarchs, prophets, priests, parables and the “Paraclete;”¹⁶ Though my research timeframe was shorter than Poloma’s, I reported as a participating researcher as she did as well. In this subjective/objective tension as pastor-researcher, I functioned as a critical observer of my own ministry, intentionally being curious, giving space for discovery of the unknown. I attempted to limit the possibility of my superimposing any prior notion, bias, and influence that would taint the self-reporting and researching aspects and thus lead to self-deception of my pastoral ministry.

I was the servant God used in the healing of members of Grace Church of God, so I assigned Grace non-members in the LAT to conduct these interviews and collect their stories of supernatural healing. In some of these cases, the interviewers also contacted and interviewed other witnesses who were present within the prayer group when the healing took place. Here I followed the counsel of Savage and Presnell and took the

¹⁵ Savage and Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry*, 75.

¹⁶ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Paraclete,” Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979). “A transliteration of the Greek” for the Holy Spirit as Helper and Advocate in Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.

kenotic stance when “Those who lead and would study their faith communities inevitably participate in the very myopia they seek to remedy through research.”¹⁷

Collecting Story Data

Once formed, the LAT’s first task was to gather 15 testimonies from other churches within the 1½ square mile, geographical context of the Brownsville community using the 11212 zip code where Grace Church of God is located. From a list of over 100 churches in this zone, the team randomly chose 53 of different denominations. Then mailed letters to the pastors, placed follow-up telephone calls, and also did face-to face visits. This effort sought to gain the pastors’ interest in participating in the research and to identify fifteen members willing to testify of their supernatural healing.

The first research letter sent focused narrowly on experiences of spiritual warfare healing based on today’s narrow use and interpretation of the term “deliverance.” It was thus differentiating “deliverance” from its broader synonym “salvation” and other healings. These letters all aimed at determining, “To what extent this kind of healing occurred in the church community?” Positive expectations of gathering desired testimonies were based on the verbal witnesses of pastors who had previously shared experiences of such healing. We were also encouraged by the fact that the term “deliverance” was written within the names of about 1/6 of the churches in the Brownsville area that were sent mail. Lastly, we expected support because of the meaning pastors and some practitioners give to the term “deliverance.” Unfortunately our mailings did not result in support. With no data forthcoming, members of the LAT began to wonder about the credibility of the verbal reputations of many of these churches. However one pastor responded that people healed through spiritual warfare were

¹⁷ Savage and Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry*, 74.

reluctant to participate due to the stigma and fear associated in sharing this experience with strangers.

The initial efforts to garner testimonies from churches in the Brownsville community are summarized below:

Table 1. Summary of Contacts with Brooklyn, Brownsville Churches

Total number of letters sent	53
• # Letters hand-delivered	11
# E-mails sent	1
# Follow-up telephone calls made	86
# Contacts made with church staff	18
• # In-person contacts	13
• # Telephone contacts	5

After receiving no response, the term “deliverance” was broadened to the new term, “supernatural healing.” A revised letter with the changed language was hand delivered by members of the LAT to about 25 pastors, 12 prospective pastors of the original group and 13 pastors beyond Brownsville. We also elected to send mailings and emails beyond Brownsville to seven additional pastors in close relationship with members of the LAT including me. These letters were followed up by a second round of telephone calls to these newly canvassed pastors. In one telephone pastoral contact to a church in Bedford Stuyvesant, I interviewed 3 different members and collected 3 healing testimonies, two of which ended up among the final seven. I also interviewed 2 women from two different churches in Flatbush, Brooklyn, 2 from a church in Freeport, New York, and 1 from a church in the Bronx. With the timeframe for collecting stories closing, the LAT decided

to collect 15 stories, with 8 testimonies from churches beyond Brownsville. We were able to accomplish this and believed it gave balance to the research process.

The LAT created a process for the interview that utilized a thematic template of questions: 1. to act as entry points into the conversation 2. to keep the storyteller sharing and 3. to later use the themes to act as a guide for selecting and analyzing seven (7) wholesome stories. (See Appendix A) The themes expanded as the storytellers introduced new ideas during the interview stage and the LAT discovered new topics for the analysis process.

In the interviews, we also collected demographic data during the initial intake probing the storyteller's background and family tree to three generations – interviewee, parent, and grandparent. The LAT planned to use this sketch of the family not only to look for recurring themes and challenges passed along generations, but also to frame a hermeneutic circle for understanding and giving meaning to the discourse.

Members of the LAT paired and conducted the interviews with audio-recording and writing verbatim stories using pre-selected criteria for guidance. After transcribing the script, I had the interviewees check our writing of their stories for accuracy. We then paired two of these interview stories with similar Biblical stories such that they were formatted as a Bible study that was later offered to the church. Those who participated in the Bible Study were given pre and post-tests. I asked questions about what impact Biblical stories of healing had on their lives before and after the Bible study. We also garnished answers to questions from 5 groups within the Bible Study.

Constructing the Stories from the Data

I trained the LAT in story-craft using Jack Hart's guidelines in *Storycraft: The Complete Guide to Writing Narrative Nonfiction*. Together we looked at important hallmarks of an excitingly structured narrative to help us understand when transcribing from data to narratives. The stories would follow logical sequences of events and their consequences,¹⁸ "rising action" with its plots and subplots, character and "complications" in life's crisis moving towards a "resolution."¹⁹ We followed Hart's sequential course of action using the interviewee's own words and differentiating high points and turning points relevant to the storyteller's point-of-view.

This framework allowed us to better capture in these narratives what Thomas O'Dea calls divine "breaking points."²⁰ This is an idea he shared in the *International Journal of Service Industry Management* about God's intervention. Armed with awareness of critical points the LAT crafted the stories using the interviewee's words, and then reported the stories in the first person. Afterwards each story was shared with the interviewee to confirm accuracy of the story as given and to make any necessary corrections.

To facilitate the framework for selecting and analyzing the continual flow of the stories, I interweaved ideas from the experts. I shortened Flanagan's "three features: [1] a description of the situation, [2] an account of the actions or behavior of the key player[s]

¹⁸ János László, *The Science of Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Psychology* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 17, Kindle Electronic Edition.

¹⁹ Jack Hart, *Storycraft: The Complete Guide to Writing Narrative Nonfiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 29-32, Kindle Electronic Edition.

²⁰ Thomas F. O'Dea, "Five Dilemmas in the Institutionalization of Religion" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 1, no. 1 (October 1961): 30, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1385174> (accessed November 10, 2014).

in the incident, and [3] the outcome or result”²¹ to Bo Edvardsson’s abbreviated version of “cause-course-result.”²² I then refined and expanded this continuum framework to cause-course-cure-celebration-change, drawing from Peter Woods’ five stages of critical or “momentous” events which Woods recommends for an educational setting in his book *Critical Events in Teaching & Learning*.²³ (See use of this continuum in Appendix C)

I felt that this structural flow or continuum of cause-course-cure-celebration-change for healing stories fit a Christian church context where expression flows from painful grief to joyful celebration and positive change. So in crafting and selecting the stories, the team did what János László’s in *The Science of Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Psychology* describes as placing an “emotional value of the narrated event along a positive–negative continuum,” but in reverse.²⁴

Selecting Seven Thick, Rich Narratives

The LAT acted as story brokers selecting 7 of the 15 narratives. We applied a depth framework comprising 5 layers of the bios, ethos, pathos, logos, and “pneumatikos”²⁵ or spiritual level. We were determined to select supernatural healing stories that spoke to the body – soul – spirit dimensions of the whole person. We teased them apart looking for salient elements of: 1) meaning to life, 2) revealing the church’s identity, 3) connecting people to God, 4) providing liberation to those stuck in life, giving

²¹ Webster and Mertova, *Using Narrative Inquiry*, 76.

²² Bo Edvardsson and Inger Roos, “Critical Incident Techniques: Towards a Framework For Analyzing the Criticality of Critical Incident” *International Journal of Service Industry Management* 12, no.3 (2001): 251-268, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000005520> (accessed September 15, 2014).

²³ Peter Woods, *Critical Events In Teaching and Learning* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 357.

²⁴ László, *The Science of Stories*, 120-121.

²⁵ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, s.v. “pneumatikos.”

faith to those troubled by doubt, cynicism, and skepticism, 5) comparing them with Biblical narratives, 6) offering hope to those in despair, 7) connecting to others, 8) giving faith to those troubled by doubt; and 9) any other new themes that did arise in the interviews. LAT members scored each of the variants from 0 meaning weak to a maximum of 3 points denoting its strength.

The selection took into account the interdisciplinary nature of the data, requiring the LAT to discover what concepts and practices in spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, worship, listening to God, and doctrine were applied in the healing process.

We also took into account the flow or plot of the story along the continuum of cause-course-cure-celebration-change, its high-point, breaking point, and turning point.

Appendix D depicts the scores of the seven narratives that were selected, 3 from Brownsville and 4 beyond. The selection exercise challenged the team to examine each particular story and broaden it to universal understanding, yet narrowing the scope towards the intended purpose of the project and targeted audiences.

Testing the Impact of Healing Narratives

The LAT set out to test the impact of these supernatural healing stories on the church and community by administering a pre and post survey after teaching 2 one hour Bible lessons using 2 of the collected stories paired with Biblical stories. Here are the stories selected, paired, and taught using the inductive method.

- 1) Lesson 1: 21st Century Story 5 – Spiritual Healing of a young South American woman raised as Hindu paired with the Deliverance in the Gadarenes²⁶
- 2) Lesson 2: 21st Century Story 7 – A Caribbean man healed from a medical diagnosis of prostate cancer paired with the Woman Healed from a Spirit of Infirmity.²⁷

²⁶ Mt 8:28-24; Mk 5:1-20; Lk 8:27-39.

This biblical pairing was based primarily on the subjects' citing these stories as similar to theirs, during the interview process. See Appendix I for the questions posed during these inductive lessons and Appendix J for feedback from these lessons.

To form a focus group of 20 people, we canvassed other churches and new members of Grace Church of God. Twenty-four people randomly volunteered to participate in two successive Wednesday night one-hour Bible studies. Of the twenty-two who attended both Bible lesson sessions and completed the pre- and post-surveys, 14 were Grace's members and 8 were from other churches.

Two ministers of the LAT created and conducted the two 1-hour Bible studies to the pre-selected group. The attendees were placed in five (5) groups averaging 4 people and they had to select a group leader, recorder, and reporter. Answers were shared in the total group, collected and reserved for analysis to be compared with findings of the pre and post survey.

Each pre and post-survey was paired, assigned a tracking number, and given to the same person to compare response changes after the lessons. Here are the questions asked before and after to measure the effect of the supernatural healing narratives.

- 1) "Rate the impact *hearing a story of someone healed by a miracle* would have on you." Participants were asked to rate this statement using a range of 1 – 5 where 1 meant "no impact" and 5 meant "enormous impact."
- 2) "What personal experience do you have regarding supernatural healing?"
- 3) "Which ways have you tried to connect to God this year?" Participants had to select all variables that applied including, "listening to stories of supernatural healings."

The two sets of answers for each numbered survey were then compared and analyzed to determine whether or not there was a distinct change in participants' understanding of supernatural healing as a result of participation in the two Bible study sessions.

²⁷ Lk 8:27-39.

Findings of the Impact of Supernatural Healing Survey

The top scores (4 and 5) indicating great impact were combined and the responses showed that the healing narratives presented in the sessions had a great impact on the participants. For the pre-test 81% and post-test 89% of participants overall reported that hearing a story of a healing miracle had a great impact on them. Four of the 22 people showed an increase.

Of the 19 people in the pre-test and 22 in the post-test most did not have a personal experience in supernatural healing. However, three people in their before and after responses said they were healed supernaturally.

In responding to what variables helped them connect to God, the majority of the 22 participants selected as their top means a) reading the Bible, b) going to church and c) praying. However, there was a marked increase from 10 people in the pre-test to 15 in the post-test who selected *listening to stories of miraculous healing* as their fourth choice.

CHAPTER 4

ELICITING THEMES AND MEANING FROM SEVEN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY HEALING STORIES

The metaphor “fruit bearing” used to describe the healing ministry at TAV is fitting for Grace Church of God in its effort to serve the community. Jesus linked fruit bearing to one’s identity and character declaring “by their fruit you shall know them” and “every good tree produces good fruit.”¹ This fruit is specific to Grace rooted in Church of God Reformation Movement’s divine healing history and tradition. Divine healing as a practice is one common thread that runs through the Holiness tradition including the Churches of God, Christian Missionary Alliance, Pentecostal Movement, and other charismatic Evangelical churches. (See Appendix K)

Daniel S. Warner the pioneer leader of the Church of God Reformation Movement “frequently prayed for divine healing and anointed the sick with oil following the instructions in James 5:15-15.”² Those healed by the power of God were encouraged to testify according to Psalm 107:2 and Revelation 12:11 respectively: “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy;” and “they overcame by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony.” Herbert M. Riggle, author, preacher, and theologian in the Church of God shared a collection of 19th century healing testimonies and spoke about them:

It would take a larger book than Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary to contain all the testimonies of the multitudes who have been healed in this blessed light, and it would include all the diseases mentioned in the New Testament that were healed and as many

¹ Mt 7:16-19.

² Michael S. Stephens, *Who Healeth All Thy Diseases*: 28.

wonderful miracles. Let us praise his name together and move forward.³

The next logical step to fruit bearing was fruit testing of these supernatural healing stories. In search of meaning, I examined separately narratives, 1, 2, and 3 indigenous to the Brownsville community ministry culture, looking for common elements. I broadened this examination across to stories 4, 5, 6, and 7 from beyond Brownsville so as to grasp a wider perspective. Common is the fact that all storytellers are of African descent. Many people and institutions including families, churches, and hospitals joined in the struggle against sickness, loss of life, and fear accompanying these calamities. The Brownsville storytellers were born and raised in the West Indies whereas the four beyond this circle were born and grew up in Central America (#4), two in the West Indies (# 6 & #7), and 1 in South America (#5). All migrated to the United States except #5 who still lives in South America.

All storytellers including the one male in the collection believed their problem and solution were spiritually rooted; but a spiritual warfare strategy was needed to bring healing to the six women. This made me curious as to why from Biblical creation to present day, Eve and women are still the primary targets of the enemy. Historically, the Church of God believed Satan was still operating today as he was in Biblical times as stated by Church of God historian, Andrew L. Byers:

Satan has many evil spirits at his command to carry on his destructive work in the realm of humanity. That he has in many respects transformed himself to be the better adapted to the times does not change the fact that there are many cases of devil-possession in the world today of the same character as those in Bible times. Many cases of insanity are of this class.⁴

³ Andrew. L. Byers, *Two Hundred Genuine Instances of Divine Healing: The Doctrine Explained* (Prestonsburg, KY: Reformation Publishers, 2005), 272.

Thank God for reversing evil by choosing “the seed of the woman”⁵ to crush the enemy. On the positive side, Mary the mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene were more receptive to the vision and mission of Jesus to give abundant and eternal life than the male disciples.

The “unknown” factor is prevalent in these stories but in different ways. In storytellers 4 and 6 doctors could not name the sickness and claim power over it. Storyteller 4 while commuting on the train to work “went into something.” Storyteller 6 was at work in the hospital as charge nurse or sister when “something came over me.” She “was diagnosed by doctors as having symptoms of unknown origin.” Most ministers rely on scientific diagnosis to specifically name in prayer to God the healing need. In these two cases ministers were effective in healing without a medical diagnosis.

The ‘not knowing’⁶ stance used in narrative research is also a short-term counseling strategy that helps ministers and prayer warriors hold tension between knowing and not-knowing the cause of illness, whether it be of the spirit, soul, and/or body. When in worship, attendees from the Brownsville and Grace community join the healing prayer line or come to the altar for prayer. Grace’s prayer warriors in intercessory prayer for the entire group can relish “not knowing” for it gives confidence in responding to God’s invitation to the prophet Jeremiah, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”⁷ Asking God to reveal unknown needs of the community that must be targeted and eradicated during prayer gives space

⁴ Byers, *Two Hundred Genuine Instances of Divine Healing*, 418.

⁵ Gn 3:15.

⁶ Howard W. Stone, ed. *Strategies for Brief Pastoral Counseling*, Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 3, Location 508.

⁷ Jer 33:3.

for God’s grace. It allows for godly creativity in thinking and imagination and facilitates healing “in a spirit of collaboration”⁸ with the Holy Spirit to reveal while maintaining the client’s “own authority and agency.”⁹

For over 15 years, Grace’s prayer ministry has annually joined other churches in New York City to do prayer walks in the community. There were positive results in the drop of crime rates in the city, particularly in Brownsville, with officials “not knowing” what was contributing to this rapid improvement of public safety. Clergy said it was due to these prayer walks. Politicians said it was the Mayor’s strategy of police stop and frisk intervention. Suffice to know that during a recent 2014 police go-slow when crime was expected to spike, continuance of prayer resulted in crime statistics dropping even lower.

Connections in Healing

Comparison of these 7 twenty-first century stories linked them to the Bible and historical tradition; showing that similar healing practices continue today, resulting in positive outcomes of supernatural healing. These practices are evidenced in the 7 stories by intercessory group prayer, the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, fasting and prayer, use of scripture, spiritual warfare, and calling on the name of Jesus. All but one of the 7 storytellers required a special type of spiritual warfare prayer, similar to what some visually and auditory impaired candidates received in Candy Gunther Brown’s case study in Mozambique as mentioned in chapter 3. Brown shared this method of prayer: “In soft tones, they petitioned God to heal, invited the Holy Spirit’s anointing, and *commanded*

⁸ Stone, *Strategies for Brief Pastoral Counseling*, 538.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 516.

healing and the departure of any evil spirits in Jesus' name."¹⁰ Here the distinction is made between communicating with God by praying, and confronting the evil spirits with direct commands by fighting. Agitation of storytellers 4 and 5 by the minister "asking questions" and the husband who "tried to bring me to awareness" respectively resulted in opposition against the enemy, not the persons held captive. The three Brownsville-healing-testimonies involving eradicating evil spirits show that people of the Grace and Brownsville community have access to local healing through this same prayer method that is used globally.

Although group prayer happened in all of the 7 stories, also at TAV in Margaret Poloma's ethnographic study and in Brown's study; an important technique is often missed. A minister or evangelist led in 6 of the 7 stories as point-persons who often take turns to lead in prayer and spiritual fight, for the power of agreement, and unity to enable effectiveness. Brown stated, "One particular Iris leader was involved in administering PIP [Proximal Intercessory Prayer] in 13 out of 25 interventions."¹¹ Poloma explained that within TAV prayer groups specific leaders wore badges indicating those "with blue dots have gone through training and a measure of inner healing in their own lives, [and] they have been approved..."¹² I agree with Brown that, "Some persons are considered more anointed than others or as "specialists" in praying for specific conditions."¹³ This notifies Grace which is currently limited to one leader spearheading healing prayer groups one-case-at-a-time; to train more people to take up strategic point positions so

¹⁰ Brown, "Study of Therapeutic Effects of Proximal Intercessory Prayer," 868. Emphasis is mine.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Poloma, The "Toronto Blessing," 264.

¹³ Brown, "Study of Therapeutic Effects of Proximal Intercessory Prayer," 865.

more people of the Grace and Brownsville community can be readily helped in healing of the spirit, soul, and body even simultaneously.

In my observation during the interview process, the storytellers as primary witnesses of healing exuded confidence, enthusiasm, and willingness to tell us what God did for them. None of them showed signs of stigma or fear of sharing their stories. Storyteller 3 mentioned how “A friend [storyteller 2] invited me to her church...I signed up for special prayer” that led to her healing. Her witness continued, “I believe that sharing my faith and story of my deliverance has also encouraged my sister and nieces to start going to church.” Storyteller 5 stated, “We shared our testimony with mom and she became a Christian.” It was encouraging how those healed were empowered to serve either as ministers (storytellers 6 and 7) or alongside a pastor (storyteller 5) who was already engaged in supernatural healing. Fear, isolation, and stigma were eliminated from the Grace community when a one-another culture is created of people connecting with each other in empathy, sharing testimonies, loving each other, inviting others, “confess[ing] your trespasses to one another, and pray[ing] for one another that you be healed as in James 5:16. This is the kind of ethos once cultivated within Grace is to be taken to the Brownsville community through supportive Prayer Care, Share (PCS) groups.

There is no way of knowing from this research how many people at Grace were prayed for without getting their desired healing results. However, According to John 15:16, there is an essential supernatural attachment between Jesus the Vine and Source of healing to faith healers as branches. In “the touch” through laying hands on the sick, the healing virtue of Jesus did flow through these ministers to the sick people healed in these stories. This is similar to the cases in Matthew 9:20 and 14:36, of the woman and others

who touched the hem of Jesus' garment and healing virtue flowed from Jesus to the sick. Spiritual attachment to Jesus is the key to effectiveness of prayer in the practice of healing. It is essential for the classification of the healing as a Christian supernatural healing. It is vital for tracing a helper's identity back to Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith. So in all scientific tests done on Christian prayer similar to that done by Candy Gunther Brown as mentioned earlier, the common fact is this: intercessors have to be linked spiritually to Jesus, for if there is a disconnect or block the results would turn out negative. A stronger attachment to God resulted after many were healed:

- 1) Storyteller 4 – “My connection to God is closer; my faith is deeper; a more definite faith. Before the healing I always had a belief in God, but now I have no doubt.”
- 2) Storyteller 6 – “growing up in the Anglican Church I never heard a message on spiritual warfare. It is a real war in which the stronger one wins, but people say, ‘You are crazy.’ Thank God in my case God won, Satan lost. Now my faith is strengthened for I know that God is able to deliver and set captives free.”
- 3) Storyteller 7 – “I now pray with fervency and authority, having experienced suffering to this extent. I have confidence in Jesus who has been touched by the feelings of our infirmity.”

The principle and practice of “joining”¹⁴ in narrative therapy and pastoral care is also present in these supernatural healing stories. One of the interviewees among the original 15 stories we collected spoke of having difficulty getting a breakthrough in the prayer session when the minister sat across from her; but as soon as he changed position and sat next to her freedom and healing came. Here the minister in a natural gesture joined forces with the person together with God against the spirits of bondage. Positional joining is the warfare strategy God advocated and communicated through the prophet Jahaziel to Israel in 2 Chronicles 20:17 in the reign of King Jehosaphat: “Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you...”

¹⁴ Savage and Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry*, 77.

Another kind of joining is found when benefactors of spiritual healing become wounded healers. Storyteller 7 became a minister and said, “Today, I have become a source of encouragement and counsel to others suffering with all kinds of sickness.” Storyteller 5 added to this discourse, “We now attend a Pentecostal church and enjoy working [alongside] the pastor setting free those who were in bondage like me.” During the site visit by my Drew faculty advisor and evaluator, a minister of Grace in the LAT shared her personal testimony of supernatural healing. She stated that before the healing she suffered depression, tried to commit suicide, and wore prescribed glasses. After her healing she has 20/20 vision--no glasses are required. She journeyed through Grace’s discipleship process, has grown spiritually, and joined the prayer team to help in the supernatural healing of others. Her inclusion in the LAT is based on her personal experience and her role as leader of Christian education in the church and minister.

I also discovered in this analysis communication that natural senses would call unusual, but the supernatural in the spirit realm would deem normal. Storyteller 4 shared of speaking to a Cuban doctor when she “went into something”:

While I was in the hospital for 2 days, a doctor from Cuba in his native language said to me: ‘Don’t let them do any more tests,’ and he left. At one time a Russian nurse and a friend who was visiting me said, ‘I went into something.’ When I awoke, they were praying. Then other doctors came, wanted to do more tests, so I told them that my doctor had said that I should not do any more tests. One of the doctors said to me ‘I’m your doctor’ and they surprisingly looked at each other.

Suffice to say, this patient eventually followed the counsel of the spiritual Cuban doctor and was healed. Later she told of her deceased uncle who appeared like the deceased Samuel brought up by the medium at En Dor in King Saul’s practice of necromancy and divination in 1Samuel 28:7-10:

The minister met me at the church door; I started feeling dizzy, was extremely tired, and weighty. He asked, 'How do you feel?' I cannot remember too many things afterwards during the 2-hour session. I recall my deceased cousin who was a minister being present, and he was telling me to say Psalm 91 and plead the blood.

We know that divination is forbidden by God from King Saul's story and from the missionary work of the apostle Paul who cast out a spirit of divination from a slave girl in Philippi.¹⁵ So implicit in the healing of storyteller 4 is that the practice of divination was not followed in using the counsel of the deceased minister. So you would need spiritual gifts to determine whether the Cuban doctor was an angel and the apparition of her deceased uncle was an evil spirit.

Beyond the 5 senses, the spiritual gift of discernment of spirits is needed to disentangle the fusion of personalities and to differentiate voices, behaviors, and emotions that on the surface seemed to be only that of the person seeking the healing. For example, before the healing intervention storyteller 2 went to the bathroom often. This human reactive behavior is often fear driven. Discernment would be needed to determine whether it originated from any evil spirit that sensed the moment of eviction and as in James 2:19 where Apostle James "believe[d] and tremble[d]." Discernment was necessary when storyteller 2 was thirsty. Water was prayed over and then offered. The question she asked, "Are you trying to kill me?" is similar to that evil spirit Jesus confronted when teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum in Luke 4:31-37. The spirit asked Jesus "Did You come to destroy us?" The mutual answer to both questions, found in 1 John 3:8 is a resounding "Yes!" for "Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil." Storytellers 4 and 5 claimed the minister "agitated me" through questioning and awakening. This agitation is often felt by the client when the evil spirit is tormented in

¹⁵ Acts 16:16-24.

battle as the minister speaks a holy word or command against that spirit. Storyteller 2 distinguished personalities or spirits speaking from within her body: “I remember a loud booming laughter (as a man’s voice) coming from deep within me and I began to cry.”...Then I remember a voice, not mine, talking and praising God but the minister rebuked the spirit while his team kept praying.” The impartation of spiritual healing gifts to more Grace leaders is needed through laying on of hands as Paul did to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:6 so that people of the community can be effectively ministered to and helped when they come for healing. Previously Grace had to turn away requests for healing due to work and ministry overload of the pastor.

Some of those who went through the process of healing said they were unable to remember all of what actually happened and what their own participation and behavior was like. In “blackouts,” storyteller 5 and for hours, storyteller 4 were cast by the enemy flat on the floor unconscious or in an altered state. In other charismatic healing ministries this time on the floor is typical and is called by many different terms such as ‘slain in the spirit,’ swooning, or simply “carpet time.” This is the last stand of the enemy resisting eviction by the Holy Spirit and the most crucial time when the client needs much prayer and wrestling support against the enemy to achieve healing in victory. So ‘slain in the spirit’ is a sign that some spiritual work has begun and is not an end in itself. It is important for Grace Church to be aware of this phenomenon so as to follow up those who swoon and not neglect their need for healing in a special offline prayer session. This is significant when serving people who are already considered underserved in many services. Grace church has to be sensitive to this grievance and avoid being neglectful in its healing ministry to the community.

I reserve speaking of linear connections along a continuum of cause-course-cure-celebration-change; and of a depth dynamic of spirit-soul-body to the section in this chapter dealing with constructs applied to these healing narratives.

Certainty in Healing

From the outset one of my promises was to “test how authentic these seven testimonies were.” All 7 of these supernatural healings met a meaningful, commonsense standard of authentic testimonies, that is, they are stories of truth based on the following:

- 1) Healing was not done in secret, but in the presence of eyewitnesses at church, in a prayer group and/or in a worship setting.
- 2) Evidence of lasting healing was sustained after the year of healing intervention as listed here in ascending order of the storytellers: 1 – 2011; 2 – 2010; 3 – 2013; 4 – 2012; 5 – 2008; 6 – 1982; 7 – 2009.
- 3) Evidence of radical positive change in each story-teller’s life is remarkable proof of healing compared to their poor condition of illness earlier diagnosed by medical doctors; and their previous meaningless life-style. At the moment of healing, storyteller 1 said, “I felt an inner peace envelop me. Consequently, I destroyed the Lodge paraphernalia, got more involved in Bible study, and continued to work in various ministries in the church.” At the healing breakpoint storyteller 5 stated, “When I became conscious, I found myself in a brand new world. I felt such peace; my mind was clear, the heaviness lifted, and the curse was gone. I began to feel the love of God in my life. My relationship with my husband, children, and principal changed.”

- 4) The stories met God's standard of truth for in God's court, such truth is established in the mouth of two or three witnesses who confirm the testimony of the one healed as in . Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1.
- 5) Based on the pre and post- tests findings these stories were proven to be impactful and useful for Bible study in that they connected people to God and related to what happens among humans in real life.

Accepted in the Biblical cannon are some healing stories in the gospels of Luke and Mark who were not eyewitnesses but vicarious gatherers and re-tellers of the stories. Luke goes further in writing a historical account of healings in the book of Acts in which he was Paul's companion and eyewitness to some of the healings. My project is similar in purpose to that written of in Luke 1:1-4, "to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us,"... "that you may know *the certainty* of those things." Though this collection of stories has no chance of being canonized, readers and hearers in the community can affirm them as authentic and life giving for healing their various maladies. Once healed, they can join the chorus of testimonies to provide what sociologist Everett Rogers called "a critical mass" for "self-sustaining" a healing ministry in the community.¹⁶

What is advantageously different with the 21st century collection of healing testimonies as compared to the Biblical healing narratives is that the former are spoken by the people healed whereas the latter accounts are third person reported. Most people healed in both sets are primarily female and in Luke's time religious law did not accept the witness of a female. The key to all of this is the common interest, intention, and

¹⁶ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 5th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2003), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 1, Location 492-493.

attitude of the character witnesses of the storytellers and the writers in giving “an orderly account” of what God has done.¹⁷ Storyteller 1 proclaimed, “Praise God I can tell others what God did for me. Other people can believe it or not.” For storyteller 4: “It is important to share, but not impose it on anyone.”

In testing the genuineness of healing some apply Gamaliel’s test, “if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it — lest you even be found to fight against God.”¹⁸ Better yet is the lasting fruit test of Jesus’ teaching: “I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain.”¹⁹

Constructs in Healing

According to Professor William Presnell of Drew University, “The trick as a counselor is to have enough theory or guiding constructs in mind that you can organize case data and separate what is peripheral and what is central to understanding the situation.”²⁰ I find this counsel true for me in this pastoral-researcher role. The 3 constructs I designed intertwined with elements that captured expressions of spirit, soul, and body; and were helpful for collecting and analyzing the process of healing in width and depth. First was the template of themes I designed with some foreknowledge of supernatural healing. It was then used as an entry point into the interviews in search of: 1) giving meaning to people’s lives, 2) connecting people to God, 3) offering hope to those in despair, 4) giving faith to those troubled by doubt, cynicism, and skepticism, 5)

¹⁷ Lk 1:3.

¹⁸ Acts 5:38-39.

¹⁹ Jn. 15:16

²⁰ William Presnell, Feedback notes on Reflection Paper, “*Short Term Counseling Interventions for Pastoral Care*,” Drew Theological Seminary, Madison NJ, August 2, 2013.

providing liberation to those stuck in life and 6) comparing them with similar Biblical narratives. (See Appendix A and E) I was also able to draw out 3 additional themes including:

- 1) *Connecting to others* after I saw human support being offered by friends and family members in the course of sickness and the curiosity of others as to how the sick became well. Storyteller 5 got much support from her husband when she was overcome by evil spirits but “the spirits harassed and scared him with threats saying, “Leave us alone. We were here before you,” and “I am going to kill you.”
- 2) *Grief and loss* evidenced in the stories by the following losses:
 - a) awareness due to blackouts, altered states, being ‘slain in the spirit;’
 - b) employment and time from work, its related income and status (e.g. case #6 loss her job and status as charge nurse at the hospital);
 - c) relatives in death to cancer. Case # 7 the storyteller was suffering with signs of prostate cancer, and burdened by the loss of his brother and sister-in-law also to cancer; creating a cloud of death at church;
 - d) capacity to care for her children and husband was evident in case # 6
 - e) hope owing to the many failed attempts to find relief and healing.
- 3) *turning points* expressed by sudden changes in the flow of action in the story

Case # 4 turning points included changing from

 - a) good health moving around on her own 2 feet to sickness – stretched out on her back in hospital;
 - b) being helpful and independent to moments of helplessness even co-dependence;

- c) disorientation at the hospital and during a 2-hour spiritual war, to awareness when God prevailed and an allopathic cure of spiritual light from Psalm 27 was applied to dispel the darkness she experienced.

What fascinated the LAT were the different dramatic emotional experiences the characters expressed at turning points in these stories. For example, storyteller 7 “was stunned” at the loss of his good health when “the doctor said he saw malignancy” in the prostate test. At this low point he “wondered how to share the bad news with his family.” You would think that he would rejoice greatly after the results of the third test when the doctor said, “Go home, you are well.” No. To our wonderful surprise he delayed this high point of celebration of praise, dancing, and glorifying God until he got to church with all the saints. He had longed to erase the cloud of doubt, disappointment, and death at church caused by the cancer death of his brother and sister-in-law. From his preaching to practice, storyteller 7 believed that the promises of God are true. The written Word or logos of Psalm 107:20, “He sent His Word and healed them” is what he clung to and became a “rhema”²¹ word that he preached at his church and made active in his own life by faith. He experienced a “but God” moment when God broke into his world and answered his prayer. Storyteller 7 said in the interview that on a scale of 1-10 where 10 is extreme joy and adoration in worship, he superseded 10 at that moment.

In the second and third constructs, I thought it best to weave a continuum of width with depth to draw out meaning from certain biological, sociological, psychological, philosophical, theological, and spiritual perspectives. The cause-course-cure-celebration-change continuum tested the origin of the healing, showed the process and cure were

²¹ E. E. Carpenter and P. W. Comfort, *Holman Treasury of Key Bible words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew Words Defined and Explained* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 422.

connected to God, and in the celebration God got the glory and praise. A real change had happened that transformed the lives of the persons healed for the benefit of God's Kingdom. (See Appendix C) For depth analysis, I created a framework to draw out elements of physical, cultural, emotional, mental, and spiritual phenomena that correspond to the body-soul-spirit triad. Such dimensions were named after their Greek roots, namely bios, ethos, pathos, logos, and pneumatikos or spiritual. The framework like a filter was placed on each story to identify such categories within the healing process. This was helpful in readily identifying the spiritual root of the problem and solution to affirm the certainty of the story being Christ centered and that the healing was of God. A sample of how this tool was applied in the analysis stage is found in Appendix G.

Crises in Healing

Four of the 7 narratives started out as critical incidents, meaning they were unplanned, unpredictable, and required some kind of first responder intervention. The other three were planned interventions or critical events of sickness experienced gradually but intensely.

Here are the voices of those describing the onset of critical incidents:

Storyteller 1: "It was early summer when I attended a disciple-making small group class at church. I began to feel excruciating pain all over my body, was unable to stand, and knew it was from the sickle cell disease that ran in my family."

Storyteller 4: "One day as I was going to work on the subway I felt some dizziness and sweating. I looked around for someone just in case I had to ask for help and saw "a brother." When I got to my stop, that man came over to ask "Are you okay? Do you want me to call 911?" I said, "Yes." The paramedics took me to a Manhattan hospital..."

Storyteller 5: "I began to get blackouts and altered states [teaching] at school and often had to be taken home. At home, my husband said that I would get up around 2:00 am, walk either to the mirror and speak in different voices, sometimes different languages; or go outside into the yard naked."

Storyteller 6: “While at work as hospital charge nurse, something came over me. I began to get heart palpitations, labored breathing, severe migraine headaches, feelings of death, weakness, unable to function socially and take care of the family.”

In these stories, the need for spiritual healers as first responders reached across geo-sociological settings, with two of the incidents taking place in the USA, one in the Caribbean and the other in South America, but all of African diaspora. Their normal lives suddenly changed. “Something [came] over [them]” is how storyteller 6 described her own phenomena.

The minister and classmates in storyteller 1’s sudden, painful attack wanted to call 911 but she refused medical help and said, “I believed God was going to heal me.” Eventually storyteller 1 received supernatural healing on-the-spot, as the minister and class joined in prayer. When time is critical, should the minister first call on God or call 911? This is typical of the challenge many Christians face when stuck between seeking spiritual and/or a medical remedy. Some ministers facing health issues have difficulty differentiating and negotiating a pathway in the American constitutional paradox of separation of church and state. It is not always clear to carry out the directive of Matthew 22:12, to know when and what to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” Here the “not knowing” strategy for pastoral counseling is needed to hold both in tension as both EMS and God need to be contacted.

From these findings, there is the need for leaders to be equipped with relevant Critical Incident Techniques. It is necessary for both ministers and churches to continually practice spiritual disciplines, especially prayer and fasting to stay ready and not repeat the unpreparedness of Jesus’ disciples in helping the sick little boy after they came down from the mountain in Matthew 17:21. Grace Church did well to yearly join

the national Church of God, Anderson's Focus 40 initiative of prayer and fasting around Easter when most healings occurred. When members of Grace have a crisis, the prayer team is informed and prayer is activated concerning the request. To broaden this connection to the community, Grace agreed to invest in a call system that allowed emergency calls from the community to reach the targeted prayer ministry team.

Culture and Healing

Marital dysfunction was a common challenge among the Brownsville stories. This was seen in their genograms and while gathering relationship information going back three generations. In the case of Storyteller 3, the husband continually wronged his wife, causing bitter roots of un-forgiveness to spread and deepen. The background to Story 1 revealed a wife who was also full of hatred towards her husband before holistic supernatural healing cured her presenting problem and marital relationship. In Story 2 this was the wife's second intervention for spiritual cleansing from the occult. Through transference, the husband contaminated her again because he failed to renounce his own connection to the same occult. Later the husband got the same healing before they could reconnect intimately.

I will now analyze Story 3 as a typical cultural characteristic in the African, Caribbean, and American community, highlighting the width and depth constructs mentioned earlier to draw out understanding and meaning. Story 3 described extramarital affairs in which the husband's unfaithfulness to his wife resulted in additional children born outside the immediate family. The story line identified both *the ethos* and *cause* of emotional, mental, and spiritual illness when the wife stated, "My husband's infidelity impacted me emotionally and physically." This particular wife's family of origin held

traditional Christian, cultural values in which marriage is built on vows, “till death do us part,” and faith in the *logos*, “What therefore God has joined together, let no [hu]man put asunder.”²² Storyteller 3 confirmed, “My parents and grandparents were married and stayed married, but unfortunately my marriage did not last.” To walk away from the marriage relationship or to divorce, created family pressure, societal stigma, demotion in the church, and often victimization in which the wife was often blamed for the husband’s behavior.

The husband’s “machismo” is commonly celebrated in African Caribbean, Central, North and South American cultures where men are esteemed by the society for prowess, virility, and male domination.²³ This is often expressed by having multiple sexual partners and maintained through intimidation – physical, verbal, and emotional abuse. Wives living in these enclaves outside of North America are afraid to confront infidelity because spousal abuse is often overlooked, even encouraged, and only prosecuted when the spouse is murdered. Grace will continue to sponsor Domestic Violence workshops for the community in October during domestic violence awareness month to spark awareness and help liberate the abused.

Womanizing behavior leaves in its wake many children with absent fathers and creates an ethos of rejection in the unmarried women and their children. In Story 3, the same feelings of rejection are true for the spouse and their children due to the absence of the husband/father sleeping away from home with other women. Storyteller 3 bears this out: “There were a number of instances of infidelity that resulted in 2 children outside of

²² Mt 19:6.

²³ Jeffery S. Mio, Joseph E. Trimble, Patricia E. Arredondo, eds. *Key Words in Multicultural Interventions: A Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 175.

our marriage. He would come to see me only to eat and have sex and then would leave to be with other women.” What is the solution?

Among Evangelicals, about half argue that there is a *logos* exception for divorce or legal separation when Jesus made it permissible on the grounds of adultery.²⁴ They do not rule out redemption and reconciliation, but returning abusive husbands or wives need to “bear fruits [evidence] worthy of repentance.”²⁵ So this story is contextually relevant to our community where ministry is administered with love as a healing balm to immigrants from the Caribbean, South, and Central America. Over 90% of our members grew up either without a father present, not knowing their father, having fathers and step-fathers abuse them sexually, or enact severe corporal punishment.

The wife in Story 3 confessed how personal suffering took its “emotional and physical” toll while staying the *course* and keeping that marriage ring. She described these symptoms of suffering in *bios* terms:

His infidelity impacted me emotionally and physically. I had a nervous breakdown, started pulling out my hair, and was taken to a hospital and put in a straitjacket. I was given medication that induced feelings of fear and paranoia, so I stopped taking it immediately. I could not sleep and I started losing weight.

The storyteller expressed psychosomatic pain using a cultural and contextual metaphor: “My husband put me through the wringer.” I interpreted this metaphor on three levels using Christian philosopher Paul Ricoeur’s idea that “metaphor at the level of the word is the domain of rhetoric; metaphor at the level of the sentence is the domain of semantics; and metaphor at the level of discourse is the domain of hermeneutics.”²⁶

²⁴ Mt 19:9.

²⁵ Mt 3:8.

²⁶ Simms, *Paul Ricoeur*, 61.

According to Ricoeur in metaphors “the ultimate goal is to discover the kind of human truth that scientific propositions cannot reach.”²⁷ As a visionary, I got the big picture, but in order to fully participate in and empathize with the storyteller’s painful *pathos* it required some focus on the meaning of “wringer” for a clearer, detailed understanding.

First this storyteller depicted suffering in a linear cleaning process from beginning to end. “He took me to the cleaners” is another metaphor that some use to express such exploitation. In this picture I first saw her husband taking control and turning the crank handle of an old-fashioned, wooden wringer. Second he forced her like laundry through the gadget, pressing and squeezing out all of her essential water and life-blood. Third, she emerged decompressed, depressed, repressed, and oppressed. Storyteller 3 is brokenhearted and wanted us to vicariously experience this prolonged, intense, repeated pressure, far more than what Merriam-Webster dictionary described “wringer” to mean: “pain, hardship, and exertion.”²⁸

Taking the whole sentence, “my husband put me through the wringer” in a postmodern context, the storyteller as a wife and mother drew from her current experience of doing laundry using an electric washer and dryer. This took the same wringer concept into a realm that is faster, more powerful, and cyclical. First, the laundry and the machines were under the control of her husband who pressed all the buttons and turned the knobs. The husband intentionally placed the wife like an article of clothing into the machine’s basket where she experienced the wringing, spinning, centrifugal force of the washer or dryer. Helpless and without any agency she was soaked, manhandled,

²⁷ Ibid., 80.

²⁸ Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “wringer.”

agitated, twisted, turned, spun around, wrung and hung out to dry. With laundry being done once or twice a week, you can picture how often in the 20 years she suffered emotional, verbal, and physical abuse, not the picture of a gentle cycle by any means.

Added to the pressure of the first depiction, this picture meant that the storyteller was caught up in a whirlwind of emotions and trapped in this emotional cycle of her topsy-turvy marriage.²⁹ Storyteller 3 is also familiar with spinning storms that devastate islands in the Caribbean. So the experience of being turned around beyond one's control described being caught up in the spinning vortex of a storm, overwhelmed and spaced out, hoping to land in the eye of the storm to escape the difficult reality.

Furthermore, the storyteller's context was one in which she lived in a sugar producing country and was acquainted with a similar centrifugal basket that sugarcane factories used for separating the sugar from the molasses. The storyteller built on the linear pressure of depiction 1, the cyclical continuous emotions of anger and bitterness of depiction 2, and depicted her position in this relationship like living in the boiling hot centrifugal, mechanical, basket used in a sugar factory. She was being spun around, her sugar and molasses extracted by the husband, leaving her feeling like the remnants of pith or bagasse and hot dirt which were thrown out and trampled upon. She bore this out this way in her story, "He would come to see me only to eat and have sex..." I can clearly see how she became a so-called "basket case" when she said: "I had a nervous breakdown and was institutionalized."

"He put me through the ringer" metaphorically described the cause and course of many ordeals in the collection of narratives. Storyteller 4's subject is "the devil" who took her through one week of "wringer" experience causing her to lose consciousness,

²⁹ Dallos and Vetere, *Systemic Therapy and Attachment Narratives*, 102.

and to display phenomena known to those who have experienced active demonization. “[Sickness] which is born of the flesh [bios] is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit [pneuma] is spirit.”³⁰ Such a case can only be diagnosed and treated by helpers operating at the depth of “pneumatikos.” “But for the grace of God,” storyteller 4 would have also been a “basket case;” ending up in a mental institution, God knows for how long.

All of the storytellers went through some wringer and some to the brink of death:

1: “I might have killed myself...I was crying a lot.”

4: “I thought I was going to die.”

5: “I thought it was the end of my life.”

6: “I had feelings of death, was hospitalized several times.”

7: “I went to the doctor for results of prostate tests and he said he saw malignancy.” [This diagnosis came under a cloud of death]: “My elder brother died of cancer, and my sister-in-law died to cancer.”

Storyteller 3’s ordeal seemed worse than the woman in Luke 8:43-44, *logos*, with the “flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any.” What happened was remarkable. At the midnight hour of their crisis a *spiritual* opportunity appeared, both protagonists got to “touch” Jesus, and healing virtue flowed to their benefit. Like the structural ‘muthos’ applied to these stories with a beginning, middle, and end followed by celebration and change: Weeping endured for a night, but joy came in the morning. Thank God that washing and drying is a cycle. Making of sugar is for a season. God did break into their lives. In her own words, is a description of the *pneumatikos* or *spiritual* breakthrough at the stages of *cure* and *change*:

During the session, the pastor asked me “Do you believe that God can heal you?” I replied in the affirmative. *He touched my stomach* and I felt something tremble, “like a baby.” I started to spit up and something came out of my mouth like soap[‘s] [foam] and *then everything suddenly felt calm*. Since then, I have been able to fall asleep freely and easily. My stomach is no longer upset and *I am simply not angry anymore. My life has changed*

³⁰ Jn 3:6.

dramatically. I feel like a young person, again...I feel free.

The whole prayer team and client did *celebrate* God's doing immediately and later when she shared her testimony to the church when praise to God broke out again.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SUPERNATURAL HEALING ON GRACE'S MINISTRY

We collected 15 testimonies of supernatural healing through interviews. We dissected and analyzed those stories to select the 7 richest and thickest, 3 from the Brownsville and 4 from churches beyond. In this initial analysis we found elements that 1) gave meaning to people's lives, 2) connected people to God, 3) offered hope to those in despair, 4) gave faith to those troubled by doubt, cynicism, and skepticism, 5) provided liberation to those stuck in life, and 6) compared with Biblical narratives and scripture.

We further analyzed the final seven stories to see what new themes emerged, and discovered *grief and loss*, *connecting to others*, and *turning points*. We compared and contrasted the four narratives from the broader region with the set of three from the local Brownsville community. Six of the seven storytellers were women who needed spiritual warfare strategies to secure their healing. A key question raised was, "Why are women primarily the target of Satan's schemes, from Eve in the beginning, Mary Magdalene in New Testament times, and now these six women in 21st century narratives?"

We also paired the 7 twenty-first century stories in supernatural healing with similar Biblical stories and conducted two Bible Study classes:

Lesson 1: Deliverance Healing in the Gadarenes from Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20, & Luke 8:27-39) & 21st Century Testimony #5 of a young South American woman born a Hindu and employed as a teacher.

Lesson 2: Woman with a Spirit of Infirmity from Luke 13:10-17 & 21st Century Narrative Story 7 of a Caribbean born man in New York.

The 21 and 22 people who attended the 2 Wednesday night classes were subdivided into 5 groups with an assigned facilitator of the LAT. Each group had to appoint a recorder, time keeper, and a reporter. Eight questions were asked, the first four to be done in each group and the rest done collectively. (See Appendix I)

Some key points gleaned from the Bible class discussions and reported were the need for spiritual discernment, training in spiritual warfare, mobilization of discipling, and the continual practice of spiritual disciplines. (See Appendix J) The paired divine healing stories have proven to be impactful and useful in the two Bible study classes. Grace Church intends to use these themes and stories in Bible studies and to do discipleship differently beginning in its own community. Grace has spiritual didactic tools to share with the community so as to bring hope to those in despair and liberation to those in captivity.

There is a window of opportunity from January to April when over 500 people from the Grace community come to have their taxes done for free. While they wait, these short stories would make for good reading. They may also get to meet some of the overcomers of sickness. This could be very encouraging for those suffering in silence to open up and share their own woes and be willing to be prayed for in a healing group.

We also did a pre and post-test in the class to see what impact these stories had on participants. Attendees rated the impact *hearing a story of someone healed by a miracle* would have on them, using a range of 1 – 5 where 1 meant no impact and 5 meant enormous impact. They rated the divine healing story as having enormous impact scoring a pre-test of 81% and an increase in the post-test to 89% after participating in the two Bible studies. To the question: “What personal experience do you have regarding

supernatural healing?” only three of the 19 people in the pre-test and 22 in the post-test had a personal experience in being healed supernaturally. The rest did not have any experience in supernatural healing.

Participants had to select from among seven variables ways they have tried to connect to God in 2014. The majority of the 22 participants selected as their top means a) reading the Bible, b) going to church, and c) praying. However, there was a marked increase from 10 people in the pre-test to 15 in the post test when people selected *listening to stories of miraculous healing* as their fourth choice after the Bible study. The opportunity in this postmodern culture is to share short stories of healing in a way that is appealing to the Grace and Brownsville communities.

By collecting, writing, and encompassing these narratives in Bible Study, we received feedback that has been affirming. It was also important to know whether Grace Church of God’s witness was Christ-centered, authentic, and impactful. We examined each supernatural healing and found Jesus’ empowering fingerprints as mentioned in chapter 2 particularly in the:

- a) practice of laying on of hands for healing by those called to offices in church leadership such as pastors, evangelists as illustrated in Ephesians 4:11.
- b) exercise of spiritual power and authority when prayer warriors called on Jesus, as commissioned by Jesus as illustrated in Matthew 28:18-20 & Luke 10:19.
- c) functioning of the unction and the discernment of spirits, confirming the work of the same Holy Spirit that anointed Jesus to heal the broken-hearted and liberate captives as illustrated in Luke 4:18, 1 John 4:1, 2 Corinthians 3:17, & 1Thessalonians 5:21.
- d) lasting fruit of healing that remained for years afterwards and were life-giving as promised by Jesus the Vine as illustrated in John.15:16.
- e) transforming and empowering change of those healed; who turn, served Christ as wounded healers. Members in the LAT were supernaturally healed and one shared her testimony during the university’s site visit.

Grace experienced opposition from a few ministry leaders and laity who left the church believing “these healings are not of God,” and that “supernatural healing does not happen today as it did in the historical times of Jesus.” Poloma had cautioned in her research about “mainline churches whose touch of charisma soon evaporated or was deliberately quenched by dissenters.”¹ I echo Poloma’s concern about sustaining a healthy charismatic fire conducive to healing and welcome her research in “the dilemmas of institutionalization” that quench the Spirit.² Poloma said this while affirming an episcopal church in Ohio for sustaining “charismatic worship and training with a particular ministry of inner healing.”³ She continued, “True charisma remains a fragile and illusive gift that cannot be manufactured..., it can be either nurtured or stifled by institutional norms and structures.”⁴

Facing this local opposition I approached district pastors for affirmation in this kind of ministry and was met with sentiments of disinterest and indifference; though such deliverance healing is scriptural and a heritage in Church of God tradition. Poloma argued that charismatic revival has a shelf life; “pass[ing] through the life stages delineated by scholars of social movements, from inchoate social action and religious agitation to some degree of legitimization, routinization, and bureaucratization.”⁵ Such contextual awareness is essential for leaders of Grace Church of God and focus on the Word of God to Moses and the Aaronic priests. “A fire shall always be burning on the

¹ Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, 203.

² Poloma, “The Toronto Blessing”, 257-271.

³ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁴ Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, 241.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 242.

altar; it shall never go out.”⁶ I believe this research stands as a crucible in historical, theological, and biblical research that tests authenticity, clarifies misunderstanding, and offers an apologetic that defends our faith in Evangelical charismatic tradition.

Poloma and Brown would classify Grace among a current “third wave” of charismatic renewal churches.⁷ I agree with Poloma: “In terms of belief, practice, and reported experiences, Spirit-filled Christians, although representing different nuances in healing theologies, have been on the forefront of the restoration of the gift of healing to the Church.”⁸ The ultimate test is whether the vision and mission of Grace’s charismatic ministry is in agreement with the Great Commission to “Go make disciples” of Christ, the Great Commandment to love God and each other as Christ loved us, and the Great Catalyst of Holy Spirit empowerment to be true witnesses of Christ.⁹

This research project provided a comprehensive self-assessment of Grace and its pastor’s proficiencies and weaknesses as Christ’s agency and agent respectively to their “Jerusalem” community and beyond.(Acts 1:8) It examined the way we manage risks and opportunities related to supernatural healing ministry. We were able to glean vital ideas, themes, values, beliefs and other phenomena from the narratives, and feedback from the Bible study and LAT while implementation the project. I embraced the “not-knowing” approach which functioned well in limiting bias in this self-investigative research. During this project not-knowing worked as a healing intervention tactic for cases without any

⁶ Lv 6:13.

⁷ Poloma and Hoelter “The “Toronto Blessing,”” 259.

⁸ Poloma, “Inspecting the Fruit of the “Toronto Blessing, 56.

⁹ Ibid., 66.

medical diagnosis; and as a short term strategy in pastoral counseling.¹⁰ It is important to note that Jesus empowers and purges both pastor and church as His agent and agency respectively to better serve the community.

The story lines in the 7 narratives reinforced the reality that people do get sick, go to doctors, hospitals, the church and alternative means seeking healing. These storytellers in the course of suffering went to churches among the various healing resources, but were not helped. Churches that are among this mix of healing disappointment can learn from this research that connecting with God through prayer and faith in God's Word are crucial for supernatural healing to happen. The scripture in Luke 11:1, "Lord teach us to pray" is still relevant for our learning and becoming effective and fervent in prayer, echoing James 5:17. Grace's fervency and effectiveness in prayer spurred God to heal which in turn stirred fervent celebration in worship to God. Prefiguring a "but God" theology of divine intervention is practical, actionable, and raises one's faith's expectation. The testimonies proved that God still steps into people's lives at ultimate moments of affliction and restores their wellbeing.

The research exposed the need to remove a culture of fear and stigma in the churches where those healed by God were afraid to share it with others. At a retreat in December of 2014, the leaders of Grace drew up plans to conduct "Operation Fearless" starting in the Spring of 2015. Grace's theme for 2015 is "Experiencing God's Perfect Love with an emphasis on 1 John 4:18: "There is no fear in love, perfect love casts out fear." The goal is to cultivate a culture of boldness and willingness to tell others "what great things the Lord has done for you and how He has had compassion on you." This

¹⁰ Stone, *Strategies for Brief Pastoral Counseling*, 508.

will be a pilot program to later freely share with pastors in the Brownsville community and beyond.

Since 6 of the supernatural healing stories required strategies in spiritual warfare, there is a need to equip the church through sermons, small group classes, and workshops on this kind of spiritual healing. There are many denominations and theological schools already engaged in such training; so Grace can scrutinize them and collaborate with the best practice among Elijah Ministries, Wagner Leadership Institute, Be in Health, Iris Global Ministries and/or others.

The preponderance of human contact in this project strengthened a key ministry core value: to be more people focused. Love, mercy, joy, patience, and grace were applied during interpersonal touches by mail, email, telephone and conference calls, face-to-face meetings in classrooms, prayer groups, coaching and consultations. Although the project had goals that were task oriented, they had to be implemented with love. As a result a greater passion for pastoring, teaching, counseling, and healing was heightened in me. In practice, the spiritual gifts and abilities at Grace were used for serving others rather than “lord it over them” as cautioned against in Mark 10:42-45.

Commissioned

Supernatural healing gave meaning to Grace’s identity as a transformative, charismatic house of prayer, worship, and disciple-making. These factors were key components in the supernatural healing testimonies. Those healed in turn became wounded healers who joined, strengthened, and validated the discipleship and healing ministries. In the healing stories the baton of disciple-making and witnessing was passed down through generations to this postmodern era. Jesus commissioned 12 disciples,

authorized and empowered them to “go make disciples,” as proclaimed in Matthew 28:19 and “to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons,” as illustrated in Mark 3:15. “As Jesus was in this world so are we”¹¹ in this postmodern world as evident in these healing testimonies. There is enough proof of healing at Grace to give us bold momentum to “Go make disciples” in our community and beyond.

In a LAT meeting, analyzing the 7 stories, Grace’s members stated how essentially important it is for those suffering illness be given “Good Samaritan” support, care, and comfort in the healing process. They saw the need to revitalize Grace’s PCS (Prayer, Care, Share) neighborhood small groups, which historically was initiated by me as pastor and failed. What would be different in restarting these groups would be the change of structure from the original top down to a bottom up one. A class on “Life Together” based on the “one another’s” of the Bible such as “love one another,” “bear one another’s burden,” is suggested in connecting to others. The emerging themes of *grief and loss, connecting to others* and *turning points* will be included in Grace’s discipleship causing a paradigm shift in the way ministry is done in serving the community.

Conflict

In evaluating this research journey, lyrics from a song “Be an Overcomer” penned by Church of God stalwart Charles W. Naylor sum up my attitude during the process: “Be an overcomer forward boldly go, you are strong enough if you count it so – strong enough to conquer through sustain grace...”¹² I had to overcome the setback of not

¹¹ 1 Jn 4:17.

¹² Arlo F. Newell, et al., *Worship the Lord Hymnal of the Church of God* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1989), 680.

finding candidates to interview for collecting narratives. I was surprised at the difficulty in finding cases in which the remedy for healing was a pure spiritual means. In a few Brownsville churches where testimonies were found, fear and stigma became the obstacle of sharing them with me a stranger. I felt considerable discouragement and disappointment and wondered why pastors did not create a culture that heralded “they overcame him [Satan the accuser] by the blood of the Lamb and *the word of their testimony*.”¹³ The thought “Why bother?” also came to mind. These negative feelings and prideful thoughts were what I had to overcome with support from the LAT, encouragement from members of my DMIN cohort, and my advisor.

What Naylor also wrote in this song is true: “In the sorest conflict you shall win the day,”¹⁴ for this project went through a threat of derailment and during the time of my disappointment. My advisor and I were able to overcome a misunderstanding of the term “deliverance” as the focus and my project was able to go forward. She took a broad view of salvation and I a narrow, current trend that focused primarily on spiritual warfare. In the end, I shifted to her broader context of supernatural healing and was able to negotiate the inclusion of some Grace narratives which the LAT and I felt were needed for comparative balance. A good next step is to have a group of Grace leaders trained and certified in conflict mediation and resolution so as to open up slots of time to help families in the community resolve their conflicts.

Conflict as a factor should have been inserted within the continuum construct that I applied to the flow of the healing process. It would fit alongside cure in this way: cause-course-cure/conflict-celebration-change. I came to this conclusion based on the many

¹³ Rv 12:11. Emphasis is mine.

¹⁴ Newell, *Worship the Lord Hymnal of the Church of*, 680.

critics and skeptics Poloma and Brown responded to in their academic works on supernatural healing. Healing in 6 of the 7 stories turned out to be done by spiritual warfare strategy which is itself a warring conflict that Jesus cited in John 10:10: “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that more abundantly.” Jesus in His healing ministry had to overcome political, religious, and demonic opposition.

Course

Step by step, the LAT and I had to implement the project. Plot by plot, we crafted each story from the data collected. Chapter after chapter, I wrote the dissertation coached by my advisor. I watched the development of the LAT through the eyes of Bruce W. Tuckman’s stages of forming, storming, norming, and performing.¹⁵ This practice with the LAT will be applied to monitoring the development of the community neighborhood PCS (Prayer, Care, Share) groups. These have all helped me learn and value “process” even more.

I created a template for depth analysis comprising elements of life: a) lived biologically in the 5 senses of the body (bios), b) experienced by sociological and cultural norms (ethos); c) felt in suffering emotionally (pathos), d) exercised mentally by human wisdom and reason (logos) and e) spiritually (pneumatikos) by faith in the living Word of God. An adjustment I would make in depth analysis of the stories would be to add the term “muthos” which Ricoeur borrowed from Aristotle.¹⁶ I would change the term story-

¹⁵ Bruce W. Tuckman and Mary Ann C. Jensen, “Stages of Small-Group Development Revisited,” *Group Organization Management* 2, no. 4 (December 1977): 419-427, doi: 10.1177/105960117700200404 (accessed September 14, 2014).

¹⁶ Simms, *Paul Ricoeur*, 84-85.

craft to muthos to denote the art of plotting the relevant actions needed in the story. I taught the skill to capture the ordering of those actions and dramatic turning points of the story, but its term ‘muthos’ was left out. In all of our lives there is muthos, the orchestration of actions and events, some plots intended for evil, *but God* turns them to good as happened in the story of Joseph the Dreamer.¹⁷ Muthos in my life is based on this truth in Psalm 37:23: “Surely the steps of a godly person are ordered by God.”

Just as these narratives were plotted, so too are the lives of people when God orders their steps. Muthos gives opportunity for coaches to help persons do some life-mapping and reflect on the turning points of their lives. The storyline of testimonies showed what it means when God breaks in, helps change one’s direction, and gives one a purpose for living. As a whole this research project is my own turning point to transition and be mobilized, from pastoring at one particular site to reaching and serving pastors in North America, the Caribbean and the rest of the world. I will be drawing from this dissertation as a resource and a guide for further study.

Narrative process and the muthos of these stories also brings an awareness to those in our community whose stories show complications in their journey of life. Some stuck in life have dropped out of school, did not complete their college degrees, and/or have unfinished business. As a pastor and coach, I will pay careful attention to the spiritual, educational, social, emotional, and developmental life of those in our church community. Being familiar with developmental theorists such as Piaget, Erickson, and others will be an asset. I will continue to make my pastoral care and counseling services available free of cost to the community as I currently do in marriage counseling and baby dedications so as to help people connect the dots in their life cycles and finish well.

¹⁷ Gn 50:20.

So much affirmation and synergy is felt as I reach the conclusion of this project that was a collaborative effort among Drew University, Grace Church of God, a Local Advisory Team (LAT), 15 interviewees of diverse African origin, and me. The project reached successful completion due to teamwork of the Local Advisory Team who took responsibility and showed competence in their assigned roles. The anthropologist in the LAT was exposed to the spiritual warfare aspect of supernatural healing for the first time, and took the initiative to do her own research. I realized that an expansion of teamwork was needed to prevent burnout or compassionate fatigue in me as pastor during the project and later for those functioning in the current healing prayer group ministry. New opportunities have opened up to conduct training in the grief process, in the deliverance healing process, in developing Prayer-Care-Share neighborhood groups that take healing and love to where the people live, right at the point of the community's needs.

Conclusion

This project has been a catalyst “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”¹⁸ We have more work to do in touching lives holistically in our community. Since the works of God never go to waste but are always life-giving, these seven supernatural healing testimonies will serve as “stones of remembrance”¹⁹ rooting Grace in its history, identity, theology, ministry, and community. Reading these accounts has awakened in us an awareness and connectivity to God's deliverance healing down through the ages, especially from the Biblical times of Jesus to Grace's wave of deliverance healing today. Supernatural healing generates a synergy

¹⁸ Eph 4:12.

¹⁹ Jo 4:20-24.

among several ministries, namely, the deaconate, prayer, worship, discipleship, teaching, mentoring, and urban outreach. It is the joining and mobilizing of the church to meet spiritual, mental, emotional and physical needs of the community.

From this project Grace as one of 26 Churches of God, Anderson, Indiana located in the Eastern New York District will become a healing coalition empowering churches that are willing to overcome the enemy who may very well be the cause of plateaued and dying congregations. When I invited my district leader to sit on the LAT this collaboration is what we had in mind.

In self-evaluation, I will use some notable observations the LAT made of me to comment on. First, they stated “*I believe that this has been a very positive learning experience for him, expanding his understanding of the healing and deliverance process.*”²⁰ I enjoy studying, even when difficulty along the journey requires enduring. One of my familiar sayings not knowing its origin is that “learning results in a change of behavior.” I have grown so as to raise my level of influence in both church and community, and to have a greater sense of maturity as a leader. I need to be continuously learning and be the transformative change I want others to exhibit. My attitude towards education and learning through experience is reflected further in what the LAT concluded about my attitude towards self-edification: “*The Candidate is open to listening and learning from others along the way.*”²¹

²⁰ Dr. Laura Pires-Hester, “Local Advisory Team Evaluation” (A project evaluation form from the DMIN Manual 6th ed. 2013, Drew Theological Seminary, Madison NJ, filled May 8, 2014 for my advisor’s site visit at Grace Church of God).

²¹ Ibid.

Secondly the LAT said, “*He has approached this project and process with enthusiasm and understanding more of the need to differentiate his different roles for this process.*”²² Whereas it used to pain me to follow process, now I seek it. To value process is a significant shift for me because my strength is as a visionary painting the big picture, which I did in drawing different implementation flow charts. Process influenced me to value mixing the big picture with details; such as when I created two (2) analysis tools 1) that examined healing in a linear continuum from sickness through to healing, celebration, and change; 2) that helped me in depth analysis in peeling off different levels of phenomena within the story in a systematic way. I paid careful attention to the input-throughput-output process from raw material to refined product at particular schedules.

I easily switched roles as pastor, researcher, husband, father, friend, ministry colleague in leading, partnering, fellowshipping, and submitting to the leader of the LAT. This proved my strength in flexibility and connecting relationally in the different places of functioning; namely home, church, seminary, community and denominational district meetings. A professor who lives in the community and works with doctoral candidates doing qualitative research volunteered his service to evaluate me in the small group Bible lessons and said, “*the Candidate’s ability to “bracket” himself would serve to add to the “trustworthiness and validity of the data collected.”*”²³ The evaluator saw me utilizing the kenotic stand Savage and Presnell advocated in controlling pastoral subjectivity. I am flexible to change to whatever leadership style is needed to get the task done while at the same time embracing the people.

²² Ibid.

²³ Dr. Terrence Simon, “Independent Feedback on Grace Bible Study Lessons” (On-site observations on 4-23-2014 and 4-30-2014 during the 1-hour classes at Grace Church of God 35 Blake Ave Brooklyn NY.)

Thirdly conflict was a positive challenge that helped me grow and gave greater meaning to the project. The LAT responded to how I handled some difficulties with my advisor particularly regarding from where to draw my “choice of interviewees... [and] misunderstanding of the methodology”²⁴ respectively. Here are their two summaries:

- 1) “...after some discussion, this was clarified and the process moved forward and Candidate and LAT members were mutually supportive, patient, and persistent throughout this process, while also praying “into” and “through” the process for God’s assistance and guidance.”²⁵
- 2) “...this was clarified through negotiation and common understanding as to the context of the prospectus and the project moved forward with support from the advisor.”²⁶

It is evident I provided a positive witness to the LAT as to how to apply peacemaking tools of negotiation, reconciliation, and mediation. At first I had angrily threatened arbitration but back-peddled to conciliatory tones and found healing in relationships. I avoided what Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries called a “slippery slope” of either “peace-faking” and “peace-breaking” often seen in a fight or flight response.²⁷ During the conflict LAT, church members, and my advisors were supportive, patient, and persistent. The LAT attested to my negotiation and leadership skills: “*He created an atmosphere in which everyone feels free to participate and that their contributions are valuable.*”

After the conflict with my advisor, I reviewed Roger Fisher and William Ury’s four steps of analyzing conflict, 1. Problem – “What’s wrong?” 2. “Diagnosis” – What

²⁴ Dr. Laura Pires-Hester, “Local Advisory Team Evaluation.”

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 22.

are the symptoms and underlying causes? 3) “Prescription” – What ought to be done to manage or solve the problem?” 4) “Action Plan” – “What might be done?”²⁸ My advisor’s strength in working out a plan of action brought resolve and restored the relationship.

Finally, I borrow a metaphor from storyteller 2 who negatively described her life experience with her husband; but I use it in a positive way. This project “took me through the wringer,” and like an item of clothing I did stretch, rather than shrink or remain the same. Here I am “sitting, and clothed, and in [my] right mind”²⁹ agreeing with Jesus: “S/He who endures to the end shall be saved.”³⁰

²⁸ Roger Fisher and William L. Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 4, 1486-1496.

²⁹ Mk 5:15.

³⁰ Mk 13:13.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE TO OPEN UP INTERVIEWS AND ANALYZE STORIES

Themes	Questions
1. Collecting the Testimony	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your story of illness and God healing you? 2. How long have you been suffering? 3. What were the symptoms of your illness? 4. What various remedies did you try for healing? 5. How did you feel after each successive try?
2. Meaning to One's Life	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What difference if any does this healing make in your life 2. What for you is the high point of your story?
3. Connecting people to God	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. How would you describe God's role in your life: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) before the healing, and b) after the healing? 4. How do you go about listening to God's voice?
4. Offering Hope	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What led you to seek divine healing? 2. What methods did the minister use to bring about healing? 3. How do you feel today? 4. Have you shared your testimony? What responses did you get?
5. Giving Faith	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How has this experience increased your faith? 2. [If relevant] What was your view of spiritual warfare prior to your experience?
6. Providing Liberation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would you recommend this kind of healing intervention to another person? 2. How has your life changed by this experience?
7. Comparing With Scripture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does your experience relate to teachings in the Word of God? 2. When you think about your experience what Bible story or character comes to mind?
8. Two (2) new themes emerged later.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Connecting with Others</i>: Who were there for you during your illness and in what way? 2. <i>Grief and Loss</i>: How did you cope with your loss? (E.g of health, job, awareness, etc.)

APPENDIX B

THE SEVEN FINAL NARRATIVES/STORIES SELECTED

Story 1 African Caribbean American woman suffering medically diagnosed disease.

“It was early summer [when] I attended a discipleship class at church. I began to feel severe pain all over my body, could not stand, and knew it was from the sickle cell disease that ran in my family. A few weeks before the class, I went to the hospital where they did X-rays and gave me chemotherapy. When the class gathered I told the minister what was wrong with me, ‘that my brother died from the disease.’ I refused their offer to call Emergency Medical Services for I did not want to continue the hospital treatment, and said ‘I believed God was going to heal me.’ The minister asked me to read Phil. 4:6-7, and I had difficulty seeing the words so he read it. Then he anointed me with oil, the others gathered around me and he prayed. I felt something ‘walking on my back...and later something telling me to run...I was shy but I ran around inside the church praising God, and around 6-7 people in the church followed me doing the same. I was ‘getting the spirit’ and the spirit was telling me I had to run. As I ran around the church I asked God to heal me...I didn’t want people to pity me...hearing the Word of God made me strong.’ When I got back to my seat I told the class that the pain was gone and they started to praise God again. It was a healing, because the next day when I went to the hospital to follow up, the doctor took a blood test and after waiting long for the results he asked me ‘What did you do?’ I answered, ‘What do you mean doctor, I have not done anything.’ He asked me again and said, ‘You had to do something, for the test says you do not have sickle cell disease anymore.’ Praise God I can tell others what God did for me. Other people can believe it or not. I tell others how God will never leave you, nor forsake you. This experience has increased my faith, because I might have killed myself...I was crying a lot and didn’t want to depend on people. My husband [used to] beat me so bad..., ‘Why would he do that?’ At one point, I used to think that I would kill him, but after the Minister prayed with me, I have been able to forget it...I forgive my husband...what’s the use? It don’t bother me no more.”

Story 2 African Caribbean American woman in bondage to occult spirits.

“In 1998 I wanted to get rid of this uneasy, uncomfortable feeling where I couldn’t sense peace. I visited a church in Brooklyn, went for prayer; so the minister anointed me with oil, and prayed for me. I fell out flat. After a while I felt the same way, with no change in my behavior. I kept attending the Rosicrucian (Lodge) faithfully, keeping to my oaths, serving as Master/Servant in 2001. Around 2002 I got fed up and really wanted a change, wanted to stop attending the meetings, but I kept feeling this urge, this imaginary force drawing me to the Lodge. In 2012 my husband and I visited [a] church in New York through contact with a friend in the Caribbean. I never intended to be a member but the love of the people and the atmosphere kept drawing me Sunday after Sunday. Consequently, I began to be a regular and took part in a Sunday school class, “Freedom from Fear”. In one class, the minister asked everyone if they wanted to observe a spiritual warfare healing session so I decided to go as an observer. Little did I know that I would

move from observer to patient. I came to the session with this uneasiness and felt the uncanny urge to use the bathroom a number of times. The minister sensed in his spirit I needed deliverance and asked, ‘Would you be willing to participate?’ I said ‘Yes,’ but scared. During prayer, I remember a loud booming laughter as a man’s voice coming from deep within me and I began to cry. Then I remember a loud streaking voice – not mine – talking, praising God, but the minister rebuked the spirit and his team kept praying. All of a sudden I began to feel sleepy, my eyes shutting down but the minister and his team kept rebuking the spirit and keeping me up. I began to feel thirsty so the minister got me water, prayed over it and gave it to me. I immediately spat it out and asked him, ‘Are you going to kill me?’ They stood me up and I felt weak and tired but they continued praying. After a while I fell to my knees at the altar and began to cry and worship God. We had a praise party and I felt an inner peace come over me. The uneasy, uncomfortable feeling where I couldn’t sense peace was gone from life when I least expected it. From that day I went home and destroyed my Lodge paraphernalia, and never stepped foot into the Lodge again. Since that session I got more involved in Bible study, joined the church choir and I sense this peace that passes all my understanding. Ps. 27:1 tells me: ‘The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?’ (NIV)

Story 3 West Indian woman suffering from emotional and mental breakdown.

“I grew up in the Caribbean with 2 siblings in a very traditional strict Christian home. My parents expected us to work hard and we had chores before school and ran errands after school. My parents and grandparents were married and stayed married, but unfortunately, my marriage did not last. My husband put me through the ringer. In 1991, I came to the United States on vacation and found out he was living with a woman. His infidelity impacted me emotionally and physically. I had a nervous breakdown, started pulling out my hair, and was taken to a hospital and put in a straitjacket. I was given medication that induced feelings of fear and paranoia, so I stopped taking it immediately. I could not sleep and I started losing weight. Since immigrating to the United States in 1995, my husband never provided for our 3 sons or myself and his infidelity eventually resulted in 2 children outside of our marriage. From time to time he would pass by to see me to eat and also looking to have sex. I knew I needed prayer so I went to several churches seeking help. People even tried to get me to pay to get help. Finally, after numerous prayer sessions at other churches and attending many prayer services, I still felt the same way. A friend invited me to her church. In the Spring of 2013, the pastor was holding deliverance sessions and I signed up because I knew that I needed special prayer. During the session, the pastor asked me ‘Do you believe that God can heal you?’ I answered yes. He touched my stomach and I felt something tremble, like a baby. He asked me if I wanted to spit up. I did, and something came out of my mouth like soap lather and then everything suddenly felt calm. Since then, I have been able to fall asleep freely and easily. My stomach is no longer upset and I am simply not angry anymore. My life has changed dramatically. I feel like a young person again. I had always served God, but I was heavy laden and carried lots of anger. I would pray to God, but not feel like I was connecting. Now I sincerely put God first, I am closer to Him and recognize that without Him, I am

lost. I am also much more sensitive to the voice of God and can hear his voice much clearer. I am now ready and available to go wherever God leads knowing without a shadow of a doubt that God is able. I feel free. I've shared my story with some of my co-workers. I have also shared it with my sons and my prayer is that they would come to experience the same healing. They too have suffered with insomnia and other side effects due to my ex-husband's infidelity. I believe that sharing my faith and sharing the story of my deliverance has also encouraged my sister and nieces to start going to church. When I think of my story, I think of Psalms 23, particularly the part where it says 'He restores my soul.' God has indeed restored my soul and I want to continue to grow stronger in Him."

Story 4 Central American female overtaken by evil spirits on her way to work.

"One day as I was going to work on the subway I felt some dizziness and sweating. I looked around for someone just in case I had to ask for help and saw a brother. When I got to my stop, that man came over to ask 'Are you okay? Do you want me to call 911?' said, 'Yes.' The paramedics took me to [a Manhattan] hospital, I answered a lot of questions; they did tests, found nothing, and advised that I go to my personal doctor. In the doctor's office, the feeling returned, the ambulance called, and I was sent to [a Brooklyn] Hospital, where they took many tests, MRI, and blood work. While I was in the hospital for 2 days, a doctor from Cuba in his native language said to me: 'Don't let them do any more tests,' and he left. At one time a Russian nurse and a friend who was visiting me said, 'I went into something.' When I awoke, they were praying. Then other doctors came, wanted to do more tests, so I told them that my doctor had said that I should not do any more tests. One of the doctors said to me 'I'm your doctor' and they surprisingly looked at each other. They did a neurological test and their assessment was 'she's psych.' They wanted to lock me up in a mental institution, but my friend suggested to me to first see this pastor who has prayed healing in such cases. So they made an appointment for me with the Minister. The minister met me at the church door; I started feeling dizzy, was extremely tired, and weighty. He asked, 'How do you feel?' I cannot remember too many things afterwards during the 2-hour session. I recall my deceased cousin who was a minister being present, and he was telling me to say Psalm 91 and plead the blood. I was on the floor, not sure how I got there...my body felt as if I had been beat up. The Minister was asking questions, but I don't remember what they were, and the questions made me agitated. I felt pushed, nauseous, unease...pressured...then felt that weight had been released, relief coming gradually until I felt a safe peace. My entire insides were coming out, but unsure what came out. I felt release...sight came back...my body felt light...I had gone from bondage to renewal. I came in lifting 70 pounds and when I left I had no weight. When I left my body was renewed...from exhausted to fresh and I went back to work the next day. Today, I feel happy, believe life has a purpose. Everything has more meaning now. God is calling me to a purpose. I see that everything is a preparation for something else. My connection to God is closer; my faith is deeper; a more definite faith. Before the healing I always had a belief in God, but now I have no doubt. I listen to God in many forms: through music, scripture, and prayer. I think of Psalm 46 and Psalm 27 in relation to my experience. This experience has

helped me to grasp more of the meaning of the Word. I shared my experience with a prayer line network and sometimes I am invited by pastors to share my testimony. I get different responses, sometimes depending upon the faith traditions. I do get questions like, 'Have you done anything wrong?' or 'Ever since you got sick, you seem more at peace, like you died and came back.' People want to know 'What the Minister did?' others asked 'If I could recommend them to the Minister?' No one thinks about demonization; they see it as 'God at work.' It is important to share, but not impose it on anyone."

Story 5 A young South American woman, born a Hindu, in bondage to evil spirits.

"I was born in a Hindu family, and had to do many rituals. I would take flowers and food to the Hindu gods. Mom clipped a lot of hair from the top of my head and presented it to the Hindu gods. That spot remained bald into my adulthood, and my husband wondered if it was a curse. I started to go to church with my husband and also became a public school teacher. One day I ate some cookies a pastor had given me and my heart started to give up. This pastor was in disagreement with my father, and I wondered if the gift contained [a grudge portion] causing my problems; or was it the Hindu religion? I began to get blackouts and [altered states] at school and often had to be taken home. At home, my husband said that 'I would get up around 2:00 am, walk either to the mirror and speak in different voices, sometimes different languages; or go outside into the yard naked.' When he tried to bring me to awareness, he agitated me. I began [to manifest] strange violent behavior towards my husband and children. The spirits harassed and scared him with threats saying, 'Leave us alone,' 'We were here before you,' and 'I am going to kill you.' My husband said, 'These spirits would have sex with me as I slept.' I was unaware of what I was doing, but next day at school I would be very tired and sometimes dozed off in the class. Year after year during this sickness, I went to priests, different pastors, and tried witchcraft to find relief but got none. My relationships with my husband, my children and the principal of the school grew worst. I wanted to have a daughter and could not get pregnant after I started to manifest. My stomach would hurt very painfully. I felt like I was going to die. Then some evangelists came to a church in my community, and before they left, my husband approached them for help. They came to our house a Saturday morning and prayed for me. It was a devastating experience as I responded violently, breaking up the chair where I was sitting, making loud, roaring sounds and losing consciousness. I thought it was the end of my life. My husband said that when the evil spirit began to speak in tongues an inexperienced minister thought I was full of the Holy Spirit; but the evangelists were not deceived. They cast it out along with others.

When I became conscious, I found myself in a brand new world. I felt such peace; my mind was clear, the heaviness lifted, and the curse was gone. I began to feel the love of God in my life. My relationship with my husband, children, and principal changed. I now love people despite their hang-ups. I now know that God had a purpose for me, so He kept me alive to this day. My husband and I have found a new purpose in life. We shared our testimony with mom and she became a Christian. We now attend a Pentecostal church and enjoy working [alongside] the pastor setting free those who were in bondage like me. My husband has learned how to discern different spirits from his experience with

me. He is no longer fearful of the enemy, and is excited in helping others heal. After 14 years from the last child, I gave birth to a beautiful daughter.”

Story 6 A West Indian woman suffering from a mental breakdown.

“I married a preacher’s fine son and became the envy of those women in the church who wanted their daughter to be his wife. My marriage was also a disappointment to a particular family in the community for they also felt I should have married their son with whom I was friendly. My family was well off for we were at the top positions of our careers, owned a beautiful home, and rode in the same kind of car the Prime Minister drove. While at work as hospital charge nurse, something came over me. I began to get heart palpitations, labored breathing, severe migraine headaches, feelings of death, weakness, unable to function and take care of the family. I also had to resign from my job and be confined at home. I was hospitalized several times over many years and was diagnosed by doctors as ‘Having symptoms of unknown origin.’ I was continuously prayed for at church, at home, without finding relief. My husband was very supportive and [filled roles] that I could not in raising our children. Some wondered if my illness was caused by attachment emotional problems, or the occult. Someone suggested that I go to the obeah man, but I was fixed on Jesus being my deliverer. My mother-in-law who was pastor told me an evangelist was coming to town and the church was going into a period of total fast and prayer for 3 days. I joined the church in the fasting and built up expectation for healing. When the first night of services came I was weak, slow in dressing, and got to see a full church where they made space for me to sit at the back. During prayer, the evangelist seemed to call out others and I wondered why he would not call me. Eventually he did and when I came close to him he paused. An elder later told me, ‘The minister felt in his body what I was feeling.’ He then prayed and delivered me from the works of darkness. ‘This kind [did] not go out except by prayer and fasting.’ [Mt. 17:21] Growing up in the Anglican Church I never heard a message on spiritual warfare. It is a real war in which the stronger one wins, but people say, ‘You are crazy.’ Thank God in my case God won, Satan lost. Now my faith is strengthened for I know that God is able to deliver and set captives like me free. The church later met and had a service of thanksgiving which etched in my memory Ps. 23:6 ‘Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.’”

Story 7 A Caribbean man suffering with prostrate problems.

“It was a Sunday, a few years after my elder brother had died from colon cancer, and the very morning my sister-in-law died in the hospital from breast cancer. I found it somewhat ironic that in the presence of death, I preached a healing message entitled, ‘Eat This Bread.’ The premise was based on the promise of God sending His Word to heal our diseases; [Ps. 107:20] that we need to meditate on the Word. Two years later I went to the doctor for results of prostrate tests and he said he saw malignancy. I was stunned, and everything in life looked different. I wondered how to share the bad news with the family. I stopped making a fuss about trivial things. I thought to myself, ‘Now I have to practice

what I preached.’ I ordered a small prerecorded gadget from [a popular television] ministries with healing scriptures and played them every morning on my way to work. After a few days, I mustered enough courage to tell my wife and family, those in the US and the Caribbean. Everyone joined me in prayer and fasting. I also shared my crisis with the church. On that Sunday, 2 prayer warriors took up my cause, the pastor prayed for me, then a sister came forward and shared her testimony. She said to me, ‘Look at me, God just healed me from breast cancer, so trust God.’ There was a hopeful ‘Amen.’ During the waiting period of 2 months when 2 more tests were made, I developed a discipline of daily morning devotion and communion, meditation, prayer, and committing the Word to memory. Many times I mourned with tears in private prayer, expecting God to comfort me. When I visited my doctor for the results of the third test, he looked at the results, paused and then said to me, ‘Go home, you are well.’ I immediately texted the good news to my wife who was sitting in the waiting room. When I emerged from the examination room, our eyes met with gleam and joy. I was bursting with joy, reserving it until Sunday when I was scheduled to lead worship. I broke the good news from the pulpit. Suddenly, there was an explosion of jubilation, dancing, praising, shouting, singing, and glorifying God. I had never shouted praise and thanks to God that loud before or since. Today, I have become a source of encouragement and counsel to others suffering with all kinds of sickness. I learned as in the case of the woman in the Bible bent over from a spirit of infirmity that there is a spiritual element to sickness which is often overlooked. I now pray with fervency and authority, having experienced suffering to this extent. I have confidence in Jesus who ‘has been touched by the feelings of our infirmity.’ I am so glad that God erased the doubt created from the death of my brother and my sister-in-law.”

APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS CONTINUUM: CAUSE-COURSE-CURE-CELEBRATION-CHANGE
IN STORY 3

Continuum	Story 3's Scripted Elements
Cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "My husband put me through the ringer." ○ "...his infidelity impacted me emotionally and physically ...eventually resulted in 2 children outside of our marriage." ○ "... in 1995, my husband never provided for our 3 sons or myself..."
Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "I could not sleep and I started losing weight." ○ "I was heavy laden and carried lots of anger." ○ "...started pulling out my hair..." ○ "I had a nervous breakdown. ... and was taken to a hospital and put in a strait jacket." ○ "I was given medication that induced feelings of fear and paranoia..." ○ "I would pray to God, but not feel like I was connecting." ○ "I went to several churches seeking help." ○ "After numerous prayer sessions at other churches and attending many prayer services I still felt the same way."
Cure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "A friend invited me to her church. In the Spring of 2013 the pastor was holding deliverance prayer sessions...the pastor asked me 'Do you believe that God can heal you?' I answered 'Yes'. He touched my stomach and I felt something tremble, "like a baby." ...something came out of my mouth like soap lather and then everything suddenly felt calm." ○ "Since then, I have been able to fall asleep freely and easily. My stomach is no longer upset and I am simply not angry anymore." ○ "When I think of my story, I think of Psalms 23, particularly the part where it says 'He restores my soul.'"
Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "I've shared my story with some of my co-workers [and]...with my sons..." ○ [Other prayer group witnesses recalled how this storyteller testified at church in a worship celebration service.]
Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "My life has changed dramatically. I feel like a young person, again." ○ "I feel free." ○ Now I sincerely put God first, I am closer to Him and recognize that without Him, I am lost. I am also much more sensitive to the voice of God and can hear his voice much clearer. ○ I am now ready and available to go wherever God leads... ○ I believe that sharing my faith and sharing the story of my deliverance has also encouraged my sister and nieces to start going to church.

APPENDIX D

SCORES IN SELECTING SEVEN 21ST CENTURY HEALING STORIES:
THREE (3) FROM BROWNSVILLE, & FOUR (4) ELSEWHERE

Story Brokers	STORY 1	STORY 2	STORY 3	STORY 4	STORY 5	STORY 6	STORY 7
JWB	24	22	24	24	24	24	24
CWB	21	16	24	21	24	22	24
CRS	19	19	24	13	24	18	22
HB	22	24	24	22	24	21	24
KG	24	24	24	24	24	21	22
CH	22	20	24	22	24	22	24
Total	132	125	144	126	144	128	140
Average	22.0	20.8	24.0	21.0	24.0	21.3	23.3
Median	22.0	21.0	24.0	22.0	24.0	20.0	23.0

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW & ANALYSIS TEMPLATE APPLIED TO STORYTELLER 5

#	Themes	Script of Storyteller 5
1.	Meaning to one's life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "I was born in a Hindu family, and had to do many rituals. I would take flowers and food to the Hindu gods. ○ "I began to get blackouts and altered states at school and had to be taken home." ○ "Year after year during this sickness, I went to priests, different pastors, and tried witchcraft to find relief but got none." ○ "I responded violently...I thought it was the end of my life." ○ "My husband and I have found a new purpose in life." ○ "I wanted to have a daughter and could not get pregnant ... After 14 years... I gave birth to a beautiful daughter."
2.	Connect to God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "...some evangelists came to our house a Saturday morning and prayed for me." ○ "I began to feel the love of God in my life. My relationship with my husband, children, and principal changed. I now love people despite their hang-ups. I now know that God had a purpose for me, so He kept me alive to this day." ○ "I sense God calling us to a ministry of healing and deliverance."
3.	Offer Hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "We shared our testimony with mom and she became a Christian." ○ "We now attend a Pentecostal church and enjoy working alongside the pastor setting free those who were in bondage like me."
4.	Give Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Then some evangelists came to a church in my community, and before they left, my husband approached them for help ○ He [husband] is no longer fearful of the enemy, and is excited in helping others heal..
5.	Liberate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They cast it out along with others. When I became conscious, I found myself in a brand new world. I felt such peace; my mind was clear, the heaviness lifted, and the curse was gone. I began to feel the love of God in my life.
6.	Compare Biblically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lk.10:19 Jesus empowering his disciples ○ "The spirits harassed and scared him with threats saying, 'Leave us alone; we were here before you,' and 'I am going to kill you.'" ○ "My husband said that when the evil spirit began to speak in tongues an inexperienced minister thought I was full of the Holy Spirit; but the evangelists were not deceived. They cast it out along with others." ○ "My husband has learned how to discern different spirits from his experience with me."
7.	Connect to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "My relationships with my husband, my children and the principal of the school grew worst." ○ "We shared our testimony with mom and she became a Christian. We now attend a Pentecostal church and enjoy working alongside the pastor..."
8.	Grief & loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "...next day at school I would be very tired and sometimes dozed off in the class." [Loss of sleep] ○ "I began to get blackouts and altered states at school and had to be taken home." [loss of awareness] ○ "Year after year during this sickness, I went to priests, different pastors, and tried witchcraft..." [loss of hope]

APPENDIX F

THREE NEW THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE STORIES

New Themes	in the Story
<p>4) <i>Connecting to others</i> - human support being offered by friends and family members in the course of sickness and the curiosity of others as to how the sick became well.</p>	<p>a) Storyteller 5 got much support from her husband when she was overcome by evil spirits but “the spirits harassed and scared him with threats saying, “Leave us alone,” “We were here before you,” and “I am going to kill you.”</p> <p>b) Storyteller 6: “My husband was very supportive and [filled roles] that I could not in raising our children.”</p> <p>c) Storyteller 4 got many questions and comments from others about her ordeal: “Have you done anything wrong? Ever since you got sick, you seem more at peace, like you died and came back. People want to know what the minister did? Others asked, ‘If I could recommend them to the minister?’”</p>
<p>5) <i>Grief and loss</i> evidenced in the stories by these losses:</p>	<p>a) awareness due to blackouts, altered states, being ‘slain in the spirit;’</p> <p>b) employment and time from work, its related income and status (e.g. case #6 loss her job and status as charge nurse at the hospital);</p> <p>c) relatives in death to cancer, (e.g. case # 7 the storyteller was suffering with signs of prostate cancer, and burdened by the loss of his brother and sister-in-law also to cancer; creating a cloud of death at church;</p> <p>d) capacity to care for her children and husband was evident in case # 6</p> <p>e) a patch of hair resulting in a bald spot after a lot was offered to the Hindu gods when she was a child;</p> <p>f) sleep (in case # 5 this teacher would sleep in the classroom because evil spirits would often awaken her around 2:00 am for sex and ‘sleep walks’;</p> <p>g) good health due to illness;</p> <p>h) peace due to harassment of the enemy; and</p> <p>i) hope owing to the many failed attempts to find relief and healing.</p>
<p>6) <i>Muthos or turning points</i> expressed by sudden changes in the flow of action in the story.</p>	<p>Storyteller # 4’s turning points included changing from</p> <p>a) good health moving around on her own 2 feet to sickness – stretched out on her back in hospital;</p> <p>b) being helpful and independent to moments of helplessness even co-dependence;</p> <p>c) disorientation at the hospital and during a 2-hour spiritual war, to awareness when God prevailed and an allopathic cure of spiritual light from Ps.27 was applied to dispel the darkness she experienced;</p> <p>d) “bondage to renewal” as expressed by this client;</p> <p>e) burdened ‘lifting 70 pounds and when I left I had no weight’ [light];</p> <p>f) “exhausted to [re]fresh[ed];”</p> <p>g) a casual lifestyle to “I believe life has a purpose”, everything has more meaning now, this was “preparation for something else;”</p> <p>h) being self-centered to becoming God’s witness testifying what God has done.</p>

APPENDIX G

ASSESSING THE DEPTH OF STORY 5

#	Levels	Depth Analysis with Storyteller 5
1	Bios (biological impact based on the 5 natural senses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “One day I ate some cookies a pastor had given me.” (enjoying the taste of a snack – cookies) ○ “I wanted to have a daughter and could not get pregnant after I started to manifest. My stomach would hurt very painfully. I felt like I was going to die.” ○ “I thought it was the end of my life.” (birthing challenge and death threat) ○ “I began to get blackouts and altered states at school...” “...losing consciousness.” (loss of awareness) ○ “I would get up around 2:00 am, walk either to the mirror and speak in different voices, sometimes different languages; or go outside into the yard naked.”(loss of sleep) ○ “I began to manifest strange violent behavior towards my husband and children.” (physical attacks /parenting and spousal conflict) ○ “These spirits would have sex with me as I slept.”
2	Ethos (social, ethical and cultural values & norms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “I was born in a Hindu family, and had to do many rituals. I would take flowers and food to the Hindu gods. Mom clipped a lot of hair from the top of my head and presented it to the Hindu gods.” (religious upbringing) ○ “One day I ate some cookies a pastor ...This pastor was in disagreement with my father, and I wondered if the gift contained a grudge portion...” (social conflict) ○ “I started to go to church with my husband...” (cultural shift from Hinduism to Christianity)
3	Pathos (emotional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We shared our testimony with mom and she became a Christian. ○ “I began to manifest strange violent behavior towards my husband and children.”
4	Logos (mental reasoning logical steps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Then some evangelists came to a church in my community, and before they left, my husband approached them for help” ○ “My husband and I have found a new purpose in life.” ○ “Year after year during this sickness, I went to priests, different pastors, and tried witchcraft to find relief but got none.”
5	Pneumatikos (Spiritual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “My husband and I have found a new purpose in life.” ○ “They cast it out along with others. When I became conscious, I found myself in a brand new world. I felt such peace; my mind was clear, the heaviness lifted, and the curse was gone. I began to feel the love of God in my life.” ○ “I would speak in different voices, sometimes different languages.” ○ “God has a purpose for me. I sense God calling us to a ministry of healing and deliverance.” ○ “Year after year during this sickness, I went to priests, different pastors, and tried witchcraft to find relief but got none.”

APPENDIX H

DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE STORYLINES OF STORYTELLERS 1 AND 7

Stories	Low-Point	High-Point	Break-Point	Turning-Point
Story 1	I began to feel excruciating pain all over my body, was unable to stand, and knew it was from the sickle cell disease that ran in my family. A few weeks ago it had sent me to the hospital where they did X-rays and administered chemotherapy. I told the minister and class what was wrong with me, and that my brother died from the disease	. I was shy but I ran around inside the church praising God, and around 6-7 people ...follow[ing] me doing the same. I told the class that the pain was gone and they started to praise God again. It was a healing, because the next day when I went to the hospital to follow up, the doctor took a blood test. He said you do not have that disease anymore.”	The minister asked me to read Phil.4:6, and I had difficulty seeing the words so he read it. ...hearing the Word of God made me strong.” Then he anointed me with oil, the others gathered around me as he prayed. I felt something “walking on my back...and later something telling me to run... I ran around inside the church praising God.	I refused Emergency Medical Services ...and believed God was going to heal me. As I ran, ...6-7 people in the church followed me [praising God]. This experience has increased my faith. I praise God I can tell others what God did for me; other people can believe it or not.
Story 7	...my elder brother had died from colon cancer, [then] ..my sister-in-law died in the hospital from breast cancer. These left a dark cloud of doubt in the church. Two years later I went to the doctor for results of prostate tests and he said he saw malignancy. I was stunned, and everything in life looked different. I wondered how to share the bad news with the family.	I was bursting with joy, reserving it until Sunday when I was scheduled to lead worship. On Sunday, I broke the good news from the pulpit. Suddenly, there was an explosion of jubilation, dancing, praising, shouting, singing, and glorifying God. I had never shouted praise and thanks to God that loud before or since.	I preached a healing message ...on the promise of God sending His Word to heal our diseases. I developed a discipline of daily morning devotion, communion, meditation, prayer, and committed the Word to memory. Everyone joined me in prayer and fasting. A sister ...shared her testimony ...and said “Look at me, God just healed me from breast cancer. Trust God.”	When I visited my doctor for the results of the third test, he looked at the results, paused and then said to me, “Go home, you are well.” I immediately ‘texted’ the good news to my wife who was sitting in the waiting room. When I emerged from the examination room, our eyes met with gleam and joy.

APPENDIX I

TWO (2) BIBLE LESSONS CONDUCTED APRIL 23, 2014 & APRIL 30, 2014

Lesson 1: Deliverance Healing in the Gadarenes (Mt 8:28-34, Mk 5:1-20,
Lk 8:27-39) & 21st Century Story #5

Lesson 2: Woman With Spirit of Infirmity (Lk 13:10-17) & 21st Century Narrative
Story 7

- In your assigned groups you will have an assigned facilitator,(LAT member) and you would need to appoint for the night a recorder, time keeper, and a reporter for your group. Please complete the following questions

Questions	Small Groups Observations	
1. What stands out to you in the narratives?	Bible Story	21 st Century Story
2. What are the similarities and differences of the narratives?	Similarities	Differences
3. What for you is the high point of each narrative?	Bible Story	21 st Century Story
4. What do you think are the lessons learned from the narratives?	Bible Story	21 st Century Story

Questions	Larger Focus Group Observations	
5. What emotions are stirred in the stories?	Bible Story	21 St Century Story
6. What ministries if any can be created from the healing encounter with Jesus?	Bible Story	21 St Century Story
7. What purpose and meaning can you get out of the various human interactions in the narratives?	Bible Story	21 St Century Story
8. What purpose and meaning can you get out of the various spiritual interactions in the narratives?	Bible Story	21 St Century Story

APPENDIX J

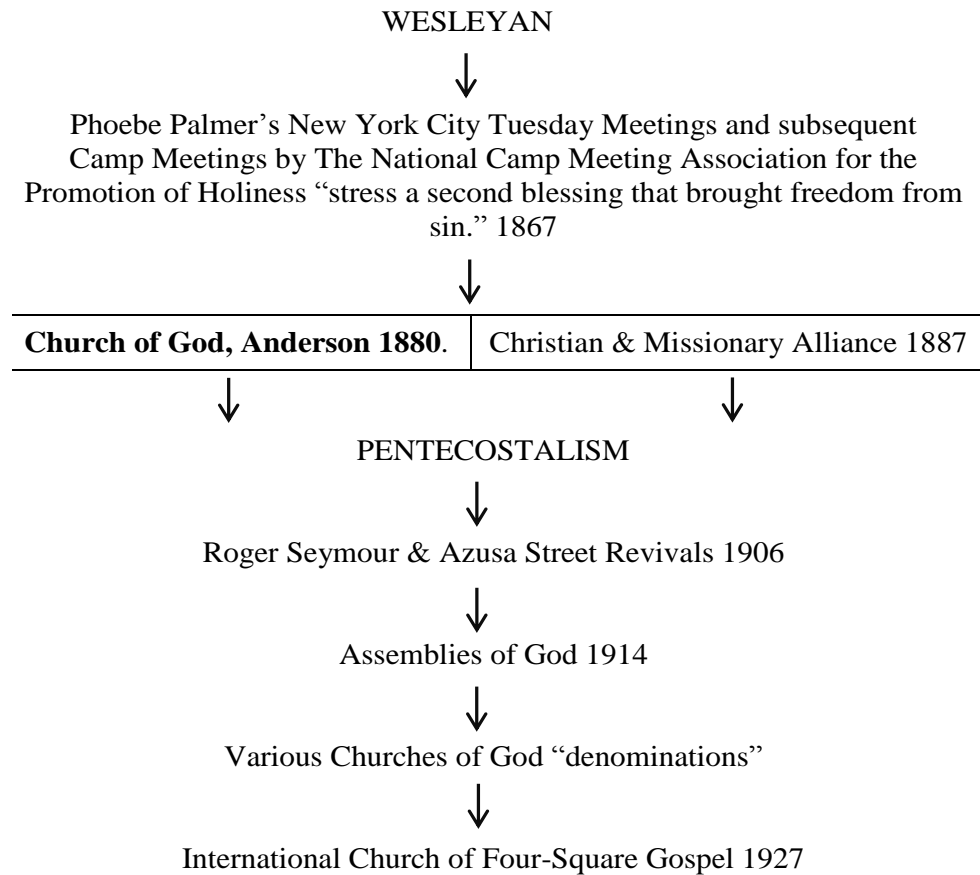
SUMMARY OF KEY GROUP DISCUSSIONS FROM BIBLE LESSONS 1 & 2

Lengthy discussions in Lessons 1 and 2 surrounded:

- 1) Discernment – the evangelists were able to *discern* the source of “speak[ing] in tongues” (storyteller 5); that it was not a gift of the Holy Spirit but an evil spirit trying to deceive using Pentecostal doctrine that the person “was filled with the Holy Spirit.” (storyteller 5) Jesus *discerned* the source of physical illness was “a spirit of infirmity” and Jesus cast it out.
- 2) Lack of knowledge – “[God’s] people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge.” (Ho.4:6) Some in the class thought the legion of evil spirits Jesus cast out from the demoniac drowned in the natural sea; even though Jesus gave them permission to stay in the territory. Many in the class did not discern that these spirits in turn influenced the people to be hostile to Jesus asking Him to leave the Decapolis region. (Mk.5:17) However Jesus left His wounded healer there to evangelize the region with testimony, telling “what great things the Lord has done for you and how He has had compassion on you.” (Mk. 5:19) The term territorial spirits was introduced and reference made to Daniel’s experience of delayed answer to prayer in Da.10:12-14.
- 3) Mobilization of healing – Jesus went to where the man lived isolated in the tombs, and the evangelists went to storyteller 5’s home, a noted approach of Jesus and His disciples.
- 4) “Clothed and in his right mind” (Mk. 5:15) is a descriptive metaphor for those healed by God in contrast to their prior sick condition of being naked and tormented. Nakedness is addressed in the spiritual warfare healing stories of storyteller 5; Adam and Eve, Job, and the demoniac in the Gadarenes. Job recognized his vulnerability to Satan and God with this attitude of worship and resolve towards God: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:20-22
- 5) Purpose in life – those supernaturally healed found their purpose in life was to serve as wounded healers sharing the gospel, helping free others in bondage, and seeing those healed follow Christ.
- 6) Spiritual disciplines – storyteller 7 practiced what he preached in Ps.107:20 that “God sent His Word and healed [Israel]” by engaging in memorizing scripture, praying and fasting, having early morning devotions, prayer and meditation, communion, listening to Bible Reading on an electronic device. Jesus prayed and fasted 40 days in the wilderness.
- 7) Conflict – Jesus radically broke religious custom was in healing the woman with the spirit of infirmity on the Sabbath. In opposition the religious leader was more concerned about the law than the person being healed. A conflict existed between Hinduism and Christianity in the life of storyteller 5 whose father was also in conflict with a Christian pastor. Christian charismatic healing and witness of storyteller 5 resulted in the salvation of her Hindu mother. The major overarching conflict was between light and darkness, Satan and Jesus. (Jn 10:10)

APPENDIX K

OUTGROWTH OF THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT FROM WESLEYAN TRADITION



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