

Healing

The Importance of the Gifts of Healing for the Church Today

An Outline and Evaluation of the Contribution of T.L.Osborn to our Understanding of Divine Healing

The Importance of the Gifts of Healing for the Church Today ...	2
Introduction.....	2
A Establishing a biblical basis for the gifts of healing.....	4
B The importance of the gifts of healing in the New Testament.....	6
C The importance of the gifts of healing for the Church today.....	9
D The importance of the gifts of healing for the Church today in Evangelism.....	10
E The importance of the gifts of healing for the Church today in giving the Gospel credence.	13
Conclusion.	15
Bibliography.....	16

An Outline and Evaluation of the Contribution of T.L.Osborn to our Understanding of Divine Healing.	18
Introduction.....	18
A Assessment of T.L.Osborn's healing ministry.....	19
B Outline of T.L.Osborn's teaching of healing in his writings.....	22
C Evaluation of T.L.Osborn's teaching of healing in his writings... ..	23
Conclusion.	33
Bibliography.....	34

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The Importance of the Gifts of Healing for the Church Today

Introduction.

In this essay I will discuss the importance of the “gifts of healing” for the Church today by first establishing its biblical basis, discussing its importance in the Bible and evaluating its role today, especially in credible evangelism. The biblical basis is important as I hold to the belief that the “Bible (i.e. the Old and New Testaments excluding the Apocrypha) is the inspired Word of God, the infallible, all sufficient rule for faith and practice”.¹ For this essay I have defined “Church” as “Christians” rather than “people in a religious meeting” or “assembled Christians”² as the gifts of healing are as relevant on a one-to-one basis as in a church meeting or crusade.

Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant... There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit... Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good... to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit... and in the church God has appointed... those having gifts of healing (1Corinthians 12:1, 4, 7, 9, 28).

The word “gifts” used in verses 9 and 28 is “**carismata**” (*charismata*) and is the plural form of “**cavri**” (*charis*) meaning “grace”. In the general sense, “grace” is used to refer to any gift which comes from God. Thayer defines “**carismata**” as:

grace or gifts denoting extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to

¹ “Assemblies of God Statement of Faith”,
<http://www.aog.org.uk/about/fundamental.htm>, (04/10/01).

² Elwell, W.A., (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1996, p.95.

serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating on their souls by the Holy Spirit.³

The word “healing” “*iamatwn*” is also plural and is defined as “a means of healing or a remedy”.⁴ Thus the “gifts of healings” are extra-ordinary graces wholly due to the Holy Spirit’s enabling, given to some Christians to serve the church by healing the sick. Carter emphasizes this point by stating, “No gift of the Spirit is an exercise of any natural faculty of talent but is a demonstration of the supernatural power of the Spirit of God.”⁵ Bengel who has Cessationist⁶ sympathies, admits, “while these gifts... include the miraculous, they do not thereby exclude ‘natural remedies’”⁷. However with the “gifts of healings” there can be little doubt that the Apostle Paul meant a supernatural intervention by God – divine-healing. Jeffreys prefers the term “divine healing” as opposed to “faith healing” because:

it generally implies belief in bodily healing as it is taught in Scriptures whereas the latter might mean healing by faith along the lines of psychology and can imply belief in any kind of faith taught in books that are decidedly anti-Christian.⁸

The high standard of medicine we enjoy today is expensive and

³ Thayer, J., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Baker House, 1977, N° 5486.

⁴ Ibid N° 2386.

⁵ Carter, H., *Questions and Answers on Spiritual Gifts*, London, AOG, 1946, p.70.

⁶ A *Cessationist* is someone who thinks that “certain miraculous gifts ceased long ago, when the apostles died and scripture was complete”.

Grudem, W., *Systematic Theology*. Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, p.1031.

⁷ Bengel, *Gnomon*, as cited by Thiselton, A. C., *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* NIGTC, Carlisle, Paternoster, 2000, p.984.

⁸ Jeffreys, G., *Healing Rays*, Worthing, H.E.Walter Ltd., 1932, p.2.

was unknown to our forefathers. Until recently even minor intrusive surgery carried great risks to the patient. Contrastingly, divine healing is risk-free and costs nothing.

Divine healing does not need to be instantaneous. Jesus healed at least one person gradually:

When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly (Mark 8:22-25).

In trying to differentiate between gifts of healing and working of miracles, Jeffreys says: "Healing suggests a gradual recovery... working of miracles suggests an immediate Divine interposition so that a person is instantly healed."⁹ However I would describe any divine healing, whether gradual or instant, as a miracle!

A Establishing a biblical basis for the gifts of healing.

The O.T. is filled with promises and prophecies about God healing people. Some healing promises are conditional such as: "Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you" (Exodus 23:25). Others such as: "He sent forth his word and healed them" (Psalms 107:20) and, "Praise the Lord... who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases" (Psalms 103:2-3) have no conditions directly attached. However all the promises were limited in their application and many people remained sick. Their one hope was the coming Messiah, who, as he ushered in God's kingdom would give them salvation. This salvation involved deliverance from every oppression including sickness:

⁹ Jeffreys, G., op. cit. p.155.

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour... (Isaiah 53:5).

Jesus clearly taught that he was the “Christ” or “Messiah” and confirmed this declaration through healings and miracles (Acts 10:38). Although the Jewish nation rejected him as their “Messiah”, Jesus boldly declared to them, “The kingdom of God has come to you” (Luke 11:20). Isaiah’s messianic prophecy of healing: “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5), was fulfilled by Jesus when he healed the sick.

Many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah “He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases” (Matthew 8:16-17).

This messianic emphasis on healing continued as Jesus commissioned his disciples to do the same: “Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’” (Luke 10:9). After his death, Jesus confirmed that his followers should continue to preach, heal and deliver: “And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons ... they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well” (Mark 16:17-18).

Jesus’ followers had to make a great paradigm shift from expecting a physical kingdom, to a receiving a spiritual kingdom. As they came to terms with God’s emphasis of an internal kingdom, the credulity of their message was essential. Jesus’

resurrection was pivotal to their preaching, “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins” (1Corinthians 15:17). The evidence of Jesus’ resurrection was the healings and miracles that he continued to perform through his followers: “With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4:33). As the N.T. Church began, this expectation of salvation of souls and healing of bodies that Jesus had taught his disciples, continued.

B The importance of the gifts of healing in the New Testament.

As the N.T. church expanded throughout the Roman world, the message of the gospel needed explaining. The changed lives of converts proved the efficacy of the Gospel but sound teaching was required to keep them true to their new found faith. So Paul gave written instruction about God and kingdom living in his letters. Clearly the Corinthian church was not ignorant of the experience of spiritual gifts (1Corinthians 12:1) but rather Paul was instructing them on the “relative importance of some of the gifts... and the relative worth of even the best gifts compared with the highest elements of Christian character.”¹⁰ Paul’s emphasis in the use of the gifts was of unity:

But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it (1Corinthians 12:24-27).

Fee says that the point is clear: “Diversity not uniformity is the essential matter for a healthy church.”¹¹ Schatzmann makes the same point when he says that their purpose is “unity not

¹⁰ Gee, D., *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*, Springfield, GPH, 1972, p.7.

¹¹ Fee, D., *God’s Empowering Presence*, Peabody, Hendrickson, 1994, p.159.

uniformity.”¹² Jealousy and jostling for prominence has no part in God’s kingdom and God’s gifts do not elevate the recipients to a position of importance. Rather these gifts should produce humility as people recognise that they are God’s servants. Schatzmann says that because Paul insists these gifts are for the common good, “he effectively eliminated every form of structuring these gifts into a hierarchy of values.”¹³ Fee expounds further, “the emphasis is not on people who have gifts but simply on the presence of these gifts in the community.”¹⁴ Gifts then, are not hierarchal manifestations of importance but expressions of God’s grace and love. Therefore, no undue importance is to be given to a person who uses God’s gifts, even the gifts of healing, but the honour belongs to God. Hadden makes the point that “the gifts are resident in the Spirit that indwells the believer and are not absolute possessions: they are manifested in the believer, not imparted to him.”¹⁵

Having said that, every person who is used by God is blessed and should be honoured! Elizabeth exclaimed to Mary: “Blessed are you... But why am I so favoured, that [you] should come to me? ... Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!” (Luke 1:42-45). Thus the use of the gift of the “gifts of healings” is honourable and a great blessing, not least to the person healed.

Fee says that because the word “gifts” “**carismata**” (*charismata*) is plural, “it suggests that the manifestation is not given to the person who is healed but to the person God uses for the healing of another.”¹⁶ Unlike the other gifts mentioned in

¹² Schatzmann, S., *A Pauline Theology of Charismata*, Peabody, Hendrickson, 1987, p.76.

¹³ Ibid p.35.

¹⁴ Fee, D., op. cit. p.193.

¹⁵ Hadden, A, “Gifts of the Spirit in Assemblies Writings”, *Paraclete*, Vol.24 No.1, 1990, 21.

¹⁶ Fee, D., op. cit. p.169.

1Corinthians 12 where the subject of each gift is for the recipient, the “gifts of healing” always benefit someone else. On this point Horton appears to contradict Paul’s teaching on “gifts of healing” given to a person, when he states:

It seems that no one is given *the* gift of healing. Rather, many gifts are available to meet the needs of specific cases at specific times... The one who prays for the sick person is just the agent; the sick person... is the one who needs and actually receives the gift.¹⁷

However Corsie emphasises that it is not man who heals but God: “every healing is a special gift. There are no healers.”¹⁸ Goodbey explains that because both the nouns “gifts” and “healings” are plural “there is a diversity of gifts, as well as an infinite multiplicity of diseases to be healed; some gifted in the healing of one disease, and some in another.”¹⁹ Carter makes a similar point: “one person may be used more specifically in one direction than another... Wigglesworth [was] greatly interested in internal trouble... and greatly used of God in praying for such people.”²⁰ Perhaps only those who have suffered from sickness and pain will appreciate the true value of this gift of “the gifts of healings”. Natural or manufactured medicines and surgeons’ skills are always appreciated but divine-healing should bring a godly gratitude, wonder and awe.

The disciples in the early N.T. Church used the “gifts of healings” very effectively in evangelism. Peter was able to speak to large crowds in the Temple because of the healing a lame man:

¹⁷ Horton, Stanley (ed), *Systematic Theology*, Springfield, GPH, 1994, p.466.

¹⁸ Corsie, E. R., “The Ministry Gifts”, *Pentecostal Doctrine* (Ed. Brewster, P.S.) ?, Brewster, 1976, p.110.

¹⁹ Goodbey, W. B., *Commentary on the New Testament Vol.4 Corinthians – Galatians*, The Ages Digital Library, Albany OR, Version 1.0, 1997.

²⁰ Carter, H., *Spiritual Gifts and their Operation*, Springfield, GPH, 1968, p.49.

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see... When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways (Acts 3:16-26).

Paul also used healing as an introduction to the Gospel in Malta: [Publius'] father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured (Acts 28:8-9).

C The importance of the gifts of healing for the Church today.

Although many *Cessationists* are sincere Christians, their refusal to accept the validity of the “gifts of healing” today blatantly ignores the evidence of both Scripture and history. Jack Deere observes:

There is one basic reason why Bible-believing Christians do not believe in the miraculous gifts of the Spirit today. It is simply this: they have not seen them. Their tradition, of course, supports their lack of belief, but their tradition would have no chance of success if it were not coupled with their lack of experience of the miraculous... No cessationist writer that I am aware of tries to make his case on scripture alone. All of these writers appeal both to scripture and to either present or past history to support their case. It often goes unnoticed that this appeal to history, either past or present, is actually an argument from experience, or

better, an argument from lack of experience.²¹

The documented evidence of divine healing available, confirms that, “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind” (Numbers 23:19) especially when it comes to spiritual gifts. However it should be noted that not all sicknesses are necessarily a medical complaint. Charles Parham, who formulated the Pentecostal doctrine of “tongues as evidence of Holy Spirit baptism” estimated half of all diseases were psychosomatic and once people “threw back their shoulders and faced the world with a smile and cheerful disposition... the afflictions would disappear.”²² Even so, Parham used the “gifts of healing” to great effect in the early C20th and it is estimated that in twenty years, he and his associates “had produced a full two million converts to Christianity”.²³

D The importance of the gifts of healing for the Church today in Evangelism.

Healing Evangelists have always attracted large crowds but larger numbers are attending crusades now than ever before. In 1998, Dr Peter Gammon estimated four million people attended a single crusade in the Philippines, with a further 20 million watching on television.²⁴ Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke had many millions of people attending his crusades in Nigeria in 2000 and 2001. His website explains:

Why such crowds? Miracles? Well, signs and wonders always attest the Word and did again. Actually tens of thousands leave when the time comes for healing.

²¹ Deere, J., *Surprised by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1993, p.55.

²² Goff, J.R., *Fields White unto Harvest*, Fayetteville, University of Arkansas Press, 1988, p.43.

²³ Ibid p.150.

²⁴ Gammons, P., “Vital Truths... for Health, Blessing and Abundance”, 1999, p.84.

Everyone knows why everybody else comes – simply to hear Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke preach the Word of God. CfaN’s giant amplifiers make every word clear while the rapt and limitless masses capture every syllable like rain in the desert. There are many fine Bible teachers and preachers in Nigeria, but the prospect of giant rallies brings ever-increasing audiences. The first night drew over 110,000. It multiplied daily to half a million on the last and fifth day, a grand total of one and a half million.²⁵

Although preachers like Wesley, Whitfield and Finney drew large crowds in the C18th they did not use healing as evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. T.L.Osborn claims to be the first missionary evangelist to go into open fields or parks in non-Christian nations, to proclaim Christ and to pray for miracles as proof that he is alive. His website explains:

Docu-miracle films and videos in seventy languages have been shown in thousands of villages and towns in one hundred and fifteen nations, influencing millions to believe the Gospel. The Osborn National Missionary Assistance Program has sponsored over 30,000 national men and women as full time Missionaries to nearly 140,000 unevangelized tribes, villages and areas. Over 400 new churches have been established and have become self-supporting annually.²⁶

In his book “Soul Winning” T.L.Osborn writes:

The church cannot send Christ out as a spiritual

²⁵ van den Berg, P., “Owerri Nigeria, February 2001”, <http://www.cfan.org/uk/crusades/africa/owerri0201/owerri0201pg1.htm>, (08/11/01).

²⁶ “OSFO International World Missionary Church”, <http://osborn.org/tlosborn.html>, (12/11/01).

messenger to bless the poor, to comfort the distressed, to visit the sick and to persuade those who are lost to believe the gospel. The only way He can visit the sick and witness to unsaved people is through his body – through believers²⁷

T.L.Osborn's normal way of conducting evangelistic services is to explain the gospel message and then pray a general prayer over the audience asking God to heal the sick. After publicising the healing testimonies of one of two people as credence that the gospel is true, he asks people to commit their life to Jesus Christ. The response is usually overwhelmingly successful.²⁸ British Assemblies of God evangelist Melvin Banks has used his "gifts of healing" to access Moslem communities in England where, after praying for the sick, he successfully makes an appeal for salvation.²⁹

After many centuries' neglect, the use of the gift of healing in evangelism has been restored to the biblical position. Brumback writes

Through the centuries some had dared to believe that it was the will of God to heal the sick. It was not until late in the nineteenth century, however that the Biblical view of divine healing was presented in a systematic form.³⁰

The C19th Holiness preacher Goodbey explains further:

You must not depreciate the gifts of healings, as you will find them a powerful auxiliary to your soul-saving work, to which they are always subordinated. When you pray for the sick, you have a right to believe that God will either heal the body or give the person something better.

²⁷ Osborn, T.L., *Soul Winning*, Tulsa, OSFO International, 1963, p.28.

²⁸ Explained by T.L.Osborn in a Conference I attended in Folkestone 30th May 2001.

²⁹ Banks, M., *Wind of Fire*, London, Marshall Pickering, 1992, p.114.

³⁰ Brumback, C., *Suddenly.... from Heaven*, Springfield, GPH, 1961, p9.

Spiritual blessings in this life are better than bodily healing, and Heaven better than all. Hence there is no reason why your faith should fail in any case. Millions of poor sufferers all around you open wide the door of infinitesimal usefulness in the interest of body and soul. When God makes you a blessing to the body, the door is wide open for you to be a blessing to the soul. The Church has lost millions of victories by her depreciation of Divine healing as an auxiliary of soul-saving.³¹

E The importance of the gifts of healing for the Church today in giving the Gospel credence.

Just as the early Church used healings as a testimony to Jesus' resurrection, so healings testify to Jesus' healing power today. Holdcroft says these are the "credentials God provides His servants... to carry out His commission... It becomes clear that the primary purpose of the gifts of healings is to validate the ministry of God's people."³² Although many people claim divine healing, without documented medical evidence taken before the healing, it is impossible to prove that God intervened! However when documented miraculous healings take place, they give credence to the Gospel message that accompanies them. As T.L.Osborn wrote in his newsletter: "Each Miracle healing becomes undeniable proof that the Gospel is indeed true!"³³ Without Jesus' resurrection power, Christianity is just another philosophy, a set of rules to live by. With Jesus' resurrection power, Christianity is supernatural. J.G.Lake explained it this way: "Christianity is one hundred percent supernatural – God possessing man."³⁴ Regrettably, many churches have little

³¹ Godbey, W. B., op. cit..

³² Holdcroft, L.T., "The Gift of the Gifts of Healing", *Paraclete*, Vol.2, No.2, 1968, p.11.

³³ Osborn, T. L., *Gospel Harvest*, "Newsletter", November 2001.

³⁴ Copeland, G., (ed.) *John G. Lake*, Fort Worth, KCP, 1994, p.432.

practical experience of spiritual gifts, especially healing. T.L.Osborn succinctly describes the contrast of the dead formalism of Christian religion and the living life of Christ in believers:

The Christian religion has become formalised by theological traditions derived by medieval concepts. As a result, much of society relegates God and miracles to legend or to superstition... Every time I see cancers healed, cripples walk, blind and deaf people restored... I see *Him* at work.³⁵

Over fifty years of T.L.Osborn's miracle ministry has been compiled in a twenty-four-volume encyclopaedia. This encyclopaedia, together with one hundred video-cassettes of his Crusades, forty audio-cassettes of sermons and twenty books authored by either T.L., his wife Daisy or daughter LaDonna have been presented to various libraries including Oxford University's Bodleian Library, the Cambridge University Library and Moscow University's Lenin Library.³⁶ This unique documentation of miracles is an invaluable resource for those who preach the full Gospel message, especially in Russia.

When healing is discussed, the question is always raised about people who are not healed. If Jesus "made his dwelling among us" John 1:14 and his name is "Immanuel - which means 'God with us'" (Matthew 1:23) then it is logical to conclude that all can be healed. However, history and experience shows that this is not so. Wimber, who suffered from cancer and was confined to a wheel chair before dying in 1997, makes a helpful comment:

My body is wearing out. It is subject to the effects of the Fall. But while I know that I cannot control the time when God will take me, I am also aware that I do not

³⁵ Osborn, T. L., *The Message that Works*, Tulsa, OSFO Int., 1997, p.40-41.

³⁶ Explained by T.L.Osborn in at a meeting I attended with him in Essex July 6th 2001.

have to die from the effects of my personal sin before my appointed time.³⁷

Godbey writes in his commentary on Corinthians:

Of course, the body is not perfectly healed until this mortal puts on immortality, and we enter the glorified state either by translation or the resurrection. Therefore all bodily healing in this life is but the earnest of the glorious complete healing which is to come, mortality itself being the very quintessence of disease, final and perfect healing utterly and eternally eliminating it. Neither is our failure to get healed an argument against our spirituality, as we are healed by the gift, and saved by grace. It is our glorious privilege, as a Christian duty, to appreciate and utilize the gifts of healings in order that we may be a blessing to the suffering thousands on all sides. As the apostles and primitive saints went from house to house, preaching the gospel and healing the sick, let us remember that we are in the succession, and the gospel has lost none of its power.³⁸

To glibly quote “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24), fails to address the question. In reality, healing is more complex than a simple formula – healing is a grace of God and many are still being healed today.

Conclusion.

The gift of the “gifts of healing” gives the Christian hope for the present as well as the future. In declaring the immutable character of God, the believer expects to see the “Lord work[ing] with them and confirm[ing] his word by the signs that accompan[y] it” (Mark 16:20). Throughout Church history

³⁷ Wimber, J., *Power Healing*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1987, p163.

³⁸ Godbey, W. B., op. cit.

records show that Christians not only expected God to heal but also actually experienced divine healing. Modern technology now makes it possible to quickly verify and publicise divine healing. The cliché “no Jesus, no miracles, know Jesus, know miracles” has become common in many churches as people’s expectations have returned to biblical levels.

In conclusion, the simple faith in the “Sovereign Lord... [for whom] nothing is too hard” (Jeremiah 32:17) has been restored to many churches. The message of the Gospel that “God so loves the world” (John 3:16) is backed up by practical tangible evidence of God intervening miraculously. However, God is sovereign, and as Reid says:

The gifts of the Spirit belong to the Spirit of God. They are His and they function in Him... He wants us to be ever conscious of our total dependence upon Him. A man who claims the precious gifts of God as his own is a man who has dethroned Christ.³⁹

Paul S Fermor 2002

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The *New International Version* is used for all biblical references and quotations unless otherwise stated.

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³⁹ Reid, M., *Faith It’s God Given*, Brentwood, Sharon, 1990, p.40.

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An Outline and Evaluation of the Contribution of T.L.Osborn to our Understanding of Divine Healing.

Introduction.

Prince Charles, writing in the forward of the “Churches Council for Health and Healing” report, states: “In an age dominated by scientific materialism, the spiritual aspects of illness, which so often determine its meaning and value, are frequently ignored.”⁴⁰

T.L.Osborn has spent over half a century declaring the Christian Gospel of God’s love with spectacular results in conversions and healings. By declaring unequivocally, in his preaching and writings, the spiritual aspects of both illness and healing, he has set a high standard for Christianity right into the C21st.

In this essay I will assess and evaluate the contribution T.L.Osborn has made to our understanding of divine healing. I will explain the background to his long and powerful international ministry as a Healing Evangelist and explore his development of mass Miracle Crusades.

T.L.Osborn has been a prolific writer and his books have helped to stimulate a worldwide rediscovery of apostolic miracle-evangelism. His classic book “Healing the Sick” is in its enlarged 43rd edition and has been a faith-building best-seller since 1951, with over a million copies in print.⁴¹ I will outline and evaluate his written teachings on healing, comparing them with other Pentecostal and Charismatic teaching. Because T.L.Osborn’s doctrine is consistent throughout his writings, I will use his book “Receive Miracle Healing” as my main point

⁴⁰ Watt, J., (ed.), *What is wrong with Christian Healing?*, London, The Churches Council for Health and Healing, 1993.

⁴¹ “The Osborn World Ministry”, <http://osborn.org>, (11/09/02).

of reference. In studying T.L.Osborn's contribution to our understanding of divine healing I am using the word "our" to mean "Pentecostal or Charismatic", using Baron's definition of "Christians who believe that the extraordinary gifts (charismata) described in the Bible ...still exist and should occur ...today."⁴²

A Assessment of T.L.Osborn's healing ministry.

The background to T.L.Osborn's healing ministry.

Tommy Lee Osborn was born in 1924 and at the age of 17 married Daisy. With their roots in the Pentecostal Church of God of America, a breakaway from the AG,⁴³ T.L.Osborn and Daisy went to India as missionaries. Unable to convince the people of India about the Christian Gospel, they returned "profoundly disheartened, feeling we had failed."⁴⁴ Within a few months of returning home, T.L.Osborn experienced four life-changing experiences of Jesus.

The first event occurred after hearing Revd Hattie Hammond speak on the subject "If you ever see Jesus, you can never be the same again."⁴⁵ T.L.Osborn explains that the next morning he saw Jesus in person when he came into his room: "**I looked on Jesus just as one looks at anyone.** He was real. He stood there... It was an overwhelming experience... Jesus Christ became **Lord** of my life... I was a totally renewed person." (*Author's emphasis*)⁴⁶

The second experience was when he saw William Branham preaching and praying for the sick: "Hundreds of people accepted Christ and we witnessed for the first time, amazing

⁴² Barron, B., *The Health and Wealth Gospel*, Downers Grove, IL, IVP, 1987, p.11.

⁴³ Synon, Vinson, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, Nashville, TE, Nelson, 2001, p.139.

⁴⁴ Osborn, T. L., *The Message that Works*, Tulsa, OK, OSFO International, 1997, p.14.

⁴⁵ Ibid p.15.

⁴⁶. Osborn, T. L. and D., *The Gospel According to T.L. & Daisy*, Tulsa, OK, OSFO International, 1985, p.48.

and instantaneous healing miracles. We saw Jesus at work **IN A PERSON.**” (*Author’s emphasis.*)⁴⁷

Thirdly, he saw Jesus in the scriptures. In response, Daisy and T.L. pledged:

We shall read the Gospels as though we never heard of them before. Whatever Jesus says he will do, we will expect him to do it. Whatever he says we can do, we will act on His Word and do it.⁴⁸

The fourth experience happened shortly afterwards when T.L. and Daisy invited the public to bring sick people to the Church they pastored in Portland: “We preached, then prayed for the sick and it seemed that everyone we touched was instantly healed... We discovered Jesus at work **IN US.**” (*Author’s emphasis.*)⁴⁹

The development of T.L.Osborn’s healing ministry.

Those four experiences of Jesus, dramatically affected T.L.Osborn’s ministry. Shortly afterwards he went to Jamaica and in thirteen weeks “over 9000 came forward, knelt and prayed the salvation prayer.”⁵⁰ Using the same prayers that Branham had used a few months earlier,⁵¹ he witnessed “125 deaf mutes... restored.”⁵²

T.L.Osborn, together with his wife Daisy, continued to hold mass miracle healing Crusades with great effectiveness. With an Apostolic vision, T.L.Osborn set about sponsoring and training nationals to carry on the work he started. In 1949 he instituted “The Voice of Faith Ministry” now “OSFO International”⁵³ and in 1953 he formed “The Association for Native Evangelism”, to

⁴⁷ Osborn, *The Message that Works*, op. cit. p.15.

⁴⁸ Ibid p15.

⁴⁹ Ibid p.16.

⁵⁰ Osborn, *The Gospel According to T.L. & Daisy*, op. cit. p.93.

⁵¹ Osborn, speaking at G.G.F. 2001 Conference, Brentwood, Essex, (06/07/01).

⁵² Osborn, T. L., *The Good Life*, Tulsa, OK, OSFO International, 1994, p.35.

⁵³ Osborn, *Believers in Action*, Tulsa, OK, OSFO International, 2000, p.91.

encourage the establishment of indigenous churches. T.L.Osborn's philosophy was that native Christians make the best missionaries because "they speak the language, they do not need a furlough, they don't need special diets nor do they get sick".⁵⁴ As he conducted impressive crusades around the world, T.L.Osborn sponsored local missionaries for up to one year, to follow the converts up and establish self-supporting congregations. During the 1960's he budgeted nearly US\$50,000 a month to support native missionaries!⁵⁵

Meticulous recording of his ministry has now been published in a twenty-four-volume encyclopaedia, containing 22,954 pages of Osborn's magazine "Faith Digest", diaries, brochures, letters, pictorial reports, tracts, and other materials published between 1947-97. This encyclopaedia together with 180 video-cassettes of his Crusades, forty audio-cassettes of sermons and twenty books authored by T.L., his wife Daisy or their daughter LaDonna, make up a 'Faith Library'. Copies of this 'Faith Library' have been presented to national libraries across the world including Oxford, Cambridge and Moscow Universities.⁵⁶ This unique documentation of miracles is an invaluable resource for those who preach the full Gospel message, especially in the old Soviet countries.

T.L.Osborn's normal way of conducting evangelistic services is to explain the gospel message and then pray a general prayer over the audience asking God to heal the sick. After publicising the healing testimonies of one or two people as credence that the gospel is true, he asks people to commit their life to Jesus Christ. The response is usually overwhelmingly successful.⁵⁷ He also stresses the importance of personal witnessing to reach

⁵⁴ Synon, op. cit. p.333.

⁵⁵ Ibid p.333.

⁵⁶ Osborn, G.G.F. 2001 Conference, op. cit.

⁵⁷ Explained by T.L.Osborn in a Conference I attended in Folkestone, (30/05/01).

those who have never heard the good news of Jesus Christ:

The church cannot send Christ out as a spiritual messenger to bless the poor, to comfort the distressed, to visit the sick and to persuade those who are lost to believe the gospel. The only way He can visit the sick and witness to unsaved people is through his body – through believers.⁵⁸

Although Daisy and T.L.Osborn were very much a team until her death in 1995, Daisy was an able minister and author in her own right. She mobilised women in ministry, pioneering efforts to “elevate the status of women through offering interpretive approaches to difficult passages in the Bible”⁵⁹ as does their daughter LaDonna today.

B Outline of T.L.Osborn’s teaching of healing in his writings.

T.L.Osborn's books have motivated many people to miracle-evangelism especially in the Third World. Several of his books such as ‘Soul-winning’, ‘God's Love Plan’, ‘The Good Life’ and especially ‘The Message That Works’, have become standard text books in Bible Schools around the world and are “esteemed as prime reference materials for successful pastors and church leaders.”⁶⁰

T.L.Osborn maintains that the blessings provided by Christ’s vicarious death are to be “accepted by faith and appropriated by putting our faith into action”.⁶¹ In his book ‘Receive Miracle Healing’, he states that the “the promises of the Bible are God’s guarantee of your liberty from sin and sickness”⁶² and gives the

⁵⁸ Osborn, *Soul Winning*, Tulsa, OK, OSFO International, 1963, p.28.

⁵⁹ Synon, op. cit., p.254.

⁶⁰ “The Osborn World Ministry”, op. cit.

⁶¹ Osborn, “The Winning Secret”, *Draft manuscript of as yet unpublished book*, obtained at G.G.F. Conference, Brentwood, Essex, 2002, p.9.

⁶² Osborn, *Receive Miracle Healing*, Tulsa, OK, OSFO International, 1984, p.213.

following seven steps to receiving a miracle healing from God:

- 1) Know the age of miracles has not passed and physical healing is part of Christ's ministry today.
- 2) Know God's Promises to heal in the Scriptures, and be convinced they are for you personally.
- 3) Understand that God wants you well; that only Satan wants you to suffer.
- 4) Understand that physical healing is a part of salvation.
- 5) Ask God to heal you according to His promises and believe that He hears your prayer.
- 6) Believe when you pray that you have received what you asked for. This step we call faith.
- 7) Praise the Lord for the answer to your prayer and act on His promise.⁶³

These steps may be summarized by these four principles, which will be discussed in the next section:

Miracles and healings are for today.

The Biblical basis for divine healing.

Divine healing is included in salvation.

The prayer of faith.

C Evaluation of T.L.Osborn's teaching of healing in his writings.

Miracles and healings are for today.

Foundational to T.L.Osborn's teaching is the principle that physical healing is part of Christ's ministry today and that the age of miracles has not passed. In his Gospel tract 'The God of Miracles' T.L.Osborn explains that miracles are natural for God:

It is DIVINELY NATURAL for God to perform

⁶³ Ibid p.212.

miracles, signs and wonders. Every time He answers a prayer, that is a miracle, because one can never answer one's own prayers.

Every time a sinner is converted, that is a miracle, because sinners can no more convert themselves than lepers can cleanse their own flesh.

Every time a sick person is healed in answer to prayer, that is a miracle, because sick people cannot cure their own diseases.

His ministry today is a continual stream of miracles. He is a miracle *Savior*, a miracle *Healer*, a miracle *Provider*. When He saves someone, that is the greatest miracle.

Hundreds of times in my own life, I have seen the sick healed, blind eyes opened, paralysed legs and arms restored, lepers cleansed, deaf and dumb people healed.

*(Author's emphasis.)*⁶⁴

Facilitating miracle healing, especially in mass healing crusades, has been a major emphasis of T.L.Osborn and in his writings he encourages his readers to expect them too. However, he is not without his critics. Understandably, Cessationists⁶⁵ oppose divine healing, but the Church of England, which has a tradition of praying for the sick, in their 1993 report "What is wrong with Christian Healing?" opposes the miraculous emphasis of divine healing services. Howell talks of "the unhealthiness of always looking for miracles. Seeking the sensational is at best to miss the point and at worst to be quite contrary to the way of Christ

⁶⁴ Osborn, "The God of Miracles", *Gospel Tract*, Tulsa, OK, OSFO International, ?.

⁶⁵ A *Cessationist* is someone who believes that the "miraculous gifts ceased long ago, when the apostles died and scripture was complete." Grudem, W., *Systematic Theology*, Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, p.1031.

who so often said ‘tell no one of it.’”⁶⁶

Weatherhead was scathing of the concept of healing missions, especially by George Jeffreys, the founder of Elim Pentecostal Churches:

This book offers no approval of the methods used by the Four Square Gospel Movement in the healing missions carried out by Pastor Jeffreys and others. No doubt his intentions are excellent, but the dangers attending his methods are so great that neither from the point of view of psychology nor from that of true religion can they be approved.⁶⁷

Quoting from the 1930 Bampton Lectures, Weatherhead also makes the point that “...mission should be essentially an act of worship evoking faith, and faith not in a cure but in God.”⁶⁸ He concludes that chapter by approving Section II of a report by the 1920 Lambeth Conference: “...we are not prepared to give any encouragement to public missions of healing.”⁶⁹

McConnell, who is also critical of the position that T.L.Osborn take on miracles, talks of the “cultic nature of the doctrine of healing”⁷⁰ and yet states “healing is a divine gift and ministry of the church.”⁷¹ By noting, “a ministry of miracles and healing in no way proves soundness of doctrine”,⁷² McConnell shows his desire to see miracles but also his unease with some aspects of divine healing. It is notoriously difficult to actually ‘prove’ a

⁶⁶ Watt, op. cit. p.55.

⁶⁷ Weatherhead, L., *Psychology, Religion and Healing*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1952, p.201.

⁶⁸ Ibid p.205.

⁶⁹ Ibid p.208.

⁷⁰ McConnell, D., *The Promise of Health and Wealth*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1990, p.149.

⁷¹ Ibid p.159.

⁷² Ibid p.166.

miracle and, as Percy points out, “what seems like a miracle to one, is, to another, a complex psychosomatic response to external and internal factors that are somewhat intangible.”⁷³

However, as AOG minister Pauline Edwards writes: “there are still many Christians – inside and outside the Pentecostal movement – who believe we can live without miracles... So we must prove we are different by letting people see the supernatural working of God in our midst.”⁷⁴

The Biblical basis for divine healing.

Pentecostals adhere to the literal Biblical interpretation that sickness, and its eventual consequence death, is the result of Adam’s sin. They also believe that “the curse on humankind is general, afflicting people regardless of personal righteousness or sin,”⁷⁵ and, “God should not be blamed for human tragedy and misery”.⁷⁶ However, while “it is His nature to heal now”⁷⁷ some have difficulties with expecting God to use Believers to heal today in the same way as Jesus was used in the Gospels. Conversely, T.L.Osborn teaches that what Jesus did in the gospels, Christians can do today. Jesus’ command to heal the sick (Luke 9:2; 10:9) has not been withdrawn. As Blue says, healing is a means of expressing God’s kingdom: “Now through the followers of the last Adam, God’s authority is expressed, in part by healing the sick. In drawing back from praying for the sick, we deny God his usual means of working in the world.”⁷⁸

T.L.Osborn emphasizes that people must know “God's

⁷³ Percy, Martyn, *Words, Wonders and Power*, London, SPCK, 1996, p.149.

⁷⁴ Edwards, Pauline, “Return to God’s Power”, *Joy Magazine*, February 2003, p.36.

⁷⁵ Menzies, W., and Horton, S., *Bible Doctrines and Pentecostal Perspectives*, Springfield, MO, Logion Press, 1994, p.191.

⁷⁶ Ibid p.192.

⁷⁷ Ibid p.193.

⁷⁸ Blue, Ken, *Authority to Heal*, Eastbourne, Monarch, 1987, 106.

promises to heal in the Scriptures, and be convinced they are for you personally.”⁷⁹ He gives five basic reasons for his belief in divine healing:

God is a healer and has not changed (Ex.15:26; Mal.3:6).

Jesus Christ healed the sick and has never changed (Matt.9:35; Heb.13:8).

Jesus commanded his disciples to heal the sick and a true disciple of Christ is the same today as then (Matt.10:1-8; Jn.8:31).

Miracles of healing were manifested in the early church and the true church has never changed (Acts 3:6f; Matt.8:20).

Jesus commissioned all believers among all nations to the end of the world to lay their hands on the sick and true believers have not changed (Mk.16:15f; Jn.14:12).⁸⁰

In all his writings, T.L.Osborn stresses the importance of knowing God’s promise to heal.

If you are cognizant of God’s redemptive plan for humanity, you will know that His will is for you to have physical health as well as spiritual salvation and material blessings. John wrote, *I wish above all things that you may prosper (be helped, to succeed in affairs) and be in health, even as your soul prospers. (Author’s emphasis).*⁸¹

He states that among the tens of thousands who have been miraculously healed by Christ in his crusades, almost none of them have been prayed for individually but “they have been healed though their own faith, which was born in their own hearts, while meditating on the Bible truths we present from our

⁷⁹ Osborn, *Receive Miracle Healing*, op. cit. p.70.

⁸⁰ Ibid p.41.

⁸¹ Osborn, *The Message that Works*, op. cit. p.131.

crusade platforms or from our books on Bible faith.”⁸² He continues:

Almost any church member in any nation has been convinced that sickness may be God’s blessing in disguise... But I have also discovered that very few can quote a single scripture in the Bible that promises healing... If people do not know these truths, there can be no faith for miracles. If there is no faith for miracles, they cannot be experienced.⁸³

Divine healing is included in salvation.

Although all Pentecostals would support the statement: “We cannot separate Jesus the healer, from Jesus the savior, so we cannot separate divine healing from salvation,”⁸⁴ not all agree on the exact link between salvation and healing. T.L.Osborn takes the traditional Pentecostal interpretation of ‘divine healing in the atonement’ as meaning: “Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement and is the privilege of all believers.”⁸⁵

He paid for your healing when He carried your diseases and suffered your pains, taking the stripes by which you were healed... Your health has been paid for. Your diseases were laid upon Him. He took them away forever. Healing belongs to you now. It is a gift.⁸⁶

A great influence on T.L.Osborn was F.F.Bosworth,⁸⁷ who lists

⁸² Osborn, *Receive Miracle Healing*, op. cit. p.32.

⁸³ Ibid. p.32.

⁸⁴ Warrington, K., “The teaching and praxis concerning supernatural healing of British Pentecostal, John Wimber and Kenneth Hagin in the light of an analysis of the healing ministry of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels”, *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis for London University*, 1999, p.32.

⁸⁵ Menzies, W., and Horton, S., op. cit. p.190.

⁸⁶ Osborn, *Receive Miracle Healing*, op. cit. p.89.

⁸⁷ Osborn, *The Gospel According to T.L. & Daisy*, op. cit. p.97.

seven Redemptive Names of Jehovah, concluding with Jehovah-Rapha: “I am the Lord that heals you.” (Exodus 15:25.) He then argues

[That] since Jehovah-Rapha is one of his redemptive names, sealing the covenant of healing, Christ, during His exaltation, could no more abandon His office of Healer than the offices revealed by each of His six other redemptive names. Have any of the blessings that His redemptive names reveal been withdrawn from this “better” dispensation?⁸⁸

T.L.Osborn expounds the same theme, stating “[Jesus] paid for our healing when He *took the stripes by which we were healed* (Is.53:4-5).” (*Author’s emphasis.*)⁸⁹ He continues with a prayer confession: “Lord, you suffered my diseases for me so that I need never suffer them. My health is provided and I accept it now.”⁹⁰

Interestingly, Gee, a past Principal of the AOG. Bible College, challenged this view fifty years ago:

To assert that healing for our bodies rests on an identical authority with healing for our souls in the atoning work of Christ... can involve serious problems of personal faith... The doctrine of Divine healing reaches its maximum value when physical sickness is the result of our personal sin.⁹¹

Gee also makes the point that

physical health is frequently a matter of obeying simple and natural laws of health... To abuse ordinary rules for a healthy body when there is no need so to do is sheer

⁸⁸ Bosworth, F.F., *Christ the Healer*, New Kensington, PA, Whitaker House, 1999, p.22.

⁸⁹ Osborn, *The Message that Works*, op. cit. p.78.

⁹⁰ Ibid p.79.

⁹¹ Gee, D., *Trothimus I Left Sick*, London, Elim, 1952, p.21-22.

presumption, and we have little surprise if we are permitted to suffer accordingly.⁹²

The present Principal of the AOG Bible College argues that the normal proof texts for “healing in the atonement” (i.e. Is.53:4; Matt.8:17; 1Pet.2:24) are disconnected. He has reached the conclusion that no texts “when correctly exegeted, support the doctrine... of Christ’s bearing our sickness substitutionarily”.⁹³ He points out that although Jesus death paid the price for our sins and the effects of sin, the atonement was for man’s sin not his sickness. “Sickness is not a misdemeanor which attracts a penalty.”⁹⁴ He supports Gee’s point that “for the eternal future there is no question of our perfect redemption; and we have it now potentially in Christ”.⁹⁵

In discussing the doctrinal differences, one must not lose sight of the pastoral side of ministry. For sick people who may well be dying, glib repetition of a doctrine does not suffice, and neither does the hope of a future “glorious resurrection”. Dye makes this helpful point:

Every divine healing is a signpost, which directs hurting people towards the power and love of the all-healing God. Every miraculous healing is a dim foreshadowing that provides a glimpse of the total transformation at the final day.⁹⁶

Not every miraculous healing is instant or indeed need be. Dye says he mistakenly “had casually picked up the belief that any genuine divine healing must be instant, complete and

⁹² Ibid p.16.

⁹³ Petts, David, “Healing in the Atonement”, *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis for University of Nottingham*, 1993, p.288.

⁹⁴ Ibid p.282.

⁹⁵ Gee, *Trothimus I Left Sick*, op. cit. p.23.

⁹⁶ Dye, *Healing Anointing – Hope for a Hurting World*, op. cit. p5.

irreversible.”⁹⁷ Even relief or partial healings should be gratefully received: “Rather than plunging into despair at the thought of waiting for the fulfilment at the final day we should thank God for the foretaste.”⁹⁸ God is more interested in people than in a particular belief! The Christian message is all about the love of God: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”(John 3:16.) However, “each Miracle healing becomes undeniable proof that the Gospel is indeed true!”⁹⁹

The prayer of faith.

E.W.Kenyon also greatly influenced T.L.Osborn¹⁰⁰ and his ‘faith’ teaching of “bringing into existence what we state with our mouth, since faith is a confession”¹⁰¹ is seen throughout T.L.Osborn’s writings. “Ask God to heal you according to His promises and believe that He hears your prayer,”¹⁰² is the encouragement T.L.Osborn gives to his readers. “These are the three principle steps of faith to receive anything God has promised, or any blessing Christ has provided. **Knowledge** of the promise comes first. **Prayer** comes next. **Action** with praise comes last.” (Author’s emphasis.)¹⁰³

Murphy scathingly calls this teaching a “repulsive new theology ... only possible in an advanced middle-class economy... I would like to see its advocates proclaim it among the starving Christians of Africa, Asia, Latin America.”¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ Ibid p.20.

⁹⁸ Ibid p.84.

⁹⁹ Osborn, *Gospel Harvest*, “Newsletter”, November 2001.

¹⁰⁰ Osborn, G.G.F. 2001 Conference, op. cit.

¹⁰¹ Synon, op. cit. p.358.

¹⁰² Osborn, *Receive Miracle Healing*, op. cit. p.152.

¹⁰³ Ibid p.212.

¹⁰⁴ Murphy, Edward F., *The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*, Nashville, TN, Thomas Nelson, 1996, p.188, as cited by Reid, M., *Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare: A Modern Mythology?*, Fairfax, VA, Xulon, 2002, p.19.

However as Reid points out, “[it is this] gospel that lifts people from despair and failure in every aspect of their lives as demonstrated... in the ministry of...T.L.Osborn.”¹⁰⁵

In defence of this ‘faith’ teaching, McIntyre writes:

Affirmations are not a technique to get what you want in life but rather a means of building the truths of God’s word into the life and consciousness of the believer in total dependence on the Holy Spirit. ¹⁰⁶

Clearly, divine healing is not as simple as a ‘confession’ statement and not even the renowned healing evangelists see everyone healed. Warfield, in his attempt to discredit divine healing, contemptuously points out that although Dowie¹⁰⁷ prayed for over seventy thousand people a year, he only reported about seven hundred cures in two and a half years. “One success in every two hundred and fifty trials does not impress one as a very successful ministry of healing to the sick and sorrowing world.”¹⁰⁸ It is interesting that not even Warfield disputed those seven hundred cures, which tends to defeat his argument against divine healing!

Although not the usual interpretation, Barron makes an interesting comment, that the ‘faith’ message “claims only that our faith can overrule the curse of the *law*, not the curse of the *fall*. Believers no longer need to fear poverty, sickness and spiritual death.” (*Author’s italics.*)¹⁰⁹ However T.L.Osborn teaches the more traditional ‘faith’ message. He writes:

¹⁰⁵ Reid, M., *Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare: A Modern Mythology?*, Fairfax, VA, Xulon, 2002, p.19.

¹⁰⁶ McIntyre, J., *E.W.Kenyon and his Message of Faith – The True Story*, Orlando, FL, Creation House, 1997, p.262.

¹⁰⁷ J.A..Dowie was one of the major healing evangelists of the late C19th and early C20th and was based near Chicago, Il.

¹⁰⁸ Warfield, B.B., *Counterfeit Miracles*, London, Banner of Truth, 1972, p.196.

¹⁰⁹ Barron, *The Health and Wealth Gospel*, op. cit. p.67.

When you discover your roots in God and identify with His purpose for you on this earth, you have begun to really live the life God intended for you to live. It is a lifestyle based on positive faith, positive thinking, positive talking, positive acting. What is the source of this positive faith? Faith comes from hearing the word of God.¹¹⁰

Kydd describes the premise that “God is a good God and that he wills to heal and prosper his people” as an “optimistic theology”,¹¹¹ but he is right to challenge the “sloppy thinking [that] has characterized many Christians.”¹¹² Faith is not merely a ‘confession’ but is “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb.11:1) and as Dye says, “[miraculous healing] is only one part of the full health and wholeness which is God’s will for us.”¹¹³

Conclusion.

Although Dye differs from T.L.Osborn on some areas of doctrine, they both share the same commitment to see God work miraculously in evangelism. Dye comments:

It is my firm belief that the divine healing ministry - including supernatural signs and wonders – is now open to every Christian believer. Some of us will be more involved in healing than others. A few believers may receive a particular gift of healing ... We need to minister in an inclusive way which encourages every believer to volunteer as an active healing partner for God.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Osborn, *Receive Miracle Healing*, op. cit. p.219.

¹¹¹ Kydd, R., *Healing through the Centuries*, Peabody, MA, Henrickson, 1998, p.205.

¹¹² Ibid p.214.

¹¹³ Dye, C., *Healing Anointing – Hope for a Hurting World*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1997, p.4.

¹¹⁴ Dye, *Healing Anointing – Hope for a Hurting World*, op. cit. p175.

For over a half-century T.L.Osborn has proclaimed the Gospel in 74 nations, face to face to millions. His literature has been published in 132 languages and dialects. He has sponsored over thirty thousand qualified national preachers, both women and men, as full-time missionaries to their own and neighbouring tribes and villages where the Gospel of Christ had not been established.¹¹⁵

The Osborns have probably reached and led more unreached souls to Christ in non-Christian lands, and may have witnessed more great healing miracles, than any other couple in history. Their team efforts in world evangelism have been truly pace-setting as they have proclaimed to the world the good news that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.* (Author's emphasis.)¹¹⁶

In conclusion, T.L.Osborn's consistent ministry for over half a century gives much credence to his writings, which are "a declaration of the total victory in Christ Jesus."¹¹⁷ They have stimulated multitudes to share the good news of Jesus Christ. As Edwards writes:

We might not have the special calling of great evangelists like T.L.Osborn or Reinhard Bonnke, but we can all determine to know the miraculous measure which God has promised every church. Otherwise what marks us out as special?¹¹⁸

Paul S Fermor 2003

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The *New International Version* is used for all biblical references and quotations unless otherwise stated.

¹¹⁵ "The Osborn World Ministry", op. cit.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Reid, M., *Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare: A Modern Mythology?*, Fairfax, VA, Xulon, 2002, p.100.

¹¹⁸ Edwards, op. cit. p.36.

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Abbreviations.

C21st = Twenty-first Century (or other number as relevant).

AG = Assemblies of God in America.

AOG = Assemblies of God (GB).