

Healing on the Streets

Introduction

A ministry called 'Engage' set up 'Healing on the Streets' (HOTS) in Bath in 2008. It now has over 60 team members representing 20 local churches. Due to 'success' it was given its own trust status. HOTS' vision is, To promote Christian healing as a daily life style for every believer, through demonstration, training and equipping.

'Engage' is a non-denominational (i.e. compromised) organisation to demonstrate the kingdom of God and to encourage others to do this. The key leader is Rt. Rev. Tony Palmer, Community Bishop of the Ark Community. It has links with the Vineyard Churches, Bath City Church, Forerunner Ministries, the Filling Station and others. Some of these have women leaders and preachers; most are radical Charismatic with a false Gospel.

The testimonials on the website are poverty stricken (as always with Charismatic healing). There is no genuine healing from a congenital condition but reference to pain relief, such as for back pain. After several years, instead of considering this work a success one would have thought it would be shut down due to lack of success.

HOTS ran into trouble when a citizen complained to the Advertising Standards Authority about a flyer claiming that God wanted to heal everybody because he loved everybody. The ASA considered the claims and ruled against it banning them. The judgment is found in Appendix One.

The Gospel proclaimed by this group is:

NEED HEALING? GOD CAN HEAL TODAY! Do you suffer from Back Pain, Arthritis, MS, Addiction ... Ulcers, Depression, Allergies, Fibromyalgia, Asthma, Paralysis, Crippling Disease, Phobias, Sleeping disorders or any other sickness? We'd love to pray for your healing right now! We're Christian from churches in Bath and we pray in the name of Jesus. We believe that God loves you and can heal you from any sickness.

<http://www.hotsbath.org/>

This portrays God as some mere vending machine to offer healing. There is no mention of the cross, sin, repentance, judgment, hell, righteousness, conviction, godly sorrow for sin or God's requirements of man.

This is not the Biblical Gospel and such groups are not Christian in the slightest.

When a discussion of this appeared on the Jeremy Vine, BBC Radio 2 programme on Wednesday 8 February 2012, it was stated that a massive scientific survey of prayer for healing in controlled conditions for heart patients revealed that it worsened the patients subsequent state, such as increased arrhythmia or post op complications. [No reference to the report was given.] Representatives of HOTS, and similar works, stated that it was a Biblical command to proclaim healing for all in the Gospel but offered no proof. This is what we will look at here very simply.

The false Gospel of healing

A caller to the Jeremy Vine radio programme summarised the Charismatic position by stating that all Christians are called by the Bible to proclaim that God loves everybody and that he desires to heal everybody and thus it is right to go into the streets and offer to pray for the healing of any that will accept it.

This is a false Gospel; for these reasons:

God does not love everyone

- God only loves those he calls from eternity, the elect. [Eph 1:4](#).
- God loves the elect as individuals. [Mal 1:2](#), [Rm 9:13](#).
- God only has mercy on those he has chosen. [Rm 9:15](#), [23](#).
- God only saves a small portion of the human race. [Matt 20:16](#), [22:14](#); [1 Pt 3:20](#); [2 Pt 2:5](#).
- God hates sinners who are not called by him from eternity, the reprobate. [Ps 5:6–6](#), [11:5](#).
- God hates individual sinners. [Mal 1:3](#); [Rm 9:13](#).
- God hated certain nations for their sin. [Lev 20:23](#); [Deut 12:31](#).
- God hated the nations he committed to genocide by Israel. [Deut 7:2](#), [20:16–18](#).
- God hated Jewish apostates. [Hos 9:15](#); [Jer 12:8](#); [Ps 106:40](#); [Lev 26:30](#).
- God hates certain heretics. [Rev 2:6](#), [15](#).
- God hates false teachers in the church. [Zech 11:8](#).
- God has prepared the reprobate for destruction. [Rm 9:17–22](#); [Prov 16:4](#).
- There is no statement in Scripture that God loves all men.
 - [John 3:16](#) does not mean that God loves everyone or [Jn 3:17](#) would mean universalism and no hell at all. The word ‘world’ frequently meant only a few people, as in [Jn 12:19](#).
 - The word ‘loving’ in the NIV translation of [Ps 145:13b](#) is wrong; the Hebrew word ‘love’ does not appear and the second part of the verse in its entirety is not in the majority of Masoretic manuscripts and, therefore, nor in the best Bible versions.

God does not desire to heal everyone, not even Christians

- If he did he would not have allowed the apostles and their co-workers to be sick, but they frequently were. Such as: Timothy ([1 Tim 5:23](#)), Epaphroditus ([Phil 2:25–27](#)), Paul ([2 Cor 12:7–10](#); [Col 1:24](#)) and Trophimus ([2 Tim 4:20](#)).
- There is not a single case of a Christian being healed in the NT.
- Christ and the apostles repeatedly promised disciples that they would know suffering, affliction and tribulation; not health, wealth and happiness. [Acts 14:22](#); [2 Tim 1:8](#); [1 Thess 3:4](#); [Rm 8:17](#); [Jn 12:25](#), [16:33](#); [Phil 1:29](#); [2 Cor 4:10–12](#); [1 Pt 5:10](#); [Jm 5:10](#), [13](#).

There is no promise of healing in the atonement; no Gospel of healing

- There is no Scripture that plainly teaches ‘healing in the atonement’.
- Sickness does not need atonement but sin does.
- It is Christ’s life given up in death that secures atonement, not his earlier sufferings, such as, being whipped. [Pentecostals claim that his scourging secures healing.]
- Many verses claimed for healing are quoted out of context. This context is often regarding the period after the Last Day, such as [Ps 103:2–5](#). Other verses use ‘healing’ as a symbolic

reference to healing from sin, such as [Isa 53:5](#) and [1 Pt 1:24](#). For an evaluation of [Matthew 8:17](#) see my paper, 'Over anticipating the kingdom'.

The healings of Jesus and the apostles were a divine authentication of their ministry and proof that Jesus was the Messiah.

- The healings and miracles did not continue. Towards the end of the early Gospel age they had declined or vanished. The last chronological mention of healing is [Acts 28:8-9](#).
- Signs and wonders initiated the Gospel age as proof of divine origin. [Heb 2:3-4](#).
- The healing miracles of the church were only by the apostles and their delegates, not just anybody. [Acts 5:12,15:12, 19:11; Rm 15:19](#).
- There is no Gospel promise that all God's children can perform miracles at any time if they have faith.

Charismatic healings are never substantiated

- They are not of the order of Jesus and the apostles; they do not immediately heal major illnesses in the street or the town square.
- They are always the effect of hypnotic suggestion bringing temporary pain relief, just as any hypnotist can do.
- The formal evaluation of healing campaigns by Christian medical witnesses has always shown very poor results. Indeed, many people who initially claimed to be healed soon died. This has been the case since the beginning of Pentecostalism.
- Many Charismatics have claimed to raise the dead but not one case of this has been substantiated; if it were it would be worldwide front-page news.

Suffering is sent from God for a purpose; it is not a means avoided by God

- Sometimes, mysteriously, for the glory of God. [Jn 9:2-3; Job 1:8-12](#).
- Sometimes as a means of discipline. [Jm 5:15; 1 Cor 11:29-30; Num 21:6; 2 Sam 12:14-18; Ps 38:1-8](#).
- Sometimes sickness results from sin. [Jm 5:16](#).
- Sometimes as a means of training in godliness. [Heb 2:9-10; Jm 5:10; 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10; 1 Pt 1:11](#).
- Sometimes as a testimony to Christ. [Col 1:24; 2 Tim 1:8](#).
- Sometimes as a reproach for the Gospel. [Heb 10:32-23; 1 Pt 4:13, 5:9](#).

Today the normal means of divine healing is by the prayer of elders in the church

[Jm 5:14-15](#).

Praying for God to bless unbelievers is wrong

- Our job in praying for unbelievers is to pray for their salvation, not their happiness. Indeed, we pray for their sins to cause them godly sorrow so that they will seek salvation. [2 Cor 7:9-10](#).
- What is the point of blessing a person with healing if they then go to hell?
- God cannot bless the reprobate, those he hates and has predestined for destruction. [Ps 5:6-6, 11:5; Rm 9:17-22; Prov 16:4](#).
- We do not give pearls to swine (an unclean animal) or the bread of God's children to dogs. [Matt 7:6, 15:26](#).

- The blessing of God is only upon the elect. [Eph 1:3–4](#); [Prov 10:6](#), [28:20](#); [Deut 28:2](#).
- God's blessing is only given to Christ; it is then passed on to the elect in Christ; it cannot go to those in the world. [Rm 9:5](#); [1 Tim 6:15](#).
- Sinners are under God's curse and cannot be blessed. [Gal 3:10](#); [Matt 25:41](#); [Ps 37:22](#), [119:21](#); [1 Cor 16:22](#).

Some of the greatest saints in history were sick for long periods

The list of suffering saints is very long indeed. Many of the great theologians were continually ill. Martin Luther's ailments are well described in his writings, as are those of Calvin by his biographer. Both had a number of maladies. Some of the greatest preachers were frequently sick and dead before their 60th birthday, such as Calvin, Luther and Spurgeon. Some great hymn-writers were very sick for long periods, such as Frances Ridley Havergal or Philip Doddridge. Some evangelists, who were used by God in revivals, were so sick that they were dead by the age of thirty; such as David Brainerd or Murray M'Cheyne. In modern terms Joni Earicksen Tada has achieved great things despite being quadriplegic her entire Christian life. A healing at her conversion would not have resulted in so much beneficial ministry.

To claim that the Gospel always involves physical healing, or stating that God always wants to heal everybody, is an insult to all the great saints who led godly lives, despite much suffering, in the past.

The true Gospel

- To believe in (receive) Christ as Saviour. [Jn 1:12](#); [Matt 10:40](#); [Col 2:6](#).
- To repent and believe the Gospel. [Gal 3:26](#); [Rm 10:9–10](#); [Mk 1:15](#); [Acts 2:38](#), [17:30](#), [20:21](#).
- To call upon Christ as Lord. [Rm 10:13](#); [1 Cor 1:2](#); [Acts 2:21](#).
- To acknowledge your sins and seek forgiveness of God in Christ. [Acts 13:38–39](#); [Gal 2:16](#); [Phil 3:9](#).
- To confess Christ as Lord after expressing faith in him. [Rm 10:9–10](#); [Matt 10:32](#); [Lk 12:8](#); [1 Jn 4:2](#).

Conclusion

The Gospel proclaimed by the people at 'Healing on the Streets' is unbiblical and false. It will do no good to their hearers. The Biblical Gospel proclaims Christ as the only mediator between God and man, the one who redeems God's people and the only Saviour and Lord. The Gospel does not include a promise to heal all people who seek it and Charismatic fake healing is not a means of preaching the truth.

Any Gospel message that does not lift up Christ as Saviour, Lord and Redeemer, but instead focuses upon man's needs is a false Gospel.

Appendix

Advertising Standards Authority Ruling

ASA Adjudication on Healing on the Streets-Bath

http://asa.org.uk/ASA-action/Adjudications/2012/2/Healing-on-the-Streets_Bath/SHP_ADJ_158433.aspx

Healing on the Streets-Bath

- 8 Huntingdon Place, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 1RG
- Date: 1 February 2012
- Media: Internet (on own site)
- Sector:
- Non-commercial
- Number of complaints: 1
- Complaint Ref: A11-158433

Ad

A website and a leaflet, for Healing on the Streets - Bath, viewed on 10 May 2011:

a. The website home page stated "Our vision is to: - Promote Christian Healing as a daily life style for every believer, through demonstration, training and equipping. We are working in unity, from numerous churches outside the four walls of the building, In order to :- - Heal the sick ...".

A page headed "What people have told us afterwards ..." included five testimonials in which people stated that after receiving prayer their conditions had been improved.

b. The leaflet was available for download on the website under the heading "Download a healing flyer by clicking below". The leaflet stated "NEED HEALING? GOD CAN HEAL TODAY! Do you suffer from Back Pain, Arthritis, MS, Addiction ... Ulcers, Depression, Allergies, Fibromyalgia, Asthma, Paralysis, Crippling Disease, Phobias, Sleeping disorders or any other sickness? We'd love to pray for your healing right now! We're Christian from churches in Bath and we pray in the name of Jesus. We believe that God loves you and can heal you from any sickness".

Issue

The complainant challenged whether:

1. The claim in ad (b) that the advertiser could heal the named conditions was misleading and could be substantiated;
2. The testimonials in ad (a) misleadingly implied that the advertiser could heal the conditions referred to; and
3. The ads were irresponsible, because they provided false hope to those suffering from the named conditions.

4. The ASA challenged whether the ads could discourage essential treatment for conditions for which medical supervision should be sought.

CAP Code (Edition 12) 1.312.112.212.63.13.473.63.7

Response

1. & 2. Healing on the Streets - Bath (HOTS) said there were no claims in the ads that HOTS or any individual person could heal the conditions referred to. They said the leaflet stated "God can heal you", which was a statement of their belief. They said that the statements in the testimonials on their website were the individuals' genuine statements of their experiences and beliefs, and there were no guarantees or promises in the ads that people would be healed.

3. HOTS said they did not believe the ads were irresponsible or provided false hope to people who were sick. In their view, any hope provided was not false because they believed that God could and did heal sickness, and that many people had experienced that. They said it was not irresponsible to provide people with an opportunity to be prayed for, and to experience healing. They said they were a registered charity and praying for healing was part of their objectives as a registered charity, and was also in accordance with traditional Christian beliefs. They added that the charity's activities were endorsed by many churches and other reputable members of the community. They said they provided people with an opportunity to consider the possibility that God could help them.

4. HOTS said they did not agree that the ads discouraged people from seeking essential treatment and there was no suggestion that people should think that it was an alternative to seeking medical supervision or essential treatment. They said all their volunteers underwent detailed training before taking part in their activities, including instruction that everyone who received prayer must be given a letter which included the statements "if you are on medication STAY on it. Under NO circumstances should you stop doing anything a medical professional or counsellor has advised. We are not medically trained so please verify with them what has happened and take their advice. If you have been healed, their endorsement is a great encouragement to others of what God has done".

HOTS offered to amend their ads to state "We believe God can heal" and "See God heal the sick" or "Pray for the sick", to include the words "We believe" in any references to healing, to include a prominent reference to medical treatment on their website, and to remove the leaflet from their website.

Assessment

1., 2. & 3. Upheld

The ASA acknowledged that HOTS sought to promote their faith and the hope for physical healing by God through the claims in their ads. However, we were concerned that the prominent references in ad (b) to healing and the statement "You have nothing to lose, except your sickness" in combination with the references to medical conditions for which medical supervision should be sought such as arthritis, asthma, MS, addictions, depression and paralysis, could give

consumers the expectation that, by receiving prayer from HOTS volunteers, they would be healed of the conditions listed or other sicknesses from which they suffered. We also considered that the testimonials in ad (a) could also give consumers that expectation, and furthermore, noted that a video on the website also made claims that HOTS volunteers had successfully prayed for healing for people with cancer, fibromyalgia, back pain, kidney pain, hip pain, cataracts, arthritis and paralysis. We noted the testimonials on the website and in the video but considered that **testimonials were insufficient as evidence for claims of healing**. We therefore concluded **the ads were misleading**.

We acknowledged that HOTS volunteers believed that prayer could treat illness and medical conditions, and that therefore the ads did not promote false hope. However, we noted **we had not seen evidence that people had been healed through the prayer of HOTS volunteers, and concluded that the ads could encourage false hope in those suffering from the named conditions and therefore were irresponsible**.

We acknowledged that HOTS had offered to make amendments to the ads, and to remove the leaflet from their website. However, we considered that **their suggested amendments were not sufficient for the ads to comply with the CAP Code**.

On these points, ads (a) and (b) breached CAP Code rules 1.3 (Social responsibility), 3.1 and 3.6 (Misleading advertising), 3.7 (Substantiation), 3.47 (Endorsements and testimonials), 12.1 and 12.6 (Medicines, medical devices, health-related products and beauty products).

4. Upheld

We understood that HOTS volunteers were instructed to give a letter to the recipients of prayer which told them they should not stop taking their medication or following the advice of medical professionals. We also noted their offer to add a prominent reference along the lines of that letter to their website. However, we considered that, because both the leaflet and the website made claims that through the prayer offered by HOTS volunteers people could be healed of specific medical conditions for which medical supervision should be sought such as arthritis, asthma, MS, addictions, depression and paralysis, **the ads could discourage people, and particularly the vulnerable or those suffering from undiagnosed symptoms, from seeking essential treatment for medical conditions for which medical supervision should be sought**. We concluded the ad breached the Code.

On this point, ads (a) and (b) breached CAP Code rule 12.2 (Medicines, medical devices, health-related products and beauty products).

Action

The ads must not appear again in their current form. We told HOTS not to make claims which stated or implied that, by receiving prayer from their volunteers, people could be healed of medical conditions. We also told them not to refer in their ads to medical conditions for which medical supervision should be sought.