

"Made Whole: Bridging the Natural and Supernatural in Christian Healing"

Yves Perriard – June 2025

Healing That Touches Body and Soul: A Holistic Vision for the Church Today

I believe the Church has lost one of its greatest tools for reaching the world: the power to heal. Almost every page of the Gospels is filled with stories of healing, and the early Church's ability to heal—both naturally and supernaturally—drew crowds to Jesus. In the centuries that followed, monasteries offered natural healing using herbs, oils, and hydrotherapy. Yet today, healing rarely draws anyone into church. This, to me, is both tragic and ironic.

In our postmodern world, people are more open than ever to holistic healing approaches, including those that acknowledge the spiritual. Non-believers, in fact, are often more ready than Christians to explore natural and supernatural therapies. Meanwhile, the Church remains divided and hesitant—disconnected from both ancient wisdom and modern openness. I think it's time for the Church to rediscover a global, integrated approach to health that speaks powerfully to today's world.

The Great Divide - Where We Went Wrong

The Church's separation from healing didn't happen overnight. Historically, the decline in healing power coincided with a weakening of spiritual insight. As Thomas Droege noted, "The power to heal, once manifest through living individuals in union with the love and power of God, came to be associated with relics, sacred shrines, and impersonal sacramental ministry." Healing was no longer personal—it became ritualistic and lifeless.

Over time, suspicion grew toward natural medicine, especially anything rooted in Greek philosophy. Tatian, an early Church father, believed it was inappropriate to credit matter with healing power. As a result, the Church shut down Greek medical schools, outlawed surgeries, and refused to engage in holistic thinking. Later, the Protestant Reformation reacted against Catholic claims of miraculous healing by throwing out the supernatural altogether. What was left was a Church that neither embraced miracles nor practiced holistic care.

I find it shocking that we not only lost the supernatural power evident in the New Testament but also abandoned the natural healing practiced in the monasteries—herbs, essential oils, cleanses, lifestyle disciplines. The Church relinquished both realms.

The Great Bridge - A Shift in Culture—and an Opportunity

Modern science created a view of medicine focused solely on the physical—chemistry and mechanics. Anything “irrational” or spiritual was dismissed. But postmodernism has changed that. More and more people question medical authority and are turning to therapies once labeled fringe. In fact, in 2002, 62% of U.S. adults used some form of complementary or alternative medicine (CAM), including prayer, herbs, chiropractic care, and meditation.

Major hospitals like the Mayo Clinic and Duke now offer CAM services, from acupuncture to massage. All 18 of the U.S. News top-ranked hospitals now incorporate alternative therapies. This is not fringe—it’s mainstream. Many chronic illnesses today, like high blood pressure or depression, have strong psychosomatic roots, and people are searching for deeper healing that addresses body, mind, and spirit.

More importantly, even medical professionals are open to these changes. I’ve seen firsthand how doctors, patients, and researchers alike are exploring how faith, spirituality, and lifestyle contribute to healing. Courses like "Caring for the Soul" are being introduced in medical schools. I believe the Church is missing an extraordinary opportunity here to reintroduce itself as a place of healing—deep, meaningful, powerful healing.

Where the Church Stands

From my experience, the Church today falls into three camps:

1. **Non-charismatic believers** – They lean on reason, dismiss miracles, and remain skeptical of anything supernatural. For them, medicine is modern, and prayer is personal, but never powerful.
2. **Postmodern-friendly non-charismatics** – These Christians are open to yoga, acupuncture, or herbal medicine, but they stop short of embracing healing prayer or deliverance. Some fear these therapies' spiritual roots; others embrace them. But almost all keep the supernatural at arm’s length.
3. **Charismatic believers** – These Christians embrace supernatural healing but often ignore diet, exercise, or natural health disciplines. Many pray for miracles without changing harmful habits. However, I also see a growing minority—especially among educated charismatics—who are embracing both realms. Universities like Oral Roberts and Regent teach a holistic theology of healing that welcomes natural remedies, modern science, and miracles.

This third group, in my view, is the most culturally relevant. It bridges the gap. Postmodern people are drawn to wholeness and experience. A Church that offers both—faith and herbs, prayer and detox, miracles and massage—will be uniquely positioned to minister in today’s world.

A New Direction for My Healing Ministry

This realization has radically reshaped my approach to healing. I've started emphasizing to believers that healing must include wise lifestyle choices. Cooking methods, raw food ratios, detox routines, and exercise all matter. I encourage people to use herbs, essential oils, supplements, and sunlight. I teach rest, various therapies, and fasting. Health is not just about praying—it's about living wisely.

At the same time, I challenge those who reject supernatural healing. Many illnesses defy rational explanation. In the Gospels, about 25% of Jesus' healings involved demonic or supernatural elements. The Greek word *sozo* means more than "healing"—it means "liberation" and "restoration." Likewise, the Hebrew concept of *shalom* is more than peace—it is full, holistic well-being.

The early Church understood this. Healing was both natural and supernatural. They healed through prayer and through practice. I believe that same model—now increasingly accepted in secular culture—can make the Church once again a place where people come for healing.

Final Thoughts

I am convinced that our younger generation is not just open to healing—they are searching for it. But they will not respond to a Church that offers prayer without wisdom or medicine without spirit. We must offer both. A holistic gospel for the whole person. This, I believe, is one of the greatest missional opportunities before us. If we meet people on the level of their pain—with authenticity, power, and practical healing—I believe we will also lead many to the ultimate Healer.