

Naturally all of these six considerations do not apply to every case, but they are germane to the whole question of healing today.

Thomas R. Edgar (pp. 103-107) writes:

To sum up, there is no explicit statement in the New Testament that gifts of healings and miracles were performed by members of the local church. If someone insists that the Corinthian church actually performed all of the spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, then there is still no proof that any other church performed such ministries. In other words, there is no evidence that miracle-working and healing were common in the first-century church. They were not common but were mainly performed by apostles.

The Epistles definitely state that miracles (including healing) were for the confirmation of the gospel message as it was proclaimed in new areas. Romans 15:19 is especially clear. Another very strong passage is Hebrew 2:3-4, which apparently restricts the miracles to eyewitnesses of the Lord and implies that the miracles were past as far as the Hebrews were concerned. Such a conclusion coincides with the evidence of the book of Acts. Very few cases of miracles or healing were private. The case of Eutychus, which was unusual, is the only case of a miracle connected with a meeting. The miracles in Acts were performed for and before the multitudes, did not depend on the recipient's faith, never failed, and were performed almost *en masse*. This fits perfectly with the opinion that the miracles (sign gifts) were to confirm the gospel to unbelievers. They were not primarily for the benefit of the faithful. They were not evidence of someone's faith. They were not practiced in a religious meeting. There is little similarity with the modern-day healing campaigns or with modern claims to healing. The claims of modern-day proponents of healing and miracles do not agree with the practice of the early Church, nor with the purpose, nor with the results.

There are other indications that such gifts were not exercised for the benefit of the local church. James 5:14-15 implies either that these gifts had ceased or that they were not for the church, since it is assumed that the believer has no "healer" to appeal to for healing. Paul writes to Timothy regarding Timothy's physical condition (1 Timothy 5:23) and yet does not tell Timothy to look for a healer. It is impossible to reconcile James 5:14-15 with the claims of present-day healers. In contrast to the lack of exhortation to use or to expect miracles, the Epistles abound in exhortations to holiness, and to minister, teach, pray, etc. For example, Timothy was not instructed to perform miracles but to read, preach, and exhort in sound doctrine. Miraculous sign gifts are not even mentioned in Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 4:10-11, where gifts are discussed and where local church members are exhorted to use their gifts.