

The Faith Healing Claims of Morris Cerullo

Peter May, M.D., recently had the opportunity to evaluate the faith healing claims of Morris Cerullo, an American evangelical who took his healing crusade to Britain. Although a committed Christian and Anglican authority, Dr. May is skeptical of Cerullo's alleged healing powers and tells why.—EDS.

Dr. Peter May

Claims to miraculous healing have been made on American television regularly for many years. They have not passed without critical scrutiny, which does not seem to have altered their popularity. Only recently has there been an attempt to broadcast such programs in Britain. Yet widespread claims to miraculous healings already occur regularly in Britain and throughout the world. Many of these are associated with the so-called Charismatic movement of Pentecostal-style Christianity which has over the last twenty years spread within all the mainstream denominations.

However, such claims are made more widely. Filippino psychic surgeons, New Age and "spiritual" healers, and alternative therapists of varying descriptions claim to perform miracles of a sort.¹ Confusions about the diagnosis and prognosis, the use of other therapies that are not declared, misunderstandings about what the doctor actually said, and irrational beliefs and fears that patients have about their conditions all contribute to the testimonies of those who believe that something quite remarkable has happened to them.

Method

A public challenge was issued to faith healer Morris Cerullo to produce details of his three "best cases" from his week-long "Mission to London" (MTL) in June 1992. By allowing him to select the cases, it was hoped to avoid any suggestion of bias on behalf of the

"What is a miracle? Is a healing always a cure?"

investigator. "Best cases" would also imply that the other cases were not as good.

While it was claimed that 70,000 people had attended the mission and that they were a representative group of Londoners, a survey done by the mission organizers showed that this was not the

case. The average person attending, they discovered, came more than four times. Although it was called a "mission," 94 percent of those who "responded" to Cerullo's preaching were already church members, mostly from independent and charismatic house churches. Less than a quarter of them were of British origin while Afro-Caribbeans accounted for nearly half the total. Women outnumbered men by 2 to 1.²

It was said that 476 of these people had claimed to be healed, although advertisements for Cerullo's 1993 Mission put the number at 2,250. From these, Morris Cerullo took one month to produce a short list of nine cases, while only seven of these provided written consent to approach their doctors. One of these consents was subsequently withdrawn and another was found to have claimed to have been healed at a different event some two years previously.

Results

Of the six who provided access to their records, the following details emerged:

1. *Back pain.* Sheila Lambshead was



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a forty-five-year-old woman who attended a Cerullo meeting in 1990. She gave a fifteen-year history of constant back pain which she attributed to a slipped disc. It had caused her to give up work and had reduced her to using a Zimmer frame indoors and a wheelchair outside. She had been treated with analgesics, physiotherapy, acupuncture, and a corset. At the meeting, Cerullo had put his hand on her head and prayed for her. She claimed that the pain had left her body immediately and that she has subsequently remained well.

An earlier x-ray of Lambshead's lumbar spine had shown marked narrowing of her L5/S1 disc space with osteophyte's formation. This was repeated after her healing and was unchanged.

Given the severity of the degeneration of the base of her spine, her orthopedic surgeon concluded that the disease seen on her x-ray was causing the symptoms she experienced. However, a discrepancy was noted. Her pain extended into her neck and arms. He did not feel this was a condition to put her in a wheelchair, and he and another colleague commented on "functional overlay." It was also observed that her symptoms had made her "very depressed," so much so that she wanted her life to end.

Her visit to the meeting in 1990 had given her a new reason for living. She came away with a newfound faith, and a very real sense of her life having taken on a new significance. She found an inner sense of peace and joy, and claimed new capacity to love others. The mission had made a great impact on her spirituality, and the psychosomatic factors were clearly very powerful. Her records showed that she had had one episode of back pain since her healing, which resulted in a prescription for analgesics.

2. *Poor vision.* Several small children during the mission were claimed to have been healed from severe visual impairments and had their glasses taken from them. The only child whose parents agreed to public retesting was a three-year-old boy, Azam Anjum. Shortly before the mission, his health visitor suspected a squint and at a routine three-year test he was found to have a lazy left eye. This was due to farsightedness

and astigmatism. This initial test suggested very poor vision in the left eye. A review appointment was awaited.

At follow-up, a better reading was obtained for the vision in the left eye, which Azam's mother saw as evidence of a miracle. However, the orthoptist believed it was because the child was less tired and confirmed that the underlying problem remained. She felt that unless the better eye was covered, Azam was in danger of losing his vision in the weak eye. The parents agreed to allow him to wear his glasses again and wear a patch for a while on the right side in order to exercise the left eye. The child has subsequently made good progress although he has required stronger lenses for each eye.

A subsequent promotional leaflet from Morris Cerullo boasted this true but entirely misleading testimonial from the child's mother: "My son has very poor eyesight and could not see out of his left eye. . . . Since MTL, he has been healed and is now able to see clearly out of both of his eyes."

3. *Knee pain.* Arlene Braham was a twenty-six-year-old woman who claimed to have been healed of a twelve-year history of knee pain. She said she had been offered surgery which she had declined. Her G.P. reported that some fifteen months previously she had seen an orthopedic surgeon who found no significant clinical abnormality but reported that x-rays showed signs of *chondromalacia patellae*. She was reassured there was nothing significantly wrong and that surgery had nothing to offer her. At that time, she asked her general practitioner for private physiotherapy and had not consulted her doctor since.

4. *Fibroid.* Georgine McHale was a forty-six-year-old woman who claimed to have been miraculously healed of a fibroid. Cerullo's office stated, "Her testimony is very strong and all documented." Her doctor reported that she had presented in April 1992 with heavy periods. Hormone testing indicated that she was approaching the menopause. There was no suggestion in her notes of a fibroid being found on examination but an ultrasound test had been arranged to investigate that possibility. It was

performed three weeks after the mission and showed two ovarian cysts, but no fibroid.

5. *Lump in groin.* Ann Terry was a fifty-three-year-old woman who feared she had cancer. A malignant melanoma had been removed from her leg in 1981. She presented to her surgery in the week of the mission with what she described as a pain in the groin and feared was a recurrence of her cancer. A *locum* (physician on duty) general practitioner saw her and recorded a one-line entry in her notes: "Small inflamed cyst. Perianal. Advised." She prescribed only a sun block lotion. The doctor recalled the consultation and confirmed that this was just a little spot. No treatment, investigations, or follow-up were thought appropriate. Three days later, after attending the mission, Miss Terry went back to the surgery. She saw another doctor who recorded only that the patient now believed herself to have been healed. No clinical observation was recorded but the patient claimed that she was re-examined and the doctor had commented to her that he could see where the spot had been.

6a. *Back pain.* Maureen Dawes was a forty-three-year-old woman who claimed to have had an eight year history of back pain that had not responded to ultrasound therapy but was healed instantaneously at the mission. Her general practitioner confirmed that she had been off sick a long time due to chronic back-pain. An x-ray of the lumbar spines in February 1992 had been reported as normal. When I spoke to her by phone after the mission, she said she had had no further pain until the day of my call, when it had returned. She said that the devil had given it back to her but she was not going to accept it as real. However, subsequent publicity from Morris Cerullo quotes her as saying, "Since that evening I have not experienced a twinge of pain. . . ."

6b. *Cyst in skull.* More interestingly, this same lady also claimed to have been miraculously healed four years previously at another Cerullo meeting. She said she had had a lump in the skull causing a "prolapse" of her left eye. Her medical records confirm that she had an obvious swelling on the outer side of her

eye socket causing a protrusion of her left eye. She was seen by a neurosurgeon and x-rays led him to think this was a mucocele in communication with her frontal sinus. He strongly advised surgical exploration as he thought the cyst would get bigger, but after attending a Cerullo meeting she took herself off

the waiting list and failed to attend a review appointment. Four years later, the swelling is not obvious, but hair covers the site. She refused to allow close inspection or a repeat of the x-ray. She said the pain had stopped instantly and that her skull had slowly returned to almost normal. One is left to speculate

on the pathology, its resolution, and the possible implications had the diagnosis been different.

These then were the best cases from MTL 1992, selected by Cerullo and presented for public scrutiny. The day after producing this list, Cerullo held a press conference in London in which he

Who Is Morris Cerullo?

Hector Avalos

In the wake of a power vacuum created by the downfall of Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart, Morris Cerullo has emerged as one of the most powerful televangelists in the world. He is a fiery preacher who is seen by millions of persons every week, especially in the United States and Latin America.

According to his autobiographical account, *From Judaism to Christianity* (first published in 1962 and revised in 1965), Cerullo was born in Passaic, New Jersey, on October 2, 1931. He grew up in a Jewish orphanage, and converted to Christianity as a teenager.

Although Cerullo now heads his own independent ministry, he was ordained as a minister for the Assemblies of God in 1952, the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world. The Assemblies of God once counted Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker among its ministers. Cerullo pastored churches in New Hampshire and Indiana in the 1950s, but his greatest success came in southern California. In San Diego, where he still maintains his headquarters, he organized Morris Cerullo World Evangelism, Inc., (MCWE) in 1961. By the 1970s he had gained widespread notoriety for his television appearances.

During the 1980s, Cerullo was probably better known in Latin America than in the United States. He was especially famous for anti-communist crusades filled with undiplomatic rhetoric. He was report-

edly censured several times in Argentina for such outspokenness. In 1981 the Nicaraguan government barred him from entering the country.

In 1990 Cerullo helped to purchase, reportedly for about \$50 million, two major elements of Jim Bakker's former empire: The Praise the Lord (PTL) satellite network and the Christian theme park in Fort Mills, South Carolina, known as Heritage USA. Aside from his own telethons, money for this purchase came from Malaysian bankers and a number of wealthy, but anonymous, donors. Eventually Malaysian United Industries became the owners of Heritage USA, while Cerullo retained control of the broadcasting element. The PTL satellite network was estimated to reach about seven million households in 1990, and his flagship television show, *Victory with Morris Cerullo*, airs throughout the United States and Canada.

In order to understand Cerullo and his popularity, one must understand his Pentecostal message. Pentecostalism is a fast-growing Christian movement that stresses that the miraculous powers attributed to the early Christians in the New Testament (e.g., faith healing, speaking in tongues) are still achievable and should be actively cultivated. These powers are conferred to believers by an event called "Holy Spirit Baptism," which, after salvation from sin, is one of the greatest goals stressed by Pentecostalism. The emphasis on access to miraculous power is one of the

obvious attractions for people who feel powerless in this world.

But perhaps the most attractive part of Cerullo's Pentecostal message is the claim of access to instant healing power. Pentecostalism purports to be, in part, an alternative or complementary health care system for its clients. It is no surprise that this movement grows in places where people can't afford good health care, or where conventional health care has not provided satisfactory results from the viewpoint of the patient. In short, the success of Cerullo lies in his ability to market, and profit from, his claim to have immediate access to a universal, immediate, and supernatural health care plan. Whether Cerullo will be more or less successful in the future may depend on how well the medical and scientific communities can expose the fallacy of his claims.

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presented a further twenty stories. Although I was in the building at the time, I was forbidden to attend, and despite my request, medical verification of these claims was not forthcoming. I was assured that the Cerullo office would "be happy to facilitate follow-up" but this promise was not honored. I can only imagine that the many people I wrote to had been instructed not to reply, as so few did. Some details, however, have come to light.

7. *Esophageal cancer.* Alfred Coombes was an elderly man who claimed to have been healed of a malignancy in his gullet. He readily admitted that he had just had a course of fifteen sessions of radiotherapy, and thanked God for the skill of his doctors.

8. *Deafness.* Cherrelle Grant was a six-year-old child who was not in the original list of nine but was mentioned in the same letter as someone whose parents had agreed to cooperate depending on the result of a clinic appointment in August. The Cerullo office promised to advise me on the progress, but I heard nothing more for nearly a year.

It was reported by Dr. Martin Soole³ that this child's story was one of only three cases investigated and discussed by Mr. Cerullo's own medical panel in June 1993. A doctor visited the child at home and discussed her story with her parents. However, they refused to allow access to medical records so that it could not be established whether and to what degree she was deaf and whether she could now hear.

Her case was presented a week later at Morris Cerullo's "Healing Symposium" held in Birmingham in July 1993. It was claimed that she had been retested and her hearing was now 95 percent normal.

9. *Diabetes.* Edna Merryman claimed to have been healed of diabetes at a Cerullo meeting in 1984. Her doctor confirmed that this was a late onset "type two" diabetes that had settled but had since returned. Although this fact was reported on BBC TV in August 1992, her story was still used in Cerullo's 1993 advertisements.

10. *Stroke.* Sharon Oakley, a nurse, gave her testimony from the MTL platform before eight thousand people.

She claimed to be totally healed of a severe hemiplegia. I phoned her at home. She was very cooperative and gave me her doctor's details and agreed to deliver written consent to him that day. She never did. The Cerullo office insisted that all my inquiries should go through them and that my phone call to her was an "invasion of privacy." I did therefore inquire through them—and heard no more.

11. *Knee disorder.* Luan Spurgeon was a seventeen-year-old girl with a short history of knee pain. At the Cerullo meeting she walked onto the platform carrying a crutch which was dramatically thrown across the platform to an assistant. Cerullo publicity now features a photograph of the front page of a local newspaper that headlined her story. She told me that she had attended a local casualty department (emergency room) with knee pain. They did not x-ray her and made no firm diagnosis, though they said they thought the cause was muscular and loaned her the crutch. They did not arrange a follow-up appointment or any further investigations. She refused to allow me access to her case notes. Her story has been promoted strongly by Dr. Cerullo's organization and appears to be its most sensational case.

Amongst the people who were claimed to be healed but whose names were not put forward for one reason or another, the following details have been gathered:

12. *Displaced hip.* J. B. was a thirty-year-old woman who claimed to have had a congenital hip displacement that had led to a shortening of her leg and arthritis in the joint. She claimed she had been healed of pain in the hip but refused a repeat x-ray as she did not believe it would have altered. She continued to get pain in the leg and still walked with a limp.

13. *Poor vision.* Janet Nwatu is a health visitor who claimed to be healed of poor vision. I was able to find the Health Centre where she worked and wrote to her there. She did not reply to my letter. Her story was included in Cerullo publicity: "My eyesight was very bad. On the Wednesday evening of MTL, I felt like scales were falling from my eyes. Since then, I have been able

to read and write and see perfectly without my glasses on. My colleagues at work are just amazed."

A year later she told her story to a journalist. She said that after her healing she threw away her glasses, but six weeks later developed severe headaches and eye strain. She then returned to her optician who told her her sight had deteriorated and that she needed stronger glasses. She reported this to Cerullo's office and was told that she should pray harder. She felt very upset and disappointed. Despite this failure, she still intended to return to Cerullo to try once more for miraculous healing.⁴

14. *Neuroblastoma.* Natalia Barned was a small child who was declared on the platform by Cerullo to have been healed of "cancer of the blood and the bones." He then made her run for the benefit of the audience. It was obvious that this was a very sick child, yet Cerullo insisted that if she went back to her doctors they would verify her healing. In the next few days she required further blood transfusions and remained seriously ill. An inquiry by ITN has revealed that she died two months later.⁵

15. *Poor vision.* Temitope was one of the children who had had her glasses taken from her by her parents, who insisted that she had been healed. Initially they said they would cooperate with my inquiries and gave me their address. I therefore visited them at home. She had had very thick glasses which were taken from her during the public meeting and shown to the crowd. Morris Cerullo referred to her healing on television and at the end of the mission week invited her back for reassessment, after which he made further claims about her from the platform. I was concerned to witness her walk home from school without her glasses. Her parents confirmed that they had not been returned to her even though she had asked for them. They refused to allow me to arrange an eye test.

16. *Ankle injury.* Twenty-five-year-old Audrey Reynolds claimed to be healed of an ankle injury. She was so convinced she was completely well that she stopped taking her drugs for epilepsy. Six days later she had a seizure in the bath and drowned. Sir Montague

Levine, the Southwark Coroner, concluded, "It is a tragedy that she went to this meeting and thought she had been cured of everything. Sadly, it led to her death."

Prior to his 1993 Mission to London, Cerullo set up a medical panel to examine some of the claims in order to present cases to a special conference he had organized. In a press release⁶ he had promised that this would be a medical symposium at which "irrefutable evidence" of miraculous healing would be presented. In the actual event, his panel of doctors only discussed three cases in detail.³ Cherrelle Grant's parents, it was learned, would not provide medical documentation of her deafness (case 8 above) and Georginia McHale's fibroid story (case 4) remained unimpressive. One further claim was considered.

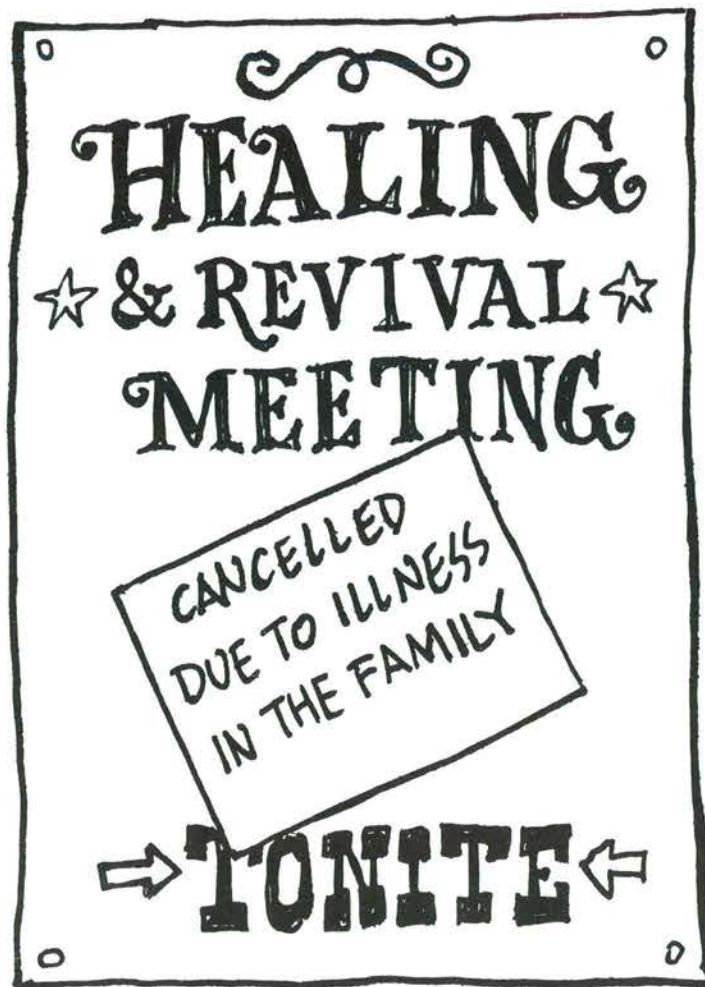
17. *Collapsed lung.* Gloria Malcolm claimed to be healed of a partially collapsed lung. Her doctor however reported to the panel that a chest x-ray had shown she had had some consolidation in her lung but it did not show evidence of collapse. Such an appearance would be likely to follow a lung infection. Although this fact was known by Cerullo's organization in June, advertisements claiming her healing continued to appear in August.⁷

18. *Hay fever.* Dr. James Muir was a prominent member of Cerullo's medical panel. He claimed to be healed of hay fever, albeit towards the end of the hay fever season, in the last week of June 1992. However, healing for him did not mean cure, and he subsequently admitted that he had had further symptoms in 1993.⁸

Dr. Muir was one of about six doctors who were invited to attend Cerullo's "Healing Symposium" held in Birmingham in July 1993. Other doctors were excluded. This did not prevent Cerullo's office issuing a press release afterwards saying that "over 450 doctors and church leaders" had attended.⁹

Among the untold stories, two in particular demand attention.

19. *Asthma.* Nineteen-year-old Malcolm Searle was one of the original "best cases" presented in July 1992. He claimed to be healed of life-long asthma, requiring him to use an inhaler three or more



times a day. He had a signed consent form for me to approach his doctor. However, his general practitioner replied, "Malcolm has stated that he is no longer interested. I am therefore unable to help you."

This would have been fair enough but for the fact that his story was used extensively on advertisements for Cerullo's 1993 Mission to London. A journalist phoned him at home, but he promptly put the phone down. Asthma is a condition that can remit, and it can have a psychosomatic element. It would be nonetheless interesting to know how much inhaler use he has required over

the past year. With such a history, a cure would be highly unlikely in the normal course of events.

20. *Deaf-mute.* Elijah Lewis was six years old when he appeared before the cameras during the 1992 Mission to London. His parents said he had been born deaf and could not speak. Now we were told he was healed. Cerullo tried to get him to count, but resorted to using fingers when he realized he could not hear him. The child grunted in response, making corresponding sounds for whatever number of fingers Cerullo held up. It seemed patently obvious that this child could neither hear nor

Don Davis

speak. Neither would there be any difficulty in having such a child properly assessed.

It was therefore surprising to find that this boy's healing was used prominently in advertisements in 1993. His photograph appeared in newspapers, and full-page advertisements mentioned him first in a list of examples of miraculous healing.

When a journalist contacted Lewis's home, he was told that the family had been instructed not to speak to the press and that all inquiries should go to Greg Mauro, Cerullo's European director.

Strangely, this cute little boy has not appeared on the platform this year. This claim has now become the focus of a formal complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority.

A "Heart of the Matter" television documentary with Joan Bakewell presented the outline of several of these stories. At the end of the program, as if to balance such negative findings, a doctor from Leeds presented the case of Lloyd Twibill. This male infant had a rare congenital fibrosarcoma which the doctor believed had been miraculously healed.

Subsequently the child's surgeon and oncologist complained vigorously at the way that case had been presented on television. Congenital fibrosarcomas have no more than a 10 percent incidence of metastases, and as a group, neonatal soft tissue tumors are highly likely to regress. Colleagues from other centers had advised them of other cases that had spontaneously regressed. They therefore withheld mutilating surgery for good scientific reasons and their optimism was rewarded. Neither was there any question of instantaneous recovery—the tumor remitted gradually over the next six months.¹⁰

I was informed by Cerullo's office, "If in this clear case you were not willing to acknowledge a miraculous explanation, there really would be no point in MCWE [Morris Cerullo World Evangelism] putting forward further cases for your review." I provided detailed explanations as to why I did not accept this story to be miraculous and have had no further cooperation since.

Mission to London 1993

This year similar claims have been made, and despite the lack of cooperation and repeated obstruction from MCWE, two cases have been pursued.

21. *Poor sight.* The mother of Emmanuelle Shean claimed on the MTL platform that her daughter had had poor vision and was now healed. Afterward she phoned Independent Television News and volunteered to have her child re-examined by her optician in front of the cameras. Her story was reported in

ITN's "News at Ten." The optician found her visual problem to be unchanged.⁵

22. *Rashida Smith.* This lady caused an uproar when she reported from the platform that she had been healed of rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and blindness. She presented her blind cane and dark glasses to Morris Cerullo. However, she was walking so unsteadily that he was unconvinced. He announced that she was not healed, but had been "touched." Earlier she was to be seen wearing a large red hat, slowly getting out of her wheelchair. She took some forty minutes to make it up to the platform, needing several assistants to get her up on stage.

The following night however, to great acclamation from the crowd, it was announced by Mr. Cerullo that her healing had progressed all day, and now she was healed of heart disease, diabetes, and paralysis. Doctors, she said, had told her she would never walk again. She then ran across the stadium in front of an ecstatic audience.

Later, she gave ITN written permission for her doctor to provide a report, and I spoke to her doctor on their behalf. She told me reluctantly that, even with written permission, she could not reveal what was written in her case notes without first fully explaining to her patient the nature of the records. If the woman still agreed after that—and I was left with the impression that she thought that would be unlikely—she would then be pleased to cooperate. The patient however was not prepared to see the doctor personally.

It was quite clear to me, reading between the lines of this conversation, that her astonishing story was fundamentally untrue. To suffer from heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, and multiple sclerosis resulting in blindness and paralysis that confined her to a wheelchair would be a remarkable phenomenon. Rarely is so much disease to be found in one body. It is difficult to imagine what would hinder the doctor from announcing the plain facts, if the woman had suffered as she claimed. It was the doctor's concern to protect her patient that indicated that this fantastic story was not to be taken seriously. This impression was confirmed by ITN's

inquiries at the woman's home.⁵

Discussion

The popularity of television healers has made them very wealthy, and Cerullo's organization alone claims to be worth over \$40 million. Its fund-raising is facilitated by the mystique of alleged supernatural powers and an audience is in no position to evaluate what it sees.

Those healers who have fallen from grace have done so because of sexual or financial scandals, which seem easier to expose than documenting the falsehood of their claims to perform miracles.

In our increasingly global village, healers' wealth enables them to operate everywhere. They are not the only people to claim such healing powers. Many alternative therapists in different cultures, from psychic surgeons to witch doctors, are making similar claims and are presumably seeing similar results.

The cases described here highlight the levels of confusion that abound. The first confusion concerns terminology. What is a miracle? Is a healing always a cure?

In 1735, Cardinal Lambertini devised a set of criteria for "miracles" derived from the New Testament, ostensibly used at Lourdes to this day.¹¹ The illness must be incurable and not one that could remit. There must be no treatment given and the cure must be both instantaneous and complete.

These criteria were put before Cerullo's medical panel but rejected as being too rigorous. However, it had no other criteria to use in their place, and used the terms *healing*, *improvement*, and *cure* almost interchangeably.^{3, 12}

Reminders of remission of cancer always sounds like special pleading from a skeptic, but cancers do sometimes regress. Neuroblastoma, for instance, is one of the commonest types of tumor to undergo spontaneous remission. Had such a wonderful thing happened to Natalia Barned it would indeed have seemed like a miracle and would no doubt have been proclaimed as such. One of the most recent claims to miraculous healing from Lourdes (1963) was of an unusual tumor of the pelvis which gradually regressed over many months.¹³ Such things however never

occur instantaneously. Lloyd Twibill's tumor had been called "malignant," but few of these rare tumors have ever metastasized. It resolved over six months.

The cyst on Maureen Dawes's skull seemed like a tumor, but it wasn't malignant, and it resolved spontaneously, and very gradually, possibly draining through her frontal sinus.

The anxiety of Ann Terry, fearing she had a recurrence of her malignant melanoma, is something with which we can all sympathize. Perhaps the *locum* doctor who saw her did not fully appreciate how she felt and did not reassure her adequately. Small inflamed spots can capture our attention out of all proportion to their size and importance.

Patients often do not appreciate the reason that tests are done, and explanations are always time-consuming. Georgina McHale presumably did not understand that her ultrasound was done to see if a fibroid was present, not to confirm a diagnosis that had already been made.

Cancer of the esophagus is a serious condition, but Alfred Coombes would not have been given radiotherapy if there was no chance of his tumor responding to it. He was quite open about his therapy, and grateful for it. However, such testimonials are sometimes overlooked entirely by a patient who has also attended a faith healer.

Diabetes is a serious condition. Many might think it always requires insulin. However, the most common sort of diabetes that older people get is often mild and controllable by diet alone. It might then be argued that such a patient is only a diabetic when he or she puts on weight or eat sweet things.

The anatomy of the knee is such that it is often unclear what the cause of a given knee pain might be. Investigations are only warranted if the pain does not settle. As with so many conditions, time and rest are great healers. Accident departments often loan out crutches for these reasons.

Similarly, the wheelchair seems to be the ultimate hallmark of the "genuine case." However, if the patient won't walk he or she will need to be pushed, and

plenty of people enjoy the luxury of such transport and the attention that goes with it. There may be real gains to be had by adopting an invalid role. Occasionally a visiting doctor, as he approaches the house, will see his patient walking indoors, only to be met at the door moments later by the patient now seated in the wheelchair.

The emotional uplift that healing meetings can create can cause some symptoms to disappear for weeks afterward. Maureen Dawes's backache would seem to be an example, while Janet Nwatu seemed to manage for weeks without her spectacles.

The dangers of believing that you are healed when you are not are exemplified by the sad story of Audrey Reynolds, who died after stopping her medication. Mr. Cerullo insists that he does not tell people to discontinue their treatments but tells them to report back to their doctors.

In practice, what he often says, as he said this summer to an asthmatic child as he held her inhalers, "If you go back to your doctor, he will tell you you do not need these." That might be seen as a good reason not to go back to the doctor.

Janet Nwatu, a health professional, saw fit to throw away her glasses. Maureen Dawes took herself off the surgeon's waiting list, despite his warnings. Temitope's parents saw no need to have her sight retested.

Night by night, disabled people were encouraged to abandon their wheelchairs, take off their braces, or throw away their crutches. Children were deprived of their spectacles and hearing aids. None of this was done with medical approval.

Conclusion

Morris Cerullo has been asked to submit his best cases for public scrutiny. After extensive inquiries that included sending out a questionnaire to the many people on his lucrative mailing list, he has been unable to find a miracle. As one of the

doctors on his own medical panel reported, they have uncovered nothing that lies outside the realm of normal clinical experience.¹⁴ Undeterred, he continues to announce at his meetings, "Every kind of disease is being healed right now."

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to all the doctors who cooperated with my inquiries.

Notes

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