

So what is 'healing' anyway?

IT'S a fair question to ask of someone who has just become diocesan healing adviser: What exactly do we mean by 'Christian healing'?

One definition was provided by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, who said: "The ministry of healing is one way in which the Church reaches out as part of its mission to the world, living out its commission from its gospel roots, but in a way which is highly relevant to contemporary needs."

Healing has as many layers as an onion and so means different things to different people. Many Christians see healing primarily within healing services - involving prayer, the laying on of hands and anointing. In these services the Holy Spirit may work through signs and perhaps even physical cure.

Others see healing as intimately tied up with all that we do as a Christian community. It is possible, for example, to see a whole range of healing within the celebration of the Eucharist - the heal-

the big issue



What do we mean when we talk about 'Christian healing'? Just miracle cures, or something wider than that? Diocesan healing adviser the Rev Paul Kennedy considers the question as part of our regular series on the big moral, spiritual and social issues

ing of sins by confession, the healing of others through intercession, the healing of relationships within the Church as we gather together around the table, and personal spiritual healing through receiving Communion.

So is healing part of our everyday Christian life or experienced in particular times set aside for healing activity? The answer is both. Within our everyday experiences we should be open to specific times and opportunities for healing. This spirit of openness throughout our daily lives may be encouraged by healing services and follows the pattern of Jesus.

We have only to think about how Jesus seized the opportunity

to cleanse the leper, give sight to the blind or healing to the paralysed. In another case, the passing haemorrhaging woman literally grasped the opportunity for healing by clutching at his robe.

In the same way we, as disciples, should be open to specific opportunities for healing within our communities. We may bring the healing touch of Jesus to the dying, preparing them for their death and offering peace.

We may comfort the bereaved as we offer friendship and hope in eternity. We may visit those who are housebound or ill, bringing prayers and support. Those who are weighed down by sin can be encouraged to experience healing

forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Those caught up in bitterness or hatred may experience the healing of relationships and memories: we have only to think of the Peace and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa.

If our healing ministry is part of the everyday, we will always work alongside healthcare professionals and other carers. This is the love of neighbour in practice. It is also the love of God in practice, seeking to restore to wholeness those who are created in God's image.

Such a wide approach to Christian healing is part of the challenge and excitement of this ministry - a ministry we are all called to, as we follow the example of Jesus.

To encourage Christian healing within this diocese, there is an event entitled 'A Celebration of Healing and Wholeness' taking place at our cathedral on May 7 from 10am-3pm.

The speaker is Mrs Beatrice Brandon who, as the convenor for healing in the House of Bishops, played a key part in producing the recent *A Time to Heal* report. She will be speaking on 'Healing and

Wholeness in the Context of Eternity'.

There are a range of workshops later in the morning entitled: 'Deliverance Ministry, an approach'; 'God's Healing in Sight'; 'Reconciliation and Healing within Worshipping Communities'; 'Introduction to Carisbrooke Priory'; and 'Pastoral Healing and Death'. After lunch there is a Eucharist for Healing and Wholeness at 1.45pm. The bishop will preach and preside at this.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about areas of healing that interest us or to be challenged by new insights. All are warmly welcome. Please bring a packed lunch or make your own lunchtime arrangements.

For more details about the ministry of healing, or the Celebration of Healing and Wholeness, contact the Rev Paul Kennedy on 01730-264282 or paul@kennedypaul.wadadoo.co.uk

● *What social, moral or spiritual issue would you like to see covered in The Big Issue column? Contact Neil Pugmire on 023-9282 5731 or communications@portsmouth.anglican.org*



MARKETING ● PUBLISHING ● PRINT ● DESIGN



Call Ian Pilkington on 01752 225623 or visit www.cornerstonevision.com

Cornerstone Vision, 28 Old Park Road, Peverell, Plymouth PL3 4PY Tel: 01752 225623 www.cornerstonevision.com