

ANOINTING OF THE SICK:
STUDIES IN THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT
AND PASTORAL METHOD

by

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Summary

In this thesis the rite of anointing the sick with oil blessed for this purpose has been examined in its historic context beginning with the Old Testament background and concluding with writings which have become available in the present year (1973).

The Old Testament background and the New Testament use of oil show that the injunction of James implied a union of religious and medical weapons in the fight on illness. This was effected through the use of oil, the medical specific of the age, and prayer, the religious dimension of the rite. Thus it is shown that the use of the elders and their oil was not a replacement for the use of ordinary care in the face of illness but rather was the combination of all means available in an attempt to overcome the realm of illness and disease.

From this period the history of the rite has been traced up to the time of the Protestant Reformation. During these centuries the anointing of the sick came to be regarded as unction of the dying. This transition period threw the ritual of anointing into a state of confusion and this situation has not been reversed until the present day attempt to reinstate the oil of the sick as a sacrament to be sought by the seriously ill rather than by those who are in the actual throes of death. The old idea of oil as a means of conveying restoration to health and wholeness lost popular appeal at this time as the beliefs of the general public were such that the rite was postponed for fear of recovery and the resultant rigorous penitential requirements which were associated with such cases. There were still to be found those who were interested in the use of the rite in terms of James 5

where the purpose appears to be for health and wholeness and not for death and life after death.

Thus at the time of the Reformation the position of the rite was very confused. The official Church belief was that the oil was effective in the cure of ills even though the popular belief was that it was to be used at the point of death. With this confusion the Reformers found another area at which to direct their attacks and this they did by comparing the Epistle of James to the practices of the day. Seeing a great deviation from the original meaning of the injunction and regarding the possible superstitions which might evolve from the rite, the ritual came to be omitted from the religious life of the Protestant Churches.

At this time Rome met problems of doctrine and the abuses which were rampant within the Church through the Council of Trent, which met from 1545 until 1563. At this assembly of the Church the sacraments, among other things, were discussed and explained theologically. Extreme unction was defined and commended to the populace of the Roman Catholic Church in terms which were not in keeping with the popular attitudes of the day. This doctrine was to be the official doctrinal position of the Church until the present day revisions which were proclaimed in January 1973. The decisions of Trent are examined and show the teaching of the Church of Rome in reference to this ancient rite.

Following a discussion of Trent the modern Church is examined in an attempt to indicate the beliefs which surround this ritual in the present day. The Anglican Church's use of the oil of the sick seems to have been fairly consistent throughout its history and this usage has been in terms of the restoration to health of the patient anointed.

A brief sketch of this history will show how the sacramental ministry has been regarded throughout the centuries by the Church in its official and unofficial manifestations. Documents from various periods will indicate the implicit beliefs surrounding the use of this ministry as performed within this denomination of Christianity.

Pentecostalist denominations, like several enthusiastic movements in the past, use this ministry to the ill as they attempt to exercise a ministry of healing in the present day. A cursory examination of the roots of this movement of the modern Church indicates that this is not a new phenomenon but a manifestation of a recurring aspect of life within the Christian Church. The literature on and about the healing ministry within this denomination is used to indicate the place and meaning of this rite in the care of the sick. The paucity of information within the writings on the use of chrism as a ministry of the community of faith means that much has to be derived by implication rather than from the content of theological expositions or doctrinal assertions on the rite.

The modern Roman Catholic revisions of the sacrament of the sick occupy much of the section devoted to modern Roman Catholic practices. The theology of the Church as regards this rite can be seen from reading the new rites for the sick and these show the movement of the Church towards a new appreciation of the ancient significance of the anointing of the members of the Church who are seriously ill. A perusal of the prayers and liturgy indicate the meaning which is implied in the use of the oil of the sick as it will be administered in the new rites which become effective on January 1, 1974.

The modern attitude appears to indicate cross-denominational similarities with the function of the ritual anointing of the sick being regarded by Anglicans, Pentecostals, and Roman Catholics as a means of conveying the Church's ministry of healing to those members of the community of faith who are ill. There are to be found in this sacramental ministry to the sick certain qualities which have not been given the attention which they deserve. Confrontation and mission are to be found in the illness situation and these are not only directed to the member who is ill but also speak to the community of faith in its life and work. The use of suffering as a means of confrontation and mission has been shown to operate effectively under the use of a ritual ministry such as the anointing of the sick. When this is the case the community of faith through the unction of the sick makes of illness a time when there is to be found the opportunity for health and wholeness, the ancient and modern goal of the anointing of the sick. This healing and wholeness have been examined and indicate the similarities between medical wholeness and theological salvation, both of which are psycho-somatic and sociological in nature.

The thesis concludes with a brief consideration of some of the implications of the consideration of this rite to the modern, and especially the Protestant, Church.

Preface

The author is very much aware of the help and encouragement which enabled this work to be completed. To acknowledge all those who have assisted in some way would be virtually impossible and so those who have been of most immediate assistance will be the only ones who will be mentioned. A sincere expression of thanks is made to Rev. Professor J.C. Blackie, Professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology, and to Rev. Dr. A.V. Campbell whose guidance and supervision have been very much appreciated over the period of study in which this work evolved. A word of appreciation is also extended to the other faculty members of New College who have indicated areas of research which have been of invaluable help in the completion of this thesis.

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As in any thesis preparation the library staff contribute an assistance which is an absolute essential if the material presented is to be comprehensive. The library staff have been one of the greatest sources of help in the period of time which has been spent on the researching of this thesis. A special word of thanks is given to

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Chapter One:

Father, Calvin, The Council of Trent
On Eucharistic Realism and the Ministry
to the Sick

Introduction	vii
Calvin	101
Trent	117

Chapter Two:

Analysing of the Sick in the Modern Church
(Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman
Catholic)

Presbyterian	127
Anglican	132
Roman Catholic	141

Chapter Three:

Confrontation and Mutual Condemnation
by the Community of Faith, Vital, and
Suffering in the Search for Health and
Holiness with Forming Institutions

Community of Faith	153
Vital	158
Suffering	162
Health and Holiness	165
Forming Institutions	168

Bibliography

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Summary	
Preface	
Introduction	i
Chapter One:	
Anointing of the Sick in the New Testament	1
Chapter Two:	
Anointing of the Sick: Its History and Development Until The Time of The Protestant Reformation	36
Chapter Three:	
Luther, Calvin, The Council of Trent On Extreme Unction and the Ministry to the Sick	90
	Luther
	Calvin
	Trent
	91
	108
	119
Chapter Four:	
Anointing of the Sick in the Modern Church: Pentecostalism, Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism	130
	Pentecostalism
	Anglicanism
	Roman Catholicism
	131
	152
	185
Chapter Five:	
Confrontation and Mission: Considerations On the Community of Faith, Ritual, and Suffering In The Search For Health and Wholeness With Concluding Implications	214
	Community of Faith
	Ritual
	Suffering
	Health and Wholeness
	Concluding Implications
	218
	228
	240
	248
	263
Bibliography	269

INTRODUCTION

The Christian Church with its long antecedent history in Judaism has always been concerned with the problem of illness and with ministering to those who found themselves in this condition. In Old Testament times and in the period of the New Testament illness was seen as the action of demons or as the result of sin. All ills were regarded as the work of the realm of Satan if not caused by Satan or by demons per se. ¹ In ancient times medical cure was extremely limited by modern standards, with people utilizing such things as unction and ointments to effect the desired results. ²

Karl Barth points out that Jesus is engaged in war on all forms of sickness and suffering simply because he is the Messiah and does not accept evil as a natural part of the life of man. Barth says that evil such as illness is allowed to operate with divine permission but that it is contrary to the will of God. Jesus comes as the representative of the divine will and in the presence of him the sick are made whole, the blind are given their sight, and the lame are enabled to leap for joy. Christ comes as the victor over this negative domain of sickness and suffering. ³ The Church has continued to confront illness and the anguish which is associated with it in an attempt to continue the ministry to this group and to bring them health.

1. cf. G. Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 2, tr., G.W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), pp.18-19.

2. See Isaiah 1:6. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." (K.J.V.)

3. cf. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol.3, pt.2, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1968), pp.599-600.

One method used in the pastoral care of the sick has been the anointing of the ill person with oil blessed by the bishop for this purpose. Unction, based on tradition and on the New Testament passages which have been the foundation used for the justification of this ministry,⁴ has changed dramatically from the time of the early Church until the present day. Throughout the history of Christianity the use of oil has found acceptance within the Church structure as a means of ministering to those who suffer under the burden of serious illness. There appears to be a continuity in the use of this means of pastoral care in the western Church which warrants its study in some depth. The act in the eastern Church is different in its administration and theology and will not be regarded in this thesis. Instead the rite will be considered only in the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Pentecostal denominations.

The whole area of the ministry to the ill has taken on a new vitality in recent years with a renewed interest in the Church's healing ministry. This has found its expression in many forms and in many ways but the most vocal of these in the modern Church are to be found in those denominations which claim to exercise the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, of which healing is one. The writings which have come out of this revival are quite numerous and at the same time tend to be subjective in nature thus making it

4. Mark 6:13, "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." James 5:14, "Is any sick among you? Let him send for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (K.J.V.)

difficult to establish a theological framework within which to place a healing ministry. Unction seems to be that mode of ministry which has a degree of objectivity which would enable one to present healing as a viable gift which has been entrusted to the Church.

There is a problem in this respect too, however, as one is confronted with a type of ministry about which there has been very little written. The modern Roman Catholic writings deal with unction only in a few pages in books on sacramental theology and give very little space to the development of the rite from ancient times to the present day. The writings of the Anglican Church are of very little help in this respect either. There is a renewed interest in the sacramental ministry to the ill and in the healing ministry of the Church but there is little material which places the rite in its historic context. The Anglican Church has several societies which are interested in this aspect of the Church's life, such as the Guild of St. Raphael and the Guild of Health, and these attempt to stimulate interest in and the use of the ministry of healing within the Church. Yet there is little to be found in the writings which are inspired by these groups that would place illness and a sacramental ministry to the ill in the context of the tradition of the Church. Laying on of hands and anointing with oil are used and held up as valid means of executing a healing ministry but there is given little background for the use of such forms of help. The situation is even worse in the Pentecostal writings which deal with the healing ministry. Here one finds writings about individuals who

perform such ministries and about the results which they have obtained in their presentation of the laying on of hands and the administration of the oil of the sick. Tradition appears to be relegated to a position of little importance whereas the injunction as found in James 5: 14ff. is held up as sufficient justification for the usage of this ancient rite. It would appear from the lack of material available on the use of unction that the history of the sacramental ministry to the ill has little to teach modern man in the search for new meaning in the pastoral care of the sick.

This dearth of information was one of the primary reasons for the presenting of this thesis on the anointing of the sick. The method used will be to give a history of the use of chrism from its Old Testament background until the present day. There are some very great gaps in the history of the rite but these can be filled in by implication and conjecture due to statements from earlier and later periods which maintained a degree of continuity until the eighth century. From this time until the present day there is a fairly clear development of the rite as it became both anointing in the face of death, *de facto*, and unction in the danger of death, *de jure*. This is also seen in relation to the ancient use of oil as in the early Church.

Through using the developing history of the rite it was hoped that a clearer understanding and appreciation of the meaning and purpose of anointing could be attained. The findings of this search are interwoven throughout the text of the thesis and lead on to a

final chapter which deals with some new possibilities in interpreting the use of the oil of the sick in the modern Church in times of serious illness.

It is hoped that this presentation might stimulate interest in the sacramental ministry to the ill within the Protestant denominations of Christianity.

This brief passage of Scripture and an even shorter text from the Gospel according to St. Mark give a tradition dating from the Testament which have been the foundation for the building of the Church's practice of anointing the sick and dying. This study will endeavour to examine these few verses of the New Testament writing to discern a developing theology of persons now explicit in them. The primary focus of this chapter will be the Epistle of James, its background and setting, and from this it will be attempted to state what James and the early Christians understood as the outcome of this act.

Most my commentary to the Epistle of St. James will provide the with the different theories as to the author of this letter. The leading authorities tend to feel that James, the brother of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, was, in all probability, the brother of Jesus and the Bishop of Jerusalem. Other views, of course, are not unknown and have been raised for centuries.

CHAPTER ONE

ANOINTING OF THE SICK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Is one of you ill? He should send for the elders of the congregation to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer offered in faith will save the sick man, the Lord will raise him from his bed, and any sins he may have committed will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, and then you will be healed. A good man's prayer is powerful and effective.

James 5:14-16 New English Bible

This brief passage of Scripture and an even shorter text from the Gospel According to St. Mark plus a tradition dating from Old Testament times have been the foundation for the building of the Church's practice of anointing the sick and dying. This thesis will endeavour to examine these few verses of the New Testament writing to discern a developing theology of pastoral care implicit in them. The primary focus of this chapter will be the Epistle of James, its background and meaning, and from this it will be attempted to state what James and the early Christians visualized as the outcome of this act.

Almost any commentary on the Epistle of St. James will provide one with the different theories as to the author of this letter. The leading authorities tend to feel that James, the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, was, in all probability, the brother of Jesus and the Bishop of Jerusalem.¹ Other views, of course, are not uncommon and have been voiced for centuries.

1. J.B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: Macmillan & Co., 1892), p.vi.

However, one can examine these other points of view ² and arrive at one's own decision concerning authorship. In this work the position will be held that the source of the epistle was James the brother of the Lord.

It seems obvious that James would have been a person of considerable authority for his letter to be addressed to such a far reaching group as the people of the dispersion. These people would be Jewish Christians ³ and the letter was written in a style, tone and doctrine with a definite Jewish note. ⁴ The purpose of the letter was to deepen and broaden the understanding of the term Christian to these recent converts. James indicates the need for personal commitment and involvement rather than merely verbal acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord. He tries, therefore, to arouse those new Christians to a more outgoing and dynamic faith; a faith which transcends mere orthodox belief and becomes a faith which brings one's total being into line with the will of God as manifested through Jesus Christ. ⁵

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2. Ibid., Mayor develops the arguments lucidly and thoroughly and it is felt that his commentary is a reliable source to examine the opposing schools of thought regarding the authorship of the Epistle of James.
 3. R.J. Knowling, Westminster Commentaries: The Epistle of St. James (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1910), p.xvi. Also see C.L. Mitton, The Epistle of James (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1966), pp. 7-8. And also Mayor, The Ep. of Jas., p.cxiii.
 4. Mayor, The Ep. of Jas., p.i.
 5. Mitton, The Ep. of Jas., pp. 7-8.

In order to do this James uses terse and powerful phrases which are quite similar and parallel to the sayings of Jesus. These sayings and teachings are not unrealistic or simply philosophical exclamations, rather they are very practical and concrete exhortations to be used in the ordering of one's life.⁶ The text upon which this thesis is written, James 5:14-16, is one such pragmatic passage as here James appears to be speaking of the efficacy of prayer in the life of believing Christians of the early Church.⁷

This book of the New Testament is certainly of an early date. There is some disagreement as to the proper dating of it, but many authorities would claim that it was probably written between A.D.40 and 60.⁸ Thus it appears as if it would convey practices and attitudes of the time of Jesus quite well and also indicate the practices of the early Church.

This passage is one of two in the New Testament which makes reference to the act of anointing those who are sick. The other is found in St. Mark 6:13, "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them". King James Version.

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6. Knowling, West. Comm. The Ep. of Jas., p.xvi.
 7. C. Kearns O.P., Christ and the Sick in the New Testament. The Furrow, Vol. 11 number 9, September 1960, pp.557-571 (Maynooth, 1960), p.566.
 8. J. Wilkinson, Healing in the Epistle of James. The Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 24 number 3, August 1971; pp. 326-345, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1971), p.326. Also: Mayor, The Ep. of Jas. p.cxxiv. He says 40-50. Knowling, West. Comm. The Ep. of Jas. says 44-50. Kearns, Christ ... Test., p.566, says 45-60. However B.O. Reicke, The Anchor Bible: The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1964), claims that the letter was written by a disciple of James around A.D.90.

In Mark's account of this practice, it is obvious that the emphasis is on healing in association with the disciples and their use of oil. It is definitely a physical effect which is not only referred to but also executed through the act of anointing the sick. There is a strictly physical, if that is possible, result from this unction and there is no reference to matters spiritual whatsoever. Therefore, it may be assumed that for Mark the anointing of the sick was purely for the purpose of healing. There appears to be no trace of the later idea of unction in extremis or even of an incurable disease.⁹

Anointing is not mentioned by any of the other New Testament writers. The fact that it is mentioned by these two does indicate that it was a relatively common thing to do. In the Synoptic Gospels, on the other hand, the power to heal bodies is linked to the power over devils and unclean spirits. It seems as if this connection between illness and unclean spirits was something ascribed to all the sick in many of the early liturgies of the Church.¹⁰ In order to gain power over these demons, repentance seems to be linked to healing either directly or indirectly. Mark 6:12 indicates that the message proclaimed, prior to the healing miracles of the disciples, was that men should repent. Palmer feels that this rules out the strictly charismatic and thaumaturgic view of this act of unction and places it in the realm of the 'sacramental'.

9. A. Plummer, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: The Gospel According to St. Mark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), p.71.

10. P.F. Palmer, S.J. The Purpose of Anointing the Sick: A Reappraisal, Theological Studies Vol. 19, 1958, pp.309-344, Washington, D.C. (Published by the Theological Faculties of the Society of Jesus in the United States, 1958), p.313.

He feels that Christ gave this power to the Twelve and that it was to be extended to the elders of the congregations as mentioned by James. From this the extension ought to be carried on into today's world and the act of anointing be continued by the priests of the Church.¹¹

If this is the case then, Palmer goes on to point out, the passage in James 5:14-16 is not a new rite with a new purpose at all. It is the same rite as contained in Mark's Gospel plus the conditional effect of this sacramental act; namely, the forgiveness of sins. On this point he says that forgiveness is a conditional effect and not an essential part of anointing since one may be without sin, e.g. a recently baptized convert. For him, the primary purpose of the unction in the name of the Lord is for the recovery of health.¹²

Whatever one may assume regarding the relationship between these two passages, it seems quite clear that anointing the sick was a practice of the early Church. It also seems probable that even if one cannot state that Jesus' command was presupposed by James then at least His sanction would not have been withheld.¹³

In James 5:14-16 the sick man is to send for the elders of the Church and they are to come and anoint him with oil, pray over him, and he will be raised up, cured of his infirmity. Here there is no authoritative directive as to the use of oil. It appears as if this practice is assumed as the natural thing to do. There is, on the other hand, an injunction as to the procedure which ought to follow this unction.

11. Ibid., p.313.

12. Ibid., p.313.

13. Knowling, West. Comm. The Ep. of Jas., p.140.

The elders here are told to pray with the man in prayers of faith and this will be effective in executing a physical cure as the Lord will raise him up.¹⁴

Deems is not alone in feeling thus. James Hastings also claims that healing in James is directly related to prayers of faith rather than to the anointing with oil.¹⁵ He maintains that anointing is of lesser importance in this passage and probably was performed in order to follow custom. Custom does not imply superstition since it is performed in the name of the Lord. To continue, he points out that the oil is a "sacramental help" to faith and claims that it is easier to believe when one uses visible means than when nothing is used, especially when the visible means are expected to have merit of their own.¹⁶

Be this as it may. This appears to be reading too much into this first century practice. It is felt that here James is assuming the use of medical means available in conjunction with prayers of faith. These two powerful tools are seen to be more efficacious in their results when used together than either one used in isolation from the other. Used in union, the medical and spiritual methods referred to by James result in the proper treatment of disease, the therapy of the whole man. Here James is calling one's attention to the fact that even in illness God cares for and is with man and hears the prayer of faith, and out of love responds with the appropriate action.

14. C.F. Deems, The Gospel of Common Sense (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1896), pp.292-293.

15. J. Hastings, ed., Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, Vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1918), p.107.

16. Ibid., p.107.

It is an act which calls for all: the authority of Christ, for the use of medical science, and for the prayers of those of faith. This completed and the way to cure is made clear.

Kearns gives something of this idea when he comments on this passage from James:

"Let them pray over him: They are pictured, while they pray as stretching their hands out over him, or perhaps even laying their hands upon him (epi), in accordance with a religious rite already existing amongst the Jews and adopted by Our Lord ... Anointing him with oil: This practice was general amongst the ancients, including the Jews, as a therapeutic measure. The oil referred to is olive oil (elaion). But for the Apostles this rite had already been raised to the supernatural order. With Our Lord's sanction they had used it as the vehicle of the charismatic ministry to the sick with which He had entrusted them. Saint James here shows it to us as an accepted practice in the Church. In the name of the Lord: "The Lord" is Christ. The rite is carried out in His name, i.e. invoking His name, calling for the intervention of His power and showing that which is done is done with His authority." ¹⁷

He indicates quite clearly why each step was performed but does not go quite far enough. It is felt that James is calling for the necessary union of these composite parts to result in the harmonious whole which executes efficacious cures.

The problem naturally arises as to the meaning of the term sick. The word for sick in James 5:14 is the same word used in Matthew 10:8 (Heal the sick ..., K.J.V.), which refers to physical illness. This word, $\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu\epsilon\hat{\iota}$ refers to one who is sick enough to be kept away from his work. Even as today one would be advised to call in the people who could help in such a situation, so James advised his readers not to attempt to face the situation alone.

17. Kearns, Christ...Test., p.567.

He instructed them to call on the assistance of their Christian friends and singled out from this group those who were well known as men of spiritual understanding. Together they would pray for restoration to health and use the medical means available in the form of anointing with oil.¹⁸

J.E. Huther maintains that *ἀσθενέω* means more than just any sick person. He says that it applies to "only such a person who under the burden of bodily suffering also suffers spiritually, being thereby tempted in his faith."¹⁹ It is for this reason, he feels, that the person ought to call to himself the presbyters of the congregation to which he belongs. Like Hastings, Huther feels that it is the prayer of faith which is effective rather than the oil. The anointing with oil is simply the act accompanying the prayer.²⁰

Similarly, B.O. Reicke claims that the intercessory prayers of the church officials are the effective element in the cure of the illness. Nevertheless, he points out that James's instruction to anoint the sick with oil is based upon an old model to be found in Jewish tradition and claims that the unction of the sick has a definite point of contact with Jesus by means of Mark 6:13. He says that the "healings of Jesus are thought to be perpetuated and effected through the officials of the church, as a result of intercessory prayer confirmed by the use of holy oil".²¹

18. Mitton, The Ep. of Jas., p.197.

19. J.E. Huther, ed., Meyers Commentary on the New Testament: Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James and John (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1882), pp.217-218.

20. Ibid., pp.217-218.

21. Reicke, The Anc. Bib.: The Ep. of Jas., Pet., & Jude, p.59.

But there appears to be more to it than this. The intercessory prayers are important but there is the whole realm of faith and its merits. James demands that the presbyters and all concerned not only display but hold faith and confidence in the efficacy of the prayers for the person's recovery. Unless they have faith the full effect of the sacramental act is not readily felt. This can be seen in the expression that we see in verse 15, "the prayer of faith". P.F. Palmer maintains that this phrase may mean the prayer inspired by faith or a prayer accompanied by faith. He says that this would better explain the closing remarks of this particular passage where James says "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas.5:16)²²

B.O. Reicke seems to concur in this opinion. He turns to verse 17 and makes use of the reference to Elijah to substantiate his claim. However, he goes beyond the faith dimension and enters the realm of righteousness. Whether or not there is a difference between the two ideas, the prayer offered from faith, and the prayer of the righteous man it is difficult to say. Nevertheless there seems to be more implied in the comment of Reicke than there is in the one by Palmer.

Reicke says: "it is not a matter of intercessory prayer by any honorable or faultless man, but specifically by the righteous one, who because of his righteousness is able to intercede effectively ... It is made clear that Elijah was no superhuman being but a man. Nevertheless Elijah cannot be called "righteous" in any commonplace sense, but should rather be described as a "martyr (witness)", a "holy one", or something comparable The supernatural power of Elijah's prayer derives from his righteousness or holiness, as a man intimately associated with God."²³

22. Palmer, The Purpose ... A Reappraisal, p.314.

23. Reicke, The Anc. Bib.: The Ep. of Jas., Pet., & Jude, p.60.

From this statement Reicke goes on to point out that this is not the end of such power. "If that man of God could hold back and call heavenly grace through prayer, then a righteous and holy man of the church can also by his prayer call down God's healing power on a sick person." ²⁴

From this it appears as though the resultant effectiveness of the act of anointing the sick with oil was because of a certain quality of prayer from a certain type of individual. This may be so but surely it goes beyond this. Granted that a prayer from a righteous man is probably more fervent than a prayer uttered by a man of considerable faith, there seems to be a lack of appreciation of the nature of the purpose of the prayer in the first instance. Surely there is more to such acts of the church as a whole than that their effectiveness is only felt or operative when performed by one who would be considered as righteous, as in Reicke's commentary. It would seem that this view tends to placing the efficacy of the act on the shoulders of the persons involved and not primarily on God, who should be the focal point. It is possible that this attitude could arise out of a need to explain the problem of those who are not healed by the prayers of the elders of the congregation. However, this is not the case at all. If the person is not raised up as James says he will be, there is no implicit lack of faith or sincerity in the prayers offered on his behalf. The logic of faith allows for the wisdom of God in the healing of the person involved. There may well be other reasons why the healing has not occurred and will not

24. Ibid., pp.61-62.

occur in any particular case. Faith and constancy in prayer are necessary in the process of healing but there is the element of the wisdom of God.²⁵ The oil and the prayers are not the important or the essential elements in the cure of the patient. They are but the means by which God heals. It is God through Christ who heals as God is the "Life-giver and Healer."²⁶

For this reason it seems that the act of unction of the sick implies more than a medical or a spiritual panacea. It appears to be a symbolic act performed by the church to bring about the physical cure of the person afflicted with an illness and at the same time it is a means of sanctifying the patient to the glory of God. Or as James Hastings says: "anointing had in part the nature of a sacrament. And it seems probable that something of this sort underlies the passages Mk.6:13 and Jas.5:14. The anointing oil was not merely medicinal, but consecrated the patient to God, and, together with prayer, was the means of conveying to him the Divine healing life."²⁷

From this one must begin to look at the history of this act to see if there is any continuity in the practice surrounding the use of oil as a means of setting apart of the person anointed to the service of God. Some feel that this anointing is the continuing rite in the church which harkens back to apostolic times.

25. Wilkinson, Heal. in the Ep. of Jas., p.337.

26. Mitton, The Ep. of Jas., p.201.

27. J. Hastings ed., Dictionary of the Apostolic Church Vol. 1. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915), p.66.

James Bengel states: "That which Christ had committed to the apostles, Mark vi.13, was afterwards continued in the Church, even after the time of the apostles: and this very gift, remarkably simple, conspicuous, and serviceable, was of longer continuance than any other If in the discharge of thy office, thou anointest the sick with oil. It even seems to have been given by God with this intent, that it might always remain in the Church, as a specimen of the other gifts: just as the portion of Manna laid up in the ark was a proof of the ancient miracle. It is clear that James assigns the administration of this oil to the presbyters, who were the ordinary ministers."²⁸

Bengel is not alone in using the term presbyters to apply to the ordinary leaders of the Christian communities. Rather than referring to those who are designated as righteous or of special religious aptitude, he sees the presbyters as those who were the ones responsible for the pastoral oversight of the local congregation. They were the ones upon whose shoulders the local community of faith had seen fit to entrust the spiritual oversight of its members. That is, they were responsible for the maintaining and strengthening of faith and trust in God and those members of the community who were both well and ill. It would be this group who would be called upon to visit the homes of the sick. It appears as though the person who called the elders would be too ill to attend the regular gathering in the church²⁹ and have his needs attended to there. Hence the congregation would go to the person concerned in the persons of the elders. They were the ones seen as being best suited to meet the needs of the community of faith at large.³⁰

28. J.A. Bengel, Gnomon of the New Testament Vol. 5, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1873), p.39.

29. O.E. Oesterley, The Expositors Greek Testament: The General Epistle of James (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), p.474. He says that the term $\epsilon\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\alpha$ is a collective term deriving from the Hebrew $\{ \text{קָהָל} \}$ which was the word used for their collective worship. It came to be applied to the local communities of Christians rather than the whole of Christianity and it is in this sense that it is used here when reference is made to the term "church".

30. Mitton, The Ep. of Jas., p.197.

When the elders came they were to do two things. They were to pray over the sick man and also they were to anoint him with oil. The passage is not clear as to the methods to be used or the time sequence to be followed in this sacramental act. However, Wilkinson sheds some light on the subject.

He states: "It is difficult to dogmatise on the time relationship of these two procedures. The instruction to anoint with oil is expressed by an aorist participle which usually means that the action it describes precedes that of the main verb, which in this case concerns prayer. However, since there are numerous examples where the aorist participle denotes simultaneous action it is impossible to exclude this here, and so the anointing may have preceded the prayer or may have accompanied it. It should be noted that James gives no guidance on where or how extensively the sick man was to be anointed.

The prayer of the elders was to be offered over (epi) the sick man, presumably as he lay in bed. The type of prayer which will be effective is defined in verse 15 as 'the prayer of faith.' In response to this believing prayer, the sick man will be saved, will be raised up and will have his sins forgiven....

In verse 16 James appears to ignore the elders and goes on to say that all members of the congregation can take part in healing. They should confess their sins to one another and pray for one another, and they will be healed."³¹

Thus it seems logical to assume that the anointing of the sick as performed by the elders was not an uncommon event in the early church. As a general rule, it appears to have been performed by the elders but it would not be too gross an assumption to indicate that the average member of the congregation would have been involved in a ministry of healing as well. The reference to Elijah could possibly have been for the purpose of a well known example of the power of the prayers of faith more as a model to emulate rather than as a criterion for faith.

31. Ibid., p.206.

The main thing to remember at this point is that the whole person is being treated with every means available. The prayer of faith and the anointing with oil are to be used but they are to be used together and thus the desired effect will be obtained. Ordinary medicine is to be used but it is the prayer of faith, in the final analysis, that will bring about the miraculous cure. These are effective in connection with the faith of the person who is ill. His faith is an essential element in the whole process and cannot be minimized.³² Thus it can be seen that the topic of James 5:13-16 is healing in the context of prayer.³³

Before proceeding further it would be well to examine the rite of anointing in an attempt to discover its roots in history previous to James.

Throughout the east it was customary to anoint both persons and objects with a sweet smelling unguent or oil which was either poured or smeared on or over them. This can be seen from the fact of the anointing of the cultic stone. Through this act worship was offered to the deity which the stone represented or who was believed to dwell in the stone. This act had the effect of bestowing power upon the object anointed (the stone) and also set it apart as holy. Similarly, temples were anointed. The various parts were anointed and so were the holy vessels. This was the act of consecration. The same thing appears to have occurred in Babylonia.³⁴

32. R.F. Weidner, The Lutheran Commentary: James Peter John Jude (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1897), pp.78-79.

33. Wilkinson, Heal. in the Ep. of Jas., p.326.

34. S. Mowinkel, He That Cometh, ed. G.W. Anderson, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), p.4.

Why oil was used is difficult to state unequivocally, but it can quite readily be assumed that it was utilized because of its availability. It appears to have been considered as one of the basics of life amongst the ancient Israelites. Hosea 2:8 refers to corn, wine, and oil. It is also evident as a sign of God's favour and as a necessity of life in Deuteronomy 11:13-14 where corn, wine and oil are mentioned together as a reward for loyalty to God's commandments. This is also the case in Deuteronomy 28:15, 38-40 and 51 where the oppressors will be satiated with corn, wine and oil even though Israel will go without these essentials.

Evidence indicates that anointing the head with oil was merely part of the daily ritual similar to washing one's face.³⁵ Anointing with oil was also used as a sign of respect for an honoured guest. (Psalm 23:5, Luke 7:46) In the Old Testament however, "the allusions are more frequent to the use of oil in connection with the bath; thus washing and anointing are named together in Ruth 3:3, 2 S. 12:20, Ezek. 6:9, Judith 10:3, Sus. 17 and the same conjunction is probably implied in the more general references, Dt. 28:40, Mic. 6:15."³⁶

Another function of unction which one finds repeatedly in Scripture is the metaphorical anointing to express a religious idea. The New Testament term *Χρίω* is always used in this way and the Old Testament word *חָטַח* is sometimes used as a metaphor with God as the subject. It is felt that this metaphorical use may have originated in the idea of God pouring out His Spirit on a person or persons for a specific purpose. To illustrate this one could look to

35. T.K. Cheyne & J.S. Black, Encyclopaedia Biblica (London: Adam & Charles Black 1914), p.3468. cites Matthew 6:17, Psalm 141:5, Ecclesiastes 9:8, Judith 16:8.

36. Ibid., p.3467.

God pouring out His Spirit on Saul in order to smite the Amalakites as in 1 Samuel 15:17, on Jehu to smite the house of Ahab; 2 Kings 9:6f. and also it can be seen in Isaiah 61 where the Spirit of God is that which is upon Isaiah to 'preach good tidings to the meek'. Similarly, one can find this in 1 Samuel 16:13, Luke 4:18, 2 Corinthians 1:21.³⁷ In Acts 10:38 this is especially clear where there is the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with power. This gave Jesus the ability to go about doing good and to heal "all that were **oppressed** of the devil; for God was with him." It is "the anointing from the holy one" (1 John 2:20, 27) as the illumination of the Holy Spirit, which teaches those that receive it concerning all things. Hence the term 'anointed' could suitably be applied to Israel as a people - e.g. Hab. 3:13.³⁸

Non-religiously, the primary use of symbolic anointing in the ancient Near East was for legal purposes. It signified an elevation of one's legal status. For example, it was a part in the formal release of a woman from slavery. It was also utilized in the transfer of property, the betrothal of a bride, and in the deputation of vassals. This was common throughout the area at this time. In Israel it was used in the inauguration of kings, the setting apart of a priest and in the restoration of a leper to the community. These Israelite functions of anointment were cultic moreso than legal in purpose. For the Jews the idea of anointing was seen as originating from God.³⁹

³⁷ Ibid., pp.174-175.

³⁸ Ibid., p.175.

³⁹ Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol. 3. (Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971), p.27.

The act of anointing the king was performed to designate him as anointed of God, Yahweh's Anointed. Thus there is visualized a close relationship between the human and the divine. This makes clear the sacred aspect of both his office and his life. The king is really priest and king in one person. It also points to the king as one who, through his anointment, has abnormal powers which are derived from God. "The essential characteristic of a king is that he has been anointed. The Israelite speaks not of crowning a man, but of anointing him in the sense of making him king." ⁴⁰

It appears as if this act of unction of kings was not new with Israel. There seems to be evidence that it was borrowed from the Canaanites. They anointed the king as part of the process of installing him in his sacred office. ⁴¹

However, this custom did not remain unaltered. Through time it was revised and it became necessary to anoint the king only when his claim to the throne was disputed or in question. This change took place after the reign of Solomon. Only kings of the House of David whose succession was in doubt or disputed were anointed. ⁴² For example: Jehu, whose claim was not readily obvious, was anointed.

40. Mowinkel, He That Cometh, p.5.

41. The Babylonian Talmud: Horayoth (London: The Soncino Press, 1935), 11b. 11b says "But a king who is the son of a king need not be anointed ... which implies that the kingship is an inheritance. Whence is it deduced that in cases of dispute anointing is required, and that the king is not entitled to transmit the kingship as he decides." etc. 11b-12a.

42. Ibid., p.5.

When there was absolutely no question as to succession there was no need for anointment. Several examples of this case can be seen in the Old Testament. Solomon was anointed because Adonijah made claim to the throne (1 Kings 1:39). Similarly, Joash was rivalled by Athaliah (2 Kings 11:12). Also Jehoahaz was anointed because his brother, Jehoiakim, was two years older than he was, thus being the obvious heir to the throne (2 Kings 23:30).⁴³

Some may argue that Saul was anointed and was not of the Davidic dynasty. This can be explained by reference to the fact that at Saul's anointment a cruse was used for the unction whereas at the coronation of Davidic kings the oil was poured from a horn. Saul was the only non-Davidic king who received anointing and the cruse was utilized rather than the horn because Saul's kingdom was not to be a lasting one.⁴⁴

The significance of the unction of kings is that in this act several attributes were conferred upon him. This was done through the spirit of the Lord. With this reception of the spirit came God's support (1 Samuel 16:13-14), strength (Psalm 89:21-25) and wisdom (Isaiah 11:1-4). Through anointment the king absorbs divine qualities. This can be found in no other place.⁴⁵

43. Encyclo. Juda. Vol. 3, p.3.

44. Horayoth, 12a "The kingdoms of David and Solomon who were anointed with a horn endured; the kingdoms of Saul and Jehu who were anointed with a flask did not endure."

45. Encyclo. Juda., Vol. 3., p.27.

One also finds anointing of high priests in Horayoth where it is stated that "even a High Priest who is the son of a High Priest must be anointed".⁴⁶ This anointing "conferred neither ru'ah nor any other divine attribute."⁴⁷ It was rather an act which sanctified the high priest by setting him apart from the realm of the mundane to function in the sphere of the sacred. In other words, it empowers him to handle the sancta, such as the oracle. His unction was not isolated from the cult objects but rather was performed in conjunction with them. (Exodus 40: 9-15). It is felt that from Solomon's anointment by Zadok, the High Priest, (1 Kings 1:39) the royal unction was actually derived from the anointing of the high priest. "This incident complements the image of the king in the historical narratives: since he may officiate at the sacred altar like a priest (e.g., 1 Kings 3:4; 8:63-64), why should he not be similarly anointed with the sacred oil?"⁴⁸

Prophets were also anointed in the Bible. Psalm 105:15, 1 Kings 19:16 are two examples of this rite. The meaning of this, however, may not be unction in the literal sense but may refer to the symbolic sphere instead.

46. Horayoth, 11b.

47. Encyclo. Juda, Vol. 3, p.27.

48. Ibid., p.28.

"On trouve aussi dans la Bible quelques allusions à l'onction des prophètes avec l'huile. Ps.cv,15; 1 Reg., xix, 16; mais il faut prendre sans doute cette onction qu'au sens métaphorique, comme un signe de sainteté, car il ne paraît pas qu'il y ait eu une onction spéciale pour les prophètes, comme les prêtres ou pour les rois. C'est dans ce sens métaphorique qu'il faut prendre le titre donné à Cyrus d'oint du Seigneur. Le peuple d'Israel est appelé dans le même sens l'oint, Ps., lxxxiv, 9; lxxxix, 38, 51; Hab., iii, 13, etc." ⁴⁹

Oil served various purposes on the more mundane level as well. The cessation of the use of oil in one's daily personal cosmetic care was an indication of mourning. The natural obverse of this followed. That is, when anointing was resumed then mourning had come to an end. (2 Samuel 14:2, Daniel 10:3, Isaiah 61:3). From this practice the term 'to anoint' came to be used as a figure of speech meaning 'to make happy' (cf. Psalm 45:8). ⁵⁰

Olive oil was used for medicinal purposes and for purification purposes. The former can be seen from Isaiah 1:6 and the latter from Leviticus 14:10. In Leviticus, the log of oil is used as a symbol of purification rather than as a remedial measure in the treatment of leprosy. ⁵¹ The use of oil on these occasions had a sacral significance. This would undoubtedly be caught up in the idea that inherent in the oil were abnormal, holy powers. Thus in unction this power would be transferred to the person who was anointed.

49. Dictionnaire D'Archeologie Chretienne et De Liturgie, Tome 6 Deuxieme Partie. (Paris: Libraire Letouzey et Ane, 1925), p.2778.

50. Encyclo. Bibl., p.173.

51. Ibid., pp.3469-3470. Quote texts cited "And on the eighth day he shall take ... a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil." Leviticus 14:10 (K.J.V.).

If it were one who already was holy or held supernatural powers, then these would be further strengthened or renewed. Being pragmatic people, the Jews probably saw the power and usefulness of oil as food and for medicinal purposes and thus ascribed to it the sacred qualities it came to acquire.⁵²

The use of oil in the treatment of the sick as referred to in Jeremiah 8:22, 46:11 and Isaiah 1:6 was not uncommon. Indications are that the preparation was a mixture of oil, wine and water. The importance of this cure can be attested to by the fact that it was allowed to be compounded even during the rest of the Sabbath.⁵³ It would seem that oil was quite common as a cure in the ancient world. It appears as a cure for various diseases in several places in antiquity. e.g., Pliny, Dion Cassius, Aelius Gallus and the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:34 all mention oil in the treatment of those who are ill.⁵⁴

Many cures in the eastern countries consisted of external applications of one kind or another. Thus in Isaiah 1:6 it is not strange that the imagery used was taken from the practice of medicine.⁵⁵

52 Mowinkel, He That Cometh, p.5.

53 Knowling, West. Comm. The Ep. of Jas., p.139.

54 J. Hastings ed., Dictionary of the Bible Vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), pp.591-592.

55 A. Barnes, Notes: Critical, Explanatory and Practical on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. Vol. 1. (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1840), p.88.

In this particular passage Israel is depicted as a body beaten and bruised. Her sores are unbandaged and untreated with the usual medical application of oil which would soften the tissues and ease the swelling of the wound.⁵⁶ Thus one can see the logical use of this reference to oil as made by Isaiah.

Oil, Biblically speaking, is also connected with giving of the spirit and with the power of life.

"Quelques passages bibliques montrent clairement la dépendance qu'il y a entre le don de l'esprit et l'huile: c'est effet après une unction que Saul se met à prophétiser (1 Sam. x 10ss.); c'est aussi après avoir été oint que David est saisi par l'esprit de Yahweh (1 Sam. xvi 13); Es. lxi 1 relie également l'onction (d'huile, sans doute) à la fonction prophétique et au don de l'esprit. Dans le Nouveau Testament, l'huile passe pour avoir une vertu vivifiante (Marc vi 13; Jacques v 14s.).⁵⁷

Thus it is quite understandable that this concept of anointed should be applied to the Messiah. For here is the power of the Spirit coupled with the power of life. Here also is the human "instrumentality of eschatological redemption."⁵⁸

In the time of Jesus, illness was seen as the result of sins. When Jesus came proclaiming that men need not wait passively for divine favour to be healed but rather could be restored immediately by faith, it must have seemed strange to the rabbis who had used illness as a means of religious instruction. It must have baffled

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56. F. Delitzsch, The Foreign Biblical Library: Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah. Vol. 1 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1891), pp. 39-40.
57. P. Reymond, Supplement to Vetus Testamentum, G.W. Anderson et al. ed. Vol. 4, 1958, L'Eau, Sa Vie, Et Sa Signification Dans L'Ancien Testament, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1958), p.235.
58. Encyclo. Juda. Vol. 12, p.1350.

them to see these cures performed and they probably considered them of the realm of magic rather than from the sphere of religion.⁵⁹ However, here the Messiah, 'the anointed one', seems to have been functioning as one possessed of the Spirit and giver of life.

Not only did Jesus deny the claim that sickness was caused by particular sin,⁶⁰ but he also placed the two in perspective. He pointed out that some illness may originate in sin and therefore require forgiveness before the ailment could be remedied⁶¹ but he indicated that this is not always the case. James tends to follow this teaching also for in James 5:15 he uses the word "if", in connection with sins committed by the sick man. Mitton feels that, far from implying that the sick man is sinless this passage means instead that if sin is one of the originating causes of the disease, then they are forgiven and thus he is enabled to be cured.⁶²

The practice of anointing the sick with oil definitely cannot lay claim to being linked directly to Jesus except through the Mark 6:13 passage. But there are references which can and, it is felt, ought to be interpreted as anointings performed by Jesus.

59. B.H. Branscomb, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary; The Gospel of Mark (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1937), pp.46-47.

60. John 9:3; Luke 13:1-5.

61. Mark 2:5.

62. Mitton, The Ep. of Jas., p.20.

In Mark 7:32 ff. one finds the account of the healing of the deaf mute. Here there is an anointing with spittle which was believed to have curative powers.⁶³ In this type of cure Jesus deviates from the pattern followed in the rest of the New Testament where one sees him curing diseases. According to E.P. Gould that is part of the language of signs.

He says: "The thrusting of the hands into the man's ears, the spitting into them, the looking up to heaven, are the language of signs, by which Jesus seeks to awaken the faith of the man necessary to his cure ... Jesus uses something more than the ordinary laying on of hands, which would tell its story so quickly to a Jew accustomed to his ordinary procedure, and substitutes what we may call a more elaborate and significant ritual of cure."⁶⁴

Gould also goes on to say: "That is part of the language of signs employed by our Lord, and is intended to convey to the man's mind, first the help that he is to receive, the loosening of his tongue, and secondly, the heavenly source from which his help was to come ... Be opened. This is addressed to the man, who was himself to be opened to sound and speech through the opening of his organs."⁶⁵

Be opened. It would appear as if Gould is correct in assuming that Jesus was here addressing the man, demanding openness in order for cure to follow. To the Jews, this man was sick. Not just his ears and tongue, but the man in his totality.⁶⁶ There is a command

63. D.E. Nineham, The Pelican Gospel Commentaries: The Gospel of St. Mark (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), p.204.

64. E.P. Gould, The International Critical Commentary: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901), pp.149-150.

65. Ibid., pp.138-139.

66. R. Schnackenburg, New Testament for Spiritual Reading: The Gospel According to St. Mark. Vol. 1. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1971), p.131.

made and once it is obeyed then the cure follows immediately. This passage is an illustration of one type of healing performed by Jesus. When he heals "the whole person is healed".⁶⁷

Similarly, one could examine Mark 8:24 where Jesus uses spittle and clay as a remedial measure in treating the blind man. Spittle used this way is more in keeping with the Jewish medical practice than was its use in the healing of the deaf mute.⁶⁸ A parallel passage to this one is to be found in John 9:1-7 where Jesus uses spittle to restore the sight of the blind man. Cures such as these are not specifically Christian or even Judeo-Christian as they were used in the Greek world as well.⁶⁹

From these three references to the use of spittle in the healings of Jesus it is assumed that Jesus was merely utilizing the medical means available to him in conjunction with his faith in God as the Healer of all illnesses.⁷⁰

Anointing was not uncommon in Palestine during the first century and in the centuries preceding the birth of Christ. The Jews used it, as can be seen from passages such as Isaiah 1:6 and Ezekiel 16:9. Jesus himself refers to its use in the treatment of the Good Samaritan.

67. Ibid., p.131.

68. J. Hargreaves, A Guide to St. Mark's Gospel (London: S.P.C.K., 1969), p.122.

69. Nineham, The Gos. of St. Mark., p.219.

70. Schnackenburg, The Gos. Acc. To St. Mark, pp.146-147.

The fact that it is also mentioned in Mark 6:13, James 5:14, and Revelation 3:18 indicates a relatively wide acceptance of anointment as a medicinal cure. Its use did not stop here but continued on into the post-Apostolic era with Christians anointing each other in order to effect cures. ⁷¹

In speaking about Mark 6:13, Hastings claims that the Apostles were using the medical agent with which they were familiar as was also the case in James 5:14 and Luke 10:34. He maintains that in Mark 6:13 the natural curative powers of oil were accompanied by "miraculous powers of healing." ⁷²

B.H. Branscomb feels that the Marcan account of the disciples healing by anointing in Mark 6:13 is an anachronism based on later church practice. ⁷³ He does acknowledge that there is evidence which indicates that anointing was a common method of healing among the Jews and uses the Good Samaritan as evidence. However, he claims that there is no evidence that Jesus and/or his disciples had practised this well known therapeutic technique during the lifetime of Jesus. He also states that this verse in Mark points to a Palestinian missionary method as opposed to those of the Hellenistic world. ⁷⁴

There are those who would disagree with him. Kittel feels that if one is to understand Mark 6:13 and James 5:14 then one must be

71. Hastings, Dict. of the Bib. Vol. 1, pp.100-101. Quote Rev.3:18 "... and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." (Rev. 3:18 K.J.V.)

72. Hastings, Dict. of Christ & the Gos. Vol. 1, p.79.

73. Branscomb, The Moff. Comm. The Gos. of Mark, p.104.

74. Ibid., pp.104-105.

mindful of the Hellenistic and Jewish practices and meanings surrounding anointment with a view to healing.⁷⁵

It certainly appears as if oil was used to a very considerable degree in Jewish social life. It is mentioned several times in Jewish writings in reference to skin diseases and there is even a reference to anointing sores whilst pronouncing an incantation over them quite similar to the practice as described in James 5:14.⁷⁶ This being the case, it seems logical that Mark would use this commonly known specific in demonstrating to others the efficacy of spiritual healing. That is, point to unction with olive oil and then transcend the purely conventional view by pointing his readers to the supernatural healing performed by God.

One can readily see how oil would soothe certain skin disorders and indeed might even call for a remission of the symptoms. One could possibly go further and include muscular complaints. But how external massage with oil could correct internal ailments is not at all clear. Mitton hints at psychosomatic illnesses and their cure by suggestibility as explaining this phenomenon.⁷⁷ Nevertheless there are those who differ in their opinion on this point. Dr. Ryle maintains that there is too much to contradict the idea that the problems are strictly psychological in origin.⁷⁸ However it seems

75. G. Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. 1, tr. G.W. Bromiley (London: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1964), p.230.

76. a) Ma'aseroth Sheni ii p. 288.
b) Yoma 77b p. 377.

77. Mitton, The Ep. of Jas., p.198.

78. R.J. Ryle, M.A., M.D., Hibbert Journal Vol. 15, 1907. The Neurotic Theory of the Miracles of Healing (London: Williams and Norgate, 1907), pp.572-586.

quite clear that regardless of the modus operandi that "Jesus, as well as James, authorized the use of oil for healing (Mark 6:13)." ⁷⁹ This is not to say that Jesus ordered the use of oil by his followers. But it would be ludicrous to assume that the rite was not practised in the early church. Even though there is little evidence to support the belief that this was performed until the fourth century, it seems quite logical that the sick would be anointed with oil as a matter of course. ⁸⁰

If the act was performed one ought to examine the purpose for which it was carried out. Thus far it has been assumed that the effect of the rite was physical well-being. This can only be appreciated when one examines the Old Testament background and concept of man. To the Hebrew, the modern body-soul dichotomy was not a way to describe man. Man was a unity as seen in Genesis 2:7b "and man became a living soul". (K.J.V.) In the Old Testament Scriptures there appears to be a relationship between one's sin and one's sickness. These two are portrayed as "two related aspects of a fundamental disorder or deformation in human personality." ⁸¹ Thus when one experiences salvation there is a total revision of man. He is grasped out of both sin and sickness. One must use the term "save" here for it was the term often used in connection with healing as well as in concert with the concept of sin. e.g. Luke 17:19, Mark 10:52, James 5:15 all refer to health whereas Luke 7:50 refers to forgiveness of sin.

79. Mitton, The Ep. of Jas., p.198.

80. P.J. Cloagg, Introduction to the Catholic Epistles (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1887), p.100.

81. Kearns, Christ ... Test., p.558.

Bernard Poschmann says that *σωζέειν* and *εγχείρειν* can indicate both bodily and spiritual healing.⁸² This seems to be in keeping with the Hebraic concept of man inasmuch as the Hebrews would unite the two concepts in their view of illness. It is the prayer of faith which will result in this salvation of men. That is, it is the prayer of faith which will effect beneficial results for the patient. The salutary effect is operative whether the person lives or dies, as he does so in a state of grace.⁸³

This tends to be difficult to understand from the ancient point of view. If the body and soul were seen as a unity then death was not liable to be regarded as a salubrious effect of anointing. However, it is felt that the primary meaning in James 5:14 is that the man will be physically healed or saved.⁸⁴

Others tend to regard this passage in a more encompassing manner and perhaps with some justification. Huther feels that the promise which is issued by James so freely in this passage is very wide in its claims. It seems to say that the Lord will heal, without any limitation, those who utter their prayers of believing intercession. However, Huther points out that James uses expressions which point beyond the material world to include the more spiritual realm. From this he asserts that when the prayer is not answered by physical healing that all is not lost for then the prayer is answered in "the higher sense".⁸⁵ To state that it is answered in "the higher sense"

82. B. Poschmann, Penance and the Anointing of the Sick (London: Burns & Gates, 1964), p.235.

83. Ibid., p.235.

84. Wilkinson, Heal. in the Ep. of Jas., p.334.

85. Huther, Meyers Commentary, p.221.

seems to be non-scriptural] but it is felt that Huther refers to the fact that there is a living or a dying in Christ based upon faith answered by grace.

There is a close relationship between spiritual and physical usage of the word "save" in the New Testament and this ought not to be overlooked. Perhaps Mitton expresses this as well as any when he speaks on salvation in Paul and in the Gospels.

He says: "The word "save" as used in the Pauline writings, is one of deep spiritual significance. In the gospels, however, it often appears to carry largely a physical meaning, and is used of bodily health more frequently than of the salvation of the soul (cf. for instance Mark 6:56 where R.S.V. translates the word "were made well". See also Matt. 9:21-22). Perhaps, however, we do less than justice to the New Testament use of the word to make this kind of distinction. God's forgiveness can be a factor in restoration of physical health (Mark 2:5). This means that a right relationship to God and what we regard as physical health are sometimes very closely related to each other. Here too James links the spiritual blessing of forgiveness with man's need for physical healing.

In this context, too, "save" clearly means primarily the restoration of physical health, but not alone. It is the restoration of the man to the total well-being, including his relationship with God." ⁸⁶

Wilkinson tends to concur with Mitton on the interpretation of this passage. In it he sees the double meaning of salvation which here refers primarily to physical healing: the response to the prayer of faith, the man is raised up; and finally, the spiritual dimension of salvation, his sins are forgiven him. ⁸⁷

86. Mitton, The Ep. of Jas., p.200.

87. Wilkinson, Heal. in the Ep. of Jas., pp.334-335.

But the healing of the sick is not an isolated act performed out of a vacuum and pointing to a void. There is a demand for faith on the part of those seeking personal help or help for another person.⁸⁸ When this faith is lacking then Christ strives to strengthen it as he did in Mark 9:21-23 and in Matthew 9:28 referred to above. This grows into trust and self-surrender to the person of Christ and results in a personal commitment to Jesus⁸⁹ as the one through whom the cure was effected.⁹⁰

This is true of the act of anointing also. Faith is demanded as a requisite for healing and through this act Christ strengthens faith and conveys his love and concern to the sick person.⁹¹ The anointing of the sick, which is an aid to awakening faith,⁹² also utilizes faith to display the healing work of God⁹³ to those who are witnesses to the results of this sacramental act.

Anointing then, appears to be an act of faith to faith with a view to healing the physical ailments of the person involved. From Mark 6:13 and James 5:14 it is indicated that the call of Christ is not merely to repentance and to a change in morals but rather it extends beyond this to a call to cure diseases as he did when he lived

88. Mark 5:34; Matthew 9:27-30; Mark 10:52.

89. Kearns, Christ ... Test., pp.560-561.

90. Mark 1:45; 5:18-20; 7:36-37; 10:52; Luke 17:15-19; John 4:53, 9:35-38.

91. Kearns, Christ ... Test., p.571.

92. Mitton, The Ep. of Jas., p.199.

93. Schnackenburg, The Gos. Acc. to Mark, Vol. 1., p.104.

some two thousand years ago.⁹⁴ If this is so, then the rite of anointing the sick seems a logical continuation of the apostolic ministry of healing as mentioned in Mark 6:13 and as recommended by James in his epistle. It appears as if James is calling for the perpetuation of this act within the community of faith. The function is to heal diseases and to restore one to physical well-being and this transcends the limits of purely psycho-somatic medical complaints.⁹⁵

The unction is to health and life and not for death as the practice evolved in the Roman Catholic Church during the succeeding centuries. This idea would appear to be totally contrary to the purpose of James and the idea of healing as held by the apostles. Nevertheless, the ancient rite seems to lay the foundation for the practice of extreme unction found in the Church of Rome in later times.⁹⁶ How this evolution took place will be examined in a future chapter but it seems to indicate a deviation from the Old Testament background of the act which sees man as a unity rather than as a compartmentalized creature consisting of body and soul as separate entities.⁹⁷ This idea of unity is also to be found in the New Testament.

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94. C.F.D. Moule, The Cambridge Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to Mark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p.48.
95. Ryle, The Neur. Theory of the Mir. of Heal., pp.572-586. Also Wilkinson, Healing in the Ep. of Jas., p.339.
96. Palmer, The Purpose ... Reappraisal, p.314.
97. J. Crowlesmith ed., Religion and Medicine (London: The Epworth Press, 1962), p.7.

John Baillie maintains that the body-soul dichotomy or body-soul-spirit trichotomy is not in keeping with the teaching of the New Testament which sees man as a unity. Thus, for him, 'psycho-somatic' is an apt way to describe man.⁹⁸

Karl Rahner would probably agree with this definition of man for he states that the body can tell us more about the spirit and the spirit more about the body than either could tell us about itself. From this he maintains that, "Our concrete experience of sickness is never such that we are in a position unequivocally to distinguish between the spirit and the body as two completely separate compartments."⁹⁹

He further states: "Christian theology and philosophy recognise the unity and wholeness of man. Naturally when we Christians assert that man consists of body and soul we are quite right. Indeed a sick man could say with justice that he experiences this duality in his own being only too clearly. But for all this man, that is to say the objective entity with which each of us is directly confronted as a matter of his own personal experience, is originally one, one with a unity which is not the mere outcome or result of a chance combination of two prior entities. It follows from this that what we experience as soul is in reality our own being which is objectively speaking a single and whole entity as viewed from within. And what we call our body is ultimately this same entity in its oneness and wholeness as experienced from without. This is not to deny that this being of ours in its oneness and wholeness,

98. J. Baillie, The Sense of the Presence of God: Gifford Lectures 1962 (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp.196-197.

99. K. Rahner, Theological Investigations Vol. 7, Further Theology of the Spiritual Life, 1, (London: Darton, Longmann & Todd, 1971), pp.277-278.

which we are faced with in our concrete living experience has not behind and beyond this experience two metaempirical or metaphysical elements in it such that the distinction between them cannot be obliterated and they cannot be identified one with the other. But the objective reality which we encounter directly when we apprehend ourselves as a matter of authentic experience is always the whole and single entity, always man in his oneness. In apprehending this single objective reality we do not always penetrate to the same level of reality in it. But it is no less true that in apprehending it we never apprehend merely one constituent element in this whole in such a way that it does not necessarily bring the other constituent element to our awareness as well." ¹⁰⁰

James was a man of his times and saw man as man and sick man as one in need of a cure. The present writer feels that though Rahner may be correct in dividing and uniting man at one and the same time, James would have been aware of this at the experiential level only and not on the philosophical plane at all. His primary concern was to indicate the way by which man might find the cure to his illness. ¹⁰¹ Rahner would probably agree with this but would add that James here indicates the spiritual as well as the bodily dimension. ¹⁰²

Another Roman Catholic author seems to strike closer to the heart of first century thinking when he claims that salvation from illness of sin was seen as a loosening of the hold of the realm of Satan. Christ's work as Savior is such that this hold is crushed and then illness and sin can be remedied. ¹⁰³

100. Ibid., p.275.

101. Mitton, The Ep. of Jas., p.210.

102. K. Rahner, ed., Sacramentum Mundi Vol. 1 p.38.

103. Kearns, Christ ... Test., p.558.

One could quite safely assume that James was mindful of this when he wrote his epistle. Hence the call for the sick man to send for the elders of the congregation. This was the religious avenue by which route the kingdom of darkness would be overthrown and the way paved for the effective use of medical knowledge. "James held that healing should be a combination of medical and non-medical methods, and in illustration referred to a contemporary medical method of anointing with oil which he said should be used in the name of the Lord with prayer."¹⁰⁴

Thus one might state with relative assurance that James was calling for a logical and wise approach to illness. He was not calling for a simple route to cure. Rather he was mustering all means available to him to assist in the cure of disease. He was calling for trust in God's healing power through Christ and for the use of the technology available to assist this grace existentially.

104. Wilkinson, Heal. in the Ep. of Jas., p.339.

CHAPTER TWO

ANOINTING THE SICK: ITS HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT UNTIL THE TIME OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

In the first chapter the Old Testament background and the New Testament practice of anointing were examined. It would be well to remember that neither the ancient Jews nor the earliest Christians lived in a vacuum. Instead they influenced and were influenced by the groups and sub-groups with whom they came in contact. Thus it is not strange to find that unction was a common practice in antiquity and was to be found among the pagans as well as within the confines of Judaism and early Christianity.

The use of oil was similar in pagan culture as can be seen in the following statement. "On s'en servait sous forme d'onction, pour consacrer les personnes et les choses, ou pour guérir les maladies, pour écarter le tabou, etc." ¹

However, whether this use of oil was adopted by Christians from pagan culture or vice versa is not really of great importance. The important point is that it was a widespread practice of antiquity. This chapter will attempt to deal with the history of anointing the sick from the first century A.D. up to the time of the Protestant Reformation. In this treatment certain areas will have to be based upon conjecture as ancient sources are scarce and indeed, in some areas, totally lacking. Nevertheless, a relatively consistent history of anointing can be traced and one might easily assume that the rite had been practiced from the time of James up to the Reformation without interruption, though not without alteration.

1. Dictionnaire d'Archeologie Chrétienne et De Liturgie, Tome 6
Deuxième Partie, p.2777.

In the early Christian centuries, there is really very little reference made to anointing the sick per se but there are statements concerning the use of the eucharist and prayers for the sick. Until fairly recently there appears to have been available no direct reference to sick unction prior to Pope Innocent's letter to Decentius in the early 400's. However, the discovery of the Jerusalem lamina seems to have altered this considerably. This ancient silver plate, found to the south of Bethlehem, has been dated as coming from the end of the first century, and more specifically, from approximately A.D.70.² The interpreters of this find tend to feel that the first line is a title concerning the writing and see this title to be - "Oil of Faith" - a phrase which the translators find strikingly close to James 5:15 where one reads "the prayer of faith will save the sick man". Luff goes on to say that the faith referred to in the lamina is that of the Church in the first instance and not that of the subject to be anointed.³

2. S.G.A. Luff, The Sacrament of the Sick: A First Century Text, The Clergy Review vol. 52, 1967, pp.56-60. (London: The Clergy Review, 1967), p.58. To prove the early dating of the Jerusalem lamina the following line of argument is followed. a) The plate was found with four "Herodian" lamps which apparently can be satisfactorily assigned to the same era. b) The writing is felt to be identical to that found on Judaeo-Christian ossuaries of that particular period and also to that of Murabbat manuscripts associated with the Qumran scrolls. c) There is a reference to the Parousia which is in keeping with the early Christian mentality. d) It contains a statement on sacrifice as being no longer useful and this, it is felt, may imply a date close to A.D.70, the destruction of the Temple.

3. Ibid., p.58.

Turning more specifically to the contents of the text one finds very definite theological ramifications in this first century tablet. The anointing, or rather aspersion, is to be made "in the name of the Lord." Luff says that in this context it may provide the form of the sacrament. Whether or not it is a sacrament per se is not dealt with explicitly but it is felt that Father Luff is merely using modern language to describe this ancient practice. Further reference to the invocation of Jesus is to be found. One finds two crosses flanking the letters IH which were the Greek letters used by Judaeo-Christians to signify Jahweh and Jesus at one and the same time. Hence it would seem that this was used by the author of the lamina as a theological or Christological comment on the passage found in James 5:14ff. where the instructions to anoint the sick person in the Name of the Lord^{are found.} Father Luff goes on to point out that the two crosses flanking the linked IH probably indicate that use is to be made of the sign of the cross in the act of sprinkling the oil on the patient.⁴

The effects of this act are dealt with in this document as well. Sickness is referred to as blindness which is the debt of sin. There is a shifting from the darkness of sin and disease to the brightness of purity, health, and grace as a result of the sprinkling with the oil. The passage concludes with a discourse on "the rod" that comes, with punishment, but also with mercy, not only expressing the mentality of the Apostolic Church with regard to the Parousia, but

4. Ibid., p.59.

repeating explicitly the context in which James himself describes the Sacrament of Anointing - "Behold the Judge is standing at the door."⁵ The text concludes with the Hebrew "Shalom."⁵

Father Luff comments on the four Herodian lamps found with the lamina. These, he feels, were the containers for the oil used in the rite of anointing. He maintains that they stress the twofold nature of the rite, namely the symbolism of spiritual well-being and physical health. That is, the oil is a sign of medical treatment which results in health and strength and at the same time it is a product utilized to create light in the presence of darkness.⁶ This passage from light to darkness and vice versa has been referred to above and seems to indicate the spiritual domain of sin and grace.

It is obvious from this then, that in the early days of the Church, those who were sick were anointed with oil. From this period until the time of Pope Innocent I there are very few direct statements made regarding this rite. However, there are references to the pastoral care of the sick which prove beyond any doubt the Church's concern for those who were ill. The place of a healing ministry is hard to discern due to the lack of material. Nevertheless, people such as L.D. Weatherhead claim that this gift became less important due to a disintegration of the fellowship of the community of faith.

5. Ibid., p.60.

6. Ibid., p.60.

As he says: "As Pentecost faded into past history, the fellowship began to slowly disintegrate; the faith of the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit, and that love for men which is derived only from love to God, or rather a sense of God's love for men, diminished to such an extent that we note an insidious difference in the nature of the healing technique. Less is demanded from the healer. More is demanded from the patient. The onus is more and more put on the patient to have "faith", but the power to call forth faith is sadly lowered." 7

It would appear from this then, that the efficacy of anointing, as Dr. Weatherhead sees it, is primarily operative within the context of the community of faith. This seems to coincide with the conclusions of chapter one where the power of the Church was brought to bear on illness via the act of sick unction and thus conveyed to the patient the prayers and concerns of his brothers and sisters in Christ and also became the means of his physical recovery.

The Jerusalem lamina is not the sole reference to anointing from this early period. The Apocalypsis Mosis also contains a direct mention of unction through terms which are more vague than those found in the lamina. In this early work one finds oil held up as a treatment for bodily ills.

A brief passage reads as follows: "And Eve wept and said: 'My lord Adam, rise up and give me half of thy trouble and I will endure it; for it is on my account that this has happened to thee, on my account thou art beset with toils and troubles.' But Adam said to Eve, 'Arise and go with my son Seth near to paradise, and put earth upon your heads and weep and pray God to have mercy upon me and send his angel to paradise, and give me of the tree out of which the oil floweth, and bring it me, and I shall anoint myself and shall have rest from my complaints.'" 8

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7. L.D. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion, and Healing, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951), p.88.
 8. R.H. Charles, ed., The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Apocalypsis Mosis, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), pp.142-143.

Similarly, in another work of the same period one finds the following passage. "And Eve said to Adam: 'My lord, give me a part of thy pains, for this hath come to thee from fault of mine.'

And Adam said to Eve: 'Rise up and go with my son Seth to the neighborhood of paradise and put dust on your heads and throw yourselves on the ground and lament in the sight of God. Perchance He will have pity (upon me) and send His angel across to the tree of His mercy, whence floweth the oil of life, and will give you a drop of it, to anoint me with it, that I may have rest from these pains, by which I am being consumed.'⁹

These two writings clearly indicate that oil, and one might assume this to be olive oil, possessed curative powers. Adam, in his misery, seeks relief *via* the God-given gift of oil which, it was believed, would bring comfort from distress and cure from illness.

When one leaves this earliest period of Christianity and begins to trace the ministry to the ill in succeeding generations, there is to be found a gap in reference to the use of oil. Nevertheless, one can find a continuous concern for the members of the community of faith who have been cut off from the fellowship of the Church as a result of illness. These references are to be seen in passages dealing with the eucharist, in prayers of the early fathers, and in liturgical statements of the early Church as well as in early letters to the churches. In these letters and writings one can easily see that great value was placed on any works of mercy. Passages such as I Thessalonians 5:14 are almost echoed or at least emulated by such notable Christians as Clement of Rome (ca.96 A.D.).

9. Ibid., pp.142-143. This is to be found in Vitae Adae et Evae.

In Clement's letter to the Church in Corinth one finds the following passage. "Save those among us who are in tribulation; have mercy on the lowly; lift up the fallen; show Thyself unto the needy; heal the ungodly; convert the wanderers of Thy people; feed the hungry; release our prisoners; raise up the weak; comfort the faint-hearted."¹⁰

Polycarp (ca. 69-155), in his letter to the Philippians, lists the duties of the presbyters of the congregation. He charges them to be diligent in the carrying out of these tasks and indicates the importance of them in the sight of God. Most of these functions are works of compassion and mercy.

He says: "And the presbyters also must be compassionate, merciful towards all men, turning back the sheep that are gone astray, visiting all the infirm, not neglecting a widow or an orphan or a poor man: but providing always for that which is honorable in the sight of God and of men."¹¹

These two sources show a concern for those members cut off from the community due to almost insurmountable obstacles. The sick and the weak receive direct mention in these passages and are pointed out as being the objects of pastoral concern. However, the nature of the ministry to the various groups is not spelled out in either of these writers and one can only assume that the manner in which their needs would be attended to would be similar to the accepted, traditional, ministry to the needy. Anointing seems to have been performed just prior to this era so one might not be too far from the truth if one were to assume that it was practised during the second century.

10. J.B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers (J.R. Harmer, ed.), (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1898), p.83.

11. Ibid., p.179. The Greek of this passage is to be found on p.170.

Nevertheless, it may be felt that this would be too gross an assumption to make based on a few scattered remarks in scattered fragments illustrating a concern for the ill. This may be a valid criticism. But, the second century provides further evidence illuminating the attitude towards those who were ill and were thus prevented from attending worship. Justin Martyr, for example, gives a description of early Christian life and worship in his Apology. In this writing one finds that the sacrament of our Lord's Supper was to be carried to those who could not be present for worship services.

At verse 67 the Apology reads: "And on the day which is called Sunday, there is an assembly in the same place of all who live in cities or in country districts; and the records of the Apostles, or the writings of the Prophets, are read as long as we have time. Then the reader concludes: and the President verbally instructs, and exhorts us, to the imitation of these excellent things: then we all together rise and offer up our prayers; and, as I said before, when we have concluded our prayer, bread is brought, and wine, and water; and the President, in like manner, offers up prayers, and thanksgivings, with all his strength; and the people give their assent by saying Amen: and there is a distribution, and partaking by everyone, of the Eucharistic elements; and to those who are not present, they are sent by the hands of the deacons; and such as are in prosperous circumstances, and wish to do so, give what they will, each according to his choice; and what is collected is placed in the hands of the President, who assists the orphans, and widows, and such as through sickness, or any other cause, are in want; and to those who are in bonds, and to strangers from afar, and, in a word, to all who are in need, he is a protector."¹²

12. Justin Martyr, The Works Now Extant of S. Justin the Martyr Translated With Notes and Indices. A Library of Fathers, (Oxford: J.H. & J. Parker, 1861), pp.51-52.

Hence one can say quite definitely that the Holy Communion was carried from the place of public worship to the homes of those who were physically unable to attend. The use of the sacrament would undoubtedly be safely guarded so that it would not become profaned or ill-used. In these early days of the Church the eucharist was seen as more than a sign of union with Christ or a memorial feast. It was regarded as having a definite supernatural quality and characteristic. The eucharist was something which any believer who was ill would long to receive. This can be seen in the writings of the time. For example, Saint Ignatius who was prominent in the early to mid-second century said: "The eucharistic bread is a medicine of immortality; an antidote which prevents one dying and allows one to live always in Jesus Christ." ¹³

Similarly in the second century liturgy of Saint James one reads: "We entreat Thee ... that it (the eucharist) may not be for condemnation to Thy people that the mystery for salvation has been administered by us, but for remission of sins, for the renewal of souls and bodies." ¹⁴

Thus the eucharist seems to have been a panacea used in the lives of early Christians to protect them and preserve them from illness and death. Leslie Weatherhead goes further than this and states that in the early post-apostolic years sick persons if at all able, would go

13. M. Goguel, The Primitive Church, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953), p.357.

14. E. Frost, Christian Healing, (London: A.R. Mowbrays and Col Ltd., 1949), p.43.

to church or would be carried there in their beds or on litters. Once there the bishop, presumably during the public worship, would lay hands on them and anoint them with oil. The oil would, as in New Testament practice, be special oil, dedicated to the glory of God and to His service. This could be oil from the lamp in front of the altar, or simply oil brought from the home to be blessed by the bishop. It also could be blessed by touching it with some sacred relic of a notable Christian. This unguent, either self-applied or smeared by the bishop would be accompanied by the reception of Holy Communion. Weatherhead goes on to point out that when the numbers became too great for the bishop to personally lay hands on then he simply blessed them with his hands extended above them.¹⁵

To those who were simply too ill to be present at the corporate service of worship, the presbyters or elders would pay a visit. In their own homes they would receive the Communion and probably the unction for the sick from the hands of the delegation which would possibly be sizeable. It has been indicated that the number of elders visiting the patient "increased the suggestibility of the patient at home, just as the large congregation would so increase it at church."¹⁶ Perhaps this is so but there is the possibility that the allusion to cure by suggestibility is simply too glib an explanation or interpretation of the function of the visitation of the sick.

15. Weatherhead, Psychology ... Healing, p.92.

16. Ibid., p.92.

Certainly, writers of a period only a few years later saw the act of anointing the sick as much more than a cure by suggestion. Tertullian (A.D. 160-230), uses anointing in his writings to prove that Christians have a power to heal and to effect cures by means of an anointing with oil, presumably in the name of Jesus.

In Ad Scapulam he says: "And how many men of rank (to say nothing of common people) have been delivered from devils, and healed of diseases! Even Severus himself, the father of Antonine, was graciously mindful of the Christians. For he sought out the Christian Proculus, surnamed Torpacion, the steward of Euhodias, and in gratitude for his having once cured him by anointing, he kept him in his palace till the day of his death."¹⁷

From this passage it seems clear that in the very early part of the third century anointing with a view to health was an accepted part of Christian practice. Severus, apparently, was not a Christian otherwise it would add no strength to Tertullian's argument to simply cite the cure of a Christian of position as opposed to one of mean estate. It would tend to follow that if Proculus and other Christians of the era were capable of curing non-Christians by means of unction then surely the same practice would be followed within the confines of the community of faith as well.¹⁸ Since the treatise Ad Scapulam was written about A.D. 211 and since Tertullian was making reference to a

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17. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. Vol. XI. The Writings of Tertullian Vol. 1, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 1869), p.50.
 18. P. Dearmer, Body and Soul, (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons Ltd., 1912), pp.241-242.

past event one can quite safely assume that the rite was being used in the second century. If we cannot say this then the least we can say is that it was common before A.D.211.¹⁹

If in this passage Tertullian does not prove that anointing was in wide use at the beginning of the third century then one has further recourse in one of his contemporaries in the person of Hippolytus. In his *Apostolic Tradition* (ca. 215), Hippolytus gives us the earliest direct reference to the oil of the sick.²⁰ There is a definite concern for the sick and those who are in need of assistance as referred to earlier by Justin Martyr. The Ministry of works of mercy as performed by the presbyters and deacons is described lucidly by Hippolytus and allows one to see the third century Church at work.

He says: "In time of need the deacon shall be diligent in giving the blessed bread²¹ to the sick. If there is no presbyter to give out what is to be distributed, the deacon shall pronounce the thanksgiving and shall supervise those who carry it away, to make sure that they attend their duty and (properly) distribute the

19. *Ibid.*, pp.241-242. Also Weatherhead, *Psychol. ... Heal.*, p.92 dates this as ca. 200.

20. P.F. Palmer, *The Purpose ... Reappraisal*, pp.314-315.

21. B.S. Easton, *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), p.58. The term "the blessed bread", as Easton calls it, really ought to read "the sealing". Another author quotes the same passage and sees different possibilities for the translation of "the sealing". G. Dix, ed., *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome* (London: SPCK, 1937), p.49, note 14. Here Dix says that sealing may refer to unction. However, taken in the total context of the passage the term appears to be more in keeping with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

blessed food; the distributors must give it to the widows and the sick. Whoever is entrusted with the duty by the church must distribute it on the same day; if he does not, he must (at least) do so the next day with the addition of what is then given him. For (it is not his own property); it is given him only (in trust) as bread for the poor."²²

Although this passage seems to refer directly to the Lord's Supper and to have little bearing upon a discussion on anointing, there is a very definite association between the two. It seems that at the eucharist food other than bread and wine was often blessed. This harkens back to the early days of the Church when the sacrament included a meal. In the early 200's the evidence indicates that the cheese and olives once blessed were eaten at the service and also part of the oil of the olives was sipped. The oil which was left was set apart to be used in the unction of the sick.²³ This oil was blessed and set aside and the prayer of blessing was very similar to the prayer which is used to this day in the Roman Catholic Church when oil is blessed as oil of the sick at the Maunday Thursday Communion celebrated by the bishop.²⁴

The prayer of Hippolytus reads as follows: "O God, who sanctifiest this oil, as Thou dost grant unto all who are anointed and receive of it the hallowing wherewith Thou didst anoint kings, priests and prophets, so (grant that) it may give strength to all that taste of it and health to all that use it."²⁵

22. Easton, The Apost. Trad. of Hipp., p.58.

23. Ibid., p.74.

24. Ibid., p.75.

25. Palmer, The Purpose ... Reappraisal: pp.314-315. A similar interpretation is to be found in Dix, The Treatise ... Rome, p.10, and also in Easton, The Apost. Trad. of Hipp., p.36.

Here one sees a petition asking God to bless the oil by granting to it restorative, health-giving powers. From tradition we know that the sick were anointed and so it becomes obvious that the oil was used to anoint the sick with a view to physical restoration to health.²⁶

Hippolytus here betrays a sense of the importance of tradition. This is evident inasmuch as he refers back to the Old Testament use of oil to anoint kings, priests and prophets.²⁷ Thus there is a continuity with the members of the old covenant and the Christians, the people of the New Covenant.

The anointing preparatory to Baptism also utilizes oil and it too is linked to the past. Here oil was used because of the ancient belief that olive oil had curative powers. This belief was the background of James 5:14 and Mark 6:13.²⁸ Thus, for Hippolytus, the oil was seen as efficacious in the treatment of illness. This oil was referred to as oil of exorcism and it was this unguent that was believed to ward off demons and demonic forces. The oil was exorcised rather than blessed from whence came its name. It was utilized to assist in the preparatory cleansing which paved the way for Baptism.²⁹

The task of the exorcist was to exorcise the candidates for

26. Palmer, The Purpose ... Reappraisal: pp.314-315.

27. P. Murray, The Liturgical History of Extreme Unction, Furrow Vol. 11, 9. Sept. 1960 pp.572-593 (Maynooth: 1960), p.592.

28. Easton, The Apost. Trad. of Hipp., p.91.

29. Ibid., p.91.

Baptism and thereby prepare them for their night-long vigil just preceding the actual Baptismal ceremony.³⁰ However, apparently the task of exorcists went beyond this limited sphere. It was their function also to pronounce blessings over members of the Church who were ill. This was so, due to the fact that in many sicknesses there was seen to be at least some demonic influence at work causing the illness. In the face of this power of evil the only thing the church could do was to pronounce blessings and attempt to exorcise these evil forces. It seems that they were effective at least occasionally.³¹

If one professed having the gift of healing it would have to have been proven to the community of faith before acceptance of it would come. The proof was demanded in concrete experiential terms. If a man claimed to be able to heal or to cast out demons and if after examination he were found to really have the gift of healing then he was accepted as such by the congregation. It ought to be noted that this gift was not seen as being the result of ordination, but rather if it was found in an individual who had not been ordained then the ecclesiastical office was automatically bestowed upon him.³²

30. Ibid., pp.44-45.

31. J.A. Jungmann, The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory the Great, Tr. F.A. Brunner, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1959), pp.59-60.

32. Ibid., p.60. Also, Dix, The Treat. ... Hipp. of Rome, p.22, and Easton, The Apost. Trad. of Hipp., p.41.

This group, in the form of exorcists per se and not just healers in general, a generation later in Rome became an order in their own right. This minor order was given, as its most important task, the preparation of the catechumens for Baptism.³³

All these things scholars have gleaned from this third century text. This document indicates that Hippolytus envisages a congregation which is small enough to be effectively governed by a bishop. The size would have to be small, or at least small enough to allow the bishop the opportunity to pay a personal pastoral visit to those who were ill. However, one does not want to assume a congregation so small that such a visit would have gone unnoticed or be considered as an everyday happening. Rather, a call on the sick by the bishop was undoubtedly considered as a great event in the life of the patient.³⁴ Thus the congregation was small enough to be handled by a bishop yet large enough to be appreciative of, and spiritually impressed by, a personal home visitation of the bishop. The deacons and subdeacons were the ones initially responsible to the ill of the community and it was through their labours that the bishop heard of the needs of his flock.³⁵ Hence the congregation's ministry to the ill was seen as an important facet of the general pastoral responsibilities of the community of faith.

33. Ibid., p.85.

34. Ibid., p.102.

35. Dix, The Treat. ... Hipp. of Rome, p.57.



This work and others ³⁶ show how the early Christians of the third century dealt with many parochial problems among which one finds that the pastoral care of the sick was an important aspect of the day to day ministry of the church.

As the century progressed, however, the healing aspect of the ministry to the sick seems to have regressed. Persistent attacks by the pagan world were causing divisions within the structure of the church and as a result standards began to slip. With this too, came a lack of spiritual fervor and dynamism. And accompanying this weakness went the naturally resultant lack of faith which diminished and decreased the idea of community and fellowship. As a result, although a few individuals seemed able to heal the sick, the power and drive of the early church which allowed the healing ministry to be effective had gone. ³⁷

With the close of the third century and the beginning of the fourth the tradition of anointing was still to be found. There was a continuation of the belief in the curative powers of unction. This, in at least the first quarter of the century, is proved more by an argument from silence than by anything else. The Council of Nicea,

36. A. Roberts, & J. Donaldson, eds., Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. Vol. XXI The works of Lactantius Vol. 1, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871), p.385. "Also to undertake the care and support of the sick, who need some one to assist them, is the part of the greatest kindness, and of great beneficence; and that which he has given to another for a time he will himself receive from God for eternity." Written in the late 200's.

37. Weatherhead, Psych. ... Heal., p.87.

which met in A.D.325 discussed the problem of the Church and dying Christians. In the pronouncements from this illustrious body, Viaticum was spoken of in reference to the seriously ill, or at least those apparently terminally ill. Viaticum was seen as a necessary part of the ministry to the dying but there was absolutely no reference whatsoever made to anointing the critically ill and dying.³⁸ Thus one might assume with relative certainty that sick unction was simply that, and was not yet regarded as being reserved for those in the throes of death.³⁹

Certainly this was the case some twenty-five years later. In the Testament of Our Lord, which has been attributed to the period ca. A.D.350,⁴⁰ one finds several references to the sick members of the community of faith. Presbyters and deacons were instructed to visit the ill, to preach that the sick were to be helped by the church, and to say appropriate words of counsel to those who were lying stricken with illness and infirmity.⁴¹ Indeed, in this fourth

38. Dictionnaire De Theologie Catholique, Tome Onzieme 1^{er} partie, (Paris: Libraire Letouzey et Ane, 1931), p.413. Canon 13 states: "On doit continuer a observer a l'egard des mourants l'ancienne regle de l'Eglise, qui defend du necessaire viatique celui qui est pres de la mort. S'il ne meurt pas apres qu'on l'a pardonne et qu'on l'a admis a la communion, il doit etre place parmi ceux qui ne participent qu'a la priere. De Meme l'eveque doit donner l'eucharistie apres l'enquete necessaire a celui qui, au lit de mort, demande a la recevoir.

39. Palmer, The Purpose ... Reappraisal, pp.317-318.

40. J. Cooper, & A.J. MacLean, The Testament of Our Lord, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p.41.

41. Ibid., pp.94-95.

century work there is direct reference to the oil of the sick and one can state unequivocally that the rite of unction was performed quite widely at this particular period in the history of the Christian Church.

The statement is as follows. "If the priest consecrate oil for the healing of those who suffer, let him say thus quietly, placing the vessel before the altar: O Lord God, who has bestowed upon us the Spirit, the Paraclete, the Lord, the saving and unshaken Name, which is hidden from the foolish but revealed unto the wise; O Christ, who didst sanctify us, and by Thy mercies dost make the servants whom Thou chooseth wise with the wisdom that is Thine, who didst send the knowledge of Thy Spirit to us sinners by the holiness which is Thine, bestowing on us the power of the Spirit; who art the Healer of every sickness and of every suffering; who didst give the gift of healing to those who were counted worthy of this by Thee; send on this oil, which is the type of Thy fatness, the delivering (power) of Thy good compassion, that it may deliver those who labour and heal those who are sick, and sanctify those who return when they approach to Thy faith; for Thou art ⁴²mighty and (to be) praised for ever and ever."

Nor is this the only piece of evidence to support the belief that oil was used as a treatment of illness in the fourth century church. Bishop Serapion of Thumis also calls on God to send curative powers upon the oil being consecrated. In his prayer Serapion seems to even transcend the Testament of Our Lord in the belief of the function of oil. Here one can see quite definitely that the use of this agent is not simply a remedy but rather a preventive measure used to ward off any impending powers or principalities which might tend to overpower the Christian who is in need.

42. Ibid., pp.77-78.

His prayer is simple and straightforward. "We invoke Thee, who has all power and might, Savior of all men, Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and we pray Thee to send down from the heavens of Thy Only-Begotten a curative power upon this oil, in order that to those who are anointed with these Thy creatures or receive them, it may become a means of removing "every disease and every sickness" (Mt.4:23), of warding off every demon, of putting to flight every unclean spirit, of keeping off at a distance every evil spirit, of banishing all fever, all chill, and all weariness; a means of grace and goodness and remission of sins; a medicament of life and salvation, unto health and soundness of soul and body and spirit, unto perfect well-being." ⁴³

Similarly, one finds oil referred to in the Statutes of the Apostles written about A.D.350-400. ⁴⁴ Here there are several comments directly bearing on the topic of consecrating oil for use in the anointing of the sick. It is interesting to note that here too there is a definite linking of the oil of the sick and the oil used in the Baptismal ritual as was seen in the time of Hippolytus. The prayer over the oil with which the catechumens were anointed "and for full Christians who were sick" ⁴⁵ is very specific in the request for God's power to be bestowed upon the oil that "it may be for healing and safety and benefit in all diseases and sicknesses, and for extermination of every Satanic adversary." ⁴⁶

43. Palmer, The Anoint. ... Reappraisal, p.315. Also see J. Wordsworth, Bishop Serapion's Prayer-Book, (London: SPCK, 1923), pp.77-78.

44. G. Horner, The Statutes of the Apostles or Canones Ecclesiastici (London: Williams and Norgate, 1904), p.VII.

45. Ibid., p.168.

46. Ibid., p.168.

The nature and purpose of anointing in Baptism is contained in a later phrase in the prayer. The oil is offered to God through Jesus Christ "through whom we offer this chrism which thou hast given to us for healing and for using in other necessities, that thou wilt be willing and wilt send the Holy Spirit upon it, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and that it may become an unction of holiness and a seal of the Holy Spirit upon every person of those who receive the washing of regeneration."⁴⁷

This then appears to separate sick unction from pre-Baptismal anointing inasmuch as this last section tends to deal almost exclusively with the Baptismal use of oil and calls for the unguent to be set aside to be used as a "seal of the Holy Spirit" specifically. However, later on in the text the two functions seem to be united once again.

It reads such that one sees the consecration as applying to both those receiving the washing away of sins and those who are sick.

"God, my Lord, almighty, the Father of our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ, stretch out thine invisible hand upon the fruit of this olive with which thou anointedst the Priests and the Prophets; and thou hast given power with thy hand that it may become to those who shall be anointed with it for healing and benefit, and for every disease and every sickness. Destroy every adversary, and make (it) the unction of thy grace for remission of sin to those to whom has been given the Holy Spirit, through the name and through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom to thee with him and with the Holy Spirit (be) glory and might from before the age now etc."⁴⁸

In this passage it seems as if this Ethiopic text is claiming the oil to be a means of forgiveness of sins, the curing of disease and the means whereby one is reunited with God in a proper relationship due to God's grace. Thus the rite, or at least the oil, appears to be a means of bestowing benefits upon Christ's flock, the Christian

47. Ibid., p.169.

48. Ibid., p.176.

community, because of the grace of God. Hence if one cannot call the anointing of the sick a means of grace, one must at least accept it as having been believed to have been performed with oil upon which God's grace had been bestowed.

At approximately the same time (325-400) as these texts were composed or compiled, oil was being used quite widely within the Christian faith as a means of curing ills. The act of anointing was not confined to the clergy but was practised by the laity as well.⁴⁹ It also gained a definite respectability with some of the more memorable fathers of the early centuries of the Church's history. "St. Jerome (A.D.340-420), as late as 390 reports the use of oil which had been blessed as being an "infallible cure" in cases of snake-bite."⁵⁰

Similarly, the story is told of a cure by consecrated oil at the hand of St. Martin (ca.395). This was said to have been told by an eye-witness.

He then blesses a little oil, with a formula of exorcism, and, holding the tongue of the girl with his fingers, he poured the consecrated liquid into her mouth. Nor did the result of the power thus exerted disappoint the holy man. He asks her the name of her father, and she instantly replied.

49. F.W. Puller, The Anointing of the Sick in Scripture and Tradition With Some Considerations on the Numbering of the Sacraments, (London: S.P.C.K., 1904), pp.163-167. Puller relates cures by laymen who used blessed oil. St. Pachomius (ca. 292-346) sent consecrated oil to the father of a girl possessed by a demon and when she was anointed she was healed. St. Hilarion (ca.291-371) anointed many people bitten by snakes and is reputed to have healed them. His deeds with respect to anointing are referred to by such notables as St. Jerome. (See pp.165-166).

50. Weatherhead, Psych. ... Heal., p.86.

The father cries out, with a mixture of joy and tears, and embraces the knees of Martin; and while all around are amazed, he confessed that then for the first time he had heard the voice of his daughter." ⁵¹

Thus the fourth century closed with a profound faith in the efficacy of consecrated oil in the treatment of disease and disabilities.

Nevertheless, it appears as if this rite, if it may be called a rite, was causing some consternation to some members of the church. Bishop Decentius of Gubbio wrote to Pope Innocent concerning many things which were troubling him in the practice of the church in the early 400's. One such problem dealt with the anointing of the sick. As the letter from Decentius is not available, one can only guess what the questions were from a reading of Innocent's reply to his letter. It seems as if, in some quarters at least, laymen were being discouraged from using holy oil on themselves and their loved ones. There also appears to have been some problem concerning who could be anointed in time of illness.

To these questions Innocent replied by making comment on James 5:14-15.

"Now there is no doubt that this can and ought to be understood of the sick faithful, who have been sealed with the holy oil of chrism, blessed by a bishop; not priests only but all faithful can use the holy oil in their own and their dear one's necessities." ⁵²

51. Dearmer, Body and Soul, p.249. From Sulpicius Severus, de vita B. Martini c.16, P.L.XX, 169.

52. G. Ellard, How Fifth Century Rome Administered Sacraments, Theological Studies Vol. 9, 1948, pp.3-19, (Published by the Theological Faculties of the Society of Jesus in the U.S.A., 1948), p.10.

From this, then, it is obvious that the ancient custom of self-anointing and of anointing one's friends and/or family in time of necessity was still practised at the time of Pope Innocent I ca.416. The purpose of this unction, it is assumed, would be to effect a physical cure and relief from the symptoms of illness.

Nothing in this letter to Decentius gives present day readers any substantial basis for viewing the unction as a last anointing. The recipient is not depicted as being one so seriously ill that his life is to be despaired of in the immediate future nor is he shown as one even in danger of death. The only thing that is clear is that the individual involved is definitely ill. In fact, if the patient were in the throes of death, or even in danger of death, then Innocent could not make his concluding remark on this passage from James.

He says: "It may not be given to those who are performing public penance, because it belongs to the "sacraments". For how should one of the "sacraments" be considered "fit" for those to whom the others are denied." ⁵³

If Innocent is to be read in the context of his theological background then one must realize immediately that he is not referring here to last anointing. It would be impossible for Innocent to tell Decentius to withhold unction if it was unction in extremis and therefore part of the last sacraments. ⁵⁴ The patient obviously was

53. Ibid., p.11.

54. See note 38 in this chapter. Viaticum is to be given to any dying Christian whether public penance had been performed or not. This was very definitely the last sacrament and could not be withheld from those who desired to receive it.

ill and in need of help but if he was not in such a state where he qualified for reconciliation and the resultant re-admission to the Lord's Supper then sick unction was to be withheld. It could not be refused to a dying man if it was seen as part of the last rites any more than it could be said that he was barred from the other sacraments. 55

Ellard disagrees with this interpretation and presumes critical illness is referred to by Innocent in this passage. How he justifies this is not clear at all. Just prior to the discussion on anointing the sick and James 5:14-15, Innocent makes a presentation of penance and illness.

He says: "As to these performing public penance, either on account of serious transgression, or for more venial sins, if no sickness intervenes, the custom of the Roman church shows that they are to be reconciled on the Thursday before Easter. Moreover, it is the part of the bishop (sacerdotis) to judge as to the gravity of the offences, to weigh, the accusation of the penitent, to appraise the corrective of his weeping and his tears, and then order him absolved, when he has seen an appropriate satisfaction. But if one shall have fallen sick, and his life is despaired of, he is to be absolved even before the Paschal time, lest he depart this world without Communion." 56

55. Palmer, The Purpose ... Reappraisal, pp.318-319. Palmer agrees with this line of reasoning and concludes that Innocent "regards unction as a sacrament of the sick, and not specifically as a sacrament of the dying." Luff, The Sacrament ... Text, p.57, also sees this as indicating that anointing, for Innocent, was a sacrament of the living. However, Ellard, How ... Sacraments, tends to disagree though bases his implicit disagreement on a presumption. On page 19 he states: "But public penitents may not receive this sacrament before being absolved. It is to be presumed, too, that the recipients of the rite are so seriously sick that death might overtake them, if it were attempted to bring them to the bishop."

56. Ibid., pp.9-10.

If this proviso was made just prior to a discussion on sick unction it seems ludicrous to imagine that Innocent would contradict himself in the following paragraph. Therefore, it would not be too great an assumption to suppose that here Pope Innocent was telling the bishop of Gubbio about the Church's action in the face of illness.

Other than this letter there is little known about the practice of unction in the fifth century. However, there is a considerable wealth of information in this brief portion of the letter which allows one to prove that anointing was used in the treatment of illnesses of the faithful members of the community of faith.

In this period anointing is referred to explicitly as a "sacrament" for the first time. It seems that this was a word which was applied quite generally to define any holy rite⁵⁷ and not just for a very few limited rites of the church. Thus when using the term Innocent is not specifically defining an act which, in and of itself, bestows grace upon the recipient.⁵⁸ This attitude would have to come from a much later period in the history of Christianity.

Regardless of this, however, when one comes to the sixth century it can be proved that the use of oil was for remedial measures in the face of illness. Thus, the argument that Innocent saw anointing as an effective cure for ills can be strengthened and hence weaken the theory that this act was a last rite of the church. Saint Caesarius of Arles, living in the first half of the sixth century, sheds light on the attitude of the Church in reference to the use of holy oil.

57. Fuller, The Anointing ... Tradition, pp.56-57.

58. Ibid., p.56.

In his sermons one finds his reactions against the abuses of the community in time of sickness. He tries to direct his Christian hearers to the right path in order that they might find the full benefit of the church's power in the face of the realm of illness. Caesarius does not limit his attack on illness to the use of unction alone. He also includes the Eucharist and almost seems to echo the second century concept of the Lord's Supper as "the medicine of immortality ... which ... prevents one dying and allows one to live always in Jesus Christ."⁵⁹ These two weapons, Communion and unction, were to be used repeatedly throughout one's life.

In sermon 265:3 one finds the following exhortation. "So often

as any sickness comes upon a person let him receive the Body and Blood of Christ: then let him anoint his body so that that may be fulfilled in him which is written: 'Is any man sick among you?' (Jas.V, 14-15). See to it, brethren, for he who in his sickness has recourse to the Church will merit obtaining recovery of his health and pardon for his sins."⁶⁰

Caesarius goes beyond this simple treatment in time of personal illness and enters the realm of the more unusual in that he refers to epidemics. In this respect he calls upon the Christians of the community of faith to turn to the church in such times and to anoint themselves and members of their families with the consecrated oil.⁶¹

59. Goguel, The Primitive Church, p.357.

60. Cardinal P. Gasparri, The Catholic Catechism, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932), p.415.

61. P.J. Cloagg, Introduction to the Catholic Epistles, p.101.

These passages were probably preached against the practice of the people of that day, namely that of turning to magicians and sorcerers. That was a pathway to health which was totally unsuitable to Caesarius and he spoke out strongly against it. He said: "How much more correct and salutary it would be to hurry to the Church, to receive the body and blood of Christ, and with oil that is blessed anoint in all faith themselves and their dear ones; for according to what James the Apostle says, not only would they receive health of body, but also the remission of sins." ⁶²

Similarly, he told the people to "Look to Christ for health - He is the true light: come to Church, anoint yourselves with blessed oil, receive the Eucharist of Christ. If you do you will receive health not only for the body but also for the soul." ⁶³

This was not the only plea of Caesarius. He also saw the need for a non-theological approach to sickness and was not above mentioning it as well. He calls for his parishoners to resort to the Church by all means, but also intimates that they ought to "look for health from ordinary medical care" ⁶⁴ as well.

It is interesting to note that Christianity is not held up as the sole agent which could be effective in the attack upon disease. In fact the magical rites are not discounted as ineffectual at all. Instead Caesarius applies the rite of unction and Communion as a cure to all ills whether serious or mild within the context of the community of Christian believers.

62. Palmer, The Anointing ... Reappraisal, p.39.

63. P. Murray, The Lit ... Unction, pp.578-579.

64. Ibid., p.579.

It is "l'application du rit à toute maladie, légère ou grave, puisque le malade est supposé aller lui-même à l'église, puisque le rit est opposé à la médecine magique en general; ..⁶⁵ l'accomplissement du rit (est) dans l'église."

He is not denying the power of magic but rather is placing it in a definite context. Instead of magic he calls for a sacramental cure and thus places the former in the realm of sacrilege. The result of the sacramental treatment of illness is seen to be efficacious physical treatment which ends in physical well-being. The magical practices would offer this as well. However, the Bishop of Arles adds the benefit of the forgiveness of sins. He calls the pagan, magical practices of rites "diaboli persuasio (Sermo LII) but the Christian rites of communion and Anointing give non solum corpus, sed etiam animae sanitatem (Sermo L)" ⁶⁶ (Not only health of the body but also health of the spirit.)

About one century later the words of Caesarius seem to be echoed in the person of St. Eligius of Noyon (ca. 659). Apparently in the seventh century people were still running after the magicians and sorcerers in the hope of finding relief from the burdens of sickness. Eligius abhorred this and demanded a change in the behavior of his congregation.

His exhortation is as follows. "As often as any sickness shall occur, let them not seek out the sorcerers ... but let the sick person put his trust in the mercy of God alone, so as to receive with faith and devotion the Eucharist of the body and blood of Christ, and with confidence to ask the Church for blessed oil, with which he

65. Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique Tome 2, (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1905,) p.2184.

66. Murray, The Lit. ... Unction, p.578.

may anoint his body in the name of the Lord; and according to the Apostle, "the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up." ...⁶⁷

This custom is not just an isolated occurrence then, but is found throughout the early centuries of the Christian church. The privilege of self-anointing was the order of the day and can be seen in an old pontifical of Rouen where the "bishop is said to bless the oil for the sick and for the people."⁶⁸ Thus the oil of the sick was allowed to be self-administered and was hoped to be the vehicle whereby cure would come to the Christian patient.

All was not well in the seventh century, however, for here one can find the possible roots of the later transition from sick unction to extreme unction. St. Sonnatius de Reims (600-631) used the term extreme unction for what appears to be the first time on record.

In statutes attributed to him one reads: "Que l'extreme-onction soit portée à celui qui est malade et qui demande et que son pasteur aille le voir souvent à domicile et lui fasse de pieuses visites, l'excitant vers la gloire future et le préparant convenablement."⁶⁹

Nevertheless, Puller maintains that at this time unction was for health and life and not in preparation for death. He says that he can

"find no trace in the first seven centuries of such people being anointed for the remission of their sins, or for the removal of the reliquae of sin,

67. Palmer, The Anointing ... Reappraisal, p.320. Taken from De Rectitudine Catholicae Conversationis 5.

68. W. Smith, & S. Cheltenham, Dictionary of Christian Antiquities Vol. 2, (London: John Murray, 1908), p.2004.

69. Dictionnaire D'Archéologie Chrétienne et De Liturgie, Tome 5 partie 1 (Paris: Libraire Letouzey et Ané, 1922), p.1034.

or to impart to them grace enabling them to die happily or courageously. And again, in those primitive ages I find no evidence of persons in articulo mortis being anointed with the object of preparing them for death, either immediately before or immediately after their reception of the Holy Viaticum." ⁷⁰

There is an obvious discrepancy between these two authorities on the subject of anointing in extremis or in articulo mortis. There is no other reference made to St. Sonnatius de Reims about which the present writer is aware nor does there appear to be one which expands upon this brief passage from his works. However, this particular statement from the first quarter of the seventh century seems to more than imply that viaticum and unction were very closely linked in the last illness of the patient as he approached death. This use may have been developing at this early date but if it was it was far from replacing the use of unction in the treatment of ills. It is interesting to note that although this individual very clearly refers to an anointing as extreme unction most authors on the subject claim that it did not become the last rite until at least a century later. ⁷¹

The primary, or at least most popular, use of consecrated oil in the seventh century was still for treating patients with a view to restoring them to physical health. Saint Cuthbert, (A.D.635-687)

70. Puller, The Anointing ... Tradition, pp.191-192.

71. Murray, The Lit. ... Unction, p.573. Murray quotes A. Chavasse's book Etude Sur l'Onction des Infirmes Dans L'Eglise Latine du 11e au XIe Siècle (Lyon: 1942), where Chavasse claims that until the eighth century one facing death was anointed simply because he was sick and not because he was in articulo mortis. He maintains that the transition took place from the eighth century onwards.

Bishop of Lindisfarne, "used water and oil, both having been blessed, to cure disorders." ⁷² During the same period the Frankish Church also used oil as a cure for diseases. Their practice was to take oil from the lamp of some famous sanctuary or from some sanctuary governed by a man reputed to be very holy. They also made use of baptismal oil, ⁷³ a practice referred to earlier.

Anointing the sick was a common part of Christian life in the more remote areas as well. In Ireland of the seventh century a service for it was incorporated into a Book of the Gospels. This service, in the Book of Dimma, is a Mass for the sick. The ceremony is quite involved.

- I. There is an exhortation to pray for the sick brother, for the solace of pain, and for his healing by heavenly medicines; and that he who gave life may give health.
- II. Then follow six collects.
- III. The Epistle consists of a few verses from 1 Cor.xv.
- IV. The Gospel is taken from S. Matthew xxii: 23-33.
- V. The sick man is instructed to make acts of faith in the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity (separately), in the life after death, and in the resurrection. ...

72. Weatherhead, Psych. ... Heal., p.87. An interesting story is told by Dearmer in Body and Soul, p.251 about the healings of St. Cuthbert. "A sister of Ethelwold" at that time attendant on the man of God, but now abbott of the monastery at Melrose," had been "during a whole year troubled with an intolerable pain in the head and side, which the physicians utterly despaired of curing." Cuthbert, "in pity, anointed the wretched woman with oil. From that time she began to get better, and was well in a few days."

73. A. Lagarde, The Latin Church in the Middle Ages, tr. A. Alexander, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915), p.66.

VI. The Unction then follows in this form: "I anoint thee with holy oil, in the Name of the Trinity, that thou mayest have health for ever and ever."⁷⁴

This Ordo continues with prayers and a Communion service in which the patient participates.⁷⁵ This could quite easily become adapted to a ceremony wherein the anointing could become the final unction and where the Lord's Supper could become the Holy Viaticum given just prior to the death of the Christian patient. Perhaps it was at this time that the groundwork was being laid for the transition from sick unction to the last rites. The act was as yet a means of cure and relief but the seeds for change seem to have been there even as early as a century prior to the actual switch.

It may be reading too much into this passage to assume such a transitional state in the 600's in a place as remote as Ireland, but in England the stage seems to have been more nearly set for the leap from anointing the sick to extreme unction. In the seventh century the rite was still used to heal but it looks like it was beginning to become linked directly to the sacrament of Viaticum as well. Such notables as Bede, D.735, give us some indication of the facility with which the change could be made.

"Bède raconte qu'il donna lui-même à saint Cuthbert, évêque de Lindisfarne, les ((sacrements salutaires)), c'est-à-dire peut-être l'eucharistie et l'onction, peut-être aussi la communion sous les deux espèces ... Il se pourrait⁷⁶ que Bede représente une époque de transition."

74. J. Comper, A Popular Hand-Book on the Origin, History, and Structure of Liturgies, (Edinburgh: R. Grant and Son, 1891), pp.165-166.

75. Ibid., p.166.

76. Dictionnaire De Spiritualité, Tome IV Deuxieme Partie, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1961), p.2194.

Thus it appears as though the seventh century is the turning point in the de facto belief, and practice, surrounding the liturgical use of oil in the ministry to the ill. It ought to be stressed that it was just the turning point and by this is meant that at this time the foundation was laid for the actual change to take place in the succeeding generations. Nevertheless, there was no change in official church doctrine regarding the anointing of the sick. The act was still to be used for the restoration to health of those members of the congregation who had been stricken ill with some malady or other.

This is amplified by the fact that the ritual surrounding the blessing of the oil was changed very little. It was blessed by the bishop on Maunday Thursday "during the special Chrism Mass of the Ordo Instauratus."⁷⁷ At this service the blessing of the oil was a simple ceremony which was composed of an exorcism, Dominus Vobiscum, and a prayer. This prayer, it seems, is still in use today with a few additions from later eras. But the roots or basic structure of the prayer dates from the period around 800. Even at this date bodily effects were primary in the prayer.⁷⁸

77. Murray, The Lit. ... Unction, p.576.

78. Ibid., p.576. Also L. Duchesne, Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution, tr. M.L. McClure, (London: SPCK, 1903), p.305, indicates that in the seventh century (p.298) on Maunday Thursday towards the end of the Mass the faithful brought their own oil to be blessed for personal use in time of illness. He says it also served for extreme unction but does not elaborate on this latter use. It is not clear whether Mgr. Duchesne is reading modern trends back into the ancient practice or whether he is basing this assumption on supporting material. He seems to give no indication either way.

It is to be noted that the prayer itself gives no indication or mention of a use which one could see as applying to extreme unction.

However, the climate of opinion seems to have been changing in the seventh and eighth centuries. Such persons as the Venerable Bede began to speak on the proper use of unction and who should administer it to those in need. In approximately A.D. 710 Bede referred to the letter of Innocent to Decentius (416) and cited it as proof positive that holy oil, that is oil properly blessed and consecrated by a bishop, could be administered to sick Christians. This, he said, could be done by all Christians "in their own need, or in the need of any members of their households." ⁷⁹ Thus, for Bede to feel it necessary to make this statement there must have been a move afoot to alter the use of unction to at least a certain degree.

St. Boniface, d.754, had an important bearing upon the eighth century use of oil in liturgical anointing whether for health or not. Here the pendulum swung to a new extremity and when it did the privilege of lay anointing was lost and replaced by giving the administration of the rite totally to the priests. This did not happen immediately but it seems to have been Boniface who set the wheels turning to remove this ancient custom from the laity and thus give another task to the clergy. ⁸⁰

He said that "the priests should always have in their possession the oil necessary for the unctions of the sick ... that this oil should be blessed by the bishop, and that the priests should ask it of him every year on Holy Thursday ... that while the priests should always have the chrisma in their possession, they should never, under pain of deposition, give it to the faithful as a medicine." ⁸¹

79. Dearmer, Body and Soul, p.229.

80. Lagarde, The Latin ... Ages, p.66.

81. Ibid., p.66.

It was some time before these rulings of Boniface became incorporated into the practices of the church at large. But during the Carolingian reform at the Council of Châlon in 813 these rules were enacted and later added to the "canonical collections". Thus Boniface created, de facto, the rule whereby the priests were granted the sole use of holy oil to be used in the rites of the church. ⁸²

Another figure is presented as being instrumental in the transformation in the function of anointing. This is Theodulf of Orleans (760-821), who was one of the key figures in the late eighth century and in the Carolingian reform in particular. One authority claims that prior to his time every authentically recorded case of sick unction in Western Christendom falls either into the classification of healing unction or an anointing for exorcism. ⁸³ He then discusses extreme unction and indicates that as healing unction seeks cure, extreme unction is administered when cure is no longer hoped for. However, an anointing with a view to healing may precede and sanctify death and extreme unction may result in a miraculous cure. Still the two are obviously different in purpose and nature and in the latter one finds a close connection with penance and its rites and results in an anointing of the five senses. Porter states that in the eighth century in the Frankish Kingdom, due to a revival of Biblical and patristic study, the use of oil began to be renewed and also began to take on a sacerdotal nature. This he claims, developed into

82. Ibid., p.66.

83. H.B. Porter, The Rites for the Dying in the Early Middle Ages, 1: St. Theodulf of Orleans, The Journal of Theological Studies, N.S., Vol. 10, 1959, pp.43-62, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p.46.

what later came to be extreme unction. He maintains that it took until the tenth century for this transition to actually take place. ⁸⁴

Murray also goes to the eighth century and sees the union of anointing with the rites of penance, and in particular, death-bed penance. He quotes Chavasse who claims that at this period, because of this association, anointing came to be administered practically at the point of death.

Chavasse says, "The emphasis placed at this period on the purifying effect of Anointing and the assimilation, which soon became complete, of Anointing with death-bed Penance had the ... consequence that the anointing was held to be a last pardon accorded by the Church to the dying. From that time, the rite itself was reserved to those in articulo mortis. From being a fact this becomes a law. Anointing will be not only in fact conferred in extremis but will be held not to be conferred otherwise." ⁸⁵

The situation in France was of great importance. As Puller points out, Theodulf was Charlemagne's theological advisor and assisted the king in his attempts to unify the country. Charles the Great had as much or more influence over his subjects as was forthcoming from Rome.

To substantiate this he quotes F.P.G. Guigot's book, Histoire de la Civilisation en France. Guigot says: "On peut donc, sans traiter la question de droit, sans examiner s'il est bon ou mauvais qu'il en soit ainsi, affirmer en fait qu'a cette époque, directement ou indirectement, ⁸⁶ le pouvoir temporel gouvernait l'Eglise."

84. Ibid., pp.46-47.

85. Quoted in Murray, The Lit. ... Unction, p.573.

86. Puller, The Anointing ... Tradition, p.213.

Puller argues that Theodulf links unction with penance and Viaticum and supports this by quoting Theodulf. "When the sick man has been anointed in the way that has been set forth, let him be enjoined by the priest to say the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and to commend his spirit into the hands of God, and to fortify himself with the sign of the cross, and to bid farewell to the living. Then let the priest communicate him."⁸⁷

From this statement Puller states that it is evident that "Theodulf's view of the Unction of sick was that it was primarily a rite to prepare the dying for death."⁸⁸ The consensus seems to be that it was during the time of Theodulf that anointing came to be unction in extremis.⁸⁹

Porter feels that this line of approach is erroneous and he gives reason for his rejection of this, as he calls it, early dating in favour of a later date which he claims is probably at least tenth century. As cited above, one reason for belief in the early dating is that there was a revival of anointing at that time based upon Biblical and patristic research. Porter maintains that this is true but says that the revival was geared to the ancient biblical and patristic practice of healing unction and says that all reliable canonical references cite the influence of James 5: 14-15. To resort to the creation of a new rite, Porter feels, would be out of keeping with Theodulf's character as he was always to cite his ancient authorities for his actions.⁹⁰

87. Ibid., p.194.

88. Ibid., p.195.

89. Besides Puller see J.C. Didier, The Last Rites, (London: Burns & Oates, 1961), p.30. Also Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique Tome 5, pp.1971-1973.

90. Porter, Rites ... Ages, 1: J.T.S. n.s. Vol. 10, 1959, p.50.

Another argument used by those who favour the early date is Theodulf's interest in the liturgical use of oil. Coming from Spain, the Spanish element would influence Theodulf's attitudes and thus would be manifest in the liturgies used by this man.⁹¹ However, he points out, The rite which has been attributed to Theodulf seems to differ greatly from the order of the Spanish Church. In the latter, healing was the key purpose, not only in the eighth century and even in the ninth, but also in the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁹² From this Porter goes on to say that the Spanish Church was "unique in the exaggerated therapeutic values it attributed to ecclesiastical oils. Theodulf's Spanish background, if it influenced him at all, would only make it the less likely that he advocated extreme unction."⁹³

The final argument in favour of Theodulf refers to the First Capitulare of Charlemagne, which set up church policy at the beginning of his reign. This called for the anointing of the dying. Those using this line of reasoning claim that no one would have been better qualified to put into practice this exhortation, by means of practical instructions, than was Theodulf.⁹⁴

To destroy the logic of this argument Porter claims that if Theodulf did this it seems strange that the succeeding Bishop of Orleans seems totally ignorant of his innovations. To illustrate

91. Ibid., p.50. Porter quotes his earlier work as background here. H.B. Porter, The Origin of the Medieval Rite for Anointing the Sick and Dying. Journal of Theological Studies, N.S. Vol. 7, 1956, pp.211-225, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp.215-218.

92. Porter The Origin ... Dying, p.215.

93. Porter, The Rites ... Ages, 1: p.50.

94. Ibid., p.50.

this he says that Jonas of Orleans (ca.775-843), called upon his parishoners to throw away their superstitious cures for illls and instead turn to the Church from which they could receive the holy healing oil. Indeed, he points out, Jonas blames the faithful of the congregation for neglecting sick unction. Porter says that Jonas nowhere indicates "any knowledge that this oil (was) being used for any new purpose, or that it (was) being applied without suitable faith in its powers to bring recovery." 95

"Thus", he concludes, "we find that if Theodulf did advocate extreme unction, so far from conforming to the trend of the times, he stood totally alone." 96

Porter's argument gains even further support from the Council of Chalon in 813. At this meeting of the Church the curative nature of unction of the sick was not overlooked. Speaking of anointing, the church leaders there recalled the faithful to consider that "a remedy of this kind, which heals the weakness of soul and body, is not to be lightly regarded." 97 Similarly, the Council of Pavia, held in 850, refers to anointing. Here, for the first time, it appears as a "salutary sacrament" which means that "through it, if one asks with confidence, (sins) are remitted and, as a result, bodily health is restored." 98

95. Ibid., p.51.

96. Ibid., p.51.

97. Palmer, The Anointing ... Reappraisal, p.322.

98. Ibid., p.322. A few years earlier at the Second Council of Nicaea (787) Canon 13 stated "With respect to the dying, the old rule of the Church shall continue to be observed, which forbids that anyone who is on the point of death should be deprived of the last and most necessary viaticum ... The bishop shall, however, administer the Eucharist after necessary inquiry, to anyone who on his deathbed asks to receive it." - J. Mansi, Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio, Vol. 11, (Paris: Hubertus Welter, 1901-1927), p.673.

Here there is absolutely no mention of anointing which would indicate that it was not regarded as necessary in hopeless cases, and indeed tends to point out that it was not part of the official last rites of the Church.

However, though one cannot say for certain just when the actual transition transpired it is most obvious that, liturgically, an unsettled era was at hand during the 700's to the 800's. Just when unction became the practice in extremis is not sure but it may be that it came into use due to its connection with penance and death. In the oriental sector of Christendom even ordinary penitents were anointed⁹⁹ and in the west it seems that viaticum was preceded by penance. Thus the transition could be quite easily made with little fanfare and could go literally unnoticed as a new replacement for an old custom.

This anointing in conjunction with penance could well have been the reason why it became pushed further and further towards the point where the patient was actually in articulo mortis rather than simply ill or even in periculo mortis. In the early days of the Church's history penance of the sick and public penance were equated. Whenever the penitent recovered there were certain things he was obliged to do for the rest of his life. People came to believe that if they were penitent and anointed it implied that they would have to wear certain clothes, desist from eating flesh meat, and abstain from marital, and presumably extramarital, sexual relations. For this reason people obviously would desire to postpone the sacrament of penance until the latest possible moment for fear of recovery. Thus anointing became more and more associated with the moment of death and lost its intended purpose as a weapon to be used in the fight against illness. This attitude was prevalent from the eleventh to the

99. Poschmann, Penance ... Sick, p.244.

fifteenth centuries ¹⁰⁰ but it is felt that this could have been the result of earlier practice which perhaps began during the eighth or ninth centuries and maybe even as early as the seventh and this eventually replaced actual sick unction.

Indeed, even in the ninth century the rite of anointing was being reserved for not just the sick or the very ill but for those individuals who were considered to be in danger of death. Thus it appears as if the concept of healing was shifting from the physical realm to that of the spiritual nature of man. Hence the outward act of anointing began to be seen as effecting an inward cure of the sins of man. In essence it had become a sacramental anointing. ¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, there is an anonymous address to the clergy from an unknown date which indicates an effort at revitalizing the practice of sick unction. This text seems to come from around the period with which this section deals. Although there is a call to the clergy to try to reassert the ancient custom of healing the sick there is also the admonition to be careful with the dispersal of blessed items.

It reads: "Visit the sick and restore them, and according to the apostle anoint them with holy oil, and give them Communion with your own hand. And let no one presume to hand over Communion to a layman or woman to be carried the sick.

100. Ibid., pp.245-246. Murray, The Lit. ... Unction, p.581 hints at a similar attitude which may have aided the transition.

101. P. de Letter, Anointing the Sick and Danger of Death, Irish Theological Quarterly Vol. 29, no. 4 October 1962, pp.288-302, (Maynooth: St. Patrick's College, 1962), p.296.

Let none of you demand a reward or a gift for baptizing infants or restoring the sick or burying the dead." ¹⁰²

This particular address indicates that the anointing of the sick with a view to healing had fallen into disuse. The author calls for a renewal but at the same time indicates that unction and Communion are very closely linked. Dimma, Stowe, and Mulling are rituals which come to us from the ninth and tenth centuries and they also link these two rites of the church. Viaticum follows anointing in all three ordines and it would appear that these are quite common forms for administering the last rites to a faithful Christian in his terminal illness. ¹⁰³

The order in which one received unction and Communion changed quite frequently. In 852 Hincmar told his clergy to anoint the sick with holy oil and then to communicate them. Riculfus of Soissons in 889 also taught his flock that it was the duty of presbyters to anoint the sick with holy oil. ¹⁰⁴ In the time of Caesarius, Communion prepared the way for unction because then recovery was the aim of the anointing and therefore it would be only fitting to receive Communion first in preparation. However, in the ninth and tenth centuries the order was reversed as the emphasis shifted from physical healing to preparation for death. Viaticum was seen as the proper last act for a

102. G.E. McCracken, The Library of Christian Classics Vol. IX, Early Medieval Theology, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1958), p.375.

103. Dictionnaire D'Archeologie Chretienne et De Liturgie, Tome 2 Partie 2, (Paris: Libraire Letouzey et Ane, 1925), p.3023.

104. Smith & Cheltham, A Dict. ... Antiquities Vol. 2, p.2004.

dying Christian and so it came to follow unction.¹⁰⁵ Eventually, though, unctio in extremis came to be the term applied to this act rather than extrema unctio and this misunderstanding¹⁰⁶ resulted in the return to the original sequence.¹⁰⁷ This return did not take place until at least the mid twelfth century.^{108.}

By the 1100's unction was beginning to find itself totally redefined as compared to the ancient practice. Rather than being performed to facilitate cure and nothing else, the oil was not being interpreted as efficacious on a twofold plane. Hugh of St. Victor, d. 1141, in a commentary on St. James 5:14 stated emphatically that this rite was to be used "both for the remission of sins and the alleviation of bodily sickness."¹⁰⁹ He stressed that faithful reception of the anointing would result in the double reward of "alleviation and consolation both in body and soul."¹¹⁰

105. Ibid., p.2004.

106. K. Rahner, ed. Sacramentum Mundi, Vol. 1, (London: Burns & Oates, 1968), p.38. Rahner indicates that the proper meaning of extreme unction is that it is an anointing which bestows "spiritual" help for the sick in danger of death" and not an anointing for the last moments of life.

107. Smith & Cheltham, A Dict. ... Antiquities Vol. 2, pp.2004-2005.

108. A.G. Martimort, L'Eglise En Priere, (Tournai, Belgium: Desclee et Cie., 1961), p.583. "Jusqu'au milieu du XIIe siecle l'administration de l'onction precede celle du viatique."

109. Palmer, The Anointing ... Reappraisal, p.326.

110. Ibid., p.326.

Not content to leave it there, however, Hugh guarded against a possible demise of the anointed by saying that if bodily health was not forthcoming then it simply was not expedient for God to allow it. Nevertheless, the recipient would, beyond any doubt, receive "that health and alleviation which is of the soul".¹¹¹

An attitude such as Hugh of St. Victor's sheds light on the basic belief of the time. Not wanting to remove the physical restoration to health and sound body as promised by James and as expected by the church during all preceding centuries, this aspect would have to be included in the explanation of the rite. Nevertheless, the spiritual, non-physical, intangible health, that of the soul, was now brought out into the full light and shown as the really important aspect of anointing. Hence one was anointed almost in exitu in order that he might leave this world in excellent spiritual health.

A contemporary of Hugh of St. Victor said, "Every Christian is anointed three times: first, for his inception, namely in baptism; secondly, in confirmation, where the gifts of grace are conferred; thirdly, on departing (in exitu), where, if sins are present, they are remitted in whole or in major part."¹¹²

111. Ibid., p.326.

112. Ibid., p.328.

Here there is no mention of physical restoration at all. The total emphasis is placed on the remission of sins, the preparation for a good death. Other cases ¹¹³ from the same period point to the same teaching and belief.

Up to this time the two ideas had co-existed in the minds of the clergy and were conveyed to the populace through such vehicles as the tales of the saints. ¹¹⁴ With Peter Lombard (c.1151) the rite of unction was elevated to the status of a sacrament and his influence upon clerics who followed him was so profound that anointing came to be officially regarded as one of the seven sacraments. ¹¹⁵ Yet even though Extreme Unction became a sacrament per se, and even though its primary effect was considered to be the forgiveness of sins, ¹¹⁶ it continued to pay at least lip-service to the belief that this anointing brought about physical well-being. ¹¹⁷

113. H.J. Lawlor, St. Bernard of Clairvaux's Life of St. Malachy of Armagh, (London: SPCK, 1920), p.88. St. Bernard d.1153, relates several tales about St. Malachy and his ministry to the ill. One of these stories points out the order of reception of the two last rites and the importance placed on the last moments of life.

"In a certain city called Antrim a certain man lying on a bed, now deprived for twelve days of the use of his tongue, at the bidding of the saint who visited him, recovered his speech and received the Eucharist; and so fortified he breathed his last breath in good confession. O, fruitful olive tree in the house of God! O, oil of gladness, giving both anointing and light! By the splendour of the miracle he gave light to those who were whole, by the graciousness of the favour he anointed the sick man, and obtained for him, soon about to die, the saving power of confession and communion."

There is a restoration of speech to this man so the healing has not been totally lost at this time even though the primary concern seems to be the remission of sins thus providing a good death.

114. Stories such as those about St. Malachy would doubtless convey the changing trends to all who heard them.

115. Dearmer, Body and Soul, p.221.

116. New Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. 1 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), pp.570-571.

117. Dearmer, Body and Soul, p.221.

With the placing of Extreme Unction at the last moment of life there arose the problem of survival or recovery from the illness. If a person had received the last rites and recovered could he come again to the very jaws of death and be the recipient of the sacraments for a second or third time? How ought the person who had been prepared for the beatific vision¹¹⁸ be regarded by the society? During the twelfth century there was a popular superstition held which said that in such situations the Christian who had been fortunate enough to be restored to health, if such a case could be called fortunate, was to be regarded as one who had already departed. With this attitude went the belief that he was no longer able to touch the ground with his bare feet,¹¹⁹ he could no longer eat meat, and could no longer cohabit with his wife.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, all did not agree with this, almost cruel, idea about those who were anointed and for this reason it seems as if the old rite of anointing the sick was still viewed by many as different from the last anointing. This austerity which was linked to the survival after final unction in the throes of death seems to be close to the old concept of penance which was extremely severe.¹²¹

118. New Cath. Encycl. Vol. 1, p.571.

119. Lawlor, St. Bernard's ... Malachy, p.125.

120. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge Vol. IV, S.M. Jackson, ed. in chief, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1909), p.251.

121. C.J. Hefele, A History of the Councils of the Church From the Original Documents, Vol. 5, tr. W.R. Clark, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), pp.207-209, also Vol. 3, pp.160 and 170.

Hence the fear of facing harsh penitential restrictions could have pushed the act of unction to the point where death was almost a fait accompli.

When one comes to the thirteenth century the situation does not improve. The true meaning of the rite of unction still seems to fluctuate between the old concept of sick unction and the more modern idea of anointing for the removal of sins. William of Auxere of the early part of the 1200's appears to be quite similar to Hugh of St. Victor in his views on the matter. He says: "The principal and proper effect of this sacrament is the cure of the body ... but the more excellent (dignissimus) effect is the remission of sins." ¹²²

Hence one sees one of the schools of thought at work in the theology of this man. Indeed there were two schools of thought during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The one saw anointing as primarily the sacrament of the sick, but admits that it is not always effective in producing the desired results. It also does not claim that this is the only, or even the essential, effect of the sacrament as the remission of sins is also part of the outcome of the rite. The other school regards unction as the last sacrament and therefore stresses the spiritual quality of the rite almost exclusively. ¹²³ Like most situations of this sort there are those

122. Palmer, The Anointing ... Reappraisal, p.327.

123. P.F. Palmer, Sources of Christian Theology Vol. II, Sacraments and Forgiveness: History and Doctrinal Development of Penance, Extreme Unction and Indulgences, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1960), p.297.

who fall somewhere in the middle ground and do not know just exactly what stand to take, if either. In the thirteenth century Archbishop Peckham was one such individual and his Constitutions of 1281 indicate his bewilderment.

He says: "There are Seven Sacraments of the Church, the power of administering which is committed to the clergy. Five of these Sacraments ought to be received by all Christians in general; that is, Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, the Holy Eucharist, and Extreme Unction, which last is only for one who seems to be in danger of death; it should be given, if it may be, before a man is so far spent as to lose the use of his reason; but if he happens to be seized by a frenzy, or suffer from any alienation of mind, this Sacrament ought nevertheless to be administered to him, provided he gave signs of a religious disposition before his mind was disturbed. Under such qualifications Extreme Unction is believed to be beneficial to the sick person, provided he be a child of predestination, and either procures him a lucid interval or some spiritual advantage."¹²⁴

The confusion tended to give way more and more to the belief in spiritual benefits as the primary outcome of anointing. Duns Scotus believed that the sacrament ought to be pushed to the last moment of life and therefore made it the sacrament of the dying.¹²⁵ This view was justified, they argued, on the grounds that they believed that the sacrament was "meant for the remission of venial sins and so was to be

124. Dearmer, Body and Soul, pp.221-222.

125. Diction. De Spirit. Tome IV, Deuxieme Partie, p.2196.

given to one who could no longer commit any." ¹²⁶ In fact nearly all the greats of the scholastic theologians tended to view the rite in terms of the soul rather than with respect to the body. In addition to Scotus such notables as Albert the Great, Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas all agreed that the purpose of extreme unction was to prepare the soul for the beatific vision. Thus this preparation for glory ought to be withheld until death was imminent. ¹²⁷

This is not to say that the physical aspect of the sacrament was totally ruled out. At this time Aquinas had developed his doctrine of the sacraments and saw Extreme Unction as really having a double effect. Its first and most important result was seen as being a spiritual remedy ¹²⁸ like all sacraments. ¹²⁹ The bodily

126. de Letter, Anointing ... Death, I. T. Q. 29.4 Oct. 62, p.297. Also Palmer, Sources ... Indulgences, p.303, quotes Duns Scotus "On the Sentences, 4, dist. 23 q.1. Opus Parisiense". He says Extreme Unction "is to be given only to such a sick person who is no longer capable of sinning and who is in danger of death; nor is it to be given to anyone else, even though death be imminent for reasons other than sickness, as one undertaking a voyage, or entering a battle, because in such cases, no matter how imminent the danger of death, a man always has the use of his free will, and can sin afterwards, and to such as can still sin, it is not given."

127. Palmer, Sources ... Indulgences, p.299.

128. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Third Part, tr. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Fourth Number QQ LXXXIV - Suppl. XXXIII, (London: R. & T. Washbourne Ltd., 1917), Q. 29, p.336.

129. Ibid., Q. 29, p.336. Aquinas defines a sacrament in the following way. "Among the visible operations of the Church, some are sacraments, such as Baptism, some are sacramentals, such as Exorcism. The difference between these is that a sacrament is an action of the Church that reaches to the principal effect intended in the administration of the sacraments, whereas a sacramental is an action which, though it does not reach to that effect, is nevertheless directed towards that principal action. Now the effect in the administration of the sacraments is the healing of the disease of sin: wherefore it is written (Isa xxvii.9): this is all the fruit, that the sin ... should be taken away. Since then Extreme Unction reaches to this effect, as is clear from the words of James, and is not ordained to any other sacrament as an accessory thereto, it is evident that Extreme Unction is not a sacramental but a sacrament."

cure which might follow anointing was seen as only subordinate to the spiritual good for which the sacrament was administered.¹³⁰

The ancient practice had evolved to the point where it was now viewed in the opposite manner from which it had been seen in the first centuries of the Christian faith. Bodily health was secondary and spiritual purity primary. The emphasis on the preparation for immediate reception into glory seems to have acquired foremost importance as regards the purpose of this act. Yet even so, Aquinas was not prepared to attempt to establish it as one of the essential sacraments. He claimed its importance was great but said that it was "not so necessary that the dying cannot obtain salvation without it."¹³¹

130. Ibid., Q. 30, pp.354-355. "The operation of the Church is more efficacious since Christ's Passion than before. Now, before the Passion, those whom the Apostles anointed with oil here healed (Mark vi. 13). Therefore unction has its effect now in healing bodies.

Further, the sacraments produce their effect by signifying it. Now Baptism signifies and effects a spiritual washing, through bodily washing in which it consists outwardly. Therefore Extreme Unction signifies and causes a spiritual healing through the bodily healing which it effects externally. ... whereas Extreme Unction causes bodily healing, not by a natural property of the matter, but by the Divine power which works reasonably. And since reasonable working never produces a secondary effect, except in so far as it is required for the principal effect, it follows that a bodily healing does not always ensue from this sacrament, but only when it is requisite for the spiritual healing: and then it produces it always, provided there be no obstacle on the part of the recipient."

131. Ibid., Q. 29, p1343.

At this time the sacrament of Extreme Unction was seen as being only properly administered by the clergy, as already stated. Objections to this arose and it was agreed that the laity could as well pray over the sick man as the clergy and could be heard by God just as well. It was also said that in the past lay people had performed the anointing thus setting valid precedent for the practice in the time of Aquinas.¹³² Aquinas replied that the priest did not say the prayer in his own person but as a representative of the whole Church. He maintained that this was possible for the priest to do but impossible for the layman since the former was a public official whereas the latter was a private individual.¹³³ Thus it would appear as if Thomas saw the real power of the prayers offered and of the blessing on the oil as coming from the corporate Church. Hence the community of faith seems to be of profound importance and significance in the administration of anointing in this period. In this sense the high middle ages seem to have kept in touch with the practice of the early Church where the unction of the sick was seen to be an act within the spectrum of ministry to the sick.

The attitude of the great scholastic theologians continued to hold sway over the practice of the Church for years and indeed in many ways influenced the attitudes of the bishops and laity well into the twentieth century. The Council of Florence in 1439, made a statement on Extreme Unction which expresses this belief quite well.

132. Ibid., Q. 31, p.343.

133. Ibid., Q. 31, p.358.

It stated: "The fifth Sacrament is Extreme Unction; its material part is olive oil blessed by a Bishop. This Sacrament should not be given except to a sick person whose death is expected. ... The form of this Sacrament is as follows: 'By this holy anointing and His most kindly mercy may the Lord pardon you whatsoever by sight, etc. ...' and similarly for the other members. The minister of this Sacrament is a priest. Its effect is the healing of the mind, and, in so far as it is expedient, of the body as well.' " ¹³⁴

Thus as the period of open protest drew near the belief of the Church on this ancient practice stressed that one had to be at death's door before anointing could be properly administered, and the laity, out of fear of recovery, tended to delay its reception until they were in the very last moments of life.

Nevertheless, there were those who protested against the new attitudes and sought to place things in perspective. Extreme Unction was accepted and practised but its identification with James 5: 14ff. was questioned. Cajetan (1480-1547) is an example of the reaction against the attributing of this sacrament to the Epistle of St. James.

He says: "Neither to judge from the words nor from the effect does this saying (of S. James) speak of the sacramental anointing of Extreme Unction, but rather of the Unction which the Lord Jesus appointed in the Gospel to be used by His disciples in the case of the sick. For the text does not say, Is any one sick unto death? but absolutely Is any one sick? and it declares the effect to be the healing of the sick; and it speaks of the remission of sins only conditionally; whereas Extreme Unction is only given near the point of death, and tends directly ... to the remission of sins." ¹³⁵

134. Gaspari, The Cath. Catech., p.413.

135. Puller, The Anointing ... Tradition, p.39.

CHAPTER VIII

Hence one can see that there continued to be those who sought to maintain the use of oil in the care of the ill with the aim and hope of recovery rather than with a view to impending death. The Protestant Reformation which was about to split the Church would be at least one factor which would bring pressure to bear upon Rome to state dogmatically the Church's belief and teaching regarding the liturgical use of oil in sickness and at the point of death.

That they agreed certain points in their common belief regarding the purpose and efficacy of the rite and the proper manner of its use.

The Council of Trent will be credited to have for the first time defined the sacrament and to have also decreed the clergy to administer the holy oil in case of illness. Here too it will be shown that there was an agreement between the Protestant and Catholic churches regarding the purpose and efficacy of the rite and the proper manner of its use, in fact, being established. This council defined the sacrament, established its place in the Christian life, indicated its function and decreed its use by the clergy.

There are very extremely little secondary source material which to draw for this period and as a result the bulk of this chapter will be based upon dogmatic texts after referring to the primary sources. Their use is explained in detail as to the source and interpretation of this period of the Church's history.

The Reformation and the Roman Catholic will be compared to see what the differences actually were in their treatment of these matters of the sacrament of the sick.

Several letters and other documents will be the Reformation documents in this chapter as they appear to be the primary sources on the topic of the rite.

CHAPTER THREE

LUTHER, CALVIN, THE COUNCIL OF TRENT ON EXTREME UNCTION AND THE MINISTRY TO THE SICK

In this chapter the Reformation and the Council of Trent will be dealt with as regards Extreme Unction and the visitation of the sick. An attempt will be made to show that Martin Luther and John Calvin placed a high priority on the pastoral care of the ill and that they showed certain inconsistencies in their pronouncements regarding the performance of this aspect of ministry and in their actual execution of this task.

The Council of Trent will be examined to see how the Roman Catholic Church regarded this sacrament and to see how she expected the clergy to administer the holy oil in time of illness. Here too it will be shown that there was an inconsistency between the professed belief in the purpose and efficacy of the rite and the prayers for those who were, in fact, being anointed. This council defined the sacrament, established its place in the Christian life, indicated its function and commended its use to the clergy.

There has been extremely little secondary source material on which to draw for this period and as a result the bulk of this chapter will be based upon deductions made after referring to the primary sources. Thus one is relatively limited as to the scope and interpretation of this period of the Church's history.

The Reformers and the Roman Catholics will be compared to see what the differences actually were in their treatment of those members of the community of faith who were ill.

Martin Luther and John Calvin will be the Reformers discussed in this chapter as they appear to be the primary writers on the topic of Unction.

Martin Luther has been traditionally viewed as the focal point of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. His disaffection with Rome and the Papacy resulted in a gross deviation from the old traditions of the past and the development of new ideas for the future of Christendom. His break with Rome was formally enacted at the Diet of Worms in 1521 but his theology seems to have been changing quite some time prior to this date. In 1519 he preached a sermon on preparing to die and in this homily one can feel and discern his unorthodox theology of the importance of personal faith in Christ.¹ Yet in this 1519 sermon he clearly believed in the desirability and efficacy of extreme unction and he also called for prayers to be addressed to Mary and to the Saints of the Church.²

In this short treatise Luther enumerated the stages or steps through which one ought to pass in the preparation for death. He saw the journey to death as being successful or appropriate to the life of a Christian only when it was made in the proper manner, and when preparation had been adequately made for it. Thus he called upon the Christians to whom he preached to open themselves to the proper method of dying.

He said: "Fourth, such preparation and readiness for this journey are accomplished first of all by providing ourselves with a sincere confession (of at least the greatest sins and those which by diligent search can be recalled by our memory), with the holy Christian sacrament of the holy and true body of Christ, and with the unction. If these can be had, one should devoutly desire them and receive them with great confidence. If they cannot be had, our longing and yearning for them should nevertheless be a comfort and we should not be too dismayed by this

1. Luther's Works American Edition Vol. 42, Writings I, Gen. Ed. H.T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p.98.

2. Ibid., p.98.

circumstance. Christ says, "All things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23). The sacraments are nothing else than signs which help and incite us to faith, as we shall see. Without this faith they serve no purpose."

From this it is clear that Luther was still, in November 1519,⁴ quite content with the last rites of the Church for the dying. He also indicated his agreement with Aquinas⁵ inasmuch as he said that the reception of the last anointing was not necessary for salvation.⁵ However, confession, eucharist, and extreme unction were to be desired by the faithful as they approached the end of life according to this fourth part of the exhortation.

Later in the sermon Luther returned to the sacraments and death and displayed his faith in the efficacy of the Saints. He said:

"Fifteenth, we now turn to the holy sacraments and their blessings to learn to know their benefits and how to use them. Anyone who is granted the time and the grace to confess, to be absolved, and to receive the sacrament of Extreme Unction before his death has great cause indeed to love, praise, and thank God and to die cheerfully, if he relies firmly on and believes in the sacraments, as we said earlier. In the sacraments **your** God, Christ himself, deals, speaks and works with you through the priest. His are not the works and words of man. In the sacraments God himself grants you all the blessings we just mentioned in connection with Christ. God wants the sacraments to be a sign and testimony that Christ's life has taken your death, his obedience your sin, his love your hell, upon themselves and overcome them. Moreover, through the same sacraments you are included and made one with all the saints. You thereby enter into the true communion of saints so that they die with you in Christ, bear sin, and vanquish hell."

3. Ibid., p.100.

4. Ibid., p.97.

5. Thomas Aquinas, Summae Theologicae Tertia Pars Quarta Quae LXXXIV-Suppl. XXXIII, tr. Q29, p.343.

6. Luther's Works Vol. 42 Amer. Ed., p.108.

Thus Luther seems to have been relatively within the confines of orthodoxy, as far as Roman Catholicism in 1519 was concerned, as regards his beliefs about the last moments of life. The final sacraments he saw as being aids to spiritual union with the communion of saints and with Jesus and thus the patient was enabled to face death courageously, properly attuned to the spiritual powers which enable one to face the final battle against death.

However, the doctor was of a different frame of mind only a few months later. In 1520 he wrote "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" and in it he attacked orthodox belief on nearly all fronts including the area of the sacraments. He was still a Roman Catholic at this time but the Diet of Worms was drawing near where Luther's rebelliousness was dealt with by the power of the Church. In the Babylonian Captivity his views on Extreme Unction seem to have been very pronounced and dogmatic. They were certainly not orthodox and seem quite out of keeping with his sermon on preparing to die. He opposed Extreme Unction as a sacrament altogether and enumerated his reasons. He doubted the authorship of the Epistle of James and further James' authority to institute a sacrament.⁷ After using the arguments cited Luther then continued to reason that one need only look to James to see the error of Rome.

He said: "if they believe the apostle's words to be true and binding, by what right do they change and contradict them? Why do they make an extreme and a special kind of unction out of that which the apostle wished to be general? For the apostle did not desire it to be an extreme unction or administered only to the dying, but he says expressly: "Is any one sick?"

7. Luther's Works American Edition Volume 36, Word and Sacrament II, Gen. Ed. H.T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p.118.

He does not say: "Is any one dying?" ... The Apostle's words are clear enough, ... but they (Rome) do not follow them. It is evident, therefore, that they have arbitrarily and without authority made a sacrament and an extreme unction out of the words of the apostle which they have wrongly interpreted. And this works to the detriment of all other sick persons, when they are deprived of their own authority of the benefit of the unction which the apostle enjoined."

Apart, then, from his objection to the Church calling Extreme Unction a sacrament, Luther also was opposed to the way Mother Church used James 5:14-16. He called his readers to pay attention to the words of James and placed emphasis on the fact that here one could find the promise specifically made that "the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up" ⁹ (James 5:14). Thus Luther claimed that sick unction had been lost and replaced by the Church of Rome with Extreme Unction at their own deciding and not on the institution or instruction of the Bible.

His polemic against the reference to unction as a sacrament was based upon the Roman Catholic definition which claimed that sacraments were effective signs of those things signified and promised. He maintained that the sixteenth century practice was not in keeping with that definition and quoted James 5:15 where the promise of recovery is explicitly made to the faithful.

8. Ibid., pp.118-119.

9. Ibid., p.119. "See the apostle in this passage commands us to anoint and to pray, in order that the sick man may be healed and raised up; that is, that he may not die, and that it may not be an extreme unction. This is proved also by the prayers which are used even to this day during the anointing, because they are prayers for the recovery of the sick man. But they say, on the contrary, that the unction must be administered to none but the dying; that is, that they may not be healed and raised up."

He then continued: "But who does not see that this promise is seldom, if ever fulfilled? Scarcely one in a thousand is restored to health, and when one is restored nobody believes that it came about through the sacrament, but through the working of nature or of medicine. Indeed to the sacrament they ascribe the opposite effect. What shall we say then? Either the apostle lies in making this promise or else this unction is no sacrament. For the sacramental promise is certain; but this promise fails in the majority of cases ..."¹⁰

Hence Luther condemned the use of the term sacrament in reference to the passage of Scripture as found in the Epistle of St. James. He gave quite a lengthy dissertation on James 5:14-16 and dealt with the administration of the rite, its connection with Mark 6:13 and with the persons to whom it was to be given. In doing this he directed his attack at the Church and attempted to vitiate her stand on this rite de passage.

Luther's understanding was that the anointing was derived from Mark 6:13 and James 5:14f. In Mark 6:13 the apostles are portrayed as anointing with oil many that were sick and healing them; hence, Luther said, this rite must be viewed in this context. The purpose of anointing, nevertheless, was not to be regarded as a panacea to be used indiscriminately in all cases of illness. He argued that this unction ought to be used only in certain cases and referred to Philippians 1:21 to substantiate his claim. (For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.) Thus, he said, one must not view illness as an evil or as a negative thing "for the church's infirmity is her glory

10. Ibid., pp.119-120.

and death is gain." ¹¹ Because of this fact anointing was reserved and was "given only to such as might bear their sickness impatiently and with little faith, those whom the Lord allowed to remain in order that miracles and the power of faith might be manifest in them." ¹²

Luther here seems to have been affirming his belief in the effectiveness of the ministry of healing while at the same time he hastened to state his disbelief in the use to which his contemporaries were putting the holy oil. He also was opposed to the method of unction in vogue during his lifetime. The conviction that the act was efficacious only when administered by the clergy turned Luther on Rome once more. This belief was as out of keeping with the Scriptural basis as was the belief that the end result of the act was death. He called attention to the terminology of James and translated verse 14 as elders rather than priests. Elders, for Luther, were those members of the congregation who were older and more sober in outlook. It was those men who ought to visit the sick man and pray with him because they were the ones who, by long service and because of the gravity of age, were able to communicate works of mercy and effective prayer for the sick person. ¹³ This group, he felt, were the ones who might have the power to cure the sick.

However, there seems to be a bit of a credibility gap in the teachings of this reformer. On the one hand he discussed the anointing used by Rome and claimed it was ineffective and a distortion of the

11. Ibid., p.121.

12. Ibid., p.121.

13. Ibid., p.120.

originally intended practice of sick unction. This latter use of oil he said "was a work of the early church, by which they worked miracles on the sick, and which has long since ceased."¹⁴ Thus, it appears, Luther was discounting the continuance of the miraculous cures as found in the early days of Christianity. If he was not doing this then he at least was discrediting the practice as described in James' letter. James, it is felt, was calling for the use of medical treatment in conjunction with the prayer of faith. The union of these two is that which effects the cure. Hence for James the rite was an outward expression of faith in God through prayers of the community of faith plus faith in the normal use of medical science.¹⁵ Therefore, it would appear as if Luther felt that the Church had outgrown the primitive practice of anointing and the resultant cures and this he attributed to the fact that the miraculous no longer was seen to exist.

On the other hand one finds numerous references to prove that, in fact, Luther did believe in the continuing use and occurrence of the miraculous. In fact the realm where one finds this most clearly portrayed is in the field of medicine. Only one paragraph later than his statement that miracles had been withdrawn one sees Scripture quoted to prove the miraculous. "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you receive it, and you will (Mark 11:24)."¹⁶

14. Ibid., p.121.

15. Wilkinson, Heal. in the Ep. of Jas., p.339.

16. Luther's Works Amer. Ed. Vol. 36, p.121.

From this he went on to say: "There is no doubt at all that, even if today such a prayer were made over a sick man, that is, made in full faith by older, graver, and saintly men, as many as we wished would be healed. For what could not faith do? But we neglect this faith which the authority of the apostle demands above all else."

Luther seems to have been of two minds about extreme unction or at least he displayed ambivalent feelings in this regard. On the one hand he desired that it be restored to its original status as an unction of the sick, although the purpose of this cannot be understood since he saw it as no longer valuable for miraculous cure. On the other hand, he was pleased that it had evolved or been transformed into an extreme unction. He appears to have been quite dogmatic inasmuch as he stated that the "sacrament" of extreme unction was contrary to the unction prescribed by James, "for his unction agrees with ours neither in form, use, power nor purpose."¹⁸ Yet the Roman use of holy oil in the last moments of life, or at least in the final illness of one's life, seems to have had beneficial results in the mind of Luther. These benefits were not due to the sacramental nature of the rite but rather came because the recipient believed that the blessings would fall on him with the reception of the anointing. He said: "We must not deny, therefore, that forgiveness and peace are granted through extreme unction, ... because he who receives it believes that these blessings are granted to him."

17. Ibid., p.121. The apostle here is James. Earlier in this treatise, p.118, Luther questioned the authority of the Epistle of James and now he seems to call on "the authority of the apostle." This seems to be a bit of a change of heart.

18. Ibid., p.122.

For the faith of the recipient does not err, however much the minister may err." ¹⁹

He further proposed that it was a good thing that anointing had been reserved until the last moments of life due to the condition of the Church. Here his vendetta against Rome and her policies came to the fore. His explanation of the reason why he saw it as good that unction had become extreme reflects his bitterness against the hierarchy of the Church.

He said: "Still it was a good thing that this unction was made the extreme or "last" unction, for thanks to that, it has been abused and distorted least of all the sacraments by tyranny and greed. This one last mercy, to be sure, has been left to the dying - that they may be anointed without charge, even without confession and communion. If it had remained a practice of daily occurrence, especially if it had cured the sick, even without taking away sins, how many worlds, do you think, would not the pontiffs have under their control today? For through the **one** sacrament of penance and the power of the keys, as well as through the sacrament of ordination, they have become such mighty emperors and princes. But now it is a fortunate thing that they dispense the prayer of faith, and therefore, do not heal any sick, and that they have made for themselves, out of an ancient ceremony, a brand-new sacrament." ²⁰

During the following year the Diet of Worms met and declared Martin Luther a heretic. The de facto split was then, in 1521, a split de jure and Luther became the focal point of the Protestant Reformation.

19. Ibid., p.122.

20. Ibid., p.123.

In the years leading up to the final blow on Rome which caused the expulsion from the Church, Luther developed a close friendship with Philip Melancthon.²¹ These two reformers corresponded on theological and non-theological issues during their lifetimes and this correspondence sheds light on the views held by Luther on many themes, two being miraculous healing and prayer. This relationship between Luther and Melancthon is important to the study of Luther's views and practices regarding the concerns of this thesis.

On January 13, 1522 Luther wrote to Melancthon regarding the problem of prayer and evidence of extrinsic faith. This letter, in parts, reads as follows:

"You say, aren't the examples for extrinsic faith weak? I reply that there is nothing stronger. These "prophets", or all the devils, should show one weak example of this extrinsic faith! You quote the passage where Samuel grieved for Saul, he did not pray (for him); or if he prayed, he did not pray in faith, that is, he did not believe he would obtain that for which he was praying but placed the outcome (of his prayer) in doubt and left it to the arbitrariness of God.

21. Luther's Works Vol. 48, Letters 1, H.T. Lehmann, Gen. Ed., (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), pp.77-78, n.3. A summary of the friendship is given here and Melancthon's importance is indicated. Melancthon's views on Extreme Unction are to be found in C.L. Manschreck, ed., Melancthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes 1555, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.204. "The papists quarrel about confirmation and unction. They themselves confess that these are not necessary works, so that the blessings which are spoken over the oil are obviously idolatries. For this reason we should not hesitate to reject anointing, and to be no longer involved in false and blasphemous opinions. Moreover, invocation of dead men is attached to this, which also is idolatrous. The apostles used balsam with the sick, as a physical medicine, and without doubt some earlier prophets were doctors, and had donum sanationis, but we can only counterfeit this with dead ceremony."

It was the same when David prayed for his little son, or when many other people pray for many other things. If he had been certain he would receive, he surely would have, because the promise of Christ in Matthew 21 (:22) stands fast, "Whatever you may ask for, believe that you will receive it and you shall receive it." And in Matthew 18(:19), "If two on earth", etc. This fact cannot be shaken: it is impossible that that for which one prays will not happen if one believes that it will happen. Otherwise the whole doctrine of faith would waver, and personal faith, which is based on (Christ's) promise, would be of no value. Indeed (the faith in which my neighbor intercedes on my behalf) belongs to me personally, but is really someone else's faith, so far as my neighbor is concerned; Nevertheless it is necessary that (that for which the neighbor intercedes) in faith should happen to him (on whose behalf the neighbor makes intercession.)... For Christ has never rejected a single man who was brought to him through someone else's faith, but accepted all. What more should I say? The testimonies and examples of the whole Scripture are on the side of personal faith, which attains faith and whatever is desired for someone else." ²²

Yet even though Luther could make such bold statements and proclaim all this power for personal faith and prayer, he obdurately held to the belief that the age of miracle had passed. ²³ Nevertheless, he held just as stubbornly to the belief that prayer would bring objective, temporal and visible results. One area where this tenacity of belief obtained was in the realm of illness and bodily suffering. In this sphere he claimed to have had numerous successes at realizing

22. Ibid., pp.368-369.

23. Luther's Works Vol. 24, Sermons on the Gospel of St. John Chapters 14-16 J. Pelikaned., (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p.79. These sermons were preached about 1537-1538 and this section is on John 14:12.

the desired benefits solely by the use of urgent and constant prayer in faith. ²⁴ In fact, Luther proclaimed that the age of miracles had passed, as cited above, and in the same sermon emphatically preached that Christians, "Through prayer ... obtain for themselves and for others all that they ask of God, even physical things." ²⁵

His letters are full of incidents where his belief in the power of the prayer of faith seems to have been vindicated. How he would differentiate between the results of his prayers of faith and the miraculous is not at all clear but he seems to have produced cures by the power of God through the prayer of faith whether one classifies them as miracles or not. Indeed he seems to have been the recipient of such benefits himself. In the following situation Luther was, or at least appeared to be, at the point of death. The letter which is below was written to his wife and describes how he regarded his restoration to life. This letter is shown as it indicates Luther's actual belief in the effect of prayer offered by other people on his behalf.

To his wife he wrote: "In one word, I was a dead man: and had committed you with the children to God, and to my good master, as if I were never to see you again. I felt great compassion on your behalf, but had reconciled myself to the grave. But they prayed so hard for me to God, that the tears of many people proved successful on my behalf;"

24. T. Boys, The Suppressed Evidence: or Proofs of the Miraculous Faith and Experience of the Church of Christ in All Ages from Authentic Records of the Fathers, Hussites Waldenses, Reformers, United Brethren, etc. An Historical Sketch, (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1832), p.192.

25. Luther's Works Vol. 24, Amer. Ed., p.80.

(he then describes in what manner relief came;) "and I seem to myself to have experienced a new birth. Therefore thank God; and let the dear children, with aunt Helen, thank the true Father, for you certainly would have lost the earthly father. The good prince made them run, ride, fetch, and exerted himself to the utmost, to obtain (medical) relief for me, but it was not to be. Your remedy, also, was equally inefficacious. God has already wrought a miracle on me this night, and does so still through the intercession of good people." ²⁶

Here Martin Luther, though having professed a belief that the age of miracles had passed referred to his own cure as a miracle. Thus there appears to be a discontinuity between belief and practice.

Nevertheless, though Luther did not believe in anointing as found in James 5:14, he certainly did believe in a ministry of healing based on the prayer of faith. Prayer, for Luther, was a most powerful instrument of the Christian to be used in the fight against illness and bodily suffering to obtain relief and restoration to health and wholeness. However, one must doubt nothing when uttering such a prayer. If one doubts then he fails on two counts. First he frustrates his own prayer because it seems to God as unimportant or at least not important enough for the individual to care earnestly enough to submit himself to God's total care. Secondly, he treats God as a liar and as being inconsistent, thus robbing God of His honour and faithfulness and truth. This argument he based on a reading from James 1:6-7 where faithlessness is seen as a wave driven by the wind and thus undirected or purposeless. ²⁷

26. Boys, The Suppressed Evidence, p.193.

27. J. Milner, Doctrines of the Reformation in the Words of the Great Reformer, Martin Luther, Extracted from His Works (London: Saunders & Otley, 1853), pp.148-149.

Prayer of this nature was called for time and time again by Luther in his letters and works. One can find numerous instances of cure from illness and even of reprieves from what to Luther appeared as being the throes of death. On one occasion Luther was extremely ill and considered himself to be near death but was healed by prayer. This prayer was seen "as the only possible remedy in so bad a case."²⁸ On this illness Luther wrote to Melancthon and described the misery through which he had gone and then told his friend that he, "said to the Lord, Either put an end to my sufferings, or put an end to me."²⁹ Thus he was cured by earnest and continual prayer. But he did not see this relief as coming from the power of his own prayers or through any particular charismatic gift which he had received from God. His relief came as a result of the prayers of the Church. He said: "I attribute this cleansing" (of the head) "to the prayer of the church; otherwise, it would have been impossible to endure that dungeon of a head of mine so long."³⁰

Other evidence of the power of prayer can be found in Luther's works quite readily.³¹ That his belief was profound can be seen in

28. Boys, The Suppressed Evidence, p.194.

29. Ibid., p.195.

30. Ibid., p.195.

31. Ibid., p.196. There is the case of his friend Mecum or Myconius who was near death and had written Luther a farewell letter because he was so sure his demise was at hand. "Luther, however, wrote a letter in reply, which was the means of raising the dying man." p.196. Mecum, himself refers to this time and said that he was "raised up in the year 1541, by the mandates, prayers, and letter of the reverend father, Luther, from death." p.196.

the fact that on at least one occasion he left himself no loop-hole to explain a lack of cure at the request of the prayer of faith. His friend Mecum was dying and Luther wrote, "May the Lord never permit me to hear of your taking your passage, while I remain behind, but make you the survivor. So I ask, and such is my will, and my will be done. Amen. - Because this seeks the glory of God's name, certainly not my own pleasure or advantage." ³² Here his belief in prayer is seen almost as an order to God to do Luther's bidding. This same attitude obtained in a prayer over the half dead Melancthon when Luther, in essence, prayed that if God ever expected Luther to trust His promises again on other occasions then He had better raise the sick Melancthon. This plea was continued as Luther repeated Scripture verses, holding Melancthon's hand and comforting his friend with assurances that he should not lose courage for God would not let him die. Continuing thus, Philip Melancthon began to improve and gradually recovered his strength and became restored to health. ³³

Hence Luther is seen to have been a strong proponent of the belief in the visible power of prayer even in matters of health and illness. He saw the prayer as gaining its effect from its association with the community of faith. In fact he not only referred to it in the incident above but on other occasions as well. Once there was a girl who was possessed by a demon and he was asked to cast it out of her. He refused to exorcise her and sent her away with instructions to return to the church the following day. In church "He then prayed to God with the rest of the ministers of the church, that for Christ's

32. Ibid., pp.196-197.

33. Ibid., pp.200-201.

sake, he would cast the devil out of the girl." ³⁴ His belief seems to have been that the effects of prayer are powerful in their results and produce the results called for by the persons praying. He usually based his rationale for such cures on passages such as John 14:12-13 ³⁵ (He who believes in me will also do works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son;). He stated quite glibly that one ought to believe what the Scriptures promise.

In fact, in 1540 he gave a clear explanation of his views regarding the interpretation of Scripture. "The doctor (Martin Luther) said, "I can't work any more, nor can I speak any longer. When I was young I was learned, especially before I came to the study of theology. At that time I dealt with allegories, tropologies, and analogies and did nothing but clever tricks with them. If somebody had them today they'd be looked upon as rare relics. I know they're nothing but rubbish. Now I've let them go, and this is my last and best art, to translate the Scriptures in their plain sense. The literal sense does it - in it there's life, comfort, power, instruction, and skill. The other is tomfoolery, however brilliant the impression it makes." ³⁶

Thus Luther, with all his complexity and his assaults upon sixteenth century orthodoxy attempted to return to the most basic of stands. He called on the Bible for his authority and trusted in the

34. Ibid., pp. 162-163. Luther used this incident to attack Roman Catholic ceremonies for the exorcism of demons. The outcome of the story here related was that the girl was restored to normalcy.

35. Ibid., p.163.

36. Luther's Works, American Edition, Vol. 54, Gen. Ed. H.T. Lehmann, Table Talk, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p.406.

truths contained therein to justify his ministry to, among others, the sick. The act of anointing seems to have been discarded and it could be that this was due to its associations with Rome and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. He saw the outward rite as unimportant but stressed the function of prayer. He called for a return to the faith of the early Church and there found justification for his ministry to the sick which often resulted in the Church's involvement in illness via intercessory prayers which, at times, produced cures.

...and he prayed with the sick. ... He refers to the ...
... which says that prayer must be ...
... maintained that because of his ...
... through ...
... intervention ...
... support the prayers of the ...
... Christ's Church have been ...
... will be given.

... have given ...
... especially in his work on the ...
... left in ...
... used ...
... the ...
... other ...

M. L. ...
Theological ...
1943, p. 192.
p. 193.

Calvin, a contemporary of Luther, also held relatively strong views on the proper conduct of ministry to those who were ill. One can only assume that his views were strong due to the fact that his concept of ministry to this group was quite flexible. Thus his definite ideas were more an assertion of freedom to the minister than an adhering to certain specific rites for the ill.

Nevertheless, Calvin did maintain that those who were ill ought to be prayed for. He was opposed to the practice of Rome whereby one prayed via the saints. To refute this he quoted Romans 10:17 which says that prayer ought to be rooted in the word of God and Calvin maintained that because of this there exists a clear order to invoke God alone.³⁷ Prayers offered to God through Jesus were seen as being effective. Christ's intervention and intercession was seen to support the prayers of the faithful and, further, Christ's faithful have been promised that whatsoever they ask in His name they will be given.³⁸

Yet Calvin seems to have given little guidance on this type of prayer, especially in his work on the visitation of the sick. Here he almost appears to have deliberately left an unstructured or flexible situation. He did have some prayers to be used if desired but prescribed no fixed order for using them or for their place in the sick room. In this he seems to have followed the other continental

37. J. Calvin, The Library of Christian Classics Vol. XXII, Calvin: Theological Treatises tr. J.K.S. Reid, (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1954), p.195.

38. Ibid., p.195.

Reformers of the time. Calvin, however, unlike some of the other Reformers, did not feel he had to modify his stand in this regard to any very great degree. He was quite content to give only very general guidelines to his clergy as is the case today in many churches which claim to be Calvinist in outlook. ³⁹

On the matter of the sick Calvin, ca. 1545, wrote: "The office of a true and faithful minister is not only publicly to teach the people over whom he is ordained pastor, but, so far as may be, admonish, exhort, rebuke, and console each one in particular. Now the greatest need which man ever has of the spiritual doctrine of our Lord is when His hand visits him with afflictions, whether of disease or other evils, and specially at the hour of death, for then he feels more strongly than ever in his life before pressed into conscience, both by the judgement of God, to which he sees himself about to be called, and the assaults of the devil, who then uses all his efforts to beat down the poor person, and plunge and overwhelm him in confusion. And therefore the duty of a minister is to visit the sick, and console them by the word of the Lord, showing them that all which they suffer and endure comes from the hand of God, and from His good providence, who sends nothing to believers except for their good and salvation. He will quote passages of Scripture suitable to this view.

Moreover, if he sees the sickness to be dangerous, he will give them consolations, which reaches farther, according as he sees them touched by their affliction; that is to say, if he sees them overwhelmed with the fear of death, he will show them that it is no cause of dismay to believers, who having Jesus Christ for their guide and protector, will, by their affliction, be conducted to the life on which he has entered. By similar considerations he will remove the fear and terror which they may have of the judgement of God. If he does not see them sufficiently oppressed and agonized by a conviction of their sins, he will declare to them the justice of God, before which they cannot stand, save through his mercy embracing Jesus Christ for their salvation. On the contrary, seeing their

39. W.D. Maxwell, John Knox's Genevan Service Book 1556, The Liturgical Portions of the Genevan Service Book Used by John Knox While a Minister of the English Congregation of Marian Exiles at Geneva 1556-1559, (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1931), p.55.

offences, he will exhibit Jesus Christ to the life, and show how in all poor sinners who, distrusting themselves, repose in his goodness, find solace and refuge. Moreover, a good and faithful minister will duly consider all means which it may be proper to take to console the distressed, according as he sees them afflicted: being guided in the whole by the word of the Lord. Furthermore, if the minister has anything whereby he can console and give bodily relief to the afflicted poor, let him not spare, but show to all a true example of charity." 40

From this passage one can readily see that there was little guidance given to the clergy as they proceeded with their pastoral responsibilities to those of their congregation who were ill. It appears as if Calvin was primarily concerned with exhortation and consolation in illness rather than with counsel which makes one better able to overcome illness or even bear it with as little anguish as possible, unless the anguish were caused by feelings of guilt and penitence. If one were troubled spiritually about past sins and future judgement Calvin was more than willing to alleviate these fears and anxieties. If however, one were spiritually at ease he seems to have demanded a goading until the patient became remorseful. Doubtless Calvin was concerned with the proper preparation for death, which from this passage, appears to have been close to the idea of penance just prior to death. Calvin saw the act of contrition as beneficial to one facing death as it would place the patient in a right relationship with God. 41

It was before the patient's condition had become critical that this Reformer saw as the best time for pastoral activity. In fact he

40. J. Calvin, Tracts and Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church Vol. 2, tr. H. Beveridge, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), p.127.

41. Calvin, The Lib. of Chr. Clas. Vol. 22 Theol. Treat., p.68.

was of the opinion that people in illness ought to be comforted by God and His Word and felt that it was unfortunate that so many were not so consoled.⁴² In order to see to it that no one died through prolonged illness without this salubrious admonition and teaching, Calvin recommended that no one ought "to be confined to bed for three days without informing the minister, and that each be advised to call the ministers when they desire it in good time, in order that they be not diverted from the office which they publicly discharge in the Church."⁴³ He even went beyond this realm of individual responsibility for calling in the minister and said that "it is to be commanded that parents, friends and attendants do not wait until the patient is about to die, for in extremity consolation is in most cases hardly useful."⁴⁴

In this aspect of his belief Calvin seemed to be hearkening back to the situation which James called for in his epistle though it is doubtful if that was the reason why Calvin so presented his views. James says: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church" (Jas. 5:14a). Here the responsibility lies on the shoulders of the patient. It appears as if James calls for an act of faith on the part of the sick member of the congregation inasmuch as the elders are to be sent for and are not merely passively received as they perform the duties of their office.

42. Ibid., p.68.

43. Ibid., p.68.

44. Ibid., p.68.

Though Calvin did the same thing in essence, he appeared to be concerned with preparation for death rather than treatment for life.

This attitude was in keeping with Calvin's view of miraculous healing or the gift of healing. It is obvious from his commentary on James (ca. 1551) that he felt that the age of miracles had passed.⁴⁵ He (Calvin) referred to the oil and said that it was used very cautiously and only, probably, when it seemed as though there was "some hope of restoration".⁴⁶ He maintained that oil was a symbol which commended the patient to the grace of God. The symbolism was not to be destroyed or lost through abuse, contempt or through indiscriminate use. It was for this reason, said Calvin, that James ordered the presbyters to be sent for even though the use of the holy oil was "confined to the power of the Holy Spirit."⁴⁷ From these statements one ought not to be surprised to find that Calvin saw unction as being sacramental rather than medicinal.⁴⁸ But because he saw the reality of the symbol as only existing temporarily, he therefore asserted that the sign must also have been

45. J. Calvin, Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles tr. J. Owen (Edinburgh: T. Constable, 1855), p.355.

46. Ibid., p.355.

47. Ibid., p.355.

48. Ibid., pp.355-356.

for a limited time. ⁴⁹

Regardless of his belief in reference to the continuation of the use of oil as a remedial measure in time of illness, Calvin did shed some light on placing James 5:14 in context. He criticized the sixteenth century practice which tended to cause confusion as regards the purpose of the anointing of the sick. He tried to clarify the New Testament and early Christian understanding of the use of oil. To do this he indicated that, "As James brings before us this special gift, to which the external rite was but an addition, we hence learn, that the oil could not have been rightly used without faith." ⁵⁰

The Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles was not the only place where Calvin referred to anointing the sick. In his Institutes of the Christian Religion he discussed the sacraments and the other, as he called them, counterfeit sacraments performed by Rome. In this section of the Institutes he had quite a lengthy section on Extreme Unction. In it the Roman Catholic Church and her priests were quite severely dealt with as regards this rite. He mocked the ceremony which he claimed Rome said had two purposes, remission of sins and relief from

49. Ibid., p.356. He says: "And it is quite evident, that nothing is more absurd than to call that a sacrament which is void and does not really present to us that which it signifies. That the gift of healing was temporary, all are constrained to allow, and events clearly prove: then the sign of it ought not to be deemed perpetual. It hence follows, that they who at this day set anointing among the sacraments, are not the true followers, but the apes of the Apostles, except they restore the effect restored by it, which God has taken away from the world for more than fourteen hundred years. So we have no dispute, whether anointing was once a sacrament; but whether it has been given to be so perpetually. This latter we deny, because it is evident that the thing signified has long ago ceased."

50. Ibid., p.357.

bodily disease. To destroy this stand he maintained that Extreme Unction was nothing more than the laying on of hands which he saw as a mere "hypocritical farce, by which, without any reason, and without any advantage, they affect to mimic the apostles."⁵¹ He acknowledged that the Roman sacrament was professed to come from Mark 6:13 and James 5:14f. and even went so far as to quote the former where Mark says "they anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them" (Mark 6:13b). Calvin said that James held healing as the end of the anointing in his epistle as well. Calvin stated explicitly that the act of unction concealed no higher mystery than healing the sick and hastened to add that Christ and the apostles used great freedom in their cures of the afflicted. He cited the use of spittle and dust in the cure of the blind man, the touch of Christ which could heal, and the word from the Lord which removed distress. Similarly, he claimed that the apostles effected cures by touch and by word and included unction merely as another external tool used to direct the bystanders and the healed to the fact that the source of the cure was not from man but from God.⁵² He further pointed out that oil is often a sign of the Holy Spirit and His gifts.⁵³ But the time of such things had passed and no longer had the Church the power or the gift of healing the sick because the Gospel no longer needed signs to commend it to the

51. J. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol. 2, Seventh American Edition. Tr. J. Allen, Book 4, Ch. 19, Section 18, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), p.751.

52. Ibid., pp.751-752.

53. Ibid., p.752.

people and to arouse admiration from unbelievers. Therefore, said Calvin, "it has nothing to do with us, to whom the administration of those powers has not been committed." ⁵⁴

The reason for the cessation of miracles and miraculous cures was not only due to the fact that they were no longer needed but also to the fact, in some measure at least, of man's ingratitude. ⁵⁵ But, even though this was the case, as seen by Calvin, that does not leave man alone in his misery and infirmity. Calvin said that Christ is undoubtedly with the faithful and helps them in all ages and continued on to say that, "whenever it is necessary, he heals their diseases as much as he did in ancient times" ⁵⁶ even though he does not do it via the imposition of hands or visible powers.

To continue to profess to have the power even as the apostles did, for Calvin, was to do a great injustice to the representation of the Holy Spirit. He maintained that the oil as used by the priests was totally ineffective in the cure of ills and therefore it was a desecration of the power of the Holy Spirit. ⁵⁷ Calvin claimed that to state that oil is effective as a cure is the same as stating "that all oil is the power of the Holy Spirit, because it is called by that name in the Scripture; or that every dove is the Holy Spirit because he appeared under that form." ⁵⁸

54. Ibid., p.752.

55. Ibid., Bk. 4, Ch. 19, p.753.

56. Ibid., p.752.

57. Ibid., Bk. 4, Ch. 19, Sect. 20, p.753.

58. Ibid., p.753.

Thus the Reformer had prepared his attack on the name sacrament when used in conjunction with 'Extreme Unction'. He asserted that a sacrament must have two things and said that this rite had neither. "... we require these two things in a sacrament, that it be a ceremony instituted by God, and that it have some promise of God, we at the same time require that the ceremony be enjoined upon us, and that the promise have reference to us ... That the promise they presumptuously boast of in their unction is not given to us, we have clearly proved, and they themselves declare by experience. The ceremony ought not to have been used, except by those who were endued with the gift of healing; and not by these butchers, who are more capable of killing and murdering than of healing." ⁵⁹

He further attacked the Roman Catholic practice by saying that they had distorted and twisted the passage in James so that its original use could not be seen in the rite as carried out in the sixteenth century. He turned to James and indicated that there one could see the injunction to anoint the sick but instead of this, he claimed, "these men bedaub with their unguent not sick persons, but half-dead corpses, when their souls are at the point of departure from them." ⁶⁰ From this criticism he then attacked the Roman Catholics by using their own claims that the unction was used as a remedy for sins and illness. If it was that, then they ought to use it before the person was lying half dead, otherwise the church was being cruel in her activity in the realm of ministry to the sick. ⁶¹

59. Ibid., p.753.

60. Ibid., Bk. 4, Ch. 19, Sect. 21, p.753.

61. Ibid., pp.753-754.

Hence, one can see quite readily that Calvin's opposition to Extreme Unction was for several reasons. He did not like it to be called a sacrament in the sixteenth century though the apostles used it as such in their ministry. This was because in his day the promises of healing were seldom fulfilled and also because he felt that it was instituted only for a limited time to assist in the propagation of the Gospel in the early days of the Church. To attribute healing qualities to the oil, therefore, was to injure the person of the Holy Spirit inasmuch as the attribution was seen as being unrealistic.

Calvin, however, was concerned with the sick and the proper pastoral care of this group. He believed in visitations to the homes of the patients and felt that they ought to be given all the consolation which the community of faith could offer in the person of the clergyman and in his prayers and exhortations. Indeed, he went further than that. It was Calvin's keen desire to have the elements of the Lord's Supper distributed to the sick, especially those facing death. Confession was a prelude to Communion for Calvin⁶² and therefore one might safely assume that in his ministry to the dying he was quite close to the Roman Catholic practice of confession, viaticum, and anointing, leaving out only the latter of the three. But Calvin was prevented from stressing this point very openly due to the climate of opinion in his day.

62. J. Calvin, The Library of Christian Classics Vol. XX, Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol. 1, tr. F.L. Battles, (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1961), Book 3, Chapter 4, Section 13, pp. 637-638.

Yet he did long for a continuation of the old custom of carrying the Communion to the sick faithful. In a letter of September 4, 1558

he expressed this desire as follows: "That the Communion is not distributed to the Sick, also displeases me; and it is not on my account that this consolation has not been accorded to those who are quitting this life. But because a different custom has prevailed, and because a change could not be brought about without great discussion, I have preferred peace ... I should have wished, however, to witness to those who will come after us, what I should have desired."⁶³

Thus it may be said that if Calvin had seen his way clear to reinstate the administration of Communion as a final act of the Church to the sick person he would have done so with great rejoicing. Also, since his objection to unction was, or appears to have been, based upon the feeling that it had become totally inefficacious in the ministry to the sick, it does not seem ludicrous to assume that he would have used this avenue as well, if he had seen it as beneficial, as a means of conveying God's grace and healing power to those entrusted to his pastoral care. But the lack of visible manifestations of the external power of unction as a means to health led him to condemn it as a sacrament which had outlived its original meaning and which therefore ought to be dropped. This left the ministry to the sick, for himself at least, as a relatively unstructured confrontation which, hopefully, would result in confession and Communion prior to the demise of the patient.

63. Maxwell, John Knox's Genevan Service Book 1556 ... p.56.

Within Roman Catholicism at this time all was not well. There had been a desire to have a general council of the Church to deal with the abuses which were prevalent at the end of the fifteenth and in the sixteenth century. The Curia, however, was not at all anxious that such a council take place and as a result it was postponed time after time as the abuses continued relatively unabated. At one point even Luther thought that a council might effect the reforms which the papacy seemed unable to bring about. This attitude was to change, however, long before the council actually was to meet.

In 1545 the bull *Laetare Hierusalem* set the date for the beginning of the Council of Trent. The Council was to deal with the abuses within its structure and also with the disputed points of theological doctrine which were to be found in the confrontation with the Reformers. For almost two decades the Council met intermittently in Trent where the discussions seem to have ended any hope for a reconciliation with the Reformers. ⁶⁴

The sacraments were among the doctrines discussed which means that the use of the oil of the sick came before this body that they might attempt to formulate the official Church doctrine regarding the administration and meaning of this rite. The findings of the Council on this point of doctrine will occupy the remainder of this chapter.

64. cf. H.J. Hillerbrand, The Reformation In Its Own Words, (London: S.C.M. Press, 1964), pp.420-421. cf. also Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 22, (London: William Benton, 1964), pp.454-455.

Extreme Unction, as seen in the preceding chapter, was in a very confused position. Some saw its use as being the sacrament of the sick and not just for those facing death. They hoped for physical, existential results and felt that these were to be expected along with the spiritual edification which all agreed accompanied the anointing. Others opted for the use of unction merely as the sacrament of those at death's door. They saw only the spiritual benefits of the rite and felt that it ought to be administered in exitu when man could no longer sin. ⁶⁵

Reform was needed in the teaching of Rome on this issue if for no other reason than to clarify the meaning of the rite. Luther had levelled his attack on Rome and had swept aside much of her teachings as utter frivolity and non-Christian foolishness. He condemned the most prevalent beliefs regarding the use of oil in time of illness but left room to say that it was his opinion that Extreme Unction had been reserved until the last moments of life due to the fact that when this was the case the priests could not rob the poor faithful. ⁶⁶ There are, however, those who would disagree with his view. S.G.A. Luff maintains that up to the Council of Trent Extreme Unction was a kind of "Cinderella among the seven due to the characteristic mediaeval abuse of demanding exorbitant stole fees." ⁶⁷ Thus, here, as in other areas surrounding the use of oil in the ministry to the sick, there is confusion as to the state of affairs regarding this troubled "sacrament".

65. Palmer. The Purpose ... Reappraisal, p.326 & p.328.

66. Luther's Works Amer. Ed. Vol. 36, p.123.

67. Luff, The Sacrament ... Text, The Cl. Rev. 52/67, p.57.

In its treatment of this rite, the Council gave it its validity by emphatically linking it to the Epistle of St. James⁶⁸ and in this respect tended to go along with contemporary sixteenth century beliefs. Here, however, Trent seems to have ended its agreement per se with the remaining beliefs which had come to be accepted as valid by the faithful masses in general. As well as internal pressures Trent also had to face the external opposition of the Reformers when making any pronouncements on the topic of unction. The Reformers had denied the validity of Extreme Unction⁶⁹ and one can imagine that they would have been ready and willing to scrutinize any and all declarations from the Council sessions which dealt with this matter. Nevertheless, the Church did tackle the problem and seems to have showed little or no regard for the Reformers from without or from the revisers from within the pale of so-called orthodoxy. Her position appears to have been to state as simply as possible the Roman Catholic understanding of "revealed doctrine".⁷⁰ In doing this one can see the careful and well intentioned phrases about the use of oil, the recipient of the sacrament, the results of effects of the administration of the rite and, also the balance between primary and secondary effects.⁷¹

68. Ibid., p.57.

69. de Letter, Anointing ... Death, I.T.Q. 29, 4 Oct. 62. p.298.

70. Ibid., p.298.

71. Ibid., p.298.

Rather than accept the views of individuals writing about the Council of Trent it is felt that the best policy at this point would be to examine the statements made by Trent in her Catechism which was produced for use by parish priests. ⁷²

Trent believed and taught that the sacrament of Extreme Unction, like all sacraments, is the vehicle of grace and that the awareness of mortal guilt, therefore, impedes the free-flowing of this grace. Thus, in order to place the recipient of the sacrament in the proper **spiritual** state whereby he would receive the fullness of the benefits of the unction, he ought to receive the two sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist prior to the administration of Extreme Unction. ⁷³

The catechism continues: "And next, let parish priests strive to persuade the sick person to receive this Sacrament from the priest with the same faith with which those of old who were to be healed by the Apostles used to present themselves. But the salvation of his soul is to be the first object of the sick man's wishes, and after that the health of the body, with the qualification, ⁷⁴ if it be for the good of his soul."

The attitude contained in this statement tends to agree with both the scholastic ideas that the sacrament was for spiritual edification

72. Although there are undoubtedly a few sources which could shed some light on Trent in an objective way the present writer has found that very little is not so prejudiced either in favor or against the Roman Catholic Church that it is felt best to let the documents speak for themselves thus, hopefully, avoiding the same weakness.

73. J.A. McHugh & C.J. Callan, Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests, (New York: Joseph F. Wagner Inc., 1934), p.313.

74. Ibid., p.313.

and at the same time with the concept that its function was for physical health. In this respect one might say that the declaration appeared in the form of a *via media*. Whether or not this was the intention one could not say with any degree of accuracy from reading the documents.

The Council did seem to go contrary to all schools of thought in some areas at least. The scholastic period saw the use of oil primarily in terms of dying. It was used "in transitu, when all hope of recovery had been lost."⁷⁵ In this statement though, the Council of Trent called attention to the physical, mundane function which saw the restoration of the body and the cure of ills. This latter was declared to be found only when it was for the edification of the soul. Nevertheless, Trent stated explicitly that physical health was not to be disregarded as a benefit of unction but rather saw it as something to be sought.

Yet declaring an outward sign and seeing it are two different things. The Council, knowing this, dealt with it succinctly in no uncertain terms.

"However, should the sick not recover it (health) in these days, that is to be attributed, not to any defect of the sacrament, but rather to the weaker faith of a great part of those who are anointed with the sacred oil, or by whom it is administered; for the Evangelist bears witness that the Lord "wrought not many miracles" amongst his own "because of their unbelief" (Matt.xiii, 58). Although it may also be said with reason that the Christian religion, since it has struck its roots as it were more deeply in the minds of men, stands now less in need of the aids of such miracles than they would seem to have been formerly at the commencement of the rising Church. But, nevertheless, faith is here to be

75. Palmer, The Purpose ... Reappraisal, *Theol. Stud.* 19/58, p.339.

strongly excited, for however it shall happen by God's counsel and will with regard to the health of the body, the faithful ought to rely on a sure hope of attaining, by virtue of this sacred oil, spiritual health, and of experiencing, should the hour of departure from life be at hand, the fruit of that glorious assurance, by which, it is written: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Apoc. xiv.13)." ⁷⁶

Here the onus for the apparent lack of cure of bodies as a result of anointing was placed at the door of the anointer or of the anointed. It failed to be seen in the sixteenth century use of holy oil not because the rite was ineffective nor because the cure of bodies was a long lost gift of the early Church but rather simply because of a lack of faith on the part of one or other or both parties involved.

Regardless of the possible cure though, Trent placed the primary emphasis on grace which remits sins. Since the sacrament of Penance was seen to remove the stain of mortal sin then the sacrament of Extreme Unction was seen to remove the traces of venial sin. It also was seen as removing all trace of sin whatsoever from the soul of the anointed when properly received, that is after Penance and the Eucharist. Thus "it liberates the soul from the languor and infirmity which it contracted from sins, and from all the other remains of sin." ⁷⁷ This attitude would have been amenable to the scholastic thoughts on the sacrament as seen in chapter two but a disagreement would have been created by the teaching of Trent on the proper time for the administration of the oil. The popular belief was that since this sacrament was to be used in conjunction with Penance and Viaticum it

76. J. Donovan, Catechism of the Council of Trent, (Dublin: James Duffy, Sons & Co., 1829), p.274.

77. Ibid., p.273.

therefore must come at the end of one's life.⁷⁸ On the other hand, Trent taught that this was wrong. The idea of death was not removed by any means but in the teaching of Trent it was placed in a different perspective from that of the common belief. The prerequisite for the reception of the sacrament was drafted in the following way. "But the time to be considered most opportune for this cure is, when we are afflicted with a severe illness, and danger to life impends; for it has been implanted by nature in man to dread no human visitation so much as death; and this dread greatly augments the recollection on our past sins."⁷⁹ This indicates that one need only be seriously ill in order to receive the anointing and not in the actual last hours or even moments of life. It would appear as if the Council were giving priests a considerable latitude in the administration of this rite as it now made possible de jure, to anoint at one's discretion those who appeared to be gravely ill. Before Trent the confusion would doubtless have left many in a state of bewilderment and thereby have caused the withholding of the sacrament until the throes of death as proposed by Duns Scotus and others.⁸⁰

In fact the Council went even further than this and made it quite clear that the Church believed that Extreme Unction was to be regarded

78. de Letter, Anointing ... Death, I.T.Q. 29, 4 Oct. 62, p.297. Also Palmer, Sources ... Indulgences, p.299ff. These references indicate the beliefs of the period as indicated in chapter two.

79. Donovan, Catech. of the Coun. of Trent, p.273.

80. Dictionnaire de Spiritualite, Tome IV Deuxieme Partie p.2196.

as a definite sacrament of the sick and not just a sacrament of those about to succumb to death. In the Catechism of Trent one finds a section which deals with this point. Those facing death as a possibility due to a battle were to be excluded from the reception of the oil regardless of the peril involved. Similarly, those persons who were about to undertake some dangerous voyage were not to be recipients of the holy oil. In fact even when death was a certainty as in the case of a capital punishment the sacrament could not be given because the person involved was not ill as James explicitly stated as a requisite for the rite in his epistle (James 5:14).⁸¹

Instead, it was to be given to those who were ill because "it was

instituted to be medicinal not only to the soul, but also to the body; As, then, those only that labour under disease have occasion for cure, therefore should the sacrament be administered to those only who seem to be so dangerously ill as to excite apprehensions of their approaching dissolution. Those, however, sin very grievously who defer the holy unction until all hope of recovery now lost, life begins to ebb, and the sick person to sink into insensibility; for it is obvious that it avails very much to a more abundant reception of the grace of the sacrament, if the sick man be anointed with the sacred oil whilst the mind and reason are still unimpaired, and he can bring to its reception faith and devotion."⁸²

Here Trent lowered its hand of authority on those who would withhold the unction until one was in articulo mortis rather than administering it *in periculo mortis*. The judgement that one were committing a sin by waiting too long ought to have brought the sacrament back into a perspective closer to the original intention of the rite in the early Church. The name of the sacrament was not changed however,

81. Donovan, Catech of the Counc. of Trent, p.270.

82. Ibid., p.270.

but continued to be called Extreme Unction. The justification or explanation for this decision was quite simple. The name continued, "because, of all the sacred unctions prescribed by the Lord and Savior to his Church, this is the last to be administered."⁸³ Thus although the Council recognized the fact that this rite had formerly been called the sacrament of anointing of the sick and also the sacrament of dying persons,⁸⁴ she opted to carry on with the popular title of Extreme Unction. This view, one ought to hasten to add, was not new in the official teaching of the Church. Indeed the belief that this sacred unction was to be used at the door of death was a distortion of Church policy in the pre-Tridentine period as well as after the declaration on Extreme Unction. The scholastic view of reception in articulo mortis was nothing but a "deviation or exaggeration" and "was never officially endorsed by the Church."⁸⁵

One can say then, that Rome always officially taught that the act of anointing the sick with holy oil was to be used for a two-fold purpose. The primary function as seen by Trent, was a mystical, rather than a natural, healing of the illnesses of the soul of man rather than the simple cure of bodily ailments.⁸⁶ But there were to be special prayers and rites in connection with the anointing. These were to be offered up to God on behalf of the patient by the priest and these prayers were quite definitely for the recovery of the sick man.

83. Ibid., p.267.

84. Ibid., p.267.

85. deLetter, Anointing ... Death, I.T.Q. 29, 4 Oct. 62, p.288.

86. McHugh & Callan, Catech. ... Priests, p.311.

Trent implored the priests and any present at the administration of the sacrament to "pour out their fervent aspirations to God, and earnestly commend to His mercy the life and salvation of the sufferer." ⁸⁷ Thus this last anointing was "administered not only for the spiritual grace which it bestows, but also for the recovery of health." ⁸⁸ The prayers which accompany the rite were for the efficacy of the sacrament to be made real to the person involved. These prayers were not the simple appellations of a parish priest on behalf of some parishoner in ill health. They were not individual intercessions at any time but rather were to be regarded as more than this.

Trent said; "Nor should the faithful doubt that those holy and solemn prayers which are used by the priest, not in his own person, but in that of the Church and of our Lord Jesus Christ, are heard by God; and they are most particularly to be exhorted on this point, to take care that the Sacrament of this most salutary oil be administered to them holily and religiously, when the sharper conflict seems at hand, and the energies of the mind as well as of the body appear to be failing." ⁸⁹

Hence the community of faith was the actual origin of the prayers for the sick member of the body of believers. The prayers were believed to have been effective due to their union with the Church Catholic and with Jesus Christ both of whom intercede on behalf of the sick man. The act, therefore, became by Tridentine decree, an outward act whereby the sick person was made aware of the prayers and concerns of the Church and also of the grace of God which has been displayed since the time of Christ via the use of holy oil.

87. Ibid., p.310.

88. Ibid., p.310.

89. Ibid., p.313.

In summary then, one could say that the sixteenth century saw an attack upon and a definition of beliefs as regards the sacrament of Extreme Unction and the ministry to the sick. Luther obviously believed that prayer could and did effect cures from ills even though the day of miracles had passed. He saw merit in the sacrament of Extreme Unction inasmuch as it helped the patient in his infirmity as he prepared to meet his God. But he denied the sacramentality of the rite because it did not do that which it promised to do - namely cure the sick of bodily ills. Calvin, on the other hand, saw no miracles happening around him but did not rule out the possibility that God could intervene in illness if He so desired. He was very concerned with the proper care of the sick and felt that exhortation plus confession and the Eucharist would well prepare a man for his final moments. He discounted Extreme Unction for the fact that he saw it as being irrelevant, ineffective and anachronistic since the age of miracles had passed. Rome, too, seems to have abhorred the sixteenth century de facto beliefs and called attention to the lack of faith which prevented healings from taking place. The rite was reinstated as a sacrament to be utilized in the hours of grave illness, and not merely at the point of death. Its use was for physical health, but more importantly, it aimed at giving one spiritual wholeness. To both the Reformers and the Roman Catholic Church the element of central importance, apart from the effects of the act of unction, was seen as being the power of prayer, in time of illness, as an expression of the community of faith.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANCOINTING OF THE SICK IN THE MODERN CHURCH: PENTECOSTALISM, ANGLICANISM, & ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Extreme Unction changed little in the Roman Catholic Church from the time of Trent until the present century. Although Trent made this sacrament available for those faithful in periculo mortis the medieval practice of reserving its administration until one was in auriculo mortis continued until the present era. Unction in extremis has only recently met its demise, or at least should meet its timely end, with the recent revisions of the rite formulated within the Roman Church. These changes will occupy much of the section on Roman Catholicism in this chapter.

Other denominations of Christianity practice unction as a part of their ministry to the sick. Pentecostalism and Anglicanism will be examined as representatives of Protestantism who use the oil of the sick in their pastoral ministry to those of their numbers who are ill. Pentecostalist literature is, in many ways, very subjective and in some respects quite limited. Therefore the section of this chapter dealing with the rite of anointing in this denomination will be relatively restricted. Following Pentecostalism will come Anglicanism. Here a brief history of anointing will trace the use of unction from the reign of Henry VIII until the present day. The reawakened interest in this ancient rite has produced, within the Anglican Church, several healing fellowships and groups interested in the sacramental ministry to the ill. The historic and modern use of anointing in this church will occupy the Anglican section of this chapter. The chapter will conclude with modern Roman Catholic thought and practice concerning this aspect of ministry to the ill. In this section the recurring problem of the purpose of unction will be viewed in the light of modern Roman Catholic documents.

PENTECOSTALISM

When one speaks of Pentecostalism one must realize that, although the modern biblicistic and ecstatic movement of the twentieth century appears to have had its beginnings in the United States of America at the turn of the century,¹ there have been other movements throughout history which have had similarities with the modern phenomenon.

Pentecostalists emphasize the doctrine of baptism in the Holy Spirit which is made clear to the recipient of such baptism by the experience of speaking in tongues. They also claim to represent a return to original Christianity complete with an emphasis on the charismatic gifts including healing.²

The rise of Pentecostalism in this century seems to have been, in part at least, due to a thirst for a greater awareness of and awakening to the Person of the Holy Spirit.³ Such a thirst was not new to this century. The Montanists of the second to fifth centuries also called for a revival of the spiritual life.⁴ Like Pentecostalists, they stressed tongues⁵ and also called for a "recognition of the active presence of the Paraclete in the Body of Christ, and for a more spiritual and a more ascetic type of Church life than the official

1. Nils Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement: Its Origin, Development and Distinctive Character, (Copenhagen: Universitetsforlaget, 1964), p.2.

2. Ibid., p.2.

3. M. Harper, As At the Beginning, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), pp.21-22.

4. H.B. Swete, The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1912), p.72.

5. R.A. Knox, Enthusiasm, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), p.29.

churches seemed to offer." ⁶ Such a demand seems to have been made at different times in the history of the Church. There have been people who have called for a return to the primitive simplicity of early Christianity with the claim that they have been led by the guidance and direction of the third person of the Trinity. Often, in circles such as these, the claim is made that there is to be found the charismatic gifts as in the earliest days of the Church. Such groups as the Camisards and the Shakers and the "seventeenth-century visionaries of Paris who danced in the cemetery of Saint-Medard" are to be included among this group. ⁷

6. Swete, The Holy Spirit, p.83.

7. New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 9, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), pp.1078-1079. Also, A.L. Drummond, Edward Irving and His Circle, (London: James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1937), Appendix 2, pp.281-288. Here Drummond points out that the dispensation of the Holy Spirit was part and parcel of the teaching of the Anabaptists and the Quakers. On p.282 he says: "Fox claimed for every soul the privilege of receiving the truth at first hand from the fount; he had "openings" - gleams of light direct from God. Led by the Spirit, and liberated from the letter of the Word and from the authority of man-made Ministry, Creeds and Sacraments, Christians might exercise the gifts of the Apostolic Age, heal the sick, and even overcome sin in this life."

Also, V. Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States, (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p.119. Synan indicates that tongues were to be found in Christian history in many places; St. Paul, the Montanists, the Albigenses in twelfth century France, the thirteenth century Italian Waldensians, the Shakers, the Mormons, the Irvingites and in the Great Welsh Revival of 1904-05. He maintains that the 1906 outbreak, which is the basis of the modern movement, was just a recurrence of an ancient and well known phenomenon.

Since, however, the Pentecostals of today claim American origins it might be well to examine ecclesiastical history in the United States to gain an appreciation of the background which gave rise to this denomination.

The American Church has a history of being revivalistic in nature and this dates from, at the very least, the early decades of the 1700's.⁸ This revivalism found expression in the "Great Awakening" of the 1740's in New England. The Great Awakening differed slightly from earlier revivals in that its very high-spirited and emotional preaching, especially among the Puritan churches, gave rise to a vast increase in the occurrence of visible bodily effects. Such things as fainting, weeping and shrieking were to be found as the people became involved in conversion experiences.⁹ Through time the revivalistic tendency was curbed but the emotional basis found in the

8. Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, p.7.

9. S. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp.286-287. See also, Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, p.16. He claims that "Motoric outbursts of ecstasy, such as glossolalia, involuntary screams and convulsions, were already occurring among the Quakers and Shakers and later appeared among the Mormons." He further states that "There was no direct historical or genetic connection between the above-mentioned movements and the Pentecostal Movement, but this kind of physical phenomenon has accompanied American revivalism from the very beginning of the Great Awakening, often in the form of epidemic cases of screaming, trembling, falling and fainting."

See also, G.B. Cutten, The Psychological Phenomenon of Christianity, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), p.177. "Weeping, crying, wailing, shrieking, and fainting were common in meetings". Cutten goes on to say that J. Edwards, a leader of the Great Awakening, later regretted "that he had not taken a more decided stand against such delusions."

American mass mentality continued to exist and may have been one of the sources of the rise of the Pentecostal Movement.¹⁰

It would appear as if the immediate roots of the modern Pentecostal Movement are to be found in the nineteenth century. During that century glossolalia was not unknown in many of the revivals and camp meetings which were held in many localities throughout the United States. These signs were perhaps considered as proof positive, or at least as evidence, that one had been saved or, to use the Methodist term, sanctified.¹¹ These camp meetings gave rise to the Holiness Movement of the 1800's and it is in the Holiness Movement that Pentecostalism sees its parentage.¹² Bloch-Hoell agrees with this genealogy and points out that the Holiness Movement was a "Puritanic reaction against a supposedly stiffening institutionalism and secularism in the greater American churches."¹³

This revolt against the institutionalization of the Church was not only to be found in North America. The call for the charismatic was found in Britain in the seventeenth century and in the nineteenth.

10. Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, p.7.

11. Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, p.25, note 29.

12. Ibid., p.115. See also, J. E. Campbell, The Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1898-1948, Its Background and History, (Franklin Springs, Ga. : Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1951), p.184.

13. Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, p.12.

The early Methodists were charismatic in nature as was the later Catholic Apostolic Church. The latter, however, "went furthest in the charismatic direction on the one side, as it did in the institutional-liturgical, on the other side." ¹⁴ The Catholic Apostolic Church introduced glossolalia and prophecy as a regular part of the worship service in a deliberate attempt to revive the gifts of the New Testament Church. ¹⁵

On the liturgical side the Catholic Apostolics went further still.

"The year 1847 was notable for two innovations: the practice of "sealing" was adopted, by the laying on of hands of the apostles for the impartation of the Holy Ghost, and chrism or consecrated oil for healing the sick and for ordination was introduced." ¹⁶

The rite of unction was obviously seen by this group as being effective for a double purpose. It was to be used primarily for the healing of infirmities and, according to James 5:15, for the remission of sins.

The liturgy for the blessing of the oil makes this abundantly clear. "Almighty God, whose blessed Son, when He was upon earth, sent forth His disciples to anoint the sick with oil; who has also instructed us in Thy holy word, that the elders of the church should pray over the sick, anointing them with oil in the Name of the Lord: We beseech Thee to bless this Thy creature of oil, which we present before Thee;

14. H. Davies, Worship and Theology in England, Vol. 4, From Newman to Martineau 1850-1900, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), p.141.

15. Ibid., pp.141-142. Also, D.L. Gelpi, S.J., Pentecostalism: A Theological Viewpoint, (New York: Paulist Press, 1971), p.30, says: "American Pentecostalism traces its religious ancestry to the Irvingites." The Irvingites were the Catholic Apostolic Church.

16. Davies, Worship and Theology, 4, Newman to Martineau, p.159.

and by Thy power make it effectual in the hands of Thy priests, through faith, for the healings of the infirmities of Thy people: so that all those, whom the same Thy ministering servants shall anoint therewith in Thy Name, may through their effectual fervent prayer be saved and raised up, and of Thine infinite mercy may receive remission of their sins. Hear us, O merciful Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, One living and true God, be glory for ever and ever.
X. Amen.17

Although the Catholic Apostolic^{Church} was not Pentecostal in the denominational sense of the word, it was Pentecostal in makeup and character. In this liturgy one can detect the desire to return to the early customs of the Church and also the attempt to emphasize the role of faith in the healing of disease. The Catholic Apostolic Church, however, appears to have been far more liturgical than the coming Pentecostal Movement was to be. This British experience was not of profound enough influence to claim to be the beginning of the twentieth century Pentecostal revival.

The modern Pentecostal Movement traces its origin to the Asuza Street Mission in Los Angeles, California in 1906.¹⁸ Tongues undoubtedly is one of the characteristic marks of the Pentecostal Movement.

17. The Liturgy and Other Divine Services of the Church, (London: H.J. Glaisher, 1922), p.503.

18. D. Gee, Wind and Flame, (Nottingham: Assemblies of God Publishing House, 1967), p.11. Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p.820, maintains that the modern Pentecostal Movement had its real origins in Bethel Bible College, Topeka, Kansas, where one Agnes Ozman received the gift of tongues. The other students soon were equally blessed but then a period of ridicule and quiescence followed. The spiritual gifts, notably healing, of Charles Parham, founder of Bethel, became known in 1903 and then this movement spread to other Holiness groups throughout the U.S.A. In 1906 Pentecostalism reached the Pacific coast.

Gelpi, Pentecostalism, A Theological Viewpoint, p.30 says that the roots are in fact Irving's Catholic Apostolics in Britain.

It is not, however, the only distinctive feature of this group. There is a strong belief in gifts of divine healing but, unlike tongues, this is not an element by which they stand or fall. Healing is an indication of power and love from God and finds its basis in the Pentecostal understanding of the sufficiency and totality of the Bible.¹⁹ The emphasis on scripture includes the healing miracles of the Gospels and the Book of Acts and regards these accounts as applicable to the Church's ministry today. It is this healing aspect of Pentecostalism that will occupy the remaining portion of this section of this chapter.

Supernatural healing has always been an important aspect of the teaching of the Pentecostal Church throughout the world.²⁰ This belief and teaching has been made manifest in such ways as the healing ministries of individuals such as Oral Roberts²¹ and others. Although the present publicized ministries such as this are quite well known, especially in North America, the practice of this gift of healing has only occurred rather "intermittently".²² Nevertheless there appears to be enough consistency in the practice to warrant an examination of it.

19. K. McDonnell, The Ideology of Pentecostal Conversion, Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Vol. 5, 1968, pp.105-126, (Philadelphia: Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 1968), p.122. Also Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p.820, indicates the Pentecostal Attitude to scriptural authority.

20. Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, pp.147-148.

21. F.A. Sullivan, The Pentecostal Movement, Gregorianum, Vol. 53, no.2, 1972, pp.237-265, (Roma: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1972), pp.240-241.

22. Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, p.148.

Sickness, to Pentecostals, is seen as the result of sin or the Fall.²³ Illness and disease are not God given but rather come to man through the power of Satan, devils and evil powers.²⁴ Indeed some Pentecostals see the relationship between sin and sickness in a more direct manner. There are those who believe that individual cases of illness are the direct result of actual sins of the person afflicted.²⁵

If sin and powers of evil cause suffering and sickness then the remedy must be found in God's answer to these forces. This means that Pentecostal doctrine turns to the Cross in search for health and wholeness. The Atonement is that which has procured our physical well being as well as spiritual health for our soul.²⁶ "In the Atonement full provision is made for our physical healing, as well as for our deliverance from the guilt, penalty and power of sin (Isa. 53:4,5; Matt. 8:17; 1 Peter 2:24)".²⁷ These benefits are not given without reservation. In fact they seem to be reserved for those people who have faith that the effects of the Atonement are for them. This is not to say that the healing is not for all. The Statement of Fundamental Truths as Adopted by the Assemblies of God explicitly states that

23. Ibid., p.148.

24. McDonnell, The Ideology ... Conversion, p.122.

25. Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, p.148.

26. Ibid., pp.148-149.

27. P. Nelson, Bible Doctrines: A Series of Studies Based on the Statement of Fundamental Truths as Adopted by the Assemblies of God, rev. ed., (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1971), p.123.

"It is God's will to heal all the sick, for Jesus and the apostles healed all that came to them for healing (Matt. 8:16; Acts 5:12-19)." ²⁸
The responsibility, however, for the effective reception lies with the patient. "The benefits of the Atonement can be appropriated by faith, and in no other way, and accrue to the believer only as his faith lays hold on them. The Lord asks us, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" (Mark 10:51), and says "According to your faith be it unto you." (Matt. 9:29)." ²⁹

Pentecostal believers feel that this healing is not an addition to but rather is an integral part of the Gospel message. The healing ministry has been given to the Church via the disciples, then the seventy and then finally to the individual believer through the Body of Christ. The basis for this belief is to be found in Mark 16:18 where one reads that believers will lay hands on the sick and heal them. James 5:14 is also cited as a proof positive for the ministry of healing. These texts are directions to the faithful and are to be followed within the Church, that Christ's wishes might be fulfilled. ³⁰

The Statement of Fundamental Truths says: "11. No man, Church, king, or Potentate has any authority to countermand the Lord's orders.

12. Our Christ is healing the sick in our day. Wherever these directions are followed, the mighty works of our Lord are manifested." ³¹

28. Ibid., p.123.

29. Ibid., p.123.

30. Ibid., pp.123-124.

31. Ibid., p.124.

It thus appears as if the official belief is that this powerful gift to the Church is to be employed at Christ's command, or at least because he implied as much during his life on earth. Smith Wigglesworth, an early Pentecostal healer, of international renown, was very explicit on the meaning of one proof text used in the support of a ministry of healing.

Speaking of James 5:14-15, he said: "We have in this precious word a real basis for the truth of healing. In this scripture God gives very definite instructions to the sick. If you are sick, your part is to call for the elders of the church, it is their part to anoint and pray for you in faith, and then the whole situation rests with the Lord. When you have been anointed and prayed for, you can rest assured that the Lord will raise you up. It is the word of God.

I believe that we all can see that the church cannot play with this business. If any turn away from these clear instructions they are in a place of tremendous danger. Those who refuse to obey, do so to their unspeakable loss."³²

This aspect of belief takes on great importance when presented in this way. Held up as being an integral part of the Gospel, provided for in the Atonement and available to all believers,³³ healing by religious means could easily take precedence over secular means. In fact there is evidence that certain Pentecostals have "a distrust of medical care"³⁴ and that they would prefer to work in

32. S. Wigglesworth, Ever Increasing Faith, (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1924), p.43.

33. Nelson, Bible Doctrines, p.119. (Isa. 53:4,5; Matt. 8:16-17; James 5:14-16). See also W. Hollenweger, Handbuch der Pfingstbewegung, (Zurich: Unpublished dissertation, 1967), o2a.o2.127b.12. This was translated and passed on to me by Prof. Hollenweger in correspondence dated 7 February 1973. See also Campbell, The Pentecostal Holiness Church, p.226. "Divine healing was taught as the privilege of every believer who would call for the elders of the Church, according to James 5:14-16."

34. Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p.820.

isolation from the medical profession. ³⁵

One Pentecostal healer said: "So many are tampering with drugs, quacks, pills and plasters. Clear them all out and believe God. It is sufficient to believe God. You will find that if you dare trust Him, He will never fail. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the LORD shall raise him up." ³⁶ Do you trust HIM? He is worthy to be trusted."

Others would tend to agree with Wigglesworth in this respect. Some radical Pentecostals reject all medical assistance in no uncertain terms. "Let the unbeliever, who knows not God and has not faith in Him, turn to the science of man; but to us who know God these things are a curse." ³⁷ This attitude is contrary to what James was recommending in his Epistle where prayer was effective in relation to oil, the medical specific of his time. The union of sacred and secular was, for James, the ideal to be sought in time of illness. ³⁸

This attitude is not accepted by all Pentecostals. The more moderate of their numbers would find no objection to the use of medical doctors and to the procedures of their profession. Many would find that secular means are acceptable only as an assistance to faith which is weak.

35. Wigglesworth, Ever Increasing Faith, pp.44-46. Here a case is cited where Wigglesworth used anointing to effect a cure. In this incident he aroused the patient's wife to the point where she refused to allow the doctors to perform surgery.

36. Ibid., p.50.

37. Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, p.150.

38. See Chapter One, note 53.

Bloch-Hoell claims that most would agree with the following statement. "In the atonement made by Christ, it believes that provision was made for the healing of the body, but it does not antagonize the practice of medicine as something essentially evil, emphasizing the claim that there is a more excellent way."³⁹

If sickness and disease are believed to be the result of sin, as Pentecostals have been shown to believe, then surely there are just grounds for the practice of a healing ministry to the sick. In the past the Pentecostal Holiness Church, as already indicated, felt healing was offered for all who would call for the elders. This group did not feel that it was an indication of weakness to call on medical practitioners for assistance in illness. Indeed, they also did not regard illness as evidence of sin or as a sign of punishment sent from God.⁴⁰ Thus the "equation established between sin and sickness on the one hand, and redemption and health on the other"⁴¹ would appear to be a general statement about general conditions and not a specific statement about individual cases of illness.

The methods of healing within the context of sacred ministrations as opposed to secular medicine are the laying on of hands and the anointing of the sick with olive oil. The laying on of hands tends to point to the charismatic aspect of healing. Here individuals who possess a gift or gifts of healing are used by God to convey supernatural healing to the sick by means of prayer. This type of healing tends to

39. Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, pp.149-150.

40. Campbell, The Pentecostal Holiness Church, p.226.

41. McDonnell, The Ideology of Pentecostal Conversion, p.122.

be regarded as a sign gift whereby the Gospel is forcefully brought to the attention of the witnesses of the healing. The fact that one possesses the gift or gifts of healing does not preclude continued illness. Pearlman points out that one must allow for various factors such as God's sovereignty, lack of faith and one's spiritual condition. He hastens to point out the limitations placed on Christ through the unbelief of the people. (Matthew 13:58)⁴² Also, to assume that one person might have a gift of healing which would cover all classes of illness in all situations would be seriously questioned by individuals within the Pentecostal Movement. The belief is that God distributes these gifts as He wills for the service of the Church. These sign gifts, it is believed, are those which Jesus said "would follow them that believe (Mark 16:17)"⁴³

Williams further points out that these charismatic sign gifts "are similar in kind although different in purpose from the "prayer of faith", which the Lord instituted for the Church - "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church ..." (James 5:14).⁴⁴ This indicates that Pentecostal belief sees anointing as a communal act of the Church. This healing is executed through the administration of olive oil, the laying on of hands and the intercessory prayers for the patient. It is performed by the pastor of the congregation and the elders.⁴⁵

42. M. Pearlman, Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible, (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1937), pp.323-324.

43. E.S. Williams, Systematic Theology, Vol. 3, (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), p.71.

44. Ibid., p.71.

45. Bloch-Hoell, The Pentecostal Movement, p.149.

Although there appears to be little material available on the use of unction per se within Pentecostalism, it is mentioned in most discussions on healing. The anointing of the sick and the laying on of hands both seem to be practised by Pentecostals with little actual difference being made between the two other than those cited above. Uction seems to be more readily utilized within the confines of the community inasmuch as the Pentecostal belief in adhering strictly to scripture would tend to make one send for the elders as prescribed in James.

This can be seen in the following. "Notice what James says regarding the sick. "Is ANY sick among you?" That does not seem to infer that healing is for only a "few" favored ones. He is bold to declare the promise of healing to "ANY" sick. EVERY PERSON who is sick has a right to call for the elders of the church, and be healed and, if necessary, be saved at the same time. That should make you rejoice, especially if you have been one of those unfortunate church members who have been taught that healing is just for the "lucky ones", or just for those whom God happens to want to heal. Healing is for YOU." ⁴⁶

Here one finds Osborn indicating the communal aspect of this rite of healing when he refers to "unfortunate church members" who suffer under the burden of illness. ⁴⁷ It is assumed that unction is more

46. T.L. Osborn, Healing the Sick, (Tulsa, Okla.: T.L. Osborn Evangelistic Ass'n. Inc., 1959), p.26.

47. Several Pentecostal pastors have indicated to me in conversation that anointing is performed within the context of the community of faith with the patient either sending for the pastor and the elders or presenting himself at a healing service after having requested unction. These were subjective attitudes and methods used in relation to James 5:14-16 and are not presented as documentary evidence for official teachings of the Pentecostal churches.

performed than written about in a theological manner within Pentecostal circles. Certainly one finds reference to it and to cures attributed to anointing in works by and about Smith Wigglesworth who appears to have been one of the great Pentecostalist healers of this century.

Several instances related by this healer will indicate the role played by anointing in his ministry of healing. These cases may be regarded as subjective accounts of the actual use of unction and indeed one cannot rule out the possibility that they may be coloured accordingly. They will, however, indicate the beliefs and practices of one who used anointing of the sick and will point to theological presuppositions held by Wigglesworth.

"At Stockholm, long queues waited for hours to get in. The hall held 1,800 people. At nearly every meeting crowds were unable to enter the building, but they waited on, often hours and hours, for the chance, if any left the building to step into the place. Here a man with two crutches, his whole body shaking with palsy, is lifted onto the platform. (Behind him five or six hundred more are waiting for help.) This man is anointed and hands laid on him in the Name of Jesus. He is still shaking. Then he drops one crutch, and after a short time the other one. His body is still shaking, but he takes the first step out IN FAITH. Will it be? He lifts one foot and then the other, walks round the platform. The onlookers rejoice with him. Now he walks around the auditorium. Hallelujah!"⁴⁸

This story recounts little more than a subjective experience. It does, however, point to the fact that unction and laying on of hands were used in conjunction with each other, on this particular occasion at least. In this story and in the following one, anointing was used at a large public gathering, a situation which, by its very nature, would tend to preclude any previous request to be anointed from being made.

48. Wigglesworth, Ever Increasing Faith, p.32.

"At another place there was a young man whose body was spoiled because of sin, but the Lord is merciful with sinners. He was anointed, and when hands were laid on, the power of God went mightily over him. He said, "I am healed", but being broken down, he cried as a little child, confessing his sin; at the same moment the Lord saved him. Glory to God! He went into the large hall and testified to salvation and healing."⁴⁹

In this incident the connection is drawn between sin and sickness.⁵⁰ Also, by implication, Wigglesworth points out the role of penitence or contrition. In his telling of the story one must assume that the patient was moved to admit his weaknesses prior to anointing. This, though not expressly stated, seems to have been part of the whole healing situation. One can see the natural outcome of such repentance in the narrative just following the anointing and the laying on of hands in the phrase, "but being broken down, he cried as a little child, confessing his sin." The act of confession seems to have been that which Wigglesworth saw as the final step leading to salvation and to ultimate testimony as to the power of Christ in one's life even in the face of illness.

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49. Ibid., pp.31-32. See also: S.H. Frodsham, Smith Wigglesworth: Apostle of Faith, (London: Elim Publishing Co. Ltd., 1949), p.70. Frodsham recounts other healings performed by use of oil and the prayer of faith. On p.37 he tells of a dying woman being restored to health. Other stories on healing by unction are to be found on pp.58 and 60. The only obvious purpose in telling these incidents is to prove that unction and prayer do effect physical cure.
50. Wigglesworth, Ever Increasing Faith, p.36. Here the incident being told is very precise on the relationship between sin and illness.
"Sin is the cause of your sickness and not righteousness. Disease is not caused by righteousness, but by sin."

The following two episodes in Wigglesworth's ministry are cases where individuals are incapacitated in their homes. In the first he speaks of a woman who is paralyzed and thereby confined to bed.

"I showed her my oil bottle and said to her, "Here is oil. It is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. When it comes upon you, the Holy Ghost will begin to work, and the Lord will raise you up." And God did something the moment the oil fell upon her ... The woman felt the power of God in her body and cried, "I'm free, my hands are free, my shoulders are free, and oh I see Jesus! I'm free! I'm free!"⁵¹

This story relates little more than the fact that the oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit used to convey God's power to cure illness. This outward act seems to convey in a tangible way the coming of God into the sickness situation and thereby makes the prayers of the one who administers the unction more credible.

In the second of these cases the lack of a prescribed liturgy is in evidence. There was a period of frustration just prior to the incident related, with Wigglesworth and another man praying for healing for quite some time to no avail. Finally, Wigglesworth came to the realization that his partner in prayer was in fact praying a prayer of unbelief. Wigglesworth then immediately called upon God to stop the other man's prayers that the prayer of faith might prevail and relieve the woman of her illness. Almost in exasperation following the long ordeal, Wigglesworth approached the sick-bed.

"I had a glass bottle full of oil and I went up to the woman and poured the whole lot on her in the name of Jesus. Suddenly Jesus appeared, standing at the foot of the bed. He smiled and vanished. The woman stood up⁵² perfectly healed, and she is a strong woman today."

51. Ibid., p.48.

52. Ibid., pp.49-50. One might question this procedure. It is almost as if Wigglesworth either acted out of anger against his assistant or felt that if a little oil is good then a lot is better. This, however, cannot be substantiated from the other cases found in his book.

The purpose in telling this story on the part of Smith Wigglesworth was to point out how essential the prayer of faith is in the administration of unction. He tells the story so that all may see the immediate results of God's healing when unction is accompanied by the effectual fervent prayer of one of his servants. He also is pointing out the obverse picture by claiming that God's power is blocked by unbelief or insincerity.

With Wigglesworth there is no question as to the outcome of such confrontations with the sick. In the cases cited above there is very little room left for the inclusion of the prayer "Thy will be done." This limitation is not only a failing of Wigglesworth but was brought out at the World Pentecostal Conference in Toronto, Canada in 1968, as a weakness of many healing evangelists. In a lecture given by Leonard Steiner on Divine Healing in God's Plan of Redemption it was brought out that this failure to allow for the prayer "Thy will be done" was little short of making God the evangelist's errand boy. Because of this, Steiner maintained, "God has not confirmed their preaching in the last ten years. It had to be stated with sadness that in the healing campaigns, after the first rush of enthusiasm, those who remained healed were only a small percentage." ⁵³ He said that, "The apostles practised divine healing without making a special point of preaching it, whereas we preach it, but fail to practise it." ⁵⁴ This seems to be an attempt to draw attention to the fact that the will of God may be to reveal Himself in some manner other than healing simply

53. W.J. Hollenweger, The Pentecostals, (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1972), p.357.

54. Ibid., p.357.

by calling upon His name. If, however, one admits to such a possibility, then the teaching that healing is for everyone who calls upon God in faith ⁵⁵ comes under question. It may rather be a mellowing of fundamental doctrine to make the problem of continued illness more acceptable to Pentecostal sensibility.

Pentecostalism is no longer a small sect or denomination of Protestantism. It has now taken on cross-denominational dimensions and is making great inroads into the established denominations of Christendom. Roman Catholic Pentecostals seem to be the best publicized of this recent trend. Within Roman Catholic Pentecostalism, one finds that this movement seems to unite and satisfy a longing after prayer and the supernatural, within the context of community. These qualities are felt to be given through the release of the power of the Holy Spirit, common prayer and the use of the gifts of the Spirit, all of which give a sense of community. ⁵⁶

The community is of great importance to Roman Catholic Pentecostals. This is the focal point in supporting the life in the Spirit of its members. It is here that the charismatic gifts are used to build up not only individuals but also the community of believers. Within the context of community "such charismatic gifts as prophecy, interpretation of tongues, and healing, as well as leadership and teaching, are exercised." ⁵⁷ The community need not be large at all. In fact,

55. Osborn, Healing the Sick, p.26; Nelson, Bible Doctrines, p.119; Campbell, The Pentecostal Holiness Church, p.226.

56. J. Massingberd Ford, Pentecostal Prayer, Doctrine and Life Vol.22 no.9, Sept. 1972, pp.477-483, (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1972), p.477.

57. Sullivan, The Pentecostal Movement, p.249.

as Fr. Simon Tugwell points out, "the basic principle of group prayer is the teaching of our Lord, that 'where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst' (Matthew 18:20), and that 'if two of you agree about anything on earth in prayer, it shall be granted' (ibid. 18:19) ⁵⁸

The practice of prayer is also of great importance to Catholic Pentecostals. Fr. Tugwell maintains that though "it shocks our philosophical sensibility to admit that prayer makes any difference" ⁵⁹ it ought not do so because of the whole history of the Church and the promises of scripture. He points out that man can in fact be totally free in relation to prayer in that he is not forced to pray at all. He says, however, that if you do not pray then God will not act for He has nothing to act upon. This is not to say that God acts at our every whim or that we make God change His mind simply by our desires. Fr. Tugwell indicates that man has been instructed by scripture to plead with God for a hearing that God's assistance may be granted. ⁶⁰

58. S. Tugwell, Did You Receive the Spirit? (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), p.24.

59. Ibid., p.16.

60. Ibid., p.16. "This is obviously not simply to say that our creaturely desires influence God's will and make him change his mind; but it is worth noting that that is, in fact, how prayer, at least the prayer of the prophet, is sometimes presented in the bible. In Exodus 32:7-14, for instance, Moses entreats the Lord, who was determined to destroy the people of Israel, and the Lord 'was sorry for the evil he had said he would do' to them, The Lord does nothing without telling his prophets (Amos 3:7); and their role is not simply to acquiesce, but to advise, to plead, (Jeremiah 23:18; Genesis 18:16-32), to make God change his mind."

For this reason prayer is to be used in all cases of need and not least of all illness. Prayer is to be used in the face of illness on the basis of Matthew 8:17, where we are taught that Christ has taken on our infirmities and has borne our diseases.⁶¹ Thus the Atonement is a key concept in the Roman Catholic Pentecostal thinking on a healing ministry just as it is to the denominational Pentecostals.

Roman Catholic Pentecostals, however, have not been very extreme in regard to healing. They do practice this ministry but they "combine spiritual healing, psychological healing and physical healing and associate their ministry with the sacrament of Penance."⁶² This, plus the influence of good leaders⁶³ has kept this segment of Pentecostalism in the realm of moderation and has prevented excesses or extremism in their dealings with the ill.

The community of faith and fervent prayer based on the promises of scripture are the basis of Pentecostal activity. Unction appears to be performed because of the scriptural command of James 5:14-16 in the belief that through it and the effectual fervent prayer of righteous men the sick will be raised from illness and restored to health.

61. Ibid., p.17.

62. Massingberd Ford, Pentecostal Prayer, p.481.

63. Ibid., p.481.

ANGLICANISM

The Anglican Church approximates both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism in many aspects of Church life and practice and therefore has been seen as a via media between these two poles of Christendom. Within this denomination the practice of sick unction has been performed, either officially or unofficially, almost uninterruptedly since the reign of Henry VIII when the Anglican Church broke away from Rome. When this break took place Henry saw the need for a clear statement of beliefs of the Church in England and from this need came the earliest Anglican writing which, in part, deals with the sacrament of Extreme Unction. This writing allows one to see the medieval English attitude towards this sacrament.

In The Institution of a Christian Man of 1537 the following statement appears. "As touching extreme unction, we must understand, how according to scripture, and the rule and order prescribed by the holy apostle St. James, the Catholic church of Christ hath required it in their sickness and disease of body, to the intent that by the working of God in ministration thereof the sick man, through the prayer of the priest the minister, and such as assist him, might be relieved of his bodily disease, and also attain pardon and remission of his sins. For St. James saith, If any be sick ... forgiven. By which words, like as the use of the sacrament is confirmed and proved, so that the church may well use the same, with assurance that God assisteth the ministration thereof; so we must also remember, that although health of body, which is here prayed for, doth not always follow, yet we should not doubt but God ordereth man's prayer therein always to the best, as he doth of his infinite goodness all other prayers that men make, who indeed know not what they should ask, ne what is best or most profitable for them. Wherefore albeit we be taught to make all our own prayers in a most certain faith, to attain our desires, according to the general promise made by God through Christ. Ask and you shall

receive; which promise cannot fail, for God's word cannot be frustrate, but taketh ever effect; yet may we not trust our own determination and all our judgement so precisely in our prayers and requests, but committing ourselves wholly to God's governance, we ought to take, esteem and judge for the best whatsoever God shall order and dispose for us, although it be contrary to our prayer and desire, which must ever have direction and submission to God's pleasure, who knoweth our necessities, and can and will dispose all things sweetly and pleasantly, to the attaining of everlasting comfort, which all good men chiefly desire and pray for." ⁶⁴

In this passage one sees that the English Church was calling for a return to the ancient custom of anointing for health and for the relief of physical burdens. At the same time the medieval attitude that unction was for the edification of the soul was included. The divines who composed this official document were well aware of the problem of death even after the administration of holy oil and hastened to indicate the need to trust in the wisdom and ultimate good of God's will. Extreme Unction was to be given in conjunction with prayers of faith for the relief of illness and for the restoration of health, even though these might be frustrated by the will of God.

The sacrament was, needless to say, less likely to result in restoration to health if it were postponed until the patient were actually in extremis than it would if administered early in the illness. The custom of delaying the reception of the oil until the last moments of life was severely criticized at this time. It was considered

64. Formularies of Faith Put Forth by Authority During the Reign of Henry VIII. viz. Articles About Religion, 1536. The Institution of a Christian Man, 1537. A Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man, 1543. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1825), pp.290-291, in The Institution of a Christian Man.

"an evil custom to defer the administration of this Sacrament unto such time as the sick persons be brought by sickness unto extreme peril and jeopardy of life, and be, in manner, in despair to live any longer." ⁶⁵ The reason for this was given as being that the ancient and early custom of the Church was to give this anointing to the faithful members of the Church or to those who had fallen out of grace through deadly sin but who had been restored to the Church by means of Penance. The sacrament was given to these people that they might be "strengthened and comforted in their agony and fight against the Devil, who, in time of sickness and vexation of the body, is very busy to assault them." ⁶⁶ The anointing, therefore, was to be performed when a person was entering upon the serious illness which had struck him down. It was repeatable and was given when there was great hope for recovery on the part of all concerned. Unction was to be associated with the Eucharist which was to be received by Christians entering any dangerous situation. In illness, anointing was given for health and was followed by the Lord's Supper. "For surely the receiving of the body of our Savior Jesu Christ is the very consumation, not only of this, but also of all other sacraments." ⁶⁷

65. J.H. Blunt, The Sacraments and Sacramental Ordinances, (London: Rivingtons, 1867), p.221. Quoted from Formularies of Faith: The Institution of a Christian Man, p.292.

66. Formularies of Faith: The Institution of a Christian Man, p.292.

67. Ibid., pp.292-293.

Although extreme unction was desirable, wholesome and profitable for Christians to receive in the face of serious illness, it was not regarded as necessary for salvation. It was a means of gaining strength and support in cases of illness and was seen as bringing comfort to the sick and for this reason was held up as worthy of being reverently received. ⁶⁸

The next evidence of magnitude in reference to extreme unction is to be found in the Prayer Book of 1549. In this Office for the Visitation of the Sick the medieval distortion of the ancient rite was corrected. In the 1549 Prayer Book in the prayer of anointing there is nothing which indicates any anticipation of the death of the patient. It is presented as a sacrament of healing for all illnesses, both spiritual and mental as well as physical ailments. The purpose of the sacrament of healing is not simply that man might be cured but is rather that the person might be restored to bodily

68. Ibid., p.294.

health and strength in order that he might serve God.⁶⁹ The prayer does indicate that the anointing has the secondary purpose of remitting sins and continues the then current belief that sins were committed through the five senses. Nevertheless, the unction was administered by a single anointing either "upon the forehead or breast only, making the sign of the cross."⁷⁰ The prayer of 1549 has been reintroduced into the Anglican Church in this century and will be examined at a later point in this chapter.

By 1552 the situation had changed. In the Prayer Book of 1552 there is no order for the administration of Extreme Unction.

69. The First Prayer Book of King Edward VI, 1549, Reprinted from a copy in the British Museum, (London: Griffith Farran and Col, 1888), p.245. The prayer of anointing in the 1549 Prayer Book reads as follows: "As with this visible oil thy body outwardly is anointed: so our heavenly father almighty God, grant of his infinite goodness that thy soul inwardly may be anointed with the holy ghost, who is the spirit of all strength, comfort, relief, and gladness. And vouchsafe for his great mercy (if it be his blessed will) to restore unto thee thy bodily health, and strength, to serve him, and send thee relief of all thy pains, troubles, and diseases, both in body and mind. And howsoever his goodness (by his divine and unsearchable providence) shall dispose of thee: we, his unworthy ministers and servants, humbly beseech the eternal majesty, to do with thee according to the multitude of his innumerable mercies, and to pardon thee all thy sins and offences committed by all thy bodily senses, passions, and carnal affections: who also vouchsafe mercifully to grant unto thee ghostly strength, by his holy spirit, to withstand and overcome all temptations and assaults of thine adversary, that in no wise he prevail against thee, but that thou mayest have perfect victory and triumph against the devil, sin, and death, through Christ our Lord: Who by his death hath overcome the Prince of death, and with the father and the holy ghost evermore liveth and reigneth God, world without end.

Amen.

70. Ibid., p.245.

It was at this period that the influence of individuals such as Martin Bucer was felt. In his Censura of the Book of Common Prayer of 1549 he "approved of the 'Order' in its entirety with the exception of the anointing of the sick" and it was due to his criticism that the 1552 version dropped this rite.⁷¹ Bucer believed that sickness was sent from God and that when the affliction came then the ministers of the Church were to follow the ancient customs of the Church. That is, they were to visit the sick immediately "imparting such comfort, exhortation and strengthening as they find them capable of receiving, by means of the word of God, prayer, the comfort of absolution and the communion of the body and blood of Christ."⁷² The custom of anointing was dismissed as a "sign pointing to a miracle."⁷³ All that remained of the healing aspect of the Office of the Visitation of the Sick in 1552 was the "reference to the healing of 'Peters wifes mother, and the Capitaines servaunt,' while omitting the preservation of 'Thobie and Sara by the Angel from daunger' (1549 and Sarum)."⁷⁴

71. D. Wright, tr. and ed., Common Places of Martin Bucer, (Appleford: The Sutton Courtney Press, 1972), p.429.

72. Ibid., p.91.

73. Ibid., p.91.

74. C. Harris, Visitation of the Sick, in Liturgy and Worship, ed. L. Clarke, pp.472-541, (London: S.P.C.K., 1932), p.515.

This was the beginning of the end for official sanction of unction. In 1662 even these references were dropped and the Visitation of the Sick became a very sombre and gloomy part of the Prayer Book. This work was a "depressing and painful" service "to both priest and patient."⁷⁵ It marked the official abandonment on the part of the Church of any and all attempts to combat illness in her members by means of spiritual and sacramental ministrations. This state was to last more than three hundred years.⁷⁶

The use of the oil of the sick was not lost to the Church completely during the period from the 1660's until this century. Its use is to be found at various points in time throughout this period. The Nonjurors of the eighteenth century, at first content to use the official Prayer Book eventually began an attempt to restore and reinstate the early practices of the Christian Church. This desire led to the publication of new offices on the part of some of their numbers.⁷⁷ One can find some very good examples of the Nonjurors' attitudes regarding unction. Their purpose for using anointing with oil in the Office for the Sick was not as unction in extremis "but in order to recovery."⁷⁸ This is clarified by the fact that they utilized the Office of the Visitation of the Sick to which they added

75. Ibid., p.515.

76. Ibid., p.515.

77. C. Gusmer, Anointing of the Sick in the Church of England, Worship, Vol.45, no.5, May 1971, pp.262-272. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Order of St. Benedict, 1971), p.266. This came about after considerable argument within Nonjuring circles. It was by no means a unanimous opinion.

78. P. Wall, ed., Fragmenta Liturgica: Documents Illustrative of the Liturgy of the Church of England, Vol. 5, Nonjurors and Scottish Offices, (Bath: Binns and Goodwin, 1848), p.5.

a further prayer of consecration, invoked the authority of St. James and concluded with the 1549 prayer. Unction was not a once in an illness rite but could be repeated at the discretion of the priest. ⁷⁹

The attitude of the Nonjurors seems to be made quite clear in the following statement from the first half of the 1700's. "The Unction of the Sick is an outward ceremony attending the prayers of the Priest, at his visitation of the Sick, in order to render them effectual. Now the petitions put up upon the occasion are, as it is proper they should be, for the recovery of the sick person, if it may conduce to his good and God's glory, for the forgiveness of his sins, and for spiritual strength against the assaults and temptations of the devil. And anointing with oil is a proper representation of these benefits, because it was the common custom to apply it to persons, in order to give them strength or recover their health; and all the outward unctions of the Church are so many emblems of the inward unction of the Holy Ghost, by whose grace alone we are qualified, and enabled to withstand the fiery darts of the wicked one. This sacred rite is performed by Priests with Oil blessed for that purpose by the Bishop. The Priest anoints the sick person on the forehead, signing him with the sign of the Cross, and saying over ⁸⁰him a prayer for the blessings above mentioned."

There appears to be no evidence to indicate that this attempt at restoring unction as a ministry of healing gained much support outside Nonjuring circles. Deacon does, however, cast considerable light on the thinking of this group of Anglican clerics and is quite definitely pointing to anointing as a two-fold rite. Its primary purpose is to

79. Ibid., pp.59-78. See also: C.J. Cuming, A History of Anglican Liturgy, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1969), p.186.

80. T. Deacon, A Full, True, and Comprehensive View of Christianity Containing a Short Historical Account of Religion From the Creation of the World to the Fourth Century After Our Lord Jesus Christ: As Also the Complete Duty of a Christian in Relation to Faith, Practice, Worship and Rituals, second edition, (London: 1748), pp.88-89. According to Gusmer, Anointing of the Sick in the Church of England, Worship, p.266, Deacon was one of the last Nonjuring Bishops.

restore one to health in order that one might glorify God. Unction also brings forgiveness of sins and gives strength to the spiritual dimension of man that he might thwart the attacks and temptations of the devil. This eighteenth century belief in the sacrament of unction appears to be very close to the attitude expressed in the 1549 Prayer Book.⁸¹

After the Nonjurors the matter was left to rest until the nineteenth century Oxford Movement or Tractarian Movement began its rise. Here, however, though one might expect to find that unction gained much support there was actually very little said about it per se. The leaders of the movement, Newman and Pusey, were concerned to concentrate their attention on "the revival of Catholic doctrine and Church order (especially the apostolical succession), and the Sacramental life."⁸² They were not, in the first generation of the movement at least, primarily interested in ceremonial and ritual but this only after the problem of order and sacramentalism.⁸³

Unction was discussed in the Tracts for the Times in Tract XC: On Certain Passages in the XXXIX Articles. Speaking of Article XXV

81. P. Hall, ed., Fragmenta Liturgica: Documents Illustrative of the Liturgy of the Church of England, Vol. 6, Deacon's Devotions (Bath: Binn and Goodwin, 1848), pp.221-222. The prayer used by Deacon is almost identical to the one found in the Prayer Book of 1549 as found in note 69 of this chapter. The changes in no way alter the meaning of the 1549 prayer.

82. H. Davies, Worship and Theology in England, Vol. 4, From Newman to Martineau 1850-1900, p.119.

83. Ibid., p.118.

it said: "This Article does not deny the five rites in question to be sacraments, but to be sacraments in the sense in which Baptism and the Lord's Supper are sacraments; "sacraments of the Gospel," sacraments with an outward sign ordained of God.

They are not sacraments in any sense, unless the Church has the power of dispensing grace through rites of its own appointing, or is endued with the gift of blessing and hallowing the "rites and ceremonies" which, according to the twentieth article, it "hath power to decree." But we may well believe that the Church has this gift.

If, then, a sacrament be merely an outward sign of an invisible grace given under it, the five rites may be sacraments; but if it must be an outward sign ordained by God or Christ,⁸⁴ then only Baptism and the Lord's Supper are sacraments."

Hence unction, like the other rites, would only gain recognition from the Oxford Reformers if seen to be a sacrament in the pure sense of the word. It was not seen as such. Anointing of the sick was beneficial in that it obtained grace via the Church and the blessings which come from communion with it.⁸⁵ The communal aspect of the Church gives these rites their efficacy. Baptism and the Eucharist are vital and essential for salvation but unction and the other rites are not "of universal obligation, but relating to certain conditions and circumstances of life only."⁸⁶

Some of the second generation Tractarians, however, were quite concerned to restore the use of unction to the Church of England.

84. J.H. Newman, Tracts for the Times: Remarks on Certain Passages in the Thirty-Nine Articles, (London: J.G.F. & J. Rivington, 1841), p.43.

85. E.B. Pusey, The Articles Treated on in Tract Ninety Reconsidered and Their Interpretation Vindicated in a Letter to the Rev. R.W. Jelf, D.D., Canon of Christ Church, (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1841), pp.36-37.

86. Ibid., pp.34-35.

One such person was Bishop A.P. Forbes of Brechin, Scotland, an associate of Pusey.⁸⁷ He referred to unction as the "lost pleiad of the Anglican firmament."⁸⁸ He then went on to criticize the rationalizing for the discontinuation of this rite due to abuses which had made it appear contrary to the desires of St. James. Because of this, the sick had been denied the anointing and prayers which were "for the forgiveness of their sins" and which would "restore them" to health, "if God so willed, or to give them spiritual support in their maladies."⁸⁹ Forbes found some consolation in the fact that since the Visitation of the Sick was a private office there was nothing to prevent the revival of unction whenever any devout person might request it. He could see no grounds on which to deny its administration if desired.⁹⁰

87. Gusmer, Anointing ... England, p.267.

88. A.P. Forbes, An Explanation of the Thirty-Nine Articles With an Epistle Dedicatory to the Rev. E.B. Pusey, D.D., third edition, (Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1878), p.465.

89. Ibid., p.466.

90. Ibid., p.474. Some clerics compiled their own prayer books at this time and included a rite for unction in the same. One such book uses the prayer of anointing of the 1549 Prayer Book, which seems to be the standard upon which the rite is based. See:- The English Catholic's Vade Mecum: Being a Short Manual of General Devotions, compiled by a Priest. (London: G.J. Palmer, 1869), pp.123-124. The Order for the Uction of the Sick. This order is taken from the 1549 Prayer Book.

The later Tractarians, however, were not successful in their attempts to have unction officially recognized and incorporated into the Prayer Book. Yet the interest in the use of oil of the sick was not to die out completely.⁹¹ In 1923 several Prayer Book revisions appeared in which there were included orders for the administration of unction. In two important revisions of that time there is quite a noticeable difference, in the prayer of anointing. The version produced by the English Church Union simply reverted to the 1549 Prayer Book with its single anointing,⁹² on the breast or forehead, the prayer for health, and forgiveness of sins.⁹³ In the other revision, however, although there was a single anointing on the forehead, the section of the prayer of 1549 dealing with the forgiveness of sins was completely deleted⁹⁴ thus making the rite more definitely a sacramental ministrations of the Church designed to alleviate physical and mental ills. The latter proposed revision called unction an act of "healing for a person in dangerous or chronic

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91. Puller, The Anointing of the Sick, pp.304-305. Also: Knowling, Westminster Commentaries, The Epistle of St. James, pp.155-156. Both of these books were written within the first decade of this century and both refer to the continued interest in anointing which was prevalent at the time.
92. Cuming, A History of Anglican Liturgy, p.88.
93. The Prayer Book as Revised by the English Church Union, (London: Humphrey Melford, Oxford University Press, 1923), pp.433-434.
94. A New Prayer Book: Proposals for the Revision of the Book of Common Prayer and for Additional Services and Prayers. Drawn up by a Group of Clergy, (London: Humphrey Melford, Oxford University Press, 1923), pp.176-177.

sickness,"⁹⁵ and was to be given "after consultation with the physician or other responsible persons, and with the permission of the Bishop and the full understanding and desire of the patient."⁹⁶ In both proposed revisions the object of the anointing is not simply to regain health but to do so in order to serve God.⁹⁷

Even these revision proposals were ineffective in bringing pressure to bear to such an extent that unction became recognized officially in the Prayer Book. It was not until 1935 and 1936 that the Convocations of Canterbury and York, respectively, "officially approved services for the "Administration of Holy Unction and the Laying on of Hands" "⁹⁸ And again in the late 1950's both houses

95. Ibid., p.174.

96. Ibid., p.174.

97. Ibid., pp.176-177. Also: The Prayer Book ... Union, p.433.

98. Gusmer, Anointing ... England, p.268. See also: H. Riley & R.J. Graham, eds. The Acts of the Convocations of Canterbury and York 1921-1970, (London: S.P.C.K., 1971), p.84. "On 6th June, 1935, both Houses of the Convocation of Canterbury agreed: That this House gives approval to the Services for Unction and the Laying on of Hands and for the Laying on of Hands without Unction, annexed to the Report for provisional use in the province subject to diocesan sanction." P.95 states that on May 28, 1936 both Houses of the Convocation of York also agreed.

of Canterbury agreed: "(1) That this House welcomes the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on the Church's Ministry of Healing and commends it to the attention of the Church;
(2) notes with approval the emphasis given in the Report to the sacramental means of the Laying on of Hands and of Holy Unction; and commends this practice to the clergy in their pastoral ministrations;
(3) requests His Grace the President refer to the 1935 service of Holy Unction to the Liturgical Commission for review, and if necessary, revision;
(4) desires that the report be sent to the Hospital Chaplaincies Council of the Church Assembly with a view to its circulation as they deem desirable."⁹⁹

Thus unction has recently gained the recognition required to commend its use to the clergy of the English Church.¹⁰⁰ The Anglican use of this rite will occupy the remainder of this section of this chapter.

As one can see from the pronouncements of Canterbury and York, Holy Unction and the Laying on of Hands are very closely associated. This has always been the case.¹⁰¹ Unction seems to be used more sparingly by the clergy than the Laying on of Hands. The latter rite tends to be used where there is a continued or ongoing ministry to a person who is suffering from some chronic or long term illness. In cases such as these the Laying on of Hands may be used weekly or on each pastoral visit made by the priest.¹⁰²

99. Ibid., p.98. October 2, 1958, January 13, 1959. On October 1, 1958, York agreed that the "Report be commended to the Church for study." p.98.

100. Gusmer, Anointing ... England, p.268. Gusmer hastens to point out that it would be "inaccurate to claim that unction of the sick has today found universal acceptance throughout the Church of England."

101. J.G. Cox, A Priest's Work in Hospital, (London: S.P.C.K., 1958), p.28.

102. H. Cooper, A Practical Guide to the Pastoral Ministry: Holy Unction, (London: Guild of St. Raphael, 1966), p.10.

There should be no problem as to when to use Holy Unction and when to make use of Laying on of Hands. The former should be administered as soon as possible after one becomes ill with an illness of a serious nature. The latter rite, traditionally, is the one more frequently used but within the Anglican Church there is no restriction which would limit the use of oil to once in an illness.¹⁰³ If, however, one were to use unction too frequently then there is a danger that its importance might be diminished. It is properly used in crisis situations. Cooper says that crisis "is the proper word, indeed, for a Sacrament is a crisis, a judgement, an act of God which is decisive."¹⁰⁴

Unction should be used early in an illness and should not be reserved until the patient reaches the point of death. It ought to be administered "early in your illness, with prayer that God will heal you."¹⁰⁵ This, *it is claimed*, is due to the fact that Jesus constantly fought to overcome illness in people because he saw it as a manifestation of evil. Fox also says that Jesus sent the Apostles to heal the sick by means of anointing. Thus, unction is for healing and not for dying and therefore ought to be administered at the entry into serious illness.^{106.}

103. Cox, A Priest's Work ... p.92.

104. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.10.

105. A.H.P. Fox, A Little Book About Holy Unction, (London: The Guild of St. Raphael, 1962), p.7.

106. Ibid., p.7.

There is, however, no problem visualized in the use of oil with patients who are apparently in the last stages of life. If it is earnestly sought it ought to be given. Even if the patient is unconscious, or indeed not normal mentally, it can be administered. The "faith and penitence of relatives or friends in the Church must qualify him, lest he die without God's healing gifts, or lest if it be God's will by this to bring him back to life."¹⁰⁷ The difference here seems to be a liturgical one, with unction being administered prior to Communion which now becomes Viaticum, the last sacrament.¹⁰⁸

The anointing of the sick within the Anglican tradition is definitely seen as a sacrament of healing in one of the most recent reports produced within this denomination. In this document unction is portrayed as "an act of healing for Christians suffering from grave disease of mind, body, or spirit."¹⁰⁹ This obviously does not preclude death as a grave illness of body could, and often does, end in the death of the patient. Mental illness and spiritual ailments could hardly be said to generally place persons in periculo mortis

107. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.3.

108. H. Cooper, Holy Unction, revised edition, (London: The Church Union Church Literature Association, 1971), p.11.

109. R. Petitpierre, ed., Exorcism: The Findings of a Commission Convened by the Bishop of Exeter, (London: S.P.C.K., 1972), p.53. See also: Harris, Visitation of the Sick, pp.481-482. Here unction is said to be used in the treatment of such things as kleptomania, alcoholism, and drug addiction. This use of anointing is linked to exorcism and spiritual instruction plus devotional exercises and could be classed as a form of quasi-exorcism. This use is beyond the scope of this paper but is cited to indicate the definite purpose of anointing for healing as opposed to anointing for death.

however, and thus one must conclude that the restoration or recovery of well-being is the primary function of this rite.

Before one administers Holy Unction certain steps must be taken. The sick person who is to be the recipient of the sacrament should be carefully prepared, where possible, by teaching about the Christian "faith, repentance, prayer, and the sacraments."¹¹⁰ Other requirements have been suggested. J.G. Cox maintains that the anointing should only be administered to those who have been baptized and normally only to confirmed members of the Church. He hastens to point out that since confirmation is not a requisite for the reception of Communion in the face of the danger of death then, presumably, the same case would apply with Holy Unction.¹¹¹ Cox does agree that preparation, in the form of penitence, and preferably in the form of a "particular confession"¹¹² is necessary prior to the administration of anointing. He appears to protect those who administer this rite by reminding them that the sacrament is the vehicle of spiritual healing which may or may not bring with it the healing of the body. This, he feels, ought to be conveyed to the recipient of the rite with the teaching that he ought not be disappointed if physical healing does not follow because he can be certain that he will "receive spiritual benefit."¹¹³

110. Petitpierre, Exorcism, p.53.

111. Cox, A Priest's Work ... p.91.

112. Ibid., p.91.

113. Ibid., p.91.

Preparation is, apparently, of great importance and especially preparation in the form of penitence. Penance has always been closely associated with the ministry of healing and with the reception of Holy Unction ¹¹⁴ in particular. It is seen by some as a necessary prelude to the reception of anointing. How one shows this state may vary but unless the patient demonstrates some penitence the rite cannot be performed. "If umbrage is taken at its mention, that is clear evidence that it is not present, and the Sacrament should be deferred until it is. We cannot deceive God the Holy Ghost, nor attempt to do so without further mortal sin." ¹¹⁵ Cooper claims that the repentance of the patient is normally expressed via the sacrament of penance but feels that a general confession or some form of penitence suffices for this requirement to be met. ¹¹⁶ Fox tends to concur but feels that it is "very desirable, if your condition allows, that you should make a particular confession in the presence of the priest who is going to anoint you, or of some other if there is a good reason." ¹¹⁷

The purpose of confession and penance is that it clears the way to God. Cooper feels that sin "weakens and spoils all levels of life" and says that the evil, in the form of illness, is caused by sin. This sin may have its roots only in the sin of Satan but he

114. Ibid., p.32.

115. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.7.

116. Cooper, Holy Unction, pp.9-10.

117. Fox, A Little Book ... Unction, p.14.

feels that it probably has its basis in the sins of the patient.¹¹⁸
Gusmer feels that an attitude which sees the relationship between sin and illness in the sense that the latter is a divine punishment for specific misdemeanors as being an error. "A proper understanding would be to recognize man as a historical whole who suffers sickness as a consequence of sin."¹¹⁹ Confession would be more readily acceptable perhaps if seen in the light that it enables one to come to God freed from the anxiety of a conscience which is not clear.¹²⁰

This clear conscience comes after one confesses his sins against God and recognizes the need to forgive others. The forgiveness of others is an acknowledgement of "the impact which the sins of others have upon us; so much "psycho-somatic illness" reflects a breakdown in personal relationships."¹²¹ Thus when one confesses and is at peace with God and with his fellow man Holy Unction is enabled to work to the desired end of health and wholeness. Through unction, sin is further attacked and the basis for sinful action is eradicated.¹²²

118. Cooper, Holy Unction, p.9.

119. C. Gusmer, Liturgical Traditions of Christian Illness: Rites of the Sick, Worship, Vol. 46 no.9, November 1972, pp.528-543, (Collegeville, Minn.; Published by the Benedictines of St. John's Abbey, 1972), p.538.

120. G.C. Harding, The Laying on of Hands and Anointing: Principles of Revision, Chrism Vol. 16, no.2, May 1972, pp.10-15, (London: The Guild of St. Raphael, 1972), p.12.

121. Ibid., p.12.

122. Harris, Visitation of the Sick, p.508.

Following confession and penance one must be absolved. Just as there may be a particular or a general confession of sin made by the patient, so also the priest may meet this by either a particular or a general absolution.¹²³ Absolution is a necessary step in the process leading up to anointing for at least two reasons. The first of these given by Harris is that because the sins of patients are "objectively grave, absolution is needful for theological reasons." And gives the second reason as being the fact that "Their sins, though not objectively grave, greatly trouble their consciences, and therefore require absolution for psychological reasons."¹²⁴

Here the objective and subjective are united. Similarly, the illness situation, objective and mechanical yet subjective and emotional, is brought into a unity and stands before the rite of healing as performed by the Church. The patient after confession and absolution, and after having been brought into a state of charity with his fellow man is prepared to love, care for, and be concerned for others who are ill, the necessary stance for Christian health.¹²⁵

Thus prepared for Holy Unction what might one expect of it?

"If its administration is immediately effective as, if the preparation has been thorough, it not infrequently is, then he experiences something quite different from pardon, viz. inward liberation from the power of sin. His partly dissociated and inharmonious personality is knit together into an effective unity. His will recovers strength and regains control. His disordered and conflicting passions

123. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.6.

124. Harris, Visitation of the Sick, p.510.

125. Cooper, Holy Unction, p.10. Also Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.6.

and instincts contribute their energy to the attainment of moral ideals chosen by the will." ¹²⁶

When prepared in this way psyche and soma are enabled to join with medical skill and technology to combat illness. The dramatic effects of unction might tend to dissipate if there is no ongoing ministry performed by the Church. Unction, however, is closely related to the sacrament of Holy Communion. It is recommended that those who have been anointed for health receive the Eucharist as frequently as possible during the course of their illness. The patient is to be reminded by the prayers of the priest that the Eucharist is, in fact, the body and blood of Christ and that these are given to preserve the patient's body and soul. ¹²⁷ This attitude is supported by Cooper who urges regular "participation in the other Sacraments ... for the follow-up is in truth an increasing entering-in to the Sacramental Life of the **Mystical** Body." ¹²⁸ Thus illness is confronted with the sacramental ministry of the Church via Holy Unction and the Eucharist and through these ministrations the patient is strengthened to combat illness and its attendant problems.

Before one can receive unction, and indeed prior to the act of penitence and confession, the priest must attempt to create within the patient a condition called, by Harris, 'the faith state.' ¹²⁹

126. Harris, Visitation of the Sick, pp.507-508.

127. Fox, A Little Book ... Unction, p.16.

128. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.13.

129. Harris, Visitation of the Sick, p.487.

Cooper claims that this is the really primary necessity and that from this come the other requirements for the proper reception of the anointing. He sees this as a relationship with God as opposed to a virtue possessed by an individual.

He says: "All virtues are dependent upon the action of the Holy Spirit within the soul, but faith is always between man and God; and its ground is in the very character of God - what he is. In other words trust should be the patient's attitude, not because he has a virtue called faith, but because he sees God to be absolutely trustworthy. Not to trust one who is seen to be utterly trustworthy would be insanity; therefore, the pastor's task is to build up in the patient's mind a conception of God as the one who has all the power there is with all the wisdom, and at the same time cares for the patient himself utterly. The faith which is the outcome of such a vision of God will be prepared to accept his will whatever it is. That, indeed, is the proper test of faith." ¹³⁰

Harris appears to agree with this idea. He maintains that faith does not mean simply an expectation of physical recovery. Rather it means a 'spiritual communion' with God. He seems to equate faith with trust. He feels, however, that this faith state "cannot be induced in one who is not truly penitent, and who does not submit his will entirely to God, whether for recovery or for continued illness." ¹³¹

Cooper says, as he states a similar concept of faith: "Faith is prepared to accept joyfully recovery, or death, or continued pain, whichever glorifies God and is in accordance with the pattern of his purpose."

130. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.5. Also: Fox, A Little Book ... Unction, pp.13-14.

131. Harris, Visitation of the Sick, p.487.

No patient ought ever to be anointed unless he has, or is trying to have, this sort of faith, or is unconscious. Our Lord will accept, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief,"¹³² but he will not tolerate, "If thou canst ...?"

In essence the faith called for is the faith that leaves the matter in the hands of God. It is the faith which prays "Thy will be done," not merely as a submissive utterance in the face of a pre-determined decree but rather as a declaration of union of wills. That is, the patient aligns his will with the will of God making the two become one.¹³³ Unless this attitude prevails within the patient, at least to a small degree, then the anointing has not been properly or adequately prepared for.¹³⁴ This can be seen when one realizes that Holy Unction is a placing of the whole illness situation before God for his divine judgement. When one accepts that judgement it is a sign of faith.¹³⁵

The faith of the patient in God as the great physician and in the efficacy of the sacramental ministrations of the Church in securing health of the soul and through this health of the body is claimed to be the powerful forces at work in this ministry of healing.¹³⁶

132. Cooper, Holy Unction, p.9.

133. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.5.

134. Ibid., pp.5-6.

135. Ibid., p.10.

136. Harris, Visitation of the Sick, p.486.

Undoubtedly there is a great deal of truth in this but J.G. Cox seems to look at the situation from the other side of the faith relationship.

He says: "It is reasonable to believe ... that Holy Unction in sickness is an anointing of the Spirit of God, through which the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, interrupted by sin and sickness, is restored or increased that the whole man may once again be in communion with Christ, and that he may be the better instrument of the victorious Christ. The "results" of Holy Unction can only be defined by maintaining once again the double interpretation of Christ's victory over evil. Thus there might well be an act of God penetrating immediately to the level of the sickness and annihilating it; on the other hand, such a strengthening of the soul may be given that the overcoming of the evil may be by the way of patient endurance and oblation."¹³⁷

Obviously there is truth in both of these statements and the one complements the other. Regardless of the reason for the sacrament's being effective one must realize that there are three possible outcomes of the anointing. Since this sacrament is a sacrament of healing then restoration to health is the first and most obvious outcome. Secondly, experience shows that not all who are anointed are healed and in fact some die. A happy and peaceful death in a person who is very weak and extremely ill could be called a blessing. The third possibility however, can be very hard to accept or to understand. That is, that the illness, mental or physical, may be allowed to continue for a time in order that some other purpose may be done.¹³⁸

137. Cox, A Priest's Work ... pp.30-31.

138. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.8.

About the third possibility Fox says: "If God allows your infirmity and suffering to remain remember three things:

(a) He will give you grace to endure until He either heals your affliction or calls you into His nearer presence.

'He that endureth unto the end shall be saved.'

(b) He can and will use you to glorify Him and to help others if you will learn to bear your sufferings patiently. S.Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' remained, but he was told 'My grace is sufficient for thee', and it was.

(c) Your priest can help you, if you ask him, to offer your sufferings in union with those of our Savior so that they may become a part of his holy Self-offering for the sinners of this world. Christ prayed on the Cross for us all. His ministry continued in the midst of such terrible suffering, and won the soul of the thief agonizing beside him."¹³⁹

This explanation of continued suffering does not alter the fact that it is believed that Holy Unction may and often does bring triumph over disease.¹⁴⁰ Whichever of these three possibilities will come to pass one cannot say without presuming to know the will of God in a particular case. All that one can say with certainty is that good will come from the reception of this ministration of the Church. The placing of the matter in God's hands for his judgement is an indication that the priest and patient both feel that God's wisdom and love will speak good towards the patient. Being human it is almost inevitable to classify as good those things which we associate with good health and our worldly pursuits forgetting the spiritual good which is not always so easily seen.¹⁴¹ Cooper seems to feel that non-physical results, such as grace to endure suffering, or the acceptance of

139. Fox, A Little Book ... Unction, p.9.

140. Ibid., p.10.

141. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, pp.7-8.

suffering as an identification with the Cross are proof of the "spiritual efficacy" ¹⁴² of Holy Unction.

The spiritual blessing is not an occasional occurrence but rather an aspect of unction to be sought in each case. That is, of course, if the patient has been properly prepared for the rite and has received it in the correct frame of mind. Some even go further than this and claim that when these qualifications are met there will be found "in most cases, recovery or improvement in health." ¹⁴³ Yet even in the face of this, the statement is made "that Unction (with its associated ceremony of Laying on of Hands) is a ministry primarily to the soul, and that it is only through the soul that it affects the body beneficially." ¹⁴⁴ This spiritual effect or benefit is presented as a "theological healing" which may bring about healing at other levels as well such as restoration to bodily or mental well-being. The primary effect should never be presented as healing per se but rather ought to be held up as union with Christ. ¹⁴⁵ Thus the patient is to long for God's blessing which means God's act of goodness according to his will and judgement rather than according to ours. It is claimed that when this state is attained, the patient is given a sense of contentment and deep joy. ¹⁴⁶ Cooper further adds

142. Cooper, Holy Unction, pp.13-14.

143. Harris, Visitation of the Sick, p.486.

144. Ibid., p.486.

145. Cox, A Priest's Work, p.24.

146. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.9.

that though this state of tranquility and peace is normal it is "neither certain nor necessary." ¹⁴⁷

Thus it appears as if the Anglican writers on Holy Unction are claiming that though this rite is in fact a healing ministry of the Church, the spiritual benefits which accompany it warrant its use even if healing is denied. ¹⁴⁸ It is seen as a sacrament which cleanses and makes one ready for death ¹⁴⁹ as well. Regardless of the outcome, "Holy Unction is God's sign of his concern for the whole man, not merely for his body and mind." ¹⁵⁰

147. Ibid., p.13. He does say on another occasion: "Everyone who receives Holy Unction in good faith, penitence and charity is rewarded by a gift of tranquility which was not there before. There is so universal an experience that by itself it would be an outward proof of the validity of the Sacrament of Healing. It comes by reason of the contentment, which is bound to follow the action of placing the whole matter into God's hands for his infallible decision, and as a consequence of sacramental grace given." See Cooper, Holy Unction, p.14.

148. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.3. Here it is pointed out that even though one appears to be at the end of one's life the administration of Holy Unction might be the occasion of God's healing power. Thus even when healing is apparently out of the question in the minds of the persons involved unction ought to be given.

149. Ibid., p.13.

150. Ibid., p.13.

Little is said of the patient who recovers his health. What is stated seems to be implied or at least appears to be acceptable to most Anglican writers. Writing on this issue, Fox says that people such as this surely would want to thank God for his goodness and mercy towards them. He then suggests a way of expressing gratitude. "Let your thanksgiving be a rededication of your life so that you may serve Him better than you have ever done before."¹⁵¹ Thus Holy Unction is a sacrament of healing for serious ailments of the body and mind. It usually, if not always, brings tranquility and peace if not improved or restored health and ought to be followed by a rededication of one's life to the service of God.

The rite is normally performed by the parish priest with oil blessed by his own Bishop. If however, such episcopal oil is not readily available, the priest is entitled to bless his own. Oil which has been consecrated by the Bishop is seen as being the more desirable of the two "partly out of respect for his office as the chief minister of the Sacraments, and partly from psychological considerations, episcopal oil having undoubtedly much greater 'prestige' in the eyes of the patient than the oil of a simple priest."¹⁵²

151. Fox, A Little Book ... Unction, p.18. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.14.

152. Harris, Visitation of the Sick, p.485. Cooper, Holy Unction, p.6. Cooper also points out that in the Ordinal it is the Bishop and not the priest who has received the charge to heal the sick. He hastens to add that it is the Holy Ghost and "is in no sense dependent upon the skill, knowledge, holiness or special powers of the minister". p.6.

Provision is made for daily unction where it is desirable. These auxiliary anointings can be carried out by the spouse of the patient, a nurse, another patient, an authorized sick visitor or by the patient himself. The priest is instructed to bless sufficient oil for this purpose himself rather than making use of episcopal oil. ¹⁵³

The act of Holy Unction is a communal act and not merely a private incident performed by the priest on a patient who requests the sacrament. The clergy are seen as having been commissioned by Christ, through their ordination, to heal the sick and are also believed to be endowed with the power to perform that commission. ¹⁵⁴ The priest, however, is also regarded as having, by virtue of his ordination and the resulting priestly authority, been given the task to act "as the voice and hands of the Body of Christ." ¹⁵⁵ Thus when one examines the sacramental ministry to the sick by way of Holy Unction one sees the outward liturgical expression of the prayers and concern of the whole Church for those who are ill. ¹⁵⁶

If this is true, then the proper context for unction ought to be within the service of public worship where the congregation actively

153. Harris, Visitation of the Sick, p.485.

154. Cox, A Priest's Work, p.34. This appears to disagree with Cooper Holy Unction, p.6, cited in note 152, above who feels the charge is made to the Bishop of the Church.

155. Cooper, Holy Unction, p.11.

156. Gusmer, Liturgical Traditions ... Sick, pp.539.

participates in its administration. When given in Church it ought to be closely united with the Eucharist, and, indeed should just precede it. ¹⁵⁷

The new principles for the revision of the rite puts it in context in the following way: "If baptism means renewal of life, anointing its restoration, and communion its continuing enjoyment, then anointing looks backwards (as it were) to baptism and forward to the Eucharist. It brings one aspect of the Eucharist - "preserve thy body and soul" - into sharper focus. The natural place for anointing is within the framework of the Eucharist; the proper place for its administration has never been decided, but it seems appropriate that in the full rite it should follow confession and absolution and precede offertory. The order then becomes that of Mark 2. 1-12. ¹⁵⁸ "Your sins are forgiven - get well." "

He further adds: "This is in no sense a private transaction between parishioner and parish priest. What takes place in house or hospital is part of what is taking place in Church. Communion is extended (rather than reserved).

The Eucharistic action offers the whole problem-situation to God and so recognizes that the sufferer, his family and friends, doctor and nurse, ministering priest and congregation, are asking for the blessing of their own contribution to the healing of the whole situation. Prayer generates care, the natural expression of the praying community.

(iv) Therefore this is the work of the whole laos and the whole laos must participate." ¹⁵⁹

Thus it is clear that the congregation is to be made aware of its role and importance in the rite of Holy Unction. The priest, either in the regular worship service or in the hospital, administers the anointing on behalf of the Body of Christ with the operative phrase

157. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.11.

158. Harding, The Laying ... Revision, pp.10-11.

159. Ibid., p.11.

being "on behalf of". Here Christ is seen to be in immediate contact with the sufferer and the priest conveys this to the patient reminding him of the fact that Christ "takes our infirmities and bears our diseases." The whole body of believers shares in the suffering of the patient and their prayers and concern not only bring this to the mind of the sufferer but psychologically assist his faith. ¹⁶⁰

The whole illness situation and healing process takes on a sense of being confined within the Church when seen in this light. Medicine and religion are united and Christians are called upon to cooperate fully with the work of the medical profession as they seek to bring healing to the sickness situation. Unction is no substitute for medical care and ought never to be used as a final desperate attempt to secure healing. ¹⁶¹ It is rather the placing of one's trust, in prayer, before God that he will judge in the crisis situation. It may be used immediately "before an operation; or when the doctors have done all they can and there seems little hope of recovery; or when there has been a long period of deterioration or weakness, and special strength seems to be called for; besides the recognized crises of known illness." ¹⁶² In cases such as these Holy Unction brings to the patient "the touch of Christ through his Body the Church", and this may bring healing even though not anticipated by scientific medical practice. ¹⁶³

160. Cox, A Priest's Work, pp.31-32. Also Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.12.

161. Cooper, Holy Unction, p.7.

162. Cooper, A Practical Guide ... Unction, p.10.

163. Cooper, Holy Unction, p.8.

The priest "approaches the patients to interpret to them, in the light of God's word, what God is doing in them; to mediate to them the divine action sacramentally; to help them to offer up their total experiences to God. It is true that one result of this ministry may be a contribution to healing in the ordinary sense of the word; but it is wrong even to treat that ministry simply as a means to such healing. Thus it is dangerous, for instance, to say, as some do, that it is for the chaplain to clear the way for the effectual application of medical remedies by attacking the spiritual maladies which are beyond the physicians reach; for that is to subordinate reconciliation with God, which has to do with man's final end, to the lesser end and temporal end of curing disease." ¹⁶⁴

Bearing this in mind one then realizes that when the clergyman uses Holy Unction he is using this sacramental ministry to assist the person to maintain, and in fact increase, his contact with Christ's Body and thereby struggle in the midst of illness to come to wholeness of being. This ministry does not replace or prepare the way for medical technology. Rather it complements medicine even as medicine complements unction. ¹⁶⁵

Thus one can say that Holy Unction is a rite of the Church whereby seriously ill Christians place their total situation in the hands of God in trust knowing that he will speak good toward them. It is a communal act of faith whereby peace and contentment are always found and which often brings visible gifts such as health and continued life.

The patient, through confession, absolution and the Eucharist is made at one with the remainder of the congregation as he lays himself

164. Cox, A Priest's Work, pp.48-49.

165. P.L. Garlick, Man's Search for Health, (London: The Highway Press, 1952), p.311.

before the judgement of God. This is an act of acceptance of God's will and an act of rededication to the glory of God that the patient may serve God in illness and in health. Here medicine and religion unite to combat illness at its root that man may be made whole.

of all for the sake of the Kingdom of God.
 generation. 166. The same is true of
 members of the Church. It is not enough to
 enter into the Kingdom of God, but we must
 be wholly healthy of the body and of the
 Modern trends which have led
 towards a materialism of the life of the
 civilization. Its sign is "The body is
 though the domination of the
 predominates." 167. This is the
 understood primarily as the
 distinct illness, even the
 illness tends to cure or to
 history of the Church

166. G. Yaguelles, *Gen. 22*,
Vol. I, Chapter I,
World and Gates, 1917, p. 166
 167. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
 168. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
 169. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The anointing of the sick within the Roman Catholic Church is a complex matter for discussion. This is because there have always been conflicting opinions and traditions surrounding the sacramental use of oil for the sick and these conflicts exist even in the present generation.¹⁶⁶ One school favours the opinion that unction is the sacrament of the dying to be used in preparation for death whereas the other tends to view the sacrament as being primarily directed towards the bodily healing of the ailments of the patient.¹⁶⁷

Modern trends within Roman Catholic circles appear to be heading towards a compromise of the two viewpoints as is indicated by Grillmeier. He says: "Vatican II tries to combine both views, even though the designation and notion of the "anointing of the sick" predominates."¹⁶⁸ This body points to the rite as being properly "understood primarily as the help of the Church to enable Christians to dominate illness, even the illness of death."¹⁶⁹ Thus, whether the illness tends to cure or to death, anointing is desirable as a ministry of the Church.

166. H. Vorgrimler, Gen. Ed., Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Vol. 1, Chapter 2, A. Grillmeier, The People of God, (London: Burns and Oates, 1967), p.163.

167. Ibid., p.126.

168. Ibid., p.126.

169. Ibid., p.126.

One ought to keep in mind the fact that the Church never taught that this sacrament was to be reserved until the time of death.¹⁷⁰ In fact, the Church, in seeking to eradicate the abuse of withholding unction for too long, has recently set about to reappraise the sacrament of Extreme Unction or Anointing of the Sick.¹⁷¹ Rome has never taught, via Trent or any official Church body, that Extreme Unction was to be reserved for or restricted to those who were in the agony of death. The teaching has always been, at least since Trent, that one need only be in danger of death to warrant its reception. There has never been any mention made that the point of death is a prerequisite for its reception.¹⁷² The restriction of the sacrament for these in periculo mortis as opposed to in auriculo mortis would lead one to assume that officially the Church had in mind a sacrament of the sick and not a sacrament of the dying. The qualification "in danger of death" seems to make the use of holy oil in the face of illness a sacrament of those who are seriously ill.¹⁷³ That is, it is the sacrament of those who may die due to the illness which presently besieges them.

170. P. deLetter, Anointing ... Death, I.T.Q., 29, 4, Oct. 62, p.288.

171. Ibid., p.289.

172. Ibid., pp.288-289.

173. Ibid., p.289 note 3.

Within the last one and one quarter centuries there have been official statements which indicates a desire to swing from viewing Extreme Unction as a last rite to a new stance where it is an anointing of the sick. Popular opinion had viewed the rite as properly administered in extremis whereas official Canon Law never went so far.

In an attempt to rectify this the Council of Westminster in 1852 issued instructions to the clergy as follows. "Let the priest then exhort the faithful not to defer the reception of this salutary sacrament to the last moments of life, a time when the senses have already begun to fail, but rather, when the sickness grows serious, as soon as they are in danger, let them call in the priests of the Church to anoint them with oil, and thus afford them strength and protection for their last agony. And so let him warn the family of the sick person, and suggest frequently to the faithful when they are well, that, if they use the services of a non-Catholic doctor, they are to insist and with frequent questioning urge that as soon as the sickness takes on the appearance of danger (*periculi speciem inducat*) he (the doctor) is to warn them, lest some sudden change for the worse supervene and the soul be deprived of this sacrament's benefit." 174

In these instructions it is made very clear that the anointing is not to be postponed until all hope has gone and the patient has begun to be in the throes of death. Rather the time for the priest to come and to give unction is as soon as the illness takes on a serious nature such that the patient's life is despaired of. Nevertheless, this statement does emphasize the probable demise of the person to be anointed. This unction is to afford the patient strength and

174. P.F. Palmer, Sources ... Indulgences, Chap. 2. pp.317-318.

protection for the last agony, a sure allusion to the belief that the purpose is not for renewed or restored life but for death. This is further strengthened by the concluding thought in the statement which indicates that postponement of reception could deprive the soul of the sacrament's benefit. Be that as it may, the fact that the exhortation stresses that unction is to be given early surely points to the use of Extreme Unction as a sacrament of the sick who may recover though who will probably die. The primary function is obviously held to be in the spiritual realm and not in that of physical well-being.

The spiritual emphasis is made by implication in the Code of Canon Law of 1917. Canon 940 paragraph 1 states: "Extreme Unction cannot be given except to one of the faithful who, after reaching the use of reason, on account of sickness or old age, is in danger of death." ¹⁷⁵ The use of the phrase "after reaching the use of reason" points beyond the belief that this sacrament is for bodily recovery and appears to draw attention to the more intangible and non-material sphere of personhood. Here the priest is also called upon to anoint persons who are not visibly ill but who are simply in danger of death from old age. This would indicate that the sacrament is to provide some spiritual support or benefit which one would not want to deny to those faithful members of the flock whose death could occur almost momentarily due to the ravages of

175. Ibid., pp.318-319. Parts of the Canon Law pertinent to this thesis are to be found here.

old age rather than apparent illness. A single anointing is allowed in this Code as well, in cases of emergency, and if the patient survives then the rite can be completed.¹⁷⁶ This too seems to point to the non-physical side of the sacrament.

In 1921 Pope Benedict XV issued an Apostolic Letter entitled *Sodalitatem* in which he voiced his desire that people might not postpone Extreme Unction until the last moments of life. In fact he encouraged the administration of Viaticum at an early stage as well. He maintained that these sacraments ought to be given as soon as one could prudently judge that there was danger of death.¹⁷⁷ This letter obviously associates unction with dying. Though one can in no way overlook the connection between anointing, Viaticum, and death the emphasis in this letter is such that these are viewed as being for time of illness in preparation for death. They are to be administered when there becomes a probable danger of death. This would appear to be an attempt to reinstate the rite of unction as a sacrament of the sick though not of healing.

176. *Ibid.*, p.319.

177. *Ibid.*, pp.319-320. Taken from the Apostolic Letter *Sodalitatem*, May 31, 1921. "Meanwhile, we have good reason for joyfully hoping that many of the faithful will daily express their desire to join this sodality which has been propagated so widely, not only that they may enjoy the benefits conferred by the Apostolic See, but also that they may exercise, in accord with the rules of the sodality, the apostolate of the good death, striving with all the means at their disposal to bring it about that those who are in their last crisis should not put off reception of holy Viaticum and extreme unction until they are already losing consciousness, but rather, in keeping with the Church's teaching and precepts, let them be strengthened by the Sacraments, as soon as the sickness becomes more serious and one can prudently judge that there is danger of death."

Pope Pius XI seems to be an ardent supporter of the administering of Extreme Unction at an early stage in serious illness. He says:

"We are particularly anxious to enlist the eager willingness of sodalists and especially of the zealous to dispel in every way possible the deadly error which, to the detriment of souls, has given rise to the practice of not anointing the sick with holy oil, until death is imminent and they have all but lost, or lost altogether, their faculties. For it is not necessary either for the validity or liceity of the sacrament that death be feared as something proximate; rather, it is enough that there should be a prudent or probable judgement of danger. And if in such conditions unction ought to be granted, in the same conditions it surely can be granted. And he who sees its administration not only follows the teaching of Mother Church, but carries out her wishes with filial piety and with profit to souls."¹⁷⁸

This letter appears to be a strong call to administer unction at an early time in serious illness but it is still for spiritual matters as it is given "with profit to souls." There does seem to be a further loosening here, however, in the use of the words prudent and probable. In this useage, probable "is equivalent to saying that the actual degree of sickness does not affect the validity of the sacrament, although a prudent judgement of danger of death on the part of the priest is necessary for lawfulness."¹⁷⁹ With this approach to unction the priest is given a considerable degree of latitude as he confronts those of his parish who are suffering under the burden of illness. Individual discretion allows one priest to anoint in a situation where another priest might not feel that unction ought to be given at all.

178. Ibid., p.320. Taken from the Apostolic Letter, Explorata res, February 2, 1923.

179. C. Davis, The Study of Theology, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1962), p.292.

Statements such as this, however, did not have the effect of eliminating the conflicting views regarding unction and the proper time for its reception. Indeed even since Vatican II there seems to be a very definite confusion as to the time of administering the rite. Within Roman Catholicism since the letter of Pius XI there have still been conflicting beliefs as to the meaning of Extreme Unction. A sample of writers will be discussed to indicate the confusion which is to be found in modern writings on this subject.

The idea that unction is to be given in extremis is not outdated or outlived in the present era.¹⁸⁰ Statements such as those made by Van Der Meer in the post-Vatican II Church lead one to assume that unction is the sacrament which prepares one for the beatific vision. He maintains that Extreme Unction makes faithful Christians ready for eternity because in this they have already died to their will.¹⁸¹ This seems to echo the attitude of a decade earlier as expressed by L. Bouyer in his book Life and Liturgy. He claims that persons suffering from a mortal illness are to be anointed with the oil of the sick. Once anointed they are prepared for death.¹⁸²

Van Der Meer, however, leaves an opening for the possibility of recovery. He says: "Of the man who ... in his last extremity receives the three sacraments people say very appropriately that he has been fully prepared for death. ... Extreme Unction, if it does not restore

180. W.J.O'Shea, The Worship of the Church, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966), p.450.

181. F. Van Der Meer, The Faith of the Church, Tr. J. Murray, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966), p.500.

182. L. Bouyer, Life and Liturgy, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), p.175.

him to his former activity, makes him die to the old body." ¹⁸³
He believes that unction gives the grace required to experience a good death. It also aids one to overcome the depression which might come due to the memory of certain sins. Unction removes these sins through forgiveness. The grace which comes may be in vastly differing areas. "If the sick man needs patience, it gives him patience; if calm, it gives it to him; recovery to escape damnation, and even recovery in body which allows him the opportunity to repent with full consciousness and free will." ¹⁸⁴ He seems to be striving to unite a sacrament of the sick and a sacrament of the dying in his approach to Extreme Unction or Anointing of the Sick. It would appear as if the attitude expressed is simply stating that in this rite grace for a good death is always provided when unction is received by a man in serious illness. Sometimes God sees fit to allow recovery to take place even though all indications are that the patient will die. This reprieve is in order that the patient might confess and make his spiritual life at one with God. The body seems to be relegated to a position of inferiority with the spiritual dimension of man being given pride of place.

It sounds not unlike an attitude expressed in 1945. "But the Catholic teaching on this matter is that the primary effects of this sacrament are the graces, aids, and comforts it affords the soul of the sick man against the trials and difficulties especially experienced at

183. Van Der Meer, The Faith of the Church, p.435.

184. Ibid., p.434.

the time of death. According to the same teaching, the secondary effect of the Sacrament is: first, the proximate preparation of the soul for entrance into eternal life through the remission of sin and the temporal punishment due it, and secondly, bodily health if in the estimation of divine Providence it is expedient to the soul's welfare." ¹⁸⁵

Here cure is not ruled out entirely. It is possible, if it is expedient to the spiritual welfare of the ailing patient, otherwise the focus is on the preparation of the soul for death. It is an "anointing for glory". ¹⁸⁶ The concept of a sacrament for physical malfunctions is pushed aside and healing is seen as a spiritual matter. In these writings anointing is called for early on in the illness as opposed to being sought on behalf of a half-dead individual who has little or no ability to respond to the rite in any tangible way.

Regardless of what this school may believe, certain elements must be made clear. O'Shea, who indicates that many still *feel* that Extreme Unction is unction in extremis, ¹⁸⁷ also says that "oil is a symbol of health and well being." ¹⁸⁸ He further adds that the anointing is made in the form of a cross which is "the source and sign of eternal life and everlasting healing." ¹⁸⁹ The sacrament, in words and actions,

185. C. Pickar, Is Anyone Sick Among You? Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol.7, 1945, pp.165-174, (reprint), (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1945), pp.170-171.

186. E.B. Koenker, The Liturgical Renaissance in the Roman Catholic Church, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), p.119.

187. O'Shea, The Worship of the Church, p.450.

188. Ibid., p.452.

189. Ibid., p.452.

accentuates the spiritual healing that goes with it and the "prayers which follow the anointing are petitions for the healing of soul and body and ... take for granted that the person is going to get better. There is no reference made whatever in the older prayers to death or dying. The close interrelation of the health of soul and body is constantly kept before our eyes in this sacrament." ¹⁹⁰ This being the case there are discrepancies between the symbolism, actions and prayers on the one hand, and the beliefs of those who profess Extreme Unction as a sacrament for those faithful who are in extremis on the other.

The liturgy and symbolism does not preclude the problem of one's final illness. In fact, the reaction against previous abuses should never minimize the role of anointing in reference to the terminal illness of one's life. Unction has a very important part to play in such a situation but even here it is concerned with the illness and not with death. ¹⁹¹

The belief that Extreme Unction is a sacrament which prepares one for death and has nothing, or very little, to do with healing and renewed life is something which might prove difficult to overcome. If, however, such a belief could be replaced by a disposition which views the rite as anointing of the sick, then surely it could have a great many advantages from the pastoral point of view. ¹⁹²

190. Ibid., pp.452-453.

191. Davis, The Study of Theology, p.292.

192. R. Peil, A Handbook of the Liturgy, tr. H.E. Winstone, (Frieberg: Herder, 1960,)p.280

The fact of the matter seems to be that the use of the oil of the sick has a twofold purpose. It is joined with Holy Viaticum to become the last rite but on its own it stands as a sacrament of the sick.

As Peil says: "Naturally, it can, and does, also serve as a preparation for death, but this ... is not its primary purpose. It serves as a preparation for death mainly in conjunction with Holy Viaticum and the papal blessing granting a plenary indulgence at the hour of death. It is a preparation for death, then, mainly in as much as it forms part of the complete administration of the last rites. This view is supported by the fact that only in the rite of administration of Viaticum and in the preparatory prayer before the papal blessing is any allusion made to the hour of death. Nowhere in the rite of the Anointing of the Sick is there even the slightest reference made to it. On the contrary, the accent all the time is upon healing and that not in a figurative but in a medical sense. The priest prays that God may restore the sick person to health, heal his wounds, free him from all pains of mind and body, strengthen the life that he has created, and restore him to the Church." ¹⁹⁵

He claims that when the fears and anxieties associated with Extreme Unction as unction in extremis are allayed, then patients receive this anointing in a calm frame of mind and, as he says, with joy. ¹⁹⁴ To remove these fears Peil suggests a very simple remedy. He says that to simply explain the meaning of the prayers is usually enough to reassure the patient and the friends of the true meaning of the rite. ¹⁹⁵ He says that the meaning of the sacrament is clear. "It is God's remedy for body and soul." ¹⁹⁶ To Peil this is not

193. Ibid., pp.279-280.

194. Ibid., p.280.

195. Ibid., p.280.

196. Ibid., p.281.

surprising and he hastens to point out how modern medicine is also aware of the connection between body and soul.

As he says: "This accords well with the findings of modern medical science which has established a very close relation between physical and mental sickness and health. ... But the purpose of the sacrament is clearly not just bodily healing, but the healing of the soul - an indispensable condition of bodily healing. Bodily health must always be considered as secondary and ancillary to spiritual health."¹⁹⁷

Here again one sees the dual purpose expressed but the primary emphasis still lies in the realm of spiritual health which in turn affects bodily or material health. It is interesting to note that Peil turns to secular science to substantiate his claims regarding the effect of unction. He says that due to the findings of modern medicine and psychology the understanding of Extreme Unction has been "enhanced. ... and gradually its earlier title, the Anointing of the Sick, or Holy Anointing, is coming more and more into common use."¹⁹⁸

Davis agrees with this psycho-somatic view of unction and discusses this quality of man in relation to unction. He says: "Our concept of a living man is not a confusion due to a failure to distinguish clearly soul and body. In reality what exists is man; and in man as a biological and spiritual unity the anatomical, physiological, psychological and spiritual aspects exist in continuous relation and mutual interaction, so that to speak of one of these alone is to make an abstraction. ... Such is man, such likewise is therefore the help given to aid man in sickness. What is given by this sacrament is a grace that affects man as a whole. ... The anointing of the sick does not, then, exercise an influence on the soul considered apart from the body nor on the body considered apart from the soul, but on the living unity which is the whole person."¹⁹⁹

197. Ibid., pp.281-282.

198. Ibid., p.247.

199. Davis, The Study of Theology, p.294.

Here, however, the psycho-somatic quality is taken beyond the point of view held by Peil. Davis does not agree with any breaking up of man so that the body is subordinated to the soul or vice versa. For him the situation always is one of unity with the body and soul influencing each other constantly and fully that man in his unity might be whole.

Thus the attempt to see the anointing of the sick reinstated to its ancient position as a rite of healing as opposed to a rite of dying is also an attempt to deal with man in his entirety. The abuse of calling for the priest when the patient was almost dead has brought about the present day reappraisal of this sacrament and the attempt to make it more than the harbinger of death.²⁰⁰ It is not denied that anointing is a preparation for death. Even post-Vatican II writers acknowledge this²⁰¹ but it is to be noted that the rite is primarily a "sacrament of healing, and sickness ... is a consequence of sin, a token and prelude to death. In the sacramental anointing we are either restored to health or strengthened to face the final ordeal of death - which itself takes on new meaning as a share in Christ's own death and triumph."²⁰² But the principal purpose is to heal in the face of serious illness. This makes the words danger of death little more than a disciplinary clause which would tend to regulate the

200. deLetter, Anointing ... Death, p.289.

201. C.J. McNapsy, Our Changing Liturgy, (London: Frederick Muller Ltd. 1967), p.67.

202. Ibid., p.67.

sacrament and thereby avoid or reduce the chances of its being abused. ²⁰³

Vatican II appears to be a turning point in the official approach to this ancient rite. Recognizing the difficulty of changing well-established ideas and attitudes, the Council has allowed a gradual transition to be made from Extreme Unction to the Anointing of the Sick. The Council allows both names to be used but preference for the latter is an indication that it hopes that Extreme Unction will gradually disappear from useage due to the fact that for many it means unction in extremis. ²⁰⁴ The Council says that Anointing of the Sick is a happier and more fitting term than Extreme Unction because it does not suggest imminent death. It further claims that the proper time for the reception of the oil of the sick is "as soon as there is some danger of death from sickness or old age." ²⁰⁵ According to

203. J.J. Lynch, Notes on Moral Theology, Theological Studies, Vol.17, June 1956, pp.167-196 (Baltimore, Md.: Published by the Theological Faculties of the Society of Jesus in the United States, 1956), p.195. He quotes F. Meurant in Vie Spirituelle, March 1955, pp.249-250. Meurant claims that the Church could soften her attitude towards the use of unction so that it could be used in every profound illness thus making it a sacrament of all who are seriously ill whether or not cure appears to be a possible outcome.

This almost seems to predict what has in fact happened within the Roman Catholic Church.

204. The Liturgy Constitution: A Chapter by Chapter Analysis of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, (Glen Rock, N.J.: Deus Books, Paulist Press, 1964), p.76.

205. W. Abbott, gen. ed., The Documents of Vatican II, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), p.161 and also note on p.161. See also: J.A. Crichton. The Church's Worship, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1964), p.174. He says that when viewed as the Anointing of the Sick, "It will be seen by the people to be the sacrament of healing and will be possible to relate it in a more telling fashion to the healing work of Christ upon earth."

Vatican II considerable freedom is allowed in the administration of the rite with provision being made so that the priest can vary the celebration of the sacrament in accordance with the condition of the patient.²⁰⁶ Through this concession the anointing becomes a more personal confrontation with the sacrament of the sick and allows the priest to use his discretion in its administration. Since the sacrament is now to be seen as the Anointing of the Sick it becomes more obvious that the patient ought to be capable of participation in its administration. In fact, putting off the sacrament until death is imminent is regarded as an abuse by modern writers. Even if the patient is likely to die the early administration is advised due to the fact that, "It is usually a great blessing for the sick person to be able to receive the sacrament while his mind is still clear and fully conscious. Very often he experiences great calm and consolation afterwards."²⁰⁷

It thus appears as if the way were being opened up for the widest use of unction imagineable, that is, unction in all cases of serious illness even when the danger of death would have to be regarded as a remote possibility. The catechism says that the possibility of death may be slight but anointing is to be carried out. It further says that very often there is to be found a revival of strength on the reception of unction²⁰⁸ and this may indicate that there is to be

206. Abbott, The Documents of Vatican II, p.161.

207. A New Catechism: Catholic Faith for Adults, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), p.469.

208. Ibid., p.469.

found in sick unction a sacrament of healing for the body as well as for the soul. One must, however, bear in mind the fact that the anointing "is not a magical remedy",²⁰⁹ but is a sacrament and ought to be actively participated in by the patient before he becomes too incapacitated to do so.²¹⁰

Since Vatican II changes in the rites for the sick have met with approval by the official Church. Only recently²¹¹ Rome has decreed that new changes in the rite of anointing will be adopted by the Church. These changes appear to be an attempt to redefine the meaning and purpose of this ancient ceremony and to make it more central in the ministry to the sick. The official pronouncement on the revised rite, *Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum Eorumque Pastoralis Curae*²¹² contains much that makes the Anointing of the Sick a practical

209. M. Slattery, The New Rite for the Sacrament of the Sick, The Furrow, Volume 24, number 3, March 1973, pp.131-137, (Naas, Co. Kildare, Ireland: The Furrow Trust, 1973), p.133.

210. Ibid., p.133.

211. January 18, 1973.

212. Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum Eorumque Pastoralis Curae, (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanus, 1972), is the official Latin text of the new rites for the sick. This text has no official English translation as yet, but there is a draft translation entitled Rites for the Sick: Booklet for Study Purposes Only, (Published by the International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc., 1971), which, thanks to the Right Reverend Gordon J. Cardinal Gray, Bishop of Edinburgh, I have been able to use in conjunction with Ordo ... Curae. Rev. C. Gusmer has also made a copy of the draft translation available to me to study and consult and it is from this translation that all references to the new rites will be made.

and pastoral tool to be used in the ministry to the ill. Of primary concern to this thesis is the introduction to the new rites where the basis is laid for the actual liturgical expression of the Church's concern for those who are ill. ²¹³

According to the new rite the classification of persons who may receive the anointing is widened. It says: "10. A sick person should be anointed before surgery whenever a dangerous illness is the reason for the surgery.
11. Old people may be anointed if they are clearly weak even though no dangerous illness has been diagnosed.
12. Sick children may be anointed, if they have sufficient use of reason to need the strength and consolation of this sacrament." ²¹⁴

The faithful member of the Church who faces surgery for some potentially dangerous illness should be anointed. The key word in this passage is should. The illness may be dangerous in itself but surgery might hold out a very good chance for a cure yet anointing is recommended by the Church. The danger need be either proximate or remote and chance of cure may be slight or high but when death must be considered as a possible outcome, unction is to be sought. ²¹⁵

The priest is told that a "prudent or probable judgement about the danger of death, made by the pastor or priest, is sufficient ... in such a case there is no reason for scruples." ²¹⁶ It is made very clear then, that the new rite is definitely not a sacrament reserved

213. Rites for the Sick, p.8, para. 42.

214. Ibid., p.2.

215. Ibid., p.2, para. 8.

216. Ibid., p.2, para. 8.

only for those who have reached the terminal stage of life. "It is certainly appropriate for a Christian to receive it as soon as he begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age." ²¹⁷ It is to be noted, however, that unction is to be used in cases of illness or old age and not when death is a possibility or probability from some other cause, such as execution, where confession and communion are to be given. ²¹⁸

The inclusion of children as recipients is an interesting revision of the rite though it is not at all clear what is meant by the phrase calling for "sufficient use of reason", ²¹⁹ as the requisite for the proper use of holy oil. Another interesting feature is that illness of an apparent nature is waived as a necessary requirement in the anointing of the aged members of the Church. ²²⁰ One could argue that the removal of illness seems to remove the necessity of danger of death unless one assumes that the old, when frail and weak, are always in danger of death.

In all cases the person who is eligible for anointing is seen to be in a state of isolation. Illness tends to cast one into a new role, into a position of "aloneness" and separation. Uction is one method which the Church can use in approaching this state and speaking to the individual concerned. ²²¹

217. Ibid., p.2, para. 8.

218. A New Catechism, p.470.

219. Rites for the Sick, p.2, para. 12.

220. Ibid., p.2, para. 11.

221. T. Talley, Healing: Sacrament or Charism? Worship, Vol.46, no.9, November 1972, pp.518-527, (Collegeville, Minn.: The Order of St. Benedict, 1972), p.525.

In the illness situation "the object of the rite of anointing can be understood as renewal of the baptismal anointing by which each of us is CHRISTOS so that the suffering and separation of sickness become identified as participation in the pascha Christi. By such anointing, anamnesis is made of the passage of Christ through death to life and of the patient's consecration to that mystery. By such anointing, further, the suffering of the illness is oriented to a reopened future, a case of movement in Christ through the present passion toward the kingdom. Sickness becomes a work, a work of learning in act that for those who are his, there is no suffering that is not his. Thus the separation and humiliation of suffering becomes invitation to a conversio from which one never returns to his "former health" - the most regrettable phrase in the liturgies of anointing - but always moves into a deeper realization of life in the resurrection."²²²

This movement or growth takes place within the context of the community of faith. Within the Body of Christ, when one member suffers all suffer with him and similarly, acts performed in the realm of science and medicine" to prolong the life of the body ... and all heartfelt love for the sick are considered by the Church as a preparation for preaching the gospel ... and a participation in Christ's healing ministry, even when this is done by men who are not Christians."²²³ If this is true then the communal aspect of unction

222. Ibid., p.525.

223. Rites for the Sick, p.5, para. 31.

ought to be stressed so that the patient's fellow Christians might share in this fight against illness through the sacraments of the sick.²²⁴ Of the fellow Christians, the family and friends of the patient are given a special task to perform. They are to "strengthen the sick with words of faith and with common prayer, commend them to the Lord who suffers and is glorified, and to urge the sick to unite themselves willingly with the passion and death of Christ for the good of God's people."²²⁵

When the community of faith acts in such a way, the isolation situation can be transformed for the patient, into a growth in understanding of his relationship to Christ. In sickness man might find himself. "Sickness is the sign of that which we are, but it is this in two ways. ... The one reduces us to what we are (and nothing more); the other calls us to what we are (and nothing less)."²²⁶ To such a situation the priest, as representative of the whole Church and the local congregation, brings the oil of the sick.²²⁷ Here the patient and those present are made aware of the presence of Christ.²²⁸ This is so due to the fact that the sacrament of anointing

224. Ibid., p.5, para. 31.

225. Ibid., p.5, para. 33.

226. Jacques Sarano, The Meaning of the Body, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p.158. Quoted in Talley, Healing: Sacrament or Charism? p.526.

227. Vorgrimler, Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, p.163.

228. Talley, Healing: Sacrament or Charism? p.526.

continues "the concern which the Lord himself showed for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick, and which he asked his followers to show also." ²²⁹ In unction, the Church, the Body of Christ, prays for, blesses, encourages, offers spiritual help, and gives active charity to the sick. This, the *medicina ecclesiae*, is the greatest remedy which the Church can offer. ²³⁰ Through this the "whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, asking that He may lighten their suffering and save them. (cf. Jas.5: 14-16)." ²³¹ Thus the illness situation is kept within the confines of the community of faith. Some place such emphasis on the communal aspect of the rite that other qualities are minimized. Talley says that the function of the presbyters "is not to heal nor is it yet to administer last rites, but to protect the sick member from dereliction and separation from the ecclesial body." ²³² This may be a reaction against a dangerous temptation which could be associated with anointing, but it does point out the importance of community concern for the sick.

229. Rites for the Sick, p.1, para. 5.

230. J.C. Didier, The Last Rites, (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), Chapter 2, p.23.

231. Abbott, Documents of Vatican II, p.28. F.H. Dalmais, Introduction to the Liturgy, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1961), p.131 also emphasizes the communal quality of unction.

232. Talley, Healing: Sacrament or Charism? p.523.

Of this danger Talley says: "Just as we have learned once again to discern the profound ecclesiological dimensions of baptism and eucharist, as we have passed beyond limiting baptism to removal of the guilt of original sin and can see eucharist as a bit more than a dole of divinity to a dissociated communicant, we seem, in the case of the anointing of the sick, to be driven further toward a preoccupation which is all the more problematic when emphasis falls on restoration of bodily health, for that brings to a situation already laden with anxiety a well-nigh inescapable tendency to administer the rite and then stand back and see if it is going to work.

Even allowing for wide variation in the quality of the rites and the manner of their celebration, we need to remind ourselves that sacraments always "work", and that therefore what is claimed for them must be articulated within that certainty. That is to say, sacramental and liturgical realities are always and only that, and we do the theology of the liturgy no service by extravagant claims of extrinsic effects ... And, while one is ashamed to say it, there are those who have been told that sacraments and prayer in true faith would remove a malignant tumor, and so have learned from its continued growth the insufficiency of their faith, and have died in despair. And this because liturgy was confounded with charism."²³³

This danger is probably one to be kept in mind so that the healing aspect of unction may be kept in its proper perspective. Talley fears that too much emphasis is placed on the healing dimension of the sacrament. This is not borne out in fact. In the new rites for the sick the proper grace of the sacrament is that it gives strength to the patient and endows him with "God-given peace of soul to bear his suffering. It also effects the forgiveness of his sins, if this is necessary. And, if God so wills, the sacramental anointing can even

233. Ibid., p.520.

effect a total restoration of physical health." ²³⁴ In these words healing is held up as a possibility but not as a promise to all who receive the anointing from the Church. It should also be noted that in the introduction to the new rites all aspects of healing are mentioned.

Paragraph four reads: "It is not only the sick person who should fight against illness; doctors, and all who are dedicated to helping the sick, should consider it their duty to do whatever they judge will help the sick, both physically and spiritually. In doing so, they fulfil the command of Christ to visit the sick; for Christ implied that they should be concerned for the whole man and offer both physical relief and spiritual comfort." ²³⁵

Thus all forces are to be used to effect total recovery but each appears to have a task in relation to the others and contributes in the struggle for wholeness.

The healing aspect of unction is not stressed overly much in the new rites. One aspect which is made very clear, however, is that anointing, like the other sacraments, is a sacrament of the Church and as such should be celebrated within the community setting. ²³⁶ Provision is made for communal celebration of this sacrament in the new rites. Also like all sacraments, unction points to the reception of the Eucharist. ²³⁷ Thus the new rites say that when a person's

234. Rites for the Sick, p.2, para. 6.

235. Ibid., p.1, para. 4.

236. Slattery, The New Rites for the Sacrament of the Sick, p.135.

237. A New Catechism, p.470.

condition allows, and when communion is to be received, the celebration ought to take place in the Church, with the conditional clause added that it may take place in a hospital or at home with the consent of the ordinary.²³⁸ The care of the sick is a communal concern and can best be expressed in the congregational prayers just prior to the reception of the Eucharist.²³⁹ This gathered community could be in hospital or in a senior citizens home²⁴⁰ and should help to make those who suffer serious illness feel that they are still a part of the Church and not cut off in isolation because of their ailment.²⁴¹

As regards the practical use of the new rite, it is interesting to note that now the priests are told that it is desirable that they teach, privately and publicly, parishioners to "ask for the anointing on their own initiative, and as soon as the time for the anointing comes, to accept it with faith and devotion, not misusing it by putting it off."²⁴² This is in keeping with the scriptural basis of the rite as found in the Epistle of St. James. "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord," (James 5: 14, R.S.V.). Here the patient is urged to request the anointing on behalf of himself in the face of illness. The anointing is performed by a priest, but now the matter of the sacrament is no longer olive oil blessed by the

238. Rites for the Sick, p.14, para. 77.

239. Slattery, The New Rites for the Sacrament of the Sick, p.135.

240. Ibid., p.135. Also, Rites for the Sick, p.11, para. 66.

241. Slattery, The New Rites for the Sacrament of the Sick, p.135.

242. Rites for the Sick, p.2, para. 13.

Bishop on Maundy Thursday. In the new rites the requirement is oil which has been blessed as before but with the revision that it "should be natural oil of the kind people ordinarily use." ²⁴³

Confession is still a desirable prerequisite for the reception of the sacrament and if this requirement is not fulfilled prior to the actual administration of the rite provision is made for it in the celebration of the ceremony. ²⁴⁴ Thus prepared, the faithful member receives the anointing, the only one in the course of his illness. That is qualified somewhat by the words in the introduction to the new rites. It says: "This sacrament should not be repeated for the same sickness, but only if a new sickness is involved or when the sickness lasts a long time and has shown some improvement." ²⁴⁵ Anointing is not, however, to be repeated in the final moments of life, ²⁴⁶ according to the new rites, and thus an attempt is being made to make this act of the Church a sacrament of the sick and not of the dying.

Prior to the appearance of the new rites, the person to be anointed by the priest was anointed on "the eyelids, ears, nose, mouth, lips, hands, and feet (or in case of necessity, merely on the forehead)." ²⁴⁷

243. Ibid., p.3, para. 20.

244. Ibid., p.11, para. 65. This indicates that confession is a normal part of the rite either in its preparation or as part of the actual celebration of anointing. Also p.15, para. 83 states that "it is preferable that sick persons who are to be anointed and who wish to confess their sins go to confession before the celebration of anointing." See also p.15, para. 85 where the penitential rite is incorporated as part of the ritual.

245. Ibid., p.2, para. 9.

246. Ibid., p.2, para. 9.

247. A New Catechism, p.469.

Now the priest simply anoints the forehead and the hands, or, if the patient's condition is not conducive to this, an anointing of at least one part of the body is all that is required. The number of anointings and the place of the anointing may be changed or increased depending upon local custom and with the sanction of the conference of Bishops which is responsible for this matter. ²⁴⁸

Formerly, after each anointing the priest would pray as follows.

"Through this holy anointing and through his own loving mercy, may the Lord forgive all the faults that you have committed through your eyes, (ears ... feet)." ²⁴⁹ Now, one prayer is used and the words are divided so that the first part is said as the priest anoints the forehead while the final part is said as the hands are anointed. ²⁵⁰

"Through this holy anointing and his great love for you, may the Lord fill you with his Holy Spirit. ✠ Amen. In his goodness may he ease your suffering and extend his saving grace to you, freed from all the power of sin. ✠ Amen". ²⁵¹ Following this the priest says a prayer appropriate to the situation and the rite concludes with the Lord's Prayer, said in unison by those present, and a blessing. ²⁵²

248. Rites for the Sick, p.4, para. 23.

249. A New Catechism, p.469.

250. Rites for the Sick, p.4, para. 23.

251. Ibid., p.13, para. 75.

252. Ibid., p.13, para. 76. Prayers on pp.31-32, paragraphs 206-208, are very definitely prayers for health. e.g. "Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, by the power of the Holy Spirit, ease the sufferings of our sick brother (sister) and make him (her) well again in mind and body. In your loving kindness forgive his (her) sins restore him (her) to full health, and give us the peace and happiness of your kingdom where you live for ever and ever.

✠. Amen.

If the oil to be used is to be blessed during the celebration of the rite, the priest says the following prayer. "Lord God, Father of all comfort, it was your will to restore the sick through your Son, Jesus Christ. Mercifully listen to the prayer we make in faith for those who believe in you, on whom the elders of the Church have placed their hands, and who will be anointed in your name: May they receive the health you offer in this sacrament.

Send your Holy Spirit, the Consoler, from heaven to bless (†) this oil, a work of nature, an ointment to strengthen the body. May all who are anointed with this oil be freed from every pain, illness, and disease, and be made well again in body, mind, and soul.

Father, may this oil, which you have blessed for our use produce its healing effect in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.
R. Amen." 253

This prayer for the blessing of the oil obviously does contain the aspirations of the Church for healing. It does not, however, claim health of body as a definite result but rather simply asks God that the natural desire of the patient and those who struggle to restore health be fulfilled. This, it appears, is in keeping with the work of Christ who "sees his struggle against sickness and death as a struggle against evil, indeed against the evil one." 254

Healing cannot always take place upon the reception of unction. All must die one day. For this reason one should not assume physical restoration as the ultimate or sole good of the sacrament.

253. Ibid., p.13, para. 74.

254. A New Catechism, p.109.

The work of the sacrament of the sick is to effect a healing which will endure even the final illness and death of man. This sacrament is a sign of the fact that Jesus is at war against evil and is the sign of healing. ²⁵⁵

Healing is an act of God. This is so not only in the sacramental sense but in all cases. Medical practice is a dialogue between scientific technology and the life processes within man. It is "not the simple manipulation of an inert material." ²⁵⁶

As Talley says: "we must never lose sight of the mystery, indeed the miracle, of healing. The body's thrust to life, its struggle against disease and decay, is indeed an expression of the primacy of life and its ultimate victory over death, a victory archetypically achieved in the resurrection of the Lord. Thus all healing can be seen as an act of God, in that no therapeutic measure can have its effect apart from the dynamism of life itself. The practice of medicine is a dialogue with the life processes, not the simple manipulation of an inert material. And at the root of this life process there still resides the profound regenerative mystery which sustains the patient and the physician as well in humility and hope. There is no healing that is not an act of God." ²⁵⁷

Thus the whole person is treated by all who minister to him whether they be physicians, psychiatrists or clergy. The object ought to be health and wholeness and all contribute to the attaining of this state. In this sense the new rites could be regarded as healing rites and tend to be presented in this way far more than the attitude which

255. Ibid., p.109.

256. Talley, Healing: Sacrament or Charism? p.521.

257. Ibid., p.521.

sees faithful Christians anointed in extremis in preparation for glory. The new rites try to present the words of St. James in a way which better expresses their content.²⁵⁸ This new approach to the sick will soon force the old attitudes out of existence, officially at least, as it has been decreed that the old rites for the sick "can be used only until 31 December, 1973. From 1 January 1974, however, the new Order only is to be used by all those whom it concerns."²⁵⁹

Thus Rome has transformed the sacrament of Extreme Unction into the Anointing of the Sick, a communal sacrament designed to convey to the patient the healing work of Christ. Though it may be used in conjunction with Viaticum²⁶⁰ the liturgy makes no mention of death but rather speaks of deliverance from the ills besetting the patient and of recovery to health.²⁶¹ Hence unction becomes, very definitely, a sacrament of the sick to be used in conjunction with medicine and medical skill to effect God's healing and wholeness in those Christians who are seriously ill.

258. Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, The Furrow, Vol. 24, no.3, March 1973, pp.184-187, (Naas, Co. Kildare, Ireland: The Furrow Trust, 1973), p.186.

259. Ibid., p.187.

260. Rites for the Sick, pp.23-24.

261. Slattery, The New Rites for the Sacrament of the Sick, p.132.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONFRONTATION AND MISSION: CONSIDERATIONS ON THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH, RITUAL, AND SUFFERING IN THE SEARCH FOR HEALTH AND WHOLENESS WITH CONCLUDING IMPLICATIONS

Throughout the course of this thesis the anointing of the sick has been discussed in relation to the various beliefs which have surrounded this rite. Old Testament use of oil in times of sickness was for remedial purposes as was the case in the period of the New Testament. Similar use was made of oil blessed by the bishop in the early centuries of the Christian Church until the rite gradually came to be regarded as a sacrament of the dying rather than simply a sacrament of the sick. The association with penance and the severe penitential system of the Church made the use of oil anything but desirable in the face of possible recovery. Yet in spite of this, there were those who desired to have the rite continue in its ancient form as a sacrament of healing to be used in times of serious ailments. Even though there was vast confusion, the Church at the time of the Reformation did not clarify the issue. Protestants tended to discard the unction of the sick as a rite out of keeping with the scriptural foundation on which it was claimed to have been built and as being inefficacious as the vehicle of healing promised by James. Many Roman Catholics saw the use of oil as a means of effecting the removal of the vestiges of sin just prior to death in order that the soul might be properly prepared for the enjoying of the beatific vision. Nevertheless, the Council of Trent did not condone current practice but insisted on the administration of unction at the onset of illness with the danger of death. This attitude was

not accepted, on the emotional level at least, by the populace of this denomination and they continued to delay its reception until the person to be anointed was actually in the throes of death. Trent had attempted to include the healing aspect of the rite and the spiritual quality of it as well but the faithful saw its use in terms of death and not in terms of life. Thus the act, de facto, was a last rite even though it was, de jure, to be used early on in illness with the possible outcome being proclaimed as restoration to health.

The Anglican Church has a relatively continuous history of the use of this sacramental anointing. Unction has been used, either officially or unofficially, from the time of Henry VIII until the present day with only sporadic interruptions. Here, however, the use of oil blessed for the purpose of curing ailments has remained far more in keeping with the teaching of James than has the Roman Catholic usage. This is so inasmuch as the Church of England has always laid stress on the healing aspect of the rite even if in connection with the forgiveness of sins. This seems to have been accepted more readily by the Anglican laity than by their brothers in the Roman Catholic Church. In the Church of England it appears as though the desired use of the act has always been for the removal of ills and the restoration to health.

In this century there has been a resurgence of interest in the whole healing ministry of the Church. This has called for a reappraisal of the sacrament of the sick. Pentecostalist denominations

have practised the use of this ancient ministry of the Church by means of unction on the basis that it has been given to the Church by James in his epistle. The use of anointing by this denomination seems to have prompted little Pentecostal theological writing on the topic of unction. Although the healing ministry is of considerable importance to this segment of Christianity there is a very great dearth of objective presentation of the theological thinking which must surround such a ministry of the Church. Unlike the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches where recent reappraisal and re-evaluation of the use of chrism has prompted a new or modern approach to the use of the oil of the sick the Pentecostals seem to be quite content to merely anoint on the command of James.

Modern Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism have placed the practice of sick unction before modern man as a means of healing. This health or healing will be discussed later in this chapter where it will be seen that it includes a psychosomatic view of man which thus places the whole illness, death, and life situation in the context of the total individual.

Unction presents other areas which will be regarded in this thesis in an attempt to display the far reaching implications of the condition of life which we call illness. Times of suffering, the community of faith, and the use of ritual present opportunities for health and wholeness which seems to have been overlooked in writings on this rite of the Church. Confrontation with the word of God and the use of this situation as a time for mission could be

regarded as integral, and indeed, central aspects of the sacramental ministry to the sick.

In this section of the thesis unction will be discussed as a means of confrontation and as a method of stimulating and executing mission under various topics. The community of faith is central to individual members of the Church in that the community ministers to and carries out ministry through the people who claim membership in the congregation. Within the context of this group ritual is to be found in various forms and with many differing ways of expression. These rituals give structure and continuity to the activity of the members and to the work of the minister as he carries out his ministry on behalf of the community of faith. In suffering the rite of unction could be seen as a structure within which to place the communal activity as it attempts to maintain the whole illness situation within the context of the community of faith. In this chapter the community of faith will be examined to show how the patient is confronted by and confronts others through the ritual of anointing in the midst of his suffering as he strives to attain health and wholeness, the desired outcome of the rite. Following discussions on the community of faith, ritual, suffering and health and wholeness the chapter will conclude with some implications which evolve from the thesis.

COMMUNITY OF FAITH

The nature of the community of faith which will be used in this paper will be based primarily on Protestant theologians in an attempt to place unction in this particular context. To do this one must realize that although there may be many different concepts of the community of faith the mere use of the term community is of vast significance. The Church is such that its existence is to be found wherever one of its members is through the power of the Holy Spirit. There is no way in which a member can be severed from the body. Each person who belongs to the congregation has his specific task to fulfil in relation to the whole. He is responsible for his actions in relation to the total group and is called upon to participate in their needs as well.¹ In so doing the scriptural injunction to bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ is brought into effect (Galatians 6:2). This would tend to agree with Calvin's belief that the Church is not an institution to be found outside of men but rather that it is composed of individuals who, in a very real sense, are members of the body of Christ. The Church, therefore, becomes a community based on the action of Christ in the lives of people who profess faith in him.²

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1. cf. D. Bonhoeffer, Sanctorum Communio, (London: Collins, 1967), p.127.
 2. cf. F. Wendel, Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought, (London: Collins, 1963), p.295. cf. also: C.O'Grady, The Church in Catholic Theology: Dialogue with Karl Barth, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969), p. 269. Barth seems to concur with Calvin on this point.

The Church gains its strength from individuals who are seen as being in relationship with Christ. Their power and health is regarded as coming from the head of the body which is Christ himself. It is Jesus who enables there to be communication between the members and it is also Christ who makes this quality of existence a necessity. Calvin further adds that from the head, Christ, there comes love for one another which brings health to the whole body.³ This quality is of great importance for the consideration of unction. In anointing, the sick are maintained within the mutual love of the community and are assured of the prayers and concern of their fellow Christians who participate in Christ, the head of the Church. In this sense their burden is shared and thus borne by the other members of the community of faith. Thus there is a two way confrontation to be seen simply in attempting to understand something of the concept of the community of faith. The patient, suffering in illness, is confronted with the fact of his membership in the fellowship of the body and the community is confronted with its responsibility to the person who is ill. In this sense ~~the~~ community is called to include the negative aspects of sharing in this act of unction and thus approximates the healing fellowship which is claimed in modern psychiatry.⁴

3. cf. J. Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians, tr. W. Pringle, (Edinburgh: Published for the Calvin Translation Society, 1854), pp. 287-288.

4. cf. G.C. Harding & R.A. Lambourne, Health and the Congregation, International Review of Missions Vol. 57, 1968, pp.193-200. (Geneva: Published by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, 1968), p.194. Here the discussion is on the Pentecost experience and the sharing of all things, i.e. good as well as bad. Confession and forgiveness are aimed at but the attitude applies to unction as well as a symbol of the inclusion of bad in the total experience of the community of faith.

This fellowship is effective due to the fact that, in keeping with I Corinthians 12:27, the Church is one body wherein the health of one is a matter which concerns the life of the whole body. There is a mutual dependence which makes the illness situation such that when one member suffers all suffer with him.⁵ It would appear logical to assume, therefore, that illness weakens the whole community and can lessen its power for mission. In the rite of unction the particular member of the congregation who is ill is carried along by his fellows even if the illness results in death. Here the concept of the body remains forceful. In the agony of death the whole church is present in its assistance to the patient and is in fact present in the patient.⁶ In the anointing of the sick the patient is brought to face the fact of this total involvement of the community in the illness condition. He is made aware of the position he maintains within the body and how, *in his suffering,* ~~does~~ the whole congregation ^{suffers} both with and in him. He is also brought to see how he has a responsibility to execute the ministry of the Church which exists in him.⁷ Thus, he can make of his illness a time of fulfilling his function within the total context

5. cf. C. Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1868), pp.260-261. cf. also: Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 3, part 4, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), p.363.

6. cf. Bonhoeffer, Sanctorum Communio, pp.127-128 on Luther's concept of the communion of saints.

7. cf. the Pentecostal attitude to the Church and its mission. Nelson, Bible Doctrines, p.107. Here it is pointed out that every believer has a vital function to perform within the Church even though it may seem insignificant. He also indicates the interdependence which is essential for survival within the community.

of the community of faith and thereby illness becomes a time of confrontation for those who become associated with the member who suffers. This condition therefore, expresses the mutual concern of the body to the patient and by the patient through the administration and reception of unction. In anointing the nature of the caring community is brought into focus and enables the condition of illness to become an opportunity for sharing and serving in the eyes of those outside the Church who witness the whole situation. The patient accepts the support of the community of faith and recognizes Jesus as the beginning and end of faith and through the act of anointing is maintained within this faith as he attempts to become man after the will of God.⁸ Thus unction brings unity to the Christians of the community. This rite is in keeping with Calvin's thought on this quality of the Christian life inasmuch as it brings into focus the fact that Christians ought to "form one body and one soul, professing one faith and rendering every kind of assistance to each other."⁹

This unity comes about through the inclusion of health and illness, life and death, the community and the individual.

R.A. Lambourne speaks of ministering to the sick as a sacrament and cites such things as a cup of cold water as a means of bringing this sacrament to reality. This sacramental view of the treatment of illness can be extended to include the sense of mission to other patients

8. cf. B. Martin, The Healing Ministry in the Church, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960), p.84. On faith and the necessity of the community in the maintaining of the faith.

9. J.T. McNeill, The History and Character of Calvinism, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.216.

and to the medical and para-medical staff when the rite of unction is presented as a declaration of the unity which exists between God and man and between man and man. Thus the rite could be regarded as a means of proclamation which confronts individuals with the unity of the local community which is "made whole-in-Christ." ¹⁰

The community of faith comes to the illness situation with the rite of unction and thus attempts to alleviate some of the negative aspects of the condition. The patient is expected to tolerate external and, in some ways, foreign controls in illness. Trust and confidence in medical practitioners and their modes of healing are expected and are to be accepted without question. His life is manipulated and regulated by the doctor or the hospital or both and thus the patient begins to feel inferior and restricted in his rights to be free and to come and go at will. In serious ailments there is a dependence upon the care and treatment of other people and the patient is forced into a position where he cannot defend his rights. He feels he is cut off from the world he once knew. ¹¹ Uction meets this situation and conveys to the patient the fact that he still belongs to the community of faith. He is confronted with the promise of belonging to a group within which he is important and can contribute even if his illness is to end in death. This is an important aspect

10. cf. Lambourne, Community, Church and Healing, (London: Danton, Longman & Todd, 1963), pp.88-89. Lambourne's discussion of ministry to the ill would aptly apply to unction inasmuch as in anointing the subtle message of a cup of cold water is placed under the perspective of the sacramental ministry of the Church and is thus portrayed as emanating from the same source as the anointing.

11. cf. Forgotten and Neglected Groups in the Church, ed. by the General Secretariat, Concilium Vol. 8, 1968, pp.83-90, (London: Burns & Oates, 1968), p.87.

of care for the seriously ill as the fear of uselessness and of not being able to contribute to the community is very much a source of concern for those in this condition. ¹²

One way of alleviating the sense of isolation and of not being able to contribute to life might be found in the public administration of the oil of the sick. In this way the sick member, his family, and loved ones are made known as being in need of the fellowship of the congregation. This rite also indicates their willingness to offer themselves for union with the community. In order for this to be an effective demonstration of need and willingness to participate there must be two-way preparation. The congregation and the individual must be brought to see their responsibility and the representative character of the act. In this way the way is prepared for the administration of the chrism with the hope for its desired results. ¹³

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12. cf. S.A. Plummer, Thoughts Regarding the Meaning of Death, The Journal of Pastoral Care Vol. 21, 1967, pp. (New York: The Council for Clinical Training Inc., 1967), p.31. This article deals with dying patients but the same would apply to those who are seriously ill under the threat of death. cf. also: N. Autton, ed., From Fear To Faith, (London: S.P.C.K., 1971), pp.15-16. cf. also: Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, Death and Dying: Attitudes of the Patient and Doctor, (New York: Mental Health Materials Centre, Inc., 1965), p.591 and p.615. Like Plummer's article this deals with dying but would be appropriately applied to severe ailments.
13. cf. Lambourne, Community, Church and Healing, p.136. cf. also: Chapter 4 Note 47 above. Public unction confronts the congregation with their responsibility.

Traditionally the purpose of anointing has been for health and wholeness, be that of a physical or spiritual nature. The communal quality of the rite might have considerable bearing on the effectiveness of this sacramental ministry to the ill. J.D. Frank, speaking on the healings of Lourdes, claims that the people who go there, the seriously ill or those with chronic ailments, are helped towards health by the total community of faith. Previous to the pilgrimage plans they were to be found on the fringe of the congregation but through the decision to go to Lourdes they are included in the active life of the Church. Funds are raised, concern is generated, and prayers are said and the individual is brought from the periphery of the group to its centre and here is made the focus of attention. This in itself, he feels, assists in the quest for health.¹⁴ If this is true, then the administration of unction, which brings the patient to the centre of the community, ought to relieve the sense of isolation and lead to the process called health.

Frank's claim indicates a responsibility of the congregation as well. If the community contains a member who is ill and in danger of death then the rite of unction stands as a means whereby they can convey to him their assumed responsibility for him. In this way there is a ministry performed from the brothers to the brother which is in keeping with Calvin's thoughts on the community.

14. cf. J.D. Frank, Persuasion and Healing, (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p.54.

Though he was not referring to unction, it certainly is made clear by this reformer that not only is mutual concern desired, it is essential and to be expected as a right of the member in need. ¹⁵

This is not to say that this aspect of unction is only to be felt in public services for the sick. The same situation applies equally well in a hospital setting or in the sick man's home. In any case the administration of the oil of the sick is a means of the community proclaiming and presenting Christ and the unity which this includes. It appears as an answer to the problem of illness based on love and in accord with the promise of Christ. ¹⁶ The priest or minister who bears the oil of the sick does so, not as a detached individual, but as the representative of the community of faith to the representative of the same community. Lambourne maintains that in unction, whether for the removal of sins or for health, there are to be found associations with "blessing, sacrificing and commissioning as representatives of God and the people of God." ¹⁷ Thus in unction there is to be found a means of fulfilling the missionary task of the Church inasmuch as each individual in the community is present in the act and this rite looks beyond the limited sphere

15. cf. J. Calvin, Commentary on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, Vol. 2, tr. J. Pringle, (Edinburgh: Printed for the Calvin Translation Society, 1849), pp.305-306.

16. cf. Lambourne, Community, Church and Healing, p.117 on the ecclesial quality of the visitation of the sick. He bases it on the dominical promise that where two or three are gathered together there is Christ to be found in their midst. Matthew 18:20.

17. Ibid., p.132.

of the congregation to the world in which the member is ill. Through anointing the message of the Church is presented to the patient who is made aware of God's help in this time and who also is reminded of his task to proclaim this to others who are not yet members of the community. In this way the patient co-operates in and executes the missionary aspect of the Church.¹⁸ In this sense the patient indicates the open nature of the Church which reaches out to all men and in so doing the patient, the member of the community of faith, shares in the "fullness of its heavenly Head."¹⁹ Hence the sick man gains strength from the community of faith through the ministry of others who are also part of the body of Christ.²⁰ Through this strength he is enabled to execute the task which has been assigned to him through the rite of unction. He therefore contributes to the community an important ministry of mission in the face of serious illness and thereby gains a sense of worth and purpose even though he stands in danger of death.²¹

18. cf. Barth, Church Dogmatics, 3, 4, pp.504-505 on the task of the Church as mission. See also Chapter 4, Note 164 above.

19. O'Grady, The Church ... Barth, pp.269-270.

20. cf. M. Wilson, The Hospital - A Place of Truth, (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, 1971), p.25 when he says that persons gain health as well as sickness from the whole of life, including relationships with others.

21. cf. R.S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life, (Edinburgh & London: Oliver & Boyd, 1959), p.196. On mutual ministry and not, obviously, on the use of unction.

Hence, the community of faith is of importance to the rite of anointing in the face of serious illness. It confronts and is confronted with a situation wherein mission can be performed. The patient is confronted with the fact of his belonging to the community of faith and with the responsibility which he has to it by virtue of his membership in it. The congregation is responsible to and for the member who is ill as he is a vital part of the total body and his health is required in order for there to be health in the body per se. The task of mission is thus engaged both from within the community to its members and by its members to the individual who is ill and, finally, by the anointed patient to those who come in contact with him. The health of the community in terms of service and mission is thus strengthened through the ritual act of anointing in the face of suffering.

RITUAL

In the preceding discussion the confrontation and mission of the community of faith were seen under the presentation of the oil of the sick. Ritual acts such as unction are not generally used by Protestant denominations in times of illness and this is probably due, in part at least, to the attitudes of the Reformers towards anything which might appear to resemble the practices of the Roman Church. The use of rituals and ritual acts per se, however, will be examined in the light of the statements of Protestant writers in an attempt to reappraise the use of the anointing of the sick in a modern setting. Although the statements which will be used do not refer to unction in their original context, it is felt that they would, in fact, apply to this rite.

Ritual in any context is used to convey a message or meaning in a symbolic manner. Christian rites are associated with a scriptural background and context. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the obvious instances of symbolic actions with scriptural content. These rites contain a far deeper meaning than the mere external elements would indicate. Unction should do this too and in fact it is claimed to do so. The rite of anointing points to the scriptural background of the act and to the promises made about its use and function.²²

22. cf. The Encyclopaedia of the Lutheran Church, Vol. 2, (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p.1327. On liturgy.

In this act the patient and the total Christian community are confronted with the fact of the group's existence and with the basis of their unity. Unction is used to draw attention to the belief in God as the source and goal of all life and of their dependence on him in all occasions. Thus the very ground of the group's existence finds meaning in ritual acts of which unction is one.²³ As seen above, the prayers of the anointing rite are all related to the health of body and soul. Thus the ceremony is a means of expressing unity of belief and purpose in the face of an invasion by illness that God is the healer of all ills.

It is more than this. One authority claims that ritual is twofold in its purpose. He claims that Christian symbols are used to represent "God's Presence and God's Word" and also that they are used to express the "spiritual aspirations and experience of the worshippers."²⁴ Similarly, the Lutherans would see liturgy as the presence of Christ and his saving acts and also the outward expression of the inward spiritual life of man.²⁵ This, although referring to the liturgy of public worship, would apply to the rite of anointing quite readily. In unction one sees the word of God enacted as is the case in all sacramental actions. Here the rite becomes a stimulus to faith and attempts to draw the faith of the participants and observers into sharper focus. It becomes, like the sermon, a means of confrontation

23. W.A. Clebsch & C.K. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), pp.70-71. It is also pointed out that rituals not only express this agreement of beliefs but aid in creating such consensus.

24. D.H. Hislop, Our Heritage In Public Worship, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1935), p.285.

25. The Encyclopaedia of the Lutheran Church, Vol. 2, pp.1311 and 1323 respectively.

and a call to service. The Reformers never denied the fact that ritual can be a means to support faith²⁶ and for this reason the efficacy of anointing as a possible stimulus to faith through confrontation with the message of the act ought not to be denied.

The meaning of the term ritual or symbol should be examined. Tillich maintains that a symbol participates in that which it symbolizes though it is not, in point of fact, the same as it. That is, it takes part in the power and meaning of the object symbolized.²⁷ He also speaks of symbol in the realm of reality wherein one can see divine manifestations in objects or actions in life. These symbols, he maintains, can become attached to tangible, supporting symbols such as bread, wine, water, oil, and poetry where the former symbol becomes resymbolized and is expressed in poetry, parables, and, one would suppose, in rituals.²⁸ It has been shown that oil has been regarded as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In this case, the oil of the sick participates in the power and meaning of the Holy Spirit in that it is the unguent which makes the patient aware of the presence of God in the illness situation. Through the rite there is a confrontation

26. cf. Ibid., p.1324.

27. cf. P. Tillich, Theology of Culture, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p.54.

28. cf. S. Hook, ed., Religious Experience and Truth: A Symposium. (New York: Oliver & Boyd, 1962), p.9.

with the divine as the oil, through faith,²⁹ becomes a sacramental ministry in the illness condition. In this sense one can apply to unction the attitude of Tillich which claims that "symbols of the holy reveal something of the "Holy - Itself" and produce the experience of holiness in persons and groups."³⁰ Anointing is an enactment of the word which proclaims God's presence in all situations and this act confronts the patient with this truth and demands a reply. In this sense, through the natural object of oil, God speaks sacramentally to his people and turns sickness into a time for the stimulating of faith.

If this is true it would coincide with the beliefs and teachings of Luther and Calvin in some respects. Luther taught that in the sacraments Christ deals with man.³¹ In unction the patient is confronted with the crisis of the situation and is called to unite himself to Christ in suffering, as will be seen later on. Thus, for Luther, the sacraments confront man with the Christ who is willing to deal effectively with the situation. Calvin, similarly, saw illness

29. cf. D.M. Baillie, The Theology of the Sacraments, (London: Faber & Faber, 1957), p.47. On the sacramental universe. cf. also: J. Shaughnessy, ed., The Roots of Ritual, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), pp.175-176. It is indicated that outward signs are more important in our search for grace today than in the past due to the fact that we are visual-minded. He also claims that ritual should take ordinary objects and, through metaphor, transform them and thereby lift them above absurdity. In this way ritual can help us to experience the holy in the familiar things of life.

30. Hook, Religious ... Symposium, p.5.

31. See Chapter 3 note 6.

as a time when man needs the word of God which should strengthen him to encounter the assaults of evil which are present in illness.³² In this sense Calvin saw the pastoral care of the sick as a confrontation which would lead to confession and Communion.³³ In the rite of unction these things happen. The patient is confronted with the word of God and the possibility of its enactment, is prepared for its reception by confession and communion, as seen in the preceding chapter, and is then anointed. This confrontation enables man to continue to become man even when faced with possible death.

Luther and Calvin tended to concur on the use of ceremonial in the worship of God. Calvin saw ritual as depending upon the times and needs of the situation. He was willing to allow new forms to be used and old ones to be discarded so long as there was no essential salvific theological belief being deleteriously dealt with. His primary guide was that charity should be the basis of change in all cases.³⁴ Luther was not quite so ready to admit new forms of worship or ritual. He would have preferred it if all ceremonial had been removed from the Church. He was, however, willing to allow existing rituals to continue even if they did not particularly suit himself. In essence he was willing to accommodate himself to the needs of others.

32. See Chapter 3 Note 40.

33. See Chapter 3 Note 63.

34. cf. G.D. Henderson, Church and Ministry, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951), p.30.

His primary concern was that moderation be used so that they could be kept in perspective and be seen as serving tools and not as essential elements in the search for salvation. For this reason they could be changed or revised at any time and were not, therefore, to be regarded as perpetual.³⁵ This attitude is echoed in modern times in a Lutheran report of a theological commission on faith and order. This group virtually states Luther's attitude but adds the idea that even the word, which is the most appropriate symbol of the Spirit for Protestant worship, can become "debased with vain repetition."³⁶ These approaches to ritual or the use of symbols to convey religious confrontation and meaning coincide with Tillich's claim that symbols live and die because of the situation and cannot be dismissed or disregarded simply by empirical criticism.³⁷ Thus, if unction appears as a valid representation of the presence of God in the illness condition and is an expression of the group's

35. cf. E.M. Plass, What Luther Says: An Anthology, Vol. 1, (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing Co., 1959), pp.308-309. Luther suspected ritual as the "tinder and stuff for superstition."

36. P. Edwall, E. Hayman, & W.D. Maxwell, ed., The Report of a Theological Commission of Faith and Order, (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1951), p180. cf. Tillich, Theology of Culture, p.60 where he says that the danger of symbols is that they tend to replace that to which they point. Rituals are, rather, expressions of special situations and thus can only be valid as such. When they become ends in themselves they become idols. It must find its source and life in the acceptance of the group. cf. Hook, Religious ... Symposium, p.4.

37. cf. Tillich, Theology of Culture, p.65.

confrontation and call to mission in the situation wherein one of its members is ill, then it would logically follow that it could be accepted by the community of faith in order to assist in the work of the Church.

The condition of serious illness presents the patient and the priest or minister with a difficult and often ~~times~~ puzzling situation in which they both are at a loss as to how to act and react. In the modern Church there seems to be a revival of interest in the healing ministry based primarily on the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. Those who are involved in this type of ministry may feel no anxiety in the face of an illness which might result in the death of the patient. There are, however, those who would see the Church as having a vital part to play in the ministry to the seriously ill in terms of healing and wholeness but who are too timid or reticent to extend themselves far enough to participate in such acts which might be seen to be charismatic in nature. Similarly, it is not inconceivable that there are patients who feel that the Church has a ministry of healing but are not capable of becoming involved in this ministry for one reason or another. Unction comes to these groups of individuals as an answer to their dilemma. Through this rite the celebrant and recipient are enabled to forget about personalities other than that of Christ. The act of anointing is devoid of emotional overtones and can be presented as a vehicle of God's grace which is communal in nature, thus eliminating the problem of the possibility of its becoming linked to the personality of the

administrator.³⁸ Instead, one has a symbol whereby God is seen to quicken the faith of the recipient,³⁹ and through which the recipient can communicate this faith to the one administering this rite and to God.⁴⁰ For some, one quality of a ritual such as anointing in the face of serious illness which would bring welcome security is the fact that in this rite, as in others, there is established a certain degree of routine. This regulates the behaviour of both patient and celebrant and thus makes the crisis of confrontation more predictable. Thus in a relatively threatening situation wherein there might well be difficulty in communication, the use of ritual has the effect of making the unpredictable more manageable.⁴¹

Ritual acts can be regarded in a positive light when one realizes the implications of their use. Man appears to be a creature of habit be they good or evil. The whole of life seems to be grounded on certain ritual deeds and habits and these are regarded as positive aspects of life. The use of habits or rituals, however, may become more filled with meaning if and when they become humane and humanized.⁴²

38. cf. H. Beech, Pouring In Oil, *Chrism* Vol. 15, no.1, 1971, pp.16-18, (London: The Guild of St. Raphael, 1971), pp.17-18.

39. cf. Baillie, The Theology of the Sacraments, p.88. On Baptism but it would apply equally well to unction.

40. cf. Shaughnessy, The Roots of Ritual, p.169. He maintains that ritual is communicating the self to the other. Unction seems to be a multi-dimensional communication. i.e., it communicates the recipient's faith to the celebrant and to God, it expresses the faith of the one administering the rite to the patient and it conveys the prayers and faith of the total community to the recipient through the actual rite.

41. cf. Clebsch & Jaekle, Pastoral ... Perspective, p.71.

42. cf. D.B. Harned, Faith and Virtue, (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1973), pp.21-22.

Unction, because of its function of confrontation, breaks down the false barriers which exist in certain cases of serious illness by acknowledging the gravity of the situation. This prepares the way for meaningful dialogue between the patient and the priest or minister about the real process of serious illness and its attendant problems.⁴³ Thus the rite brings the crisis into focus and encourages the removal of barriers that true dialogue and growth might take place.

This does not deny the fact that there might be other problems, and possibly very serious ones, to be dealt with in such crisis situations. Karl Barth claims that the task of the minister is to make known and present the word of God.⁴⁴ As already stated, unction is the word of God enacted and thus appears to be a valid presentation of the ministry of the Church. The anointing of the sick comes with a function to perform in the illness situation. Tillich points out that symbols open up levels of reality which otherwise remain hidden and which cannot be grasped by other means. That is to say symbols speak of realities which are present in a way which is adequate and in a way in which non-symbolic language cannot do.⁴⁵

43. cf. E. Kübler-Ross, On Death and Dying, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1970), pp.36-37. Dr. Kubler-Ross speaks of the difficulties patients encounter due to the false fronts people erect in order to avoid the discussion of the gravity of the situation and how welcome the chance to discuss this threat to life really is to those in this predicament.

44. Barth, Church Dogmatics, 3, 4, p.371. The following discussion is based on theological statements on the Word of God but these are used to apply to the anointing of the sick in this presentation.

45. cf. Tillich, Theology of Culture, p.56.

He further states that symbols speak to two levels inasmuch as they open up reality and open up the soul.⁴⁶ In unction this is the case. This sacramental symbol brings to the fore the deepest realities of serious ailment to the patient and at the same time makes the patient aware of the depth of his spiritual relationship to God in the midst of the crisis. Because this is the case one might feel a degree of the implications of the act. In unction the patient is confronted with his presence in the community of faith.⁴⁷ For this reason one is confronted with a judgement or crisis situation wherein the word of God as conveyed through anointing becomes a means of healing and wholeness or a means of worsening the condition of the patient. The rite of anointing thus becomes potentially therapeutic yet at the same time the exact opposite is possible. Unction can be a very lethal instrument in the illness situation. As the clergyman brings the oil of the sick the patient must be regarded as standing under judgement. He either joins himself to Christ and the Church and the healing which this union brings and thereby enters into salvation, or he rejects the sacramental ministry, the love and care of the Church and Christ. This latter would do nothing less than worsen the sickness condition. It is not possible for the bearer of the oil of the sick, as the word of God enacted, to come to the person who is ill without bringing this two-edged aspect of the ritual which can be added to the

46. cf. Ibid., p.57.

47. cf. The Encyclopaedia of the Lutheran Church, Vol. 2, p.1313 on public worship and the liturgy.

levels discussed by Tillich above.⁴⁸ Thus the whole person is called into confrontation and cannot escape from this fact through normal ways of postponing or foregoing decision about the basic problems of existence as part of the body of Christ. He need not be fully aware of his condition in illness but he is made aware of his relationship to life and to his present situation in life. He is forced to make the ultimate decision at this particular time and cannot deny this as the presentation of the unction creates a unique or at least very special condition in which the threat of impending, if only remotely possible, death is made obvious to all present.⁴⁹

The condition of grave illness, therefore, presents the patient with the opportunity to receive the ritual act of anointing. This rite is performed in a context which is such that it brings confrontation and opportunity for mission. The patient is made aware of the gravity of the situation in a new way in this rite inasmuch as it

48. cf. Lambourne, Community, Church, and Healing, pp.86-87. His discussion is on the therapeutic and toxic qualities of the word of God in the clinical setting. Unction, it is felt, would bring this dual nature of the word into even sharper focus and therefore make it potentially more therapeutic and also more toxic. cf. also, Hook, Religious ... Symposium, pp.5-6. Here Tillich indicates how rituals can cause depression, anxiety, restlessness, fanaticism etc. depending upon the character of that to which they point and partly due to the way in which they are understood by the recipients. Because of this, he claims that they are not to be regarded as "harmless semantic expressions." p.46.

49. cf. K. Rahner, The Church and Sacraments, (London: Burns and Oates, 1964), pp.66-67.

is the recognition by the Church of the serious nature of the illness and of the desirability of a sacramental ministry to the member of the community who is ill. If the patient accepts this message of love and care as the word of God enacted and responds positively then the rite can become the vehicle whereby mission takes place. It becomes the word proclaimed as well as enacted through the response of the patient who acknowledges his gratitude to God and through his union with the Christ of Calvary.

The crisis of severe illness confronts most people only a few times in their span of life so it is fitting that this event is met with a ritual act. Rituals are for crisis situations⁵⁰ of various sorts and bring a degree of contact with the divine. Through the rites one is, or at least feels, protected against the forces of illness which tend to destroy the person involved. In the anointing the patient is, in a sense, sanctified and set apart,⁵¹ in order that he might serve God in the illness situation. By the use of the oil of the sick the patient is enabled to enter into communication with those about him who, like himself, may feel that the situation is such that it makes security in conversation very difficult and also very unreliable.⁵² Hence there appears to be a need for some structure or framework within which communication is possible. As unction seems to provide this, there would appear to be justification for the examination of its place in the pastoral care of the seriously ill within the ranks of Protestantism.

50. cf. Clebsch & Jaekle, Pastoral ... Perspective, pp.71-72. cf. also: E. Shils, Ritual and Crisis, Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Series B, Vol. 251, 1961, pp.447-450, (London: Published by the Royal Society, 1961), p.447.

51. cf. Ibid., p.447.

52. cf. Clebsch & Jaekle, Pastoral ... Perspective, p.72.

SUFFERING

In discussing suffering, which one usually associates with serious illness, there will be very little effort made to reflect theologically about the nature of or problem of evil per se. Instead, suffering will be accepted as a fact of life and an attempt will be made to indicate how it can be used as a time when the patient is confronted with certain possibilities and when there is to be found a situation in which the patient can participate in the mission of the Church.

Illness is a time of crisis for individuals wherein their whole way of life and their routine modes of existence are necessarily interfered with and altered. When man becomes ill, then, he is forced to face himself in a new way. This is the first confrontation of illness - the confrontation with the "self". He is faced with the fact that in his illness he is in control and yet at the same time he is faced with the fact that he must live under outside controls as imposed by society, doctors, family, and possibly a hospital administration. He is free to respond positively to the care and treatment of the outside controls which, in a sense, makes his active deed one of passivity. In this state man is forced to stand in the position where he must ask whether life has meaning and purpose of which this crisis is merely a part or whether life is meaningless and futile with the illness bringing him closer to the end of existence and nearer to a state of nothingness. ⁵³

53. cf. K. Rahner, Theological Investigations, Vol. 7, Further Theology of the Spiritual Life, 1, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), p.282. Throughout it is to be assumed that when speaking of the patient it is a Christian who is referred to.

The realization of one's state can throw one into a position wherein there is generated a great deal of hostility. This can result from isolation and loneliness which are to be found quite frequently in cases of serious illness. This feeling of being isolated is perhaps one of the main causes of meaningless suffering.⁵⁴ Although Tillich maintains that the rejection of a desire to be with other people creates hostility, one ought not to eliminate the possibility that hostility might represent an attempt at self-preservation in the face of unknown and confusing forces in the shape of illness.

Through the illness situation, especially if the term danger of death applies to the degree of disease, the patient is bound to come to a confrontation with God.⁵⁵ The Church, through the use of unction, can bring about this confrontation and speak to the illness condition with a message about the meaning of suffering and the purpose of life.

The Church can give no decisive or final answer to the problem of suffering. There appears to be no answer to the problem which will satisfy all people.⁵⁶ The Christian Church and its Jewish antecedents have tried to come to a viable method of finding meaning in suffering. The story of Job is one such attempt. Here the sufferings of Job are insinuated as being the result of personal sins. Yet as one reads the

54. P. Tillich, Systematic Theology, Combined Volume, Vol. 2, (Digswell Place; James Nesbitt & Co. Ltd., 1968), p.82.

55. cf. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 3,4, p.373.

56. J. Hick, Evil and the God of Love, (London: Collins, 1970). Hick presents the various approaches to the problem of evil but only one view will be presented in this work.

total treatise it becomes clear that Job suffers not because of his sins but in order that he might be won more closely to God.⁵⁷ His sufferings do not represent retribution for flagrant violation of the will of God. On the contrary, they point out the way in which the agony of certain situations can be turned into positive conditions in which man can come to a more profound faith in God. Thus it can be regarded as a meaningful disciplinary experience in which one can come to a personal confrontation with God. Goldsmith feels that through his anguish and misery Job came to realize that his faith was a living and profound one based upon religious experience and not merely assent to a theological statement about a divine being.⁵⁸

Job, then, in modern terms, came to find meaning in a hopeless situation. This was possible only through confrontation with himself and with his circumstances in relation to God. Viktor Frankl maintains that the attitude which one adopts enables one to find meaning in hopeless situations.⁵⁹ Thus it would have been Job's attitudinal values which enabled him to come to this relationship with God and thereby find profound meaning in an outwardly depressing and soul-destroying situation.

57. cf. J.B. Torrance, Why Does God Let Men Suffer? Interpretation Vol. 15, 1961, pp.157-163, (Richmond, Va.: Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1961), p.159.

cf. R.H. Goldsmith, The Healing Scourge, Interpretation Vol.17, 1963, pp.271-279, (Richmond, Va.: Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1963), p.279.

58. cf. Ibid., p.279.

59. cf. V. Frankl, The Will to Meaning, (London: Souvenir Press, 1969), p.75.

To the Christian who suffers under the burden of illness one possibility of finding meaning would be to identify with the cross of Christ and the agony of that scene. Unction presents the illness of the patient as a time to make this identification. Through the anointing of the sick the patient is made aware of the fact that suffering and sickness are to be combatted in all ways. Jesus attacked illness and death as the positive will of God in war with the negative forces of destruction.⁶⁰ Unction presents the patient with the opportunity to join himself to Christ. It is a confrontation which demands an answer or decision in the face of the illness condition. Through this confrontation the patient can identify with Christ in the quest for health. Quest for health is the proper term to use in this context. It is claimed that Jesus, even on the cross, was engaged in the proclamation of the goodness of God and revealed that even when confronted with death healing power is at work.⁶¹ Unction brings the member of the community of faith into the realization of the opportunity to unite himself to Christ in the suffering and in the struggle to counteract illness. Thus the situation which ought to bring despair and feelings of negation is seen through the eyes of the Church with its eschatological hope⁶² in Christ and thereby becomes not only a confrontation of the patient with himself but also a confrontation between the patient, as part of the congregation, and illness with its negative aspects.

60. Barth, Church Dogmatics, 3, 4, p.367.

61. cf. M. Warren, Interpreting the Cross, (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1966), p.68.

62. cf. P. Fannon, The Changing Face of Theology; The Seven Sacraments The Clergy Review Vol. 52, 1967, pp.842-850, (London: The Clergy Review, 1967), p.850.

R.A. Lambourne speaks of the faith of the sick man when he accepts Christ in a "deeply penetrating act of personal commitment to another person,"⁶³ (Christ) as the way in which the Christian must unite himself to the whole Christ. This means union in suffering as well as in health and ease. The former cannot be eliminated for the Christian any more than it could be for Christ.⁶⁴ This is not to say that man ought to give way to suffering as an acceptance of the inevitable over which one has no control. Even in the midst of such negative and over-powering burdens as serious ailments one is still, through union with Christ, called to renounce the power of illness by asserting one's humanity. In doing this man is obedient to God and resists the power of disease until the very end of life.⁶⁵

The rite of unction confronts man with this responsibility to align himself with the will of God and to counter illness and suffering through resistance to it. This does not mean a denial of its veracity or a blind acceptance of its soul-destroying power. It rather means identifying with Christ to make of illness a time of proclamation or witness. If man faces the illness condition full force and continues to be as man then he witnesses to the power of the love of God as shown in the suffering of Christ. This witness is, like Christ's, one which does not count the dividends that might accrue for faithful service and it does not regard the apparent wisdom or lack of it in such acts. It is simply a resolve to serve

63. R.A. Lambourne, Community, Church, and Healing, p.71.

64. cf. Ibid., pp.71-72.

65. cf. Barth, Church Dogmatics, 3, 4, pp.367-368.

through the illness situation regardless of the outcome. ⁶⁶

Uction confronts the individual with this opportunity.

What anointing brings by way of confrontation and opportunity for mission is similar to the following statement on death. "Death is not to be seen in terms of a biological occurrence but in terms of a personal act which is the climax of an individual's life. A human is continually in a state of becoming. The process begins at conception and is maintained during the whole period of his earthly existence. As long as man was regarded as an essentially static being - established in the fullness of his personality from birth with his daily activity only an accidental addition to his nature - death could be no more than an earthly termination of that activity. Now, however, death can be seen as the high point in this process of becoming, the supreme personal act of an individual, an exercise of that freedom, and responsibility inherent in the notion of a "person". Only now, we are told, can the perfect and full exercise of freedom be achieved. Man in death is in complete self-possession and is now capable of expressing and of disposing of himself totally and definitively: the final act in his task of realizing himself." ⁶⁷

Serious illness presents this type of challenge to the patient. The Christian who encounters the ministry to the sick in the form of unction is confronted with the seriousness of the situation and is called upon to decide for or against the constructive use of suffering. He can reject Christ in the unction and thus despair or he can join himself to the sacrifice of Christ and attempt to grow in the illness situation through the act of becoming more fully man. When the latter is the attitude of the patient then the opportunity for witnessing

66. cf. Ibid., pp.367-368.

67. P. Fannon, The Changing Face of Theology: The Last Things, The Clergy Review Vol. 57, 1967, pp.922-929, (London: The Clergy Review, 1967), pp.925-926.

is seized upon and used. He gains the power to display a victory over the destructive power of illness.⁶⁸ The Roman Catholic author, Louis Bouyer, claimed that the sick were to be anointed in preparation for their demise and entry into eternal life.⁶⁹ Seeing the use of unction as a means of dramatizing the confrontation which illness imposes on man might make the rite more comprehensible to the average Christian who struggles under the burden of serious ailment. Seen in this light, the suffering, often times regarded as unmerited, can become a mission of service or sacrifice on behalf of the whole congregation. The union with Christ and the resultant peace or quiescence, though not peaceableness or resignation, brings the illness situation to others as a crisis or judgement. Through this union with Christ, as symbolized in the anointing, others are made to examine themselves in an attempt to find the meaning of their lives. This fellowship with Christ portrays or proclaims to others the source of one's "courage to be ... in the very teeth of existential anxiety, due to the threat of meaninglessness and death."⁷⁰

Anointing, then, brings to the patient the moment wherein he is confronted with the facts of his own existence. His mortality and his relationship to God are very vividly held up in this instant as he is made aware of the sufferings of Christ, his opportunity for joining

68. cf. F.F. Bruce, Are The New Testament Documents Reliable? (London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Union, 1943), p.65. On the power of the resurrection Bruce says that it gives Christ's followers the power to "triumph over the dominion of evil."

69. L. Bouyer, Life and Liturgy, pp.175-176.

70. Lambourne, Community, Church and Healing, p.139.

his suffering to Christ and the means whereby he can find meaning in his condition. This confrontation is basically caused by the illness and is brought into focus via the use of the ritual of anointing. In serious illness Frankl's words begin to take on meaning in a deep sense of the word. He claims that life is either meaningful or meaningless. If the former is the case then the duration is not important as it is a qualitative characteristic and not quantitative. If, however the latter is the case, it would serve no end to prolong life as it is meaningless.⁷¹ Illness of a serious nature can prove to be meaningful or meaningless⁷² and one meaning which unction brings to a situation which might appear to be bereft of meaning is that of mission or service of the Church.

It is maintained, therefore, that unction brings the confrontation which illness creates into the mind of the patient. Here he is forced to try and to test his faith, as Goldsmith and Torrance have indicated was the case with Job as cited above. If this confrontation culminates in a declaration of faith and a union with Christ then the illness condition presents the patient with an opportunity to enter into the task of proclamation through suffering and struggling against the force of illness.

71. Frankl, The Will to Meaning, p.76.

72. cf. V. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), pp.84-93. He says that meaning can be found in the most drastic of conditions and in the most apparently meaningless situations such as death.

HEALTH AND WHOLENESS

In this section of the chapter health and wholeness will be viewed as the goal of the anointing of the sick. The desired outcome of unction has always been health, as cited in the previous chapters. At times this has been regarded as applying to matters spiritual more than to the physical realm of life. This discussion on health will be based on findings in some writings from psychosomatic medicine, theology, and documents of the Christian Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches. The rite of anointing will be related to the concept of health which emerges thus clarifying how the use of ritual in times of suffering is used by the community of faith to effect, or at least attempt to effect, health and wholeness.

A discussion of the problem of health and wholeness is not one which can be adequately dealt with within the confines of this paper. Here an attempt will be made to show the complexity of the concepts and at the same time relate them to the rite of anointing the sick with oil blessed for this purpose.

Health is not to be regarded as a static or simple procedure which can be performed or attained within a hospital or in the office of a medical practitioner. Rather it will be seen in the light of some recent writing and thinking on the meaning of health and its manifestation in the modern world. There are several ways of looking at the problem of health and its expression in the conditions of life in this age. One method would be to see it in terms of physiological restoration to the state which is considered as being not-ill. This is simply the eradication of the symptoms of disease or impairment of the physical aspect of one's existence. Attitudes

such as this tend to see hospitals as cure factories where one goes to find the wherewithal to return to society as a functioning being. In such cases the merely outward operation of the body is the end of cure and the desired result in the process of health care. This ^{viewpoint} is contrasted by Dr. Mathers of Birmingham who maintains that there is a difference between cure and healing. Healing for him is more inclusive in its meaning. The idea just cited is seen as being treatment of disease and not as treatment of the patient. In the former the object is to remove the symptoms and to inhibit the development of the disease in some way, be this via technology, surgery or in the use of injections. The treatment of the patient, on the other hand, is seen as the nurturing and building up of his ability for becoming more fully human, or as he puts it "his capacity for living." ⁷³

Dr. Michael Wilson sees health in a similar light. For him the concept of health means that man is returned to society in such a way that he is restored to living which has a purpose. This is far more than the restoration to the life which the person who is treated had formerly lived. It includes the restoration to the life he had in relation to his fellow members of society. And beyond this it also includes a sense of purpose in life wherein the person is enabled to see what his life can and, perhaps, should be. ⁷⁴ Thus there appears to be a creative use of the illness situation which enables the patient to progress through this crisis of life into a position where he is better able to live his life to the full.

73. M.A.H. Melinsky, ed., Religion and Medicine, (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1970), p.9.

74. cf. M. Wilson, The Church Is Healing, (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1966), pp.17-18. cf. also Lambourne, Community, Church & Healing, Chapter 8, pp.90-111.

In this sense the concept of health transcends the view which sees the eradication of disease as the meaning of wholeness or health. The process of curing the disease is only one part of the whole dynamic movement towards what is regarded as wholeness. The caring for the sick is not merely for the removal of the symptoms which inflict a degree of impairment but rather is executed in order that man might obtain his ultimate health. This is not physiological well-being per se, though this might be included in the concept, but is rather to see man in his total life situation. This is an attempt to place the whole of life in a healthy perspective. Such a state would be an ideal and therefore to define health in such a way is to set a goal at which one might aim in the struggle for wholeness. Thus wholeness is seen as being a process of development towards an ideal which is both sociological and psychological as well as physiological.⁷⁵ It is man in relationship with his fellow man and with himself. This cannot be attained and then remain a static state but rather is a process of becoming which takes place within the confines of society. Hence, true health or wholeness is a corporate quality which is affected and enhanced by interactions with one's fellow men and women. It is a quality which is not attainable in isolation from other human beings.⁷⁶

In this section of the chapter it will be this model of health which will be used. It will be shown how the rite of unction, as a means of salvation, brings the opportunity for one to progress towards

75. Melinsky, Religion and Medicine, p.14.

76. M. Wilson, The Hospital - A Place of Truth, p.42.

wholeness and health even in the midst of sickness. As Dr. Wilson points out this state can be attained or worked for even when physical health does not follow the treatment offered in the sickness condition. He says that this is possible because "physical health subserves the purpose of life - loving God, loving neighbour, loving self" - 77

From this it would not be difficult to see how the prevention of illness is to be sought rather than the cure of the ailment after the fact. Health therefore becomes a message of wholeness as well as a remedial measure to be used in the crisis of disease that man might become truly and fully man.

In this section of the paper it will be shown how unction as the word of God attempts to make man whole in sickness even though the ideal is that the message of health is presented in times of physical well-being rather than as a proclamation in the face of almost insurmountable odds in the form of severe illness. In this case the message is seen as applying to the whole of life and not just to the critical times when one feels a need for the support of the Church. Similarly, salvation will be seen as being concerned with the whole of man's life as it attempts to lead him towards wholeness and health in the fullest sense of the word. Thus it will become obvious that the task of medicine and the pastoral care of the sick via the sacramental ministry of unction seek to achieve the same or similar results.

Although the length of the discussion on health and wholeness appears to be brief and perhaps simplistic it is to be noted that the end sought by both the healing profession of medical practitioners and that of the sacramental ministry to the ill is an ideal and as such is bound to be very difficult to attain or even approximate in the harsh world of reality.

To discuss unction as a ministry of healing which is proclaimed as the word of God in the illness situation would be to discuss this rite in a context which would appear to be appropriate in the light of the ministry of Jesus. R.A. Lambourne points out that Jesus' healing and preaching ministries could not be separated as each one illustrates and explains the other.⁷⁸ Unction as the word enacted can be understood in a similar way. It is an attempt to proclaim the word of God through an outward act or rite of healing which cannot be divorced from the message which is proclaimed. This is not to say that unction is used in place of medical treatment nor does it mean that its method is superior to the means of healing which are to be found within the health care programs of the modern age. It is a means of uniting the word of God to the clinical situation and in so doing makes a dramatic statement about the presence of God in the healing of sickness and calls the Christian to serve in the face of his suffering.⁷⁹ Thus, healing as a ministry of the Church becomes an

78. cf. R.A. Lambourne, A Christian Epistemology for use in Medicine and the Church's Ministry of Healing, (unpublished paper, 1970), pp.7-8.

79. cf. Ibid., pp.8-9.

attempt at the continuation of the ministry as begun by Christ. The oil of the sick is a ministry directed at the health of the whole man as it attempts to fulfil the scriptural injunction to preach the Gospel and heal the sick (Matthew 10:8).⁸⁰ Hence it proclaims the presence of the Kingdom of God in healing and this proclamation is not just in sacramental acts such as unction but is also in such things as surgery, pills and psychiatry. In this sense one can see the continuation of the task of healing and preaching being actualized through the awareness which is called for in unction.⁸¹ The Church, then, becomes the community which proclaims healing and tries to actualize that which it proclaims. As such the community can be regarded as that which not only finds healing but also brings this healing to others. In order for this to be effective healing must be sought and preached not only in crises but at other times as well. In this way unction can become the presentation of the unity of the community in health in the midst of the illness environment in which the member finds himself. This health is drawn from the word proclaimed

80. cf. Gusmer, Anointing ... England, pp.268-269. Gusmer speaks here of the ministry of healing in general but it is felt that his discussion is very applicable to unction.

81. cf. Lambourne, Community, Church and Healing, p.39 on the healing ministry. He says: "the gift of healing given by the Father to the Son was used by him to announce the Rule of God, to describe it, and to usher it in. Thereby he marked healing work done by all men in all ages not only, nor perhaps mainly, as imitation of his compassion, but as proclamation and description of the good news of the Gospel, the announcing and bringing in of forgiveness and salvation."

and the sacraments of the Church and from the power which comes from these.⁸² Thus, healing is central to the community of faith just as it is to medical practice.⁸³ The rite of anointing the sick brings the fact of this centrality to the mind of the whole congregation by the confrontation and mission of suffering and the ritual as cited above in this chapter.

In other words, the Church comes to the illness condition not with a little extra help or assistance to the therapy of body and mind which is already being exercised. It comes, as it does in health, with a message and means of salvation and its implications. As discussed above, the oil of the sick confronts the patient with the opportunity for uniting himself to Christ which is regarded as being the means of salvation.⁸⁴ It should be noted that salvation and health are to be understood as being similar in respect to man in relationship to Christ. Salvation is concerned with man's wholeness and this includes all of his existence. This quality, therefore, applies to the realm of physical ailments and disorders

82. cf. F.M. Norstad, The Hospital as a Healing Community, International Review of Missions Vol. 57, 1968, pp.201-212, (Geneva: Published by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, 1968), p.204. Norstad is speaking of the mission of the congregation which he sees as being effective when the implications of the pulpit, altar and font are accepted by the members who are united in Christ.

cf. also: Agoraics, Ministry to the Sick and Dying, Christm vol.15, 1971, pp.10-19, (London: The Guild of St. Raphael, 1971), p.13.

83. cf. Harding and Lambourne, Health and the Congregation, p.199.

84. cf. Agoraics, Ministry ... Dying, pp.11-12.

as well as to the area of forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God. To see salvation in this light is not to pick an isolated theological stand which is unique or unusual even in this century. From Old Testament times until the present day this point of view has been found within theology. Healing or salvation is directed not only at man's physical disorders nor at spiritual ills but at his life in its entirety. Life is the aim of salvation and therefore the object of this concept is relationship with one's fellow men and women as well as with God. Salvation looks to man in his confrontations with his total existence and attempts to speak to all levels of activity which might cause impairment of one's manhood.⁸⁵ Clebsch and Jaekle claim that the function of pastoral care is very similar to this. They say that the role of this ministry is to heal, sustain, guide and reconcile individuals. Healing is referred to as the restoring of a person to a condition of wholeness wherein he might attain a new level of spiritual well-being and insight. Sustaining enables one to endure and to rise above a situation which threatens impossible or improbable restoration to one's former state. Sustaining is to be a time for spiritual growth. Illness with the threat to life could illustrate one such case for a ministry of sustaining.

85. cf. D.M. Stanley, Conception of Salvation in Primitive Christian Preaching, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol.18, no.3, 1956, pp.231-254, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1956), pp.232-233. On the Old Testament concept of salvation. cf. also: Warren, Interpreting the Cross, pp.76-78, also Nelson, Bible Doctrines, pp.48-50, and Norstad, The Hospital ... Community, pp.203-204, and also: Agoraios, Deliverance and Healing, Chrim Vol. 15, no.4, 1971, pp.10-18, (London: The Guild of St. Raphael, 1971), p.10. These sources give a cross section of denominational viewpoints on the nature of salvation.

Guiding is seen as helping persons to choose wisely between possible courses of action which will influence the state of the person's soul in the present and in the future. The final task of pastoral care is reconciling. This attempts to renew man's relationships with his fellow men and with God. Presumably this would also include one's relationship with oneself.⁸⁶

In the anointing of the sick one sees the quest for wholeness and this includes bodily and spiritual manifestations.⁸⁷ Confession and absolution preceding the administration of the rite are means of reconciling man to God and man to his fellow man. The confrontation of the oil of the sick is an attempt to guide the patient into a decision to unite himself to Christ and thus enter into life on a new level. This accomplished, the person is sustained in the sense that he is able to rise above the trials of the illness condition. Through all this, the patient, a member of the community of faith, is led towards healing. Thus the rite of anointing seems to be in accord with the concept of pastoral care as proposed by Clebsch and Jaekle and their understanding of pastoral care appears to approximate the foregoing discussion on salvation. Thus, it would seem, the purpose and outcome of pastoral care ought to be to bring the reality of salvation to the member of the community of faith who suffers under the burden of illness.

86. cf. Clebsch & Jaekle, Pastoral ... Perspective, pp.8-9.

87. cf. J.G. Davies, The Spirit, The Church, and The Sacraments, (London: The Faith Press Ltd., 1954), p.208.

There are those within the medical profession who regard healing in terms very similar to those used to describe theological healing or salvation. Healing is portrayed as psychosomatic inasmuch as cure of ills is regarded as having ramifications in the physical realm and also in the sphere of the mind or soul of man. This can be seen in the fact that there are many medical practitioners who regard disease as relating to the whole man and therefore to the areas of life which influence his relationships.⁸⁸ Dr. W.L. Carrington, in an article in the Expository Times, refers to Healing as a by-product of worship and claims that it is psychologically and spiritually sound. He continues to discuss healing and faith and in so doing speaks of the prayer of faith which, he maintains, is greatly hampered by such things as resentment, self-centeredness, doubts, or fear. When these are present, either in the patient or in the healer or in the congregation, he feels that they deteriorate and hinder the power of prayer. On the other hand, when they are absent the prayer generates or radiates spiritual power which aids in the healing.⁸⁹ The discussion is useful to the study of unction not in its reference to healing as a by-product of worship nor in the spiritual radiation generated by prayers of faith, but rather in the acknowledgement of the destructive power of fear, doubt, animosity and self-centeredness. These, he implies, must be removed before healing can be executed. Uction also seeks to eradicate these in its

88. cf. H. Thieliicke, Man in God's World, tr. J.W. Doberstein, (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1967), p.109.

89. cf. W.L. Carrington, A Medical View of Spiritual Healing, The Expository Times Vol. 81, 1969-1970, pp.85-87, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1970), pp.86-87.

preparation through confession and absolution and in its administration as it confronts people with the moment for decision whereby one either accepts or rejects the power of union with Christ and the salvation which this is believed to bring.

Carrington gains support from an article by Dr. C.P. Kimball in the Annals of Internal Medicine. Here one finds illness described as multi-faceted and as being psychosomatic in nature. The inter-relationships of individuals are held up as having a bearing on illness and cure. This dependence of one on another also applies to the bodily organic structure of man, his psychological life as well as his social interactions.

The essence of the article could be summed up in the following

quotation taken from it. "All illnesses have psychosocial aspects that influence their cause, precipitation, manifestation, cause and outcome. Cause-and-effect relationships between psychic and somatic processes are of lesser significance than establishing the inter-relatedness of psychological, social, and organic processes and their effect on one another in the ill patient." 90

Here the person-in-relationship aspect of cure is made explicit. The role of unction as the response of the people of God to God's servant in illness illustrates the communal concern for health and wholeness. It also points to a fundamental quality of life which is necessary for whole healing to be found. That is, the patient, forgiven

90. C.P. Kimball, Conceptual Developments in Psychosomatic Medicine: 1939-1969, Annals of Internal Medicine, Vol. 73, pt.2, 1970, pp.307-316, (Written for the American College of Physicians, 1970), p.314. Dr. Kimball teaches at Yale University.

of his sins and reunited to his fellow Christians, is assured of the support and ongoing concern which is conducive to the quest for health. Through this he feels a sense of belonging and a sense of responsibility which gives him a goal in the midst of illness. ⁹¹

The healing proclaimed by the Church is not to be regarded as superior to or as a replacement of the healing proclaimed by the medical profession. Medicine uses various means to exact cure from ailments ranging all the way from pills and injections to surgery and psycho-therapy. The Church in his ministry of healing uses these also but adds the dimension of the power of Christ in another way. There is to be a pronouncement and representation of "the healing and demon-conquering power implied in the message of Christ, the message of forgiveness and of a new reality." ⁹² This proclamation attempts to heal not only the individual but also the ills of the society in which these ailments found their beginning. This means providing care to the apparently healthy as well as to those who are ill. ⁹³

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91. cf. Norstad, The Hospital ... Community, p.204. cf. also: C.H. Germany, The Healing Ministry: Report on the Tübingen Consultation, International Review of Missions Vol. 53, 1964, pp.467-475, (Geneva: Published by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, 1964), p.472.
92. P. Tillich, The Eternal Now, (London: S.C.M. Press, 1963), p.52. cf. also: Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. 3, pp.298-299.
93. cf. Ibid., p.51. cf. also: C.E. Taylor, A Christian Medical Commission's Role In Health Planning, International Review of Missions, Vol. 58, 1969, pp.181-194, (Geneva: The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, 1969), p.193.

Uction attempts to do this through the proclamation of the act of love to the patient and through the patient's mission to the congregation and to those of the larger community.

In this sense, sickness in a person of the community is not to be regarded as a completely negative thing. Through anointing the illness-health condition can be turned into a positive act of becoming. Men are involved in and with each other and with the world around them. For this reason each one's health and illness affects the other's. This being the case, sickness presents an opportunity to demonstrate the possibility of health even in the face of very serious illness when health is defined or described as being the strength to be fully human. The patient brings health to the community through acceptance of this strength via the reception of anointing, and the congregation is the bearer of health as it brings the patient the opportunity to accept the healing Christ through the oil of the sick. In this way man is opened to accept God's healing in all its manifestations and becomes restricted only by the degree of acceptance of these gifts by either the member or the body.⁹⁴ The act of unction attempts to maintain the unity of life in Christ which includes life in one's fellow man. This means that man is assisted in his bid to be as man

94. Lambourne speaks of man's involvement with one another and with the cosmos as an indication of the unity of man in sin, sickness, health and salvation. Norstad claims that God uses man's total resources to effect healing if man is willing to use the resources given by God. Thus there is individual and corporate responsibility in illness and health. Barth maintains that health is possible even in the face of death if man, realizing this, exercises the power to be truly human and thus brings health and lives in health even though he is seriously ill. cf. Lambourne, Community, Church and Healing, pp.101-102, also, Norstad, The Hospital ... Community, p.203, and also Barth, Church Dogmatics 3,4, pp.357-358.

which is, according to Barth, health.⁹⁵

It appears then, that health is qualitative and not quantitative in that man can and ought to struggle to serve God through faith in him without questioning the outcome of this struggle and this can take place in the last days of life as well as in the apex of physical well-being.⁹⁶ Anointing of the sick with oil blessed for this purpose confronts man with the struggle at hand and points to the cross of Christ as the prime example of victory in this striving. It portrays the illness situation as a time wherein one can further the process of becoming healthy through growth into Christ and through the mission which is presented in the clinical situation. Hence, health is a process of salvation which is expressed through living in love and faith in God through Christ.⁹⁷

The rite of the anointing of the sick with oil therefore, is to be used in serious illnesses with the intention of assisting the member of the community of faith to confront the suffering situation which stands before him and which threatens his existence.

95. cf. Ibid., p.357.

96. cf. Ibid., p.369.

97. cf. Germany, The Healing ... Consultation, pp.471-472, also: Tillich, Systematic Theology, vol. 3, p.298, and also: M. Wilson, No Man is an Island, International Review of Missions Vol. 56, 1967, pp.344-354), (Geneva: The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, 1967), pp.350-351. Also cf. Wilson, The Church Is Healing, p.18. Discussing Lambourne he claims health and salvation are attainable without the necessity of physiological cure.

It brings to the illness condition the word of God in a tangible way, encouraging the sick man to join himself to Christ in suffering and to attempt to grow into a deeper relationship with him even in the condition in which he now finds himself. The ritual act comes to the sick man as a time of confrontation not only to him but also to the whole community of faith. All are made aware of the burden to be borne and of the message to be proclaimed in the midst of the bearing. When this challenge is responded to and accepted the patient, and thus the community of faith, continues to grow into health and wholeness. When this happens the quantity of existence becomes subordinate while the quality of life gives meaning and purpose which transcends time and makes of illness a time of fulfillment and health. This is presented in the rite of unction.

CONCLUDING IMPLICATIONS

Although the use of anointing has been presented as a time for confrontation leading to mission one must bear in mind the fact that it should not be given to people who have not indicated a desire for its reception and been properly prepared for it. It should not be forced upon people in any way. This being the case the presentation of unction in times of illness might occur very infrequently under the present form of ministry to the sick within Protestantism, as anointing has been neglected within this branch of Christianity, generally speaking, since the time of the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church in the new revised rites has been shown to urge priests to impress upon their parishoners the meaning and place of the anointing of the sick through sermons and private instruction. Ideally it is to be sought by the faithful in the Roman Catholic Church as well and is not to be brought to the illness situation as a dole of divinity or a magical panacea to be used when hope for cure has ceased to exist. This seems to be a logical and scriptural method to follow for the use of this rite in times of illness. James says: "Is any sick among you? Let him send for the elders of the church ..." (James 5:14, K.J.V.). Thus, education and stimulation ought to serve as the basis for the initiation of the rite into Protestantism and through this means a deeper appreciation of the healing ministry of the Church could be made possible.

Another problem arises when the Church turns to unction, however, if it is regarded as a healing rite. This has to do with the position of the medical profession in relation to such sacramental ministrations

in the illness situation. It has been indicated repeatedly throughout this thesis that anointing does not replace or eliminate the use of medical science. On the contrary, it points to these means of health and attempts to bring them into focus as being the instruments of God's healing in the present day. In a sense the rite of unction consecrates the patient to God so that these gifts might have their full impact on the illness condition.

Ideally, the priest or minister who comes into the illness situation does so with the blessing of the medical personnel who are tending the needs of the patient. If the doctor and nurses of the patient are Christians, one suggestion might be made that it be attempted to confront the patient and all others with the unity of medicine and theology in this crisis of life. A liturgy could be devised to suit the needs of the patient and the staff and in keeping with the theology of the rite wherein the clergyman might anoint the patient while the medical and para-medical participants join in the prayers for health and in the laying on of hands which is associated with the rite. Thus performed the patient would be given the assurance not only of the theological efficacy of anointing but also he would gain the psychological assistance of knowing that the act had the sanction of his professional medical caretakers who work for his benefit in the scientific sphere. In this situation the true nature of the psychosomatic approach to health could find its expression in the hospital setting, in the home, or in the public worship of the local community of faith.

The Tübingen consultation on the healing ministry placed the healing team within the context of the congregation which they claim is the "primary agent for healing."⁹⁸ The professional healers are included in the total context of the congregational life of word and sacrament. From this one could point to the effective healing power which exists inside the community of faith and this could be made known to the patient, the member of the congregation, through ritual anointing in serious illness. In this way the fact that all who participate in healing in all of its ramifications are participants in Christ's healing ministry is made known. This applies not only to the patient and congregation but to all observers as well.⁹⁹

The implication of this is that the practice of medicine is a means of continuing the healing ministry of Christ in the present age. The relationship between clergy and medical doctors could come into consideration at this point. Since unction makes certain claims about life and death and health of persons there are raised certain implications in the realm of medical ethics. The ramifications of this and related problems provide an area for further discussion based on the meaning of confrontation and mission and the quest for health as presented in this thesis.

Another area for further research which could evolve from the contents of this presentation is the relationship between the use of

98. Germany, The Healing ... Consultation, p.472.

99. cf. Lambourne, A Christian Epistemology ... Healing, p.12.

chrism and the exercise of the charismatic gifts of healing. This presentation has dealt with the use of the oil of the sick as a means of sacramentally ministering to the needs of those who are ill. It is a healing rite and ought to be regarded as such but is not of the same order as the laying on of hands. Unction is very definitely a communal act and as such speaks not only from the congregation but also to the community of faith. It is, therefore, a means of proclamation and mission which is reserved for the crisis of severe illness wherein the member is threatened with his possible demise. The use of the charismatic gifts of healing in relation to this rite could prove to be a valuable means of consolidating the ministry to the sick and of incorporating it into the total mission and message of the community of faith to the larger community in which it is situated. This has implications in the area of liturgy and the role of ritual in the Church of the twentieth century. The relationship between charismata and chrism in the liturgical life of the congregation could be examined in the light of the modern interest in liturgical renewal as a means of presentation of the Gospel in tangible forms in the face of serious illness which can be soul-destroying due to medical specialization and the danger of isolation which this entails. The union of these two forms of the healing ministry raises the possibility of lay involvement in the Church's therapeutic confrontation with illness and the role which they might take in this endeavour.

Other areas could be studied as implications of this thesis which have not been dealt with in the confines of this presentation.

Methods of educating the laity of the Protestant Churches in the use of this ministry in times of suffering could be explored and developed in an attempt to come to an understanding of the way in which this rite could find acceptance in the daily life of this segment of Christianity. This could also lead to a discussion on the communicating of the Gospel and the modes of such communication in the light of recent findings in the realm of the caring professions which indicate the importance of touch in the whole process of relieving the discomfort of sickness and its isolation.¹⁰⁰

In order for the laity to become educated in the use of this ritual there first would have to be a clergy which is conversant with the meaning and place of the oil of the sick. Similarly the rite would gain its most far reaching benefits if the medical practitioners were aware of the function of this ministry to the sick. The presentation of the sacramental ministry should be seen as that and not as a magical panacea which is to be used in the final stages of life in an attempt to overcome some disease which is not able to be cured by modern technology. In this sense the ministry becomes a means of health even though cure does not necessarily follow. The making known of this meaning of the rite to theological and perhaps medical students raises problems in the sphere of a theology of communication. The situation in this regard is of more significance in denominations of the Reformed tradition

100. Cf. Harding, The Laying on of Hands ... Revision, p.11.

than in the Roman Catholic Church where attempts are being made to educate the whole Church in the meaning and purpose of the ritual anointing in the face of the danger of death. Further study on this aspect of the ministry within Protestantism could evolve from this thesis.

Thus the anointing of the sick as a sacramental ministry of the Church to those who are seriously ill looks beyond the community of faith as found in the local congregation to the larger society of which it is a part. It offers possible areas for mission and confrontation in the hospital setting as well as in the Church and in the homes of individual members of the Church as it is used as a means of proclamation of the New Testament message and calls for health even in the face of death. Through this rite the opportunity is made for the union of medical science and theological belief to be made known to the suffering Christian as the minister and the professional healers join forces in the administration of the oil of the sick and the other means of health to proclaim and usher in the quality of living which is referred to as health and wholeness.

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