

Dear Yella,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You wanted to know whether deadly diseases such as cancer and aids could be cured nowadays without medicine by the prayers of believers and pastors.

The miraculous gifts that Jesus' disciples received at Pentecost were necessary in order to fulfill Jesus' last command to them before he ascended into heaven. "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." (Mark 16:15) "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by signs that accomplished it." (Mark 16:20) We believe the special gifts of the spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) were much needed at the time since the gospels were not yet written. Seeing that the apostles were preaching the good news of Christ's kingdom on earth (as well as in heaven), it was fitting that they should confirm their message by doing miracles, such as healing the sick, which gave a foretaste of what that time would be like when "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." (Isaiah 35:5)

Although the apostles could confer the special gifts of the spirit to others, that ability belonged to the apostles alone. Even Philip, a disciple, known as the evangelist, who was able to perform signs and great miracles, could not confer the gifts of the spirit, but needed to send for the apostles to do this. (See Acts 8:14-17.) We believe that once the apostles died, the special powers they possessed ceased and were not transferred to others.

Consequently, we do not believe that praying for healing in this day and age is appropriate. That power passed away once the apostles were off the scene. The Christian today lives by faith, not by sight. He does not need miraculous deeds in order for him to believe and follow after Christ. He has the Word of God (the Bible) to instruct him and God's grace to sustain him even when physically very ill. In regard to the miraculous gifts of the spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul states, "But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. . . . And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:8, 13)

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio