



How to Use *Horizons* Magazine

WHY THIS ISSUE IS IMPORTANT

“Health”—what images does this word bring to mind when you see or hear it? For many people, physical health (or the lack of it) is the most obvious connection. Yet all of us know that mental and spiritual health cannot be neglected if people and the societies in which they (we) live are to flourish. Jesus was certainly attentive to the well-being of the whole person, whether healing a bent-over woman (*Luke 13:10–17*), or casting out unclean spirits from Mary Magdalene (*Luke 8:2*) and the Gerasene demoniac (*Mark 5:1–20*). The PC(USA) Office of National Health Ministries speaks clearly to our call as Christ’s followers. On www.pcusa.org/health/usa the Office says

Ministries of health express Christ’s compassion and caring love, work for community wholeness, well-being and justice, and show stewardship of our own lives as we seek health, healing and wholeness in body, mind, and spirit.

This issue of *Horizons* examines many aspects of health, including some of the obstacles to its attainment. Yet unlike many media reports on health matters, these articles not only educate, they also offer concrete steps for making a difference (just as your contributions to the Thank Offering and the Birthday Offering make big differences). Use this issue to read more, learn more, investigate, pray and work with others to help realize the wholeness of life and well-being that God intends for all God’s people. Accept the invitation!

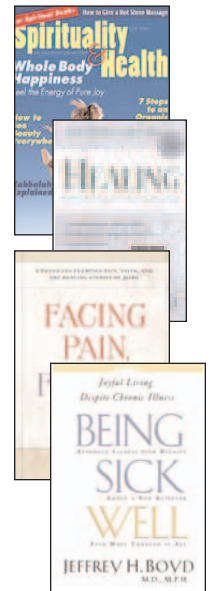
FOCUSING ON THE ISSUES

“I Believe—Help My Unbelief” by Dee Dee Risher

- Share any miraculous healing stories that may arise in your circle/PW/class. Do Dee Dee’s story and thoughts about this whole subject shed new light on the stories of others? If so, how?
- If you’re curious about what various Christian traditions say about (seemingly) miraculous healings, your circle or group might want to check with pastors of other churches in your community.
- Check out pages 1003–1022 in the PC(USA)’s *Book of Common Worship* for outlines and texts for Services of Wholeness to be used with both congregations and individuals.
- Try plugging the term “miraculous healing” into an Internet search engine such as Google, and see how many results appear (hint: it’s in the millions!).
- Order Mental Illness Worship Resource online or call Presbyterian Distribution Service, 800/524-2612 and request item #7266099015; \$2.50 plus shipping.



- Additional resources you may want to look for, or check out on the Web:
 - *Spirituality and Health* Magazine—visit www.spiritualityhealth.com to see articles and learn more about the magazine.
 - Look in your church library or presbytery resource center for this book and accompanying video: *Stretch Out Your Hand: Exploring Healing Prayer* by Tilda Norberg and Robert D. Webber. Cleveland: United Church Press, 1990. (book ISBN: 0829808361)
 - The article “Miraculous Healing: A Biblical Start” appears on the Web site of the Christian Medical Fellowship of the United Kingdom
 - The George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health— visit www.gwish.org to learn more about the goals of this organization
 - These books may provide additional material for discussion:
 - *Healing* by Francis MacNutt, Notre Dame: Ave Maria, 1999. ISBN: 0877936765*
 - *Facing Pain, Finding Hope: A Physician Examines Pain, Faith, and the Healing Stories of Jesus* by Daniel Hurley, Chicago: Loyola, 2005. ISBN: 082941780X*
 - *Being Sick Well: Joyful Living Despite Chronic Illness* by Jeffrey H. Boyd, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. ISBN: 0801012686*



“Faith, Justice and Health Care” by Mark Earnest

NOTE: Health care coverage can be a sensitive subject for people, so exercise consideration and care in discussions around this topic. Some people judge health care coverage to be a purely private matter on par with their financial affairs and thus may choose not to participate in a discussion. Conversations about this important topic can still happen, but be mindful of others’ right to privacy. It may help to focus the discussion on health care coverage as an extension of Jesus’ message of caring for one another and in his own healing ministry.

- Share a true story (with names changed or omitted as needed) about
 - an instance when lack of access to affordable, timely health care proved dangerous or deadly (e.g., Linda’s story in this article), and/or
 - an instance when timely and affordable medical attention lengthened life or greatly improved its quality.
- Ask any participant in your group who is willing to do so to share difficulties or frustrations she/he has personally experienced in obtaining or maintaining affordable health care. For instance, some medical plans have very high annual deductibles (\$10,000 or more); such policies function basically only as coverage against medical catastrophes.
- What do you know about the coverage offered by the PC(USA) Board of Pensions? Visit www.pensions.org to learn about the coverage. While congregations or employing entities pay for coverage for pastors, what about coverage for other church professionals, such as Christian educators, musicians, business administrators, secretaries, custodial staff or other employees? Check out the Board of Pensions’ Affiliated Benefits Plan.

- These books may provide additional material for discussion:
 - *The Healer's Calling: A Spirituality for Physicians and Other Health Care Professionals* by Daniel P. Sulmasy, New York: Paulist, 1997. ISBN: 0809137291*
 - *Spirituality in Nursing: Standing on Holy Ground*, 2nd ed. by Mary Elizabeth O'Brien, Boston: Jones and Bartlett, 2002. ISBN: 0763700525*
 - *My Grandfather's Blessings* by Rachel Naomi Remen, New York: Riverhead Trade, 2001. ISBN: 1573228567*
- These additional resources are available through Presbyterian Distribution Service (call 800/524-2612 or click on the items below to order).
 - *Life Abundant: Values, Choices and Health Care: The Responsibility and Role of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*; item 7266003001, \$4.25 plus shipping
 - *The Congregation: A Community of Care and Healing* (Health and Wholeness Awareness Resource); item 25790007, \$2.50 plus shipping
 - *Congregations Who Care: The Ministry of Health and Wholeness* (video on parish nursing); item 7266094004, \$5.00 plus shipping
 - *Honest Talk About Eating Disorders*: video; item 095303, \$9.95 plus shipping; leader's guide; item 095304, \$7.95 plus shipping
 - *Making Healthy Choices: A Key to Abundance*: video; item 095300, \$9.95 plus shipping



“AIDS in Africa: It’s a Matter of Faith” by Patrick Cole

- Use this article and the congregational resource packet (see ordering information at the bottom of p.11 of Horizons) to:
 - Raise awareness in your circle, PW, session and congregation about AIDS in Africa and Presbyterian ministry efforts
 - Ask your Mission/Outreach and Christian Education Committees to consider jointly sponsoring an educational opportunity for the congregation. This might be a one-time event or an ongoing series, and might be offered and publicized to the community as well as the congregation.
- If you have families in your congregation or community who came to the United States from an African nation (or who have immediate family members there), ask if their families or close friends have been affected by AIDS, and if they are willing, to share their stories. For example, one Presbyterian family from Cameroon shared with their Texas congregation that literally dozens of their aunts, uncles and cousins have died of AIDS.
- Request permission through appropriate session committees to have your congregation contribute to AIDS ministry in Africa over a set period of time (see the Extra Commitment Opportunity information on the bottom of p. 11 of Horizons).
- Get children and youth involved in all your educational and fundraising efforts. For these young Presbyterians, AIDS is an unavoidable part of their global reality. Assisting them in participation in Christian response to this devastating disease nurtures faith in concrete and practical ways.

- Investigate services and ministry to HIV/AIDS patients in your own community—remember that this is not just an African disease! Also check out the Presbyterian AIDS Network at www.panonline.org.
- When you visit www.pcusa.org/aids-international, be sure to follow the link to the International Health Ministries Office’s HIV/AIDS Web pages for a wealth of additional resources, most of which can be downloaded or accessed free of charge.
- Pray especially that African women at risk will be empowered and equipped to protect themselves from exposure.

“What Does Pro-Choice Really Mean?” By Sylvia Thorson-Smith

NOTE: If you discuss this article in a group, recognize that views about reproductive health choices differ. Offer a welcoming space and atmosphere for respectful yet candid discussion.

- See the PARO (Presbyterians Affirming Reproductive Options) home page to view PARO’s theological and biblical understandings: www.pcusa.org/phewa/paro.htm. Click the “Resources” link for a list and order links for a wealth of denominational publications. Clicking on “External Links” shows both PC(USA) official links and those to reproductive health-related sites. Also check with your presbytery resource center or church library to borrow resources you see listed.
- Presbyterians Pro-Life, an independent, nonprofit corporation made up of members and pastors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), calls on the PC(USA) to change its stance on abortion. Read more about their perspective on their Web site, www.ppl.org.
- Learn about other faith traditions’ positions on abortion and reproductive choice at www.rcrc.org/faith_choices/common_questions/answer1.htm or www.religioustolerance.org/abo_hist1.htm.
- Invite speakers from several local women’s health agencies to address your circle or PW group regarding their services. If possible, hold such a gathering at a time when senior high, college-age, and women who work outside the home can be present. It will be important to be sure that all speakers can agree to refrain from argumentative speech or speech that is disrespectful of divergent views.
- If there are women in your circle, PW group or other group who wish to share personal stories on this issue, be sure to remind hearers that confidentiality may be requested by the speaker, and should be strictly honored.
- Do other woman-focused organizations to which you belong have policies on women’s reproductive rights? You may want to inquire if you don’t know. For example, the American Association of University Women stated in 2002: “The American Association of University Women, comprised of 150,000 bipartisan members, stands strongly behind a woman’s right to choose as articulated by the *Roe v. Wade* decision. AAUW supports the right of every woman to safe, accessible, and comprehensive reproductive health care, and believes that decisions concerning reproductive health are personal ones that should be made without

government interference. AAUW trusts that every woman has the ability to make her own choices concerning her reproductive life within the dictates of her own moral and religious beliefs. AAUW members have made this position an action priority since 1977.”

“The Miracle of the Moringa Tree” By Catherine Davis and Nancy Haninger

- In addition to the action suggestions given in the article, look at these pages and sites:
 - Medical Benevolence Moringa Tree Project page, www.mbfoundation.org/Moringa.htm
 - Article from *Christian Century* noting National Council of Churches President Andrew Young’s support for moringa tree ministry, www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_15_117/ai_62324422
 - Article from the May 2000 issue of *E: The Environmental Magazine*, www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1594/is_3_11/ai_62298548
 - GA Moderator Rick Ufford-Chase’s blog on his encounter with the Moringa Tree Project: www.what-i-see.blogspot.com/2005/05/magical-moringa-tree.html
- If you are interested in the recipe possibilities, order (from an online or local book retailer) or borrow the book *Moringa: Nature’s Medicine Cabinet* by Sanford Holst. Sierra Sunrise, 2001. ISBN: 1887263160*

“Whole-Person Healing” by Patrick Cole

- Are you aware of any health care facilities in this country that emulate the Yodagawa Christian Hospital emphasis on daily worship for staff? (“It’s absolutely necessary that staff come together for worship every day, so that we can continue the idea of whole-person healing...”)
- Take a look at the Yodagawa Christian Hospital’s English language Web pages: www.ych.or.jp/e/index.html.
- Contribute directly to the support of the Yodagawa Christian Hospital through PC(USA) Extra Commitment Opportunity #326102. Make your checks payable to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and include on your check the project number and name. Send gifts to: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Individual Remittance Processing, PO Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700. You may also donate online at www.pcusa.org/missionfunding/sections/support/asmeco/eco.htm

“Pentecost” By Su Yon Pak

- In your circle or PW meeting, use this article as a springboard to try *tong-sung ki-do* for a specific length of time (try two minutes to start), perhaps as the closing prayer. Designate someone to bring the prayer to a close by beginning to sing a hymn or spiritual song with which most people in the group are familiar (e.g., the *Doxology*, the *Gloria Patri*, *Amazing Grace*, or *Sweet, Sweet Spirit*, etc.).
- In what ways does your congregation usually observe Pentecost (besides the usual red liturgical banners and paraments)? Some churches offer red punch and candies, or serve a red and white cake decorated with “Happy Birthday, Church.” Others may use clusters of red balloons in the sanctuary (not to be released outdoors). Some congregations ask members who speak languages other than English to read the Pentecost passage (*Acts 2:1–13*) in unison or separately,

each in her or his own chosen language. Compile your group's best ideas and pass them along to the Worship and Christian Education Committees.

- Offer to assist your session's Worship Committee with its preparations or plans for Pentecost, whatever they may be.
- While Christmas and Easter services usually draw the "big" worship crowds, consider using Pentecost as an opportunity for explicit outreach to invite visitors.
- If your congregation does not already do so, explore participation in the Pentecost Offering. See www.pcusa.org/pentecost.
- Check your church library or presbytery resource center for these Pentecost resources:
 - *Things to Make and Do—Pentecost Activity Book* by Martha Bettis Gee or call Presbyterian Distribution Service, 800/524-2612 and request item **095522**; \$12.95 plus shipping
 - *Creative Ideas for Pentecost* Linda S. Davidson, ed. Prescott: Educational Ministries, Inc., 1994. **ISBN: 187787163X***
 - *Pentecost Alphabet*, by Phyllis Vos Wezeman. Prescott: Educational Ministries, Inc., 1994. **ISBN: 1877871648***
 - *Worship for All Seasons, Vol. 3: Pentecost, Summer, Autumn* edited by Thomas Harding, Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1994. **ISBN: 1551340143***

* Recommended resources are available through several channels—purchase at your local bookstore or online book retailer; some may be available through your presbytery resource center.