

Although talk about healing was less popular two generations ago, a survey of mainline pastors in the United States already in 1950 reported that more than one-third had prayed for divine healing. A majority of those ministers who prayed for healing, especially Methodists and Episcopalians, reported some fairly significant healings.

Today, surveys show that a similar one-third of all Americans claim to have witnessed divine healing. Although scientific approaches necessarily and appropriately seek natural explanations, which are not incompatible with divine activity, more than half of surveyed physicians in the United States also reported witnessing restorations that they deemed miraculous.

Around the world. If Hume's radical skepticism retains some attraction in the West, it is less appealing elsewhere. "It is now recognized that much of Western thought has been domesticated by modernity, with its roots in Enlightenment thought," wrote Dr. Hwa Yung, bishop of the Methodist Church of Malaysia, in *Christianity Today*. "The autonomous rationalism initiated by Descartes and the narrow empiricism pioneered by Hume have so emasculated the modern worldview that a mechanistic universe is all that remains."

The Methodist Church of Ghana ordains evangelists gifted in healing and sponsors evangelistic healing crusades. One of their official reports in 2001 cites public cases of healings of deafness. It also notes that a leg instantly grew four inches in public sight, so that the previously disabled person could now walk and jump.



Dr. Hwa Yung

Expecting God's work among the poor, charismatic missionary couple Heidi and Rolland Baker started an orphanage in Mozambique. After several years of hardship, dramatic healings of deafness and blindness began to occur, often drawing entire unchurched villages to Christ, reminiscent of incidents in the Book of Acts.

Consequently, researchers from the United States traveled to Mozambique and tested some disabled people before and after prayer. They found a number

of cases in which people who were blind or deaf experienced significant sight or hearing immediately after prayer, and published their results in *Southern Medical Journal* in September 2010. Critics understandably complained about the testing conditions, which in rural Mozambique are hardly ideal. Nevertheless, one of the study's authors, Candy Gunther Brown of Indiana University, responded with even more striking details in her book *Testing Prayer*, published by Harvard University Press in 2012. (See Dr. Wendy Deichmann's report on page 20.)

Miracles in the West. Despite less openness to miracles in the West, dramatic recoveries occur here as well. In his book *Healing Miracles*, Dr. Rex Gardner offers case studies of spontaneous cures in the context of prayer, some of which he had also published in an article for the *British Medical Journal*. One example is that of a nine-year-old girl who was deaf without her hearing aid; testing revealed auditory nerve damage, which does not simply go away. She had been praying for healing, and one day after a test for a new hearing aid verified her continuing condition, she was instantly healed. When the parents phoned the audiologist, he protested that what they described was impossible. Testing the next day, however, showed that she had indeed experienced complete healing.

Many years ago, when I was still a recent convert from atheism, I was helping in a nursing home Bible study. One of the women who attended the study each week, Barbara, regularly complained, "I wish I could walk." After hearing a couple months of such laments, Don, the Bible study leader and a seminarian, walked over to her and took her by the hand. "In the name of Jesus Christ," he commanded, "rise up and walk." She looked as horrified as I felt; if faith is a bias, we could not have been accused of it. Yet she walked, and continued to do so from that day forward. From then on, her refrain became, "I love this Bible study."

