

HEALING OF RELATIONSHIPS

Introductory notes on Christ's Healing of Relationships

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Maranatha is a movement of Christians in all the churches.
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Christian unity and Christian renewal.
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The Maranatha Community
Healing of Relationships
Introductory Notes on Christ's Healing of Relationships
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These notes summarise the Christian approach to the healing of relationships. They present the foundation for Christian ministry in this area and are complementary to the other healing notes listed at the end.

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Healing of Relationships

Introduction

The root of virtually all our economic, sociological, political and personal crises today is to be found in relationships which have been damaged, polluted or even destroyed.

Relationships between adjacent countries and tribes can readily deteriorate to the point of enmity and conflict. Our knowledge of group dynamics, whether in commerce or industry, academic fields or local neighbourhoods inevitably leads us to the recognition that the establishment of right relationships between individuals and groups is a matter of fundamental importance.

In a society dominated by humanism there is a danger of an obsession with ourselves and our own relationships to the total exclusion of the crucial relationship which governs our existence - our relationship with God. This obsessive consideration of relationships without a consideration of God inevitably leads to introversion as we see in so much New Age activity today.

If we persistently look inward we may not find ourselves, we will certainly not find God and we may even discover or awaken dangerous spiritual influences. We may be led to believe and even claim that we ourselves are in fact God- the supreme idolatry.

Because we are creatures of God we have an inner yearning for a link, a bond, a relationship with our creator. We yearn to know the one who created us just as so many adopted children yearn to know and perhaps meet their natural parents.

Similarly, as a part of the whole of God's creation, we were not created to live in isolation. The whole of our lives are made up of relationships. These relationships are with **God**, with **ourselves**, with **others** and with **creation**. Christ comes to heal each of these four relationships.

Our relationship with ourselves and with all others is inevitably dictated by our relationship with God. This is one of the supreme messages of the Bible. Righteousness is, in fact, the establishment of a right relationship with God.

In simple terms it is God who unites, it is the devil who divides. The reconciling love of Christ is the dominant factor in the establishment of new and right relationships. "It is He who has solved the problem of our relationships with God and man. He has destroyed the fence's dividing wall..." (Eph 2.14). The love implicit in our relationship with the Father and with one another as brothers and sisters denies the hatred, envy and corruption of all unloving relationships.

If we **exclude** Jesus and **deny** what He did on the Cross, there is a real danger that we will mistakenly believe that we ourselves have the capacity, in our own strength, to establish secure and loving relationships with all others.

The claim of men and women to be **their own** saviours and healers, mistakenly put forward by New Agers and others, has been proved futile in every chapter of human history. Their lives are characterised by widespread breakdown of relationships in their families and communities.

How we relate to one another at work, in society at large and in our homes is governed by the degree to which we have responded to the grace of God and received His love into our hearts.

1. The Fundamentals - Our Human Condition

- 1.1 **God** has created us.
- 1.2 The imprint of the **creator** is inevitably upon the **creature**.
- 1.3 We have many of His **attributes**. The Bible teaches that we are made in His own **image**.
- 1.4 Although we all **share** a common humanity we each radically **differ** from one another, both in actuality and appearance.
- 1.5 Each of us is **unique** with our own fingerprints, and the Lord of the cosmos affirms our individuality by calling us personally by name.
- 1.6 We are not simply a worthless **grain of sand** in the desert, lost in the vastness of creation, without significance or purpose.
- 1.7 There is a **life** for each one of us to live which is for no-one else. There is a part for each one of us to play which cannot be fulfilled by another person.
- 1.8 The Biblical assertion that not a sparrow falls to the ground without God knowing of it is of immense significance to the person seeking his or her **identity**.
- 1.9 We need to have **healthy** human relationships in order to live purposeful lives.
- 1.10 Broken, impaired and non-existent **human relationships** are at the root of most of our problems.
- 1.11 In the Bible righteousness means the establishment of **right relationships**.
- 1.12 Wrong relationships are evidence of our **need for God**.
- 1.13 The Gospel is about **righteousness**.
- 1.14 **God gives** us right relationships i.e. righteousness.
- 1.15 **God leads** us in the paths of righteousness. (Psalm 23.3)
- 1.16 **Reconciliation** is at the heart of Christ's work.
- 1.17 In Christ God **reconciles** us to Himself. (2 Cor. 5.18)
- 1.18 It is the will of Christ that His followers experience **oneness** with God and with each other. (John 17. 20-23).
- 1.19 Reconciliation is about breaking down **barriers**, ending **separation** and experiencing **closeness**. (Eph. 2. 11-16)
- 1.20 Reconciliation brings **peace** in place of turmoil. (Eph. 2. 17-19)
- 1.21 Followers of Christ are called to be **reconcilers** in a divided world. (2 Cor. 5.19-21 & 1 Col. 21, 22)
- 1.22 The quality of individual personal relationships has a direct **influence** upon social and political issues and vice versa.
- 1.23 The **individual** influences the character of society and **society** influences the character of the individual.
- 1.24 In our form of society we are **integrated** socially with one another. We are fundamentally **social** beings. People need people.
- 1.25 Even in solitariness we have the need to be aware of **others** to relate to them.

- 1.26 Inevitably in a society where God is rejected, there is a continuing **battle** between individuals and between the individual and society.
- 1.27 For the Christian the **reference point**, in the midst of conflicting influences, is God, who brings healing and reconciliation.

2. Biblical Pointers to a new relationship with God

- 2.1 Biblical teaching places great emphasis upon right relations with God. In his translation of the New Testament William Barclay enables us to understand this in straightforward terms - "...a new situation has arisen. The world has been shown a way of being put into a **right relationship** with God apart from any kind of law". (Rom 3.21).

The following texts from Barclay's translation sum up the biblical teaching on righteousness.

- 2.2 "What does scripture say? 'Abraham took God at His word, and that act of faith was accepted as putting him into a right relationship with God' ". (Rom. 4.3)
- 2.3 "It is through **faith** that we have been put into a right relationship with God. We therefore are at peace with Him because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us." (Rom 5.1).
- 2.4 "It is **Christ** who completes what it was the goal of the law to do, and who thereby opens a right relationship with God to everyone who has faith" (Rom 10.4).
- 2.5 "It is the heart's faith which brings a man into a right relationship with God..." (Rom 10.10).
- 2.6 "It is **God** who brings men into a right relationship with himself". (Rom 10.3).
- 2.7 "It was God's decision to effect through Him (i.e. Christ) an act of universal reconciliation to Himself of everything on heaven and on earth....once you were estranged from God; your minds were hostile; your conduct was evil. But now the situation has changed" (Col. 1.20-22)
- 2.8 "It was the death of his Son which restored us to **friendship** with God even when we were hostile to him" (Rom 5.10)
- 2.9 "You lived in a world without hope and without God. But because of your relationship with Christ Jesus the situation has changed. You who were far away have been brought near through the death of Christ. It is he who has solved the problem of our relationships with **God** and **man**. He has destroyed the fence's dividing wall" (Eph 2.12-14).
- 2.10 "**Only Christ can enable men to live in a right relationship with each other**" (Col 3.15).

3. Our Relationship with God

- 3.1 The fundamental relationship in our life is our relationship with **God** who created us and to whom we return.
- 3.2 Our human need stems primarily from the fact that we are **disconnected** from God.
- 3.3 When we are disconnected from God we are **unhappy**, frustrated and unfulfilled.
- 3.4 We may have a **wrong relationship** with God because we are ignorant of, or even deny, His existence or personhood.
- 3.5 Jesus Christ tells us that those who have seen Him have seen God, (Jn 14.9) and points to a radically **new relationship** between God and humankind (2 Cor 5.17).

- 3.6 We may have a wrong relationship with God because we believe Him to be **remote**, punitive and unjust.
- 3.7 Jesus points us to a loving **Father** who desires to hold us in His arms, who knows us by name and who loves us unconditionally. (Matt 10.29, Matt 18.14)
- 3.8 We are often in a wrong relationship with God because we refuse to acknowledge, listen to, and **obey** Him.
- 3.9 Jesus points us to a Father who wants us to be lovingly obedient to Him. (Matt 7.21, Matt 12.50) and who desires to **give** good things to His children when they come to Him (Matt. 7.9).
- 3.10 A right relationship with God cannot be achieved by a formula, a technique or a law. (Eph 2.8) It cannot be achieved or bought by our own efforts. It is a **gift of grace** unearned, undeserved and totally free, which flows from God's unending love for His creation.
- 3.11 Christ Himself **confirms** and seals the reality of our relationship with God through His love and His blood shed on the Cross. (Col 1.22).
- 3.12 We personally **experience** this relationship in immediate human terms - we become the friends of Jesus. (John 15.15).

4. Our Relationship with Ourselves

- 4.1 Our knowledge of **ourselves** depends upon our knowledge and experience of God.
- 4.2 God gives us our **value**. "You are of more value than many sparrows." (Matt. 10.31) "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8. 36,37)
- 4.3 God gives us our **identity**. "I have summoned you by name, you are mine...." (Is. 43.1)
- 4.4 Because we are **damaged** people we find it difficult to accept ourselves, love ourselves and forgive ourselves. We need to recognise that as well as being damaged by the world, we have damaged ourselves.
- 4.5 A **wrong** relationship with ourselves can be manifest in a variety of ways ranging from self-hatred and low self-esteem to grossly inflated self-image.
- 4.6 Failure to recognise our dignity and worth as unique individuals robs us of our full **humanity** and blinds us to God's love and to other people's love.
- 4.7 How we **perceive** ourselves dictates how we perceive others, including God.
- 4.8 Christ himself helps us to see ourselves as we really are, **transforming** our attitude to and relationship with ourselves and God.
- 4.9 Our relationship with ourselves is strongly influenced by our **inheritance** and by conscious and unconscious **memories**, and perhaps traumas, which we hold to ourselves. God receives and heals these through Christ.
- 4.10 If we lack self-worth and perceive ourselves to be of little or no value, we behave without a sense of **responsibility** both to ourselves and to others. This is clearly evident in society today.
- 4.11 When we discover and affirm our self-worth, recognising that we are made in the image of God (Gen 1.27) our scale of **values** and **priorities** in life radically change.

5. Our Relationship with Others

- 5.1 Our relationship with **others** is dependent upon our relationship with God.
- 5.2 Our relationships with others are affected by our **perception** of ourselves and our perception of the other person.
- 5.3 When we have an **elevated** opinion of ourselves we treat others as **inferior**.
- 5.4 When we **lack** self-worth we may be inhibited with others or even allow ourselves to be **abused**.
- 5.5 Our perception and experience of God as **Father, Son** and **Holy Spirit**, will dictate our perception of ourselves and others.
- 5.6 A wrong perception of ourselves and others leads to wrong **values** and **attitudes** - threatening, attacking, repulsing, exploiting, fearing, envying, maligning etc.
- 5.7 Jesus invites us to be adopted as children into a **family**, under the fatherhood of God, which inevitably establishes brotherhood and sisterhood as a fundamental relationship of humankind. (Eph 2.19). This invitation demands a response. Our silence is a rejection of God's offer.
- 5.8 In the family of God we learn that we are all **unique**, yet all of **equal value**. There is no competition for God's love and acceptance. This sets us free to love each other in the same way that our Father loves us.
- 5.9 The pattern of relationships in Christ is dynamic and living. We are joined to God and one another as in a living **vine**. We are members one of another as in a living **body**. We are children in the same **family** and we are not isolated. We are inextricably bound up with one another.
- 5.10 Jesus comes to put right our relationships with **others**. He specifically says "...whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mat 25.40).
- 5.11 Transformation of the world occurs when all human relationships are transformed in **Christ**. He enables us to look at others through His eyes.

6. Our Relationship with Creation

- 6.1 God is the **Creator** of all.
- 6.2 God's goodness is **expressed** through His created order.
- 6.3 Our world is **damaged** by humankind through our sinful desires.
- 6.4 Because of our wrong relationship with creation, which we selfishly seek to **exploit** and which we carelessly **pollute**, we now face an environmental and ecological crisis of great significance.
- 6.5 The healing of our broken relationship with nature is fundamentally a **spiritual** process, commencing with our recognition that Jesus is the Saviour and Healer of the whole World.
- 6.6 God has entrusted the care of His created world to humankind. Our healing starts with our **repentance** for what we have done to God's created order and our readiness to acknowledge His **Lordship** in Christ.
- 6.7 Just as Christians are led to live in **harmony** with God, themselves and others, so they are led to live in harmony with all creation.

7. Model of Right Relationships

- 7.1 In the life of Jesus we see the supreme **model** for right relationships.
- 7.2 We are called to be **Christ-like**. We are given the power to be Christ-like through His Spirit.
- 7.3 To become Christ-like, we must, as St. Paul teaches, have the loving, **servicing** attitude of Jesus. (Phil 2.3-4)
- 7.4 The Church should be a **loving community** where relationships are being healed and where we participate in a continuously liberating process.
- 7.5 There are several **analogies** given in the New Testament to describe how we should **relate** to one another - the vine (John 15), the Family of God (2 Cor 6.17-18) and the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12).
- 7.6 When we are rooted in Christ, we are like branches of the one true vine - we are **interconnected** in a single living, growing and fruitful organism.
- 7.7 When we accept that God is our Father, we are adopted into His **family**. We are bonded in love to other Christians who are our brothers and sisters.
- 7.8 Christ comes to set us **free** and our adoption into God's family gives us the privilege of knowing and loving God, ourselves, and other people more fully and at a deeper level.
- 7.9 When we are born again through the imprint of God's Holy Spirit on our lives, we become **functioning** members of the Body of Christ - Jesus' continuing presence on earth.
- 7.10 As members of the Body of Christ we **share** our nervous system, and our circulation and we have one head - Christ Himself.
- 7.11 As **members** of the Body of Christ we do not live for ourselves. We live and work as a part, and for the benefit of the whole Body.
- 7.12 Jesus says "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples - that you have love one for another." This love must be **recognisable**.
- 7.13 Jesus said "He who has seen me has seen the Father." It follows therefore that His Church, the Body of Christ, should **reveal** God.
- 7.14 Jesus Christ was used by God in His human form to bring healing. If we, the Christian Church, are the Body of Christ, we too must be ready to be used by God to bring **healing**.
- 7.15 The Church is called to be an **instrument** of reconciliation in a divided world. The reconciling love of Christ should be evident in every group of Christians.
- 7.16 The ultimate model for the perfection of all our relationships is to be found in the Trinity. Jesus prays that we will experience this perfection when He prays that we will be **one**, just as He and the Father are one. (John 17)

8. Our Need for Healing

- 8.1 All people need healing of the **separation** between themselves and God. This is the prime reason for the coming of Jesus Christ.
- 8.2 Our separation from God is in fact **evil** and inevitably we suffer the consequence of loneliness because we are distanced from Him.
- 8.3 From the moment of our birth, we experience separation from our mother's womb, and an initial and fundamental **helplessness** and **loneliness**.

- 8.4 We can experience separation **within ourselves**, leading to rootlessness, restlessness, tension, lostness and imbalance.
- 8.5 Deep within humankind there is a yearning for an end to separation and **alienation**. We need relationships - "no man is an island."
- 8.6 We experience **personal** healing through the healing of our relationships with God and others.
- 8.7 We do not experience healing through introspection and so-called self-improvement. When we make **ourselves** our reference point we in fact play at being God.
- 8.8 We discover our **personhood** and our **value** when our lives are rooted in God. From this rootedness flows the healing of our relationship with ourselves, with others and with everything that God has created.
- 8.9 If our basic need for God and His love is not met through our reconciliation with Him in Jesus, we inevitably seek to have this need met by **others**. This places a burden upon them which may be increased by manipulation and control. Our self-centredness excludes God and our relationships with others are limited to the ones which we perceive will benefit us.
- 8.10 The **fruits** of wrong relationships are confusion, guilt and depression.
- 8.11 There is a fundamental order to the relationships which God has ordained. When we discard the **God-given** relationships we experience the disorders which are a characteristic of contemporary society.
- 8.12 Jesus gives us the hope of relationships which are **totally healed** by the power of His Spirit and which are pure in His sight.

9 Our Identity

- 9.1 A restless, anxious, searching world persistently asks the question 'who am I?, why am I here?, **where** have I come from?, **where** am I going?'
- 9.2 Questions about identity are never resolved satisfactorily without the discovery that we can individually become **children of God**.
- 9.3 Augustine of Hippo made the fundamental assertion that we cannot be at peace until we discover the **peace of God**.
- 9.4 When we hear God calling us **by name** and encounter His **love** - we begin to recognize who we are. Our restless wanderings cease when we discover our true home.
- 9.5 In our culture many people have a **distorted** and **diseased** perception of themselves. They are unhappy with themselves. They cannot accept themselves as they are. They may try to be someone else. They often reject themselves.
- 9.6 If we **reject** ourselves, we cannot experience self-respect. We may even slide into nihilism.
- 9.7 By having a false understanding of our nature, we impose upon ourselves **limitations** which prevent us from changing, growing and realising our God-given potential.
- 9.8 Our false understanding of ourselves may even become a **delusion**, through which we endeavour to take on an entirely different personality. We can thus be in bondage to that which is **unreal**.
- 9.9 There is a fundamental need for us as individuals to be released from the limitations of our perceptions and to be brought to the recognition and affirmation of our own unique **identity** and great **value**.
- 9.10 We are firstly human beings created to be in relationship with **God** the creator.
- 9.11 We are secondly created male and female to live in relationship with **each other**.

- 9.12 Humankind is a part of **creation** and lives interdependently within it.
- 9.13 In all the centuries humankind has created ‘imaginary’ gods. The worship of these idols has influenced many people and nations. In the absence of an encounter with the living God there is a real danger of **man** endeavouring to make a god in **his** own image.
- 9.14 It is in the nature of humankind to worship. We readily kneel before all kinds of altars. Our worship of **false** gods has dangerous consequences.
- 9.15 The process of **discovering** ourselves cannot be separated from the process of discovering God. This explains the contemporary crisis in human relationships, in the western godless society.
- 9.16 In our growing knowledge of **God**, so we discover more about ourselves.
- 9.17 In our growing knowledge of **ourselves**, so we discover more about God.
- 9.18 God is love and He is Truth. He is absolute goodness. How we understand **God** directly governs how we see **ourselves**. If, like New Agers, we perceive God as both good and evil, then our potential is ambiguous and confused.
- 9.19 If we **perceive** God as severe and intent on punishing us we will become obsessed with our own unworthiness and sinfulness which can appear to be beyond redemption. This in turn affects our attitude towards others and our relationships with them.
- 9.20 If we **encounter** God as a loving father, we will recognise his care for us as children and we will know His desire to nurture us and lead us into maturity.
- 9.21 Some Eastern religions and much New Age belief claim that we are so much a part of creation that in effect we lose our personal **identities** and that God is so much a part of us and His creation that he loses His **otherness** and his transcendent glory.
- 9.22 It is through God’s desire that He dwells **within** us - “do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? you are not your own” (1 Cor. 6.19).
- 9.23 Our experience of the indwelling God totally **changes** our perception of ourselves. Paul states “for me to live is Christ.... I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” (Phil 1.21, Gal. 2.20)
- 9.24 In the measure that I **resist** God’s call and approach to me, I am unable to discover my true self and the purpose of my life.
- 9.25 When God’s love and truth **penetrates** my being I am a new creation. (2 Cor 5.17)

10. Our Potential

- 10.1 By our nature we are **changing**, and **growing**. We are not static. We are as it were, becoming persons. We are not yet who we will be.
- 10.2 Christ sees us as we **are**, but also as we **can be** - as God intended us to be.
- 10.3 It is Christ, in His humanity, who reveals to us who we **really** are, and what we were **born** to be and to do.
- 10.4 Our full **human** potential was established at the point of our conception within our mother’s womb.
- 10.5 Our full **potential being** was established at the moment of our creation. When this event took place is a mystery, as is our life after physical death.
- 10.6 Christ enables us to discover our true **identity**.
- 10.7 Christ enables us to fulfil our **potentiality** in body, mind and spirit. This is the abundance of life which He promises.

- 10.8 Neither God nor our personal potential are dependent upon the limitations of **time** and **space**.
- 10.9 The discovery of our personal identity and potential is dependent upon our recognition that we are an integral part of the **whole** of creation. 'No man is an island'.
- 10.10 C.S. Lewis said "The prayer preceding all prayer is : may it be the real I that speaks. May it be the real Thou who I speak to".

11. Completeness - The essential components of our growth into wholeness

- 11.1 Completeness is the realisation of our full potential with the **discovery** and **expression** of our true identity.
- 11.2 We discover our identity through our relationships with **others**. Unhealthy relationships mar our true identity and create personal insecurity. Healthy relationships affirm our true identity and create personal security.
- 11.3 Our perception and expression of our identity alters according to the nature of the relationships which influence us. The relationships which are fundamental to the discovery and expression of our identity are with our mother and father.
- 11.4 The influence of **mother** is especially important during the first five years of a child's life. The temporary or permanent absence of a mother may lead to a sense of insecurity and doubt about personal identity.
- 11.5 The influence of **father** is especially important during the years of adolescence in affirming the sexuality of the young adult. Absence of a father during this period of development may lead to confusion or ambivalence about sexual identity.
- 11.6 When there is a gap in our lives, we inevitably have a compulsion to **fill** it.
The gap in a family caused by **absence** of mother or father often leads children to seek a substitute, usually, but not always of the same sex.
- 11.7 Absent, dominating or unbalanced relationships between a child and its parents will inevitably **distort** its perception and expression of its identity.
- 11.8 The young woman who has been denied a relationship with a father, will often seek (consciously or unconsciously) for this need to be met in a male partner who becomes a **father substitute**.
- 11.9 The boy who has been over-dependent upon and perhaps dominated by his mother may seek a fundamentally **maternal relationship** in a female partner.
- 11.10 A young man who has a distant or no relationship with a father and whose experience of women has been one of smothering, may seek the **companionship of men**.
- 11.11 A young woman who has been subject to sexual assault by a man may reject future male relationships and seek the **companionship of women**. This may be compounded by a rejection of the particular female role portrayed by her mother.
- 11.12 Persistent criticism in childhood may **distort** self-image in adulthood.
- 11.13 A child with overbearing parents may be left in a perpetual state of **adolescence**, unable to act with independence and maturity.
- 11.14 The gaps in our lives **prevent** us from being whole beings.
- 11.15 **Gaps** in our lives are like vacuums which demand to be filled.
- 11.16 In terms of human relationships, the vacuum or space in one person's life may lead **another** to fill it.

- 11.17 The natural striving after God within our being may mean that the gap is filled with a 'God substitute' upon whom or which we may **depend** emotionally, intellectually, spiritually and/or physically.
- 11.18 Humankind seeks to fill the gaps in individual lives with **other** beings or sensations but ultimately this leads to dissatisfaction and lack of fulfilment.
- 11.19 Man and woman are **complementary** to each other and together have the capacity to procreate.
- 11.20 The biological **complementarity** of male and female is seen throughout the plant and animal kingdom.
- 11.21 Human beings have an additional ability to **express** their male and female gender in their sexuality.
- 11.22 In both man and woman there exist both male and female sexual influences, **biologically, emotionally** and **mentally**. The relative balance of these influences plays an important role in the expression of a person's identity.
- 11.23 Our identity, including our gender and sexuality, is God-given and needs to be **discovered** by us and **affirmed** by Him.
- 11.24 We are not **complete** without God. The human search for identity and wholeness will never be concluded without recognising this.

12. Types Of Relationship

- 12.1 Relationships can be **long-term** or **short-term, permanent** or **temporary**.
- 12.2 Relationships can be **transient** with no commitment other than an acknowledgement of the other's presence.
- 12.3 Relationships can be **transactional** when each party gives and/or receives for a specific purpose. These relationships may benefit both parties or may be used by one to exploit the other e.g. promiscuity.
- 12.4 Relationships vary according to the degree of **self-disclosure, interdependence** and **mutual commitment**.
- 12.5 **Healthy** relationships embrace love, affection, compassion, generosity and sharing.
- 12.6 **Unhealthy** relationships embrace coldness, distance, forsakenness, exploitation, and separation.
- 12.7 A **close** relationship requires effective communication, contact, mutual feeling and reaction.
- 12.8 **Christian** relationships are about intimacy. Jesus prayed that we should be one with each other as He is one with the Father. (John 17). This oneness means intimate closeness and integrity.
- 12.9 The foundation of all healthy relationships is **love**. The Bible distinguishes between God's love for us, our love for God and our love for others. It also recognises the different forms of our love for others i.e. between friends, between members of a family, between husband and wife, between strangers and between enemies.
- 12.10 God's love is **unconditional** and all-embracing.

13. The Basis of Healthy Relationships

- 13.1 The fundamental characteristics of all healthy relationships are **love** and **trust**. We all need affection, appreciation, respect and goodwill.

- 13.2 Healthy relationships depend upon our ability to **give** and **receive** love.
- 13.3 Fractured relationships causing **harm** and **pain** invariably stem from lack of love and understanding.
- 13.4 The teaching of Jesus places great emphasis on **right** relationships - with our friends, with strangers, even with enemies.
- 13.5 Jesus **overturns** the ways of a world which seeks vengeance and retribution and tells us to forgive those who hurt us - not once but "seventy times seven" (Matt 18.22).
- 13.6 Jesus sets us the very highest of standards. He commands us - "love one another **as I have loved you.**" (Jn. 15.12)
- 13.7 Jesus comes to us as our elder brother. He says we are no longer just servants but His **friends.** (Jn. 15.15)
- 13.8 God's love for us is absolutely constant and is given in **totality.** This is how He wants us to love Him and others.
- 13.9 Jesus points to the **sacredness** of all human life - the hairs on our head are numbered. He affirms our dignity and worth. The message of the Bible is that we are made in the image of God Himself.
- 13.10 A healthy relationship means that we grow in **freedom.** An unhealthy relationship can lead us into bondage.
- 13.11 Love in relationships is manifest in **mutual** trust, respect and acceptance.
- 13.12 Love, by its nature, is **non-exploitive.** It is not self-seeking. It is the opposite to aggression and lust..
- 13.13 **Healthy** relationships involve mutual interaction, exchange, support and bonding.
- 13.14 When we are **close** to the Lord we must inevitably be **close** to one another - especially our brothers and sisters in our immediate Christian family, but also in the wider world.
- 13.15 The closeness of Christian love stands in stark contrast with the **separation, division** and **mistrust** which characterises the contemporary world.
- 13.16 Jesus speaks of **connective** and **intimate** relationships. He speaks of a permanent relationship with Him - "I will never leave you." He speaks of an intimate relationship with God - 'Abba' (daddy). Jesus says that when we are apart, i.e. separated, from Him we can do nothing. (Jn. 15.5)
- 13.17 God enables us to see **value** in others and to recognise His imprint on their lives. This is the foundation of a society which is in keeping with God's will.

14. Value

- 14.1 The basis of Christian civilisation is the value placed upon each individual man, woman and child by Jesus Christ. From Jesus we learn that other people are a **gift** to us. When we receive and cherish each gift our lives are blessed and society is enriched.
- 14.2 For the Christian, all human beings are potentially **brothers** or **sisters.** Through this Christians recognise their responsibilities to feed starving children, care for orphans, speak out for the oppressed and stand for justice and social righteousness on a global scale.

- 14.3 It is in caring for, serving and loving others that we are enriched. We discover our own **value** and **identity** as a part of God's creation, and as children in His family. This is the spiritual economy of life which God has ordained.
- 14.4 God **enriches** our lives through other people. God enables us, to enrich others' lives, in spite of our own sins and weaknesses. This process should be evident in the life of all our churches.
- 14.5 God created us to live in **community**, in dependence upon Him and one another. If we withdraw into selfish individualism we deny His Kingdom.
- 14.6 Lack of concern for others - their condition, hopes and fears is evidence of a flawed relationship which actually robs us of the abundant life which Jesus comes to give. When we disconnect with others we are **impoverished**.
- 14.7 A **low** opinion of ourselves can prevent God from using us. We fail to recognise and give to others what He wants to give them through us.
- 14.8 Too **high** an opinion of ourselves can **inhibit** the work of God's grace in our lives. Our arrogance and self-centredness impedes the flow of God's love between us and others and often causes hurt and injury.
- 14.9 God confirms in us our real value. There must be a balance in our lives between the recognition that we are **sinners** and the acceptance that we are the **precious children** of God for whom Jesus died.
- 14.10 If we **deny** our self-worth we tend to act irresponsibly.
- 14.11 If we **affirm** our self-worth we tend to act responsibly.
- 14.12 When we diminish the value of others we may **oppress** them. Men and women, and especially children are easily damaged by rejection and disparagement.
- 14.13 When we elevate the value of others we often **idolise** them. We may be damaged by obsession and they by adulation.
- 14.14 Our value as unique individuals is given to us by God who has created us **in His own image**. He demonstrates how precious we are to Him by the high price He was prepared to pay for us on the Cross

15. Broken Relationships

- 15.1 A dominant characteristic of contemporary society is the widespread incidence of **broken** relationships.
- 15.2 Wrong relationships are manifestations of **sin** - selfishness, intolerance, pride, greed, lust etc.
- 15.3 The evidence of broken relationships is to be found in a world experiencing **separation** and **pain**. We are surrounded by the casualties.
- 15.4 Broken relationships are **characterised** by inhibition, guilt, anger, resentment, fear, sadness and sometimes violence.
- 15.5 Wrong relationships bring about a distorted understanding of the **value** and **roles** of people.
- 15.6 A distorted perception of others may lead to **destructive** processes such as ruthless exploitation or unhealthy subservience.
- 15.7 Relationships often break down when the **power** and **authority** of one party over another is questioned or challenged.

- 15.8 The widespread breakdown of relationships in families between husband and wife and parents and children in our society is evidence of our need for Christ's **reconciliation** and **healing**.
- 15.9 History proves that the **price** paid for continuing wrong relationships is very high. Inner city deprivation, class division, colonial exploitation, racial hatred, religious bigotry are all evidence of this.
- 15.10 Without the mutual **respect** and **love** which is at the core of the Gospel, society degenerates into a jungle-like arena of aggressively competing and mutually destructive forces.
- 15.11 When deep relationships are treated as only **transitory** they will inevitably generate pain. Today we see the casualties of temporary relationships which are exploitive and debasing, such as promiscuity.
- 15.12 So often today we are **alienated** from God, **estranged** from each other and in **conflict** with God's creation.
- 15.13 The divisions within ourselves which lead to damaged relationships are self evident. We are **not** the people others think we are. We are **not** the people we ourselves pretend to be. We are **not** the people we would like to be. We **separate** our inner being from our external life to the point where we deceive ourselves and others, but we cannot deceive God.
- 15.14 The **basis** of healthy relationships with others is to be found in the love and forgiveness of Jesus. On His Cross Christ pays the highest price for a complete restoration of our broken relationships with **one another**, with **ourselves**, and above all with **God**.
- 15.15 The **motivation** and **power** to have loving relationships with others is a gift of God's Holy Spirit. We should constantly ask God for more of this gift in our lives.

16. Bonding

- 16.1 In the context of relationships a bond may be described as a **connection** between one person and another. It often relates to a situation or an event.
- 16.2 A bond is formed between two people through **mutual sharing**. This may be a sharing of stories and experiences, gifts and physical expression e.g. touch.
- 16.3 A bond is a **uniting** force which may also be restraining. It can be a help or a hindrance. It can be constructive or destructive.
- 16.4 Christ Himself is a bond. One of His titles in the New Testament is **Mesites - the one between**, or mediator. It comes from the Greek word mesos which can mean 'in the middle' and William Barclay refers to Him as 'One who brings two parties together'.
- 16.5 The Old Testament tells us of the **Covenant** bonding between Israel and God. Christ reveals to us the new bond between God and all humankind in the new **Covenant**. He seals it with His blood.
- 16.6 The bonds forged by Christ set us **free**. The relationships we have within the Body of Christ are liberating. Participation in the life of the Church should be a **continuously** liberating process.
- 16.7 The bonds between people may be **positive, negative** or **both**.
- 16.8 Positive bonds have a **good** effect on the lives of the individuals involved and encourage personal growth. They are characterised by love, trust, freedom.
- 16.9 Negative bonds have a **bad** effect on the lives of the individuals involved and inhibit, or sometimes even destroy, personal growth. They are characterised by resentment, unforgiveness, lack of freedom.

- 16.10 A person may be **bonded** to a group of people or an organisation, an idea or belief system, a past event or generation.
- 16.11 Negative bonds **hold us back** and rob us of freedom and life. They may have been inherited, imposed upon us against our will or we may have voluntarily accepted or even invited them.
- 16.12 **Negative bonds** between people can be very destructive and can be the root cause of physical and emotional disease.
- 16.13 The **restraining** influence of negative bonds perpetuates fear, sorrow and guilt.
- 16.14 Bondage is a sure sign of a **wrong relationship**.
- 16.15 Negative bonds with people and events may actually control particular aspects of a person's **life and behaviour**.
- 16.16 When we ask **Jesus** to be the bond between us and others He will reinforce good bonds and destroy negative bonds.
- 16.17 Jesus breaks the negative bonds of anger, resentment, fear and bitterness by giving us the desire and the power to **forgive**, in His name, those who have hurt us.
- 16.18 Negative bonds which have been **inherited** or **inflicted** upon us can be identified and then severed by the power of God's Holy Spirit.
- 16.19 Bondage to the occult, including secret societies, or any other form of idolatry can be broken by spoken **repentance** and **renunciation** of the devil and all his works, together with the personal **affirmation** of the Lordship of Christ.
- 16.20 In a fallen world, we are all subject to the bondage of sin. We need daily to claim the victory of Christ upon the Cross in our lives and experience the **liberation** of being bonded to Him.

17. Control

- 17.1 We can be in **bondage** to other people to the extent that we are virtually under their control.
- 17.2 **Control** may be exerted in a variety of different ways. These include the spoken word, the presence of the controlling person, conscious and unconscious memories and sensory perceptions.
- 17.3 We may **allow** our lives to be controlled by another person or group by making them our focus of attention and by seeking to please them above all else. This is **idolatry**.
- 17.4 We may have a controlling influence **inflicted** upon us by someone who seeks to dominate and manipulate others. When this is done deliberately, for personal gain, it is **exploitation**.
- 17.5 We can actually be in bondage to **ourselves** by placing strict controls upon our lives and behaviour, which is often a form of defence or security. An extreme form of this is seen in obsessional disorders.
- 17.6 Jesus Christ has come to set us **free** from every controlling influence in our lives other than God.
- 17.7 Control of one person by another stems from a wrong relationship i.e. a negative bond between them. The person in bondage inevitably has a tendency to self-debasement and may be **robbed** of their dignity and value as human beings.
- 17.8 Those who do not accept the responsibility to respect and uphold the value and rights of others consider themselves free to regard other people simply as **objects** to

be **exploited**. This is particularly true of drug dealers, pornographers, dictators and others who trample on peoples' lives.

- 17.9 One person may exercise dominant **control** over others by physical means as in disciplined hierarchic bodies such as an army or a prison. Similarly, one person may spiritually control and dominate others, as in the case of many cult leaders and gurus.
- 17.10 Parents may, often unknowingly, exercise **emotional, spiritual** and **intellectual** control over their offspring even well into maturity. This controlling influence often continues even after the death of the parent.
- 17.11 Control by one person over another operates in a variety of different ways. These include control through the **eyes**, physical **touch** and **voice**. Control may also be exercised by use of '**trigger words**' which have painful associations and, when spoken, create revulsion, fear, guilt and/or submission. Similarly, **images** and **objects** may be used to produce visual recall of a painful association, confirming the power of the controller.
- 17.12 Control over another may take the form of **abuse**. The victims of abuse, particularly if they are children, suffer feelings of pollution, dirtiness, guilt, worthlessness and rejection. The abuser often reinforces these feelings in the victim in order to secure secrecy and increase control. The **cancelling** of this control mechanism, perhaps years after the abuse has taken place, is fundamentally a spiritual act. It involves taking the authority of Christ in prayer and breaking the bond.
- 17.13 The person who controls often exercises power over other people by **manipulation**. Extreme examples of this are blackmail and the threat of suicide, although it takes many other forms, some seemingly quite innocuous. Almost invariably it is an **invasion** of another person's life in terms of time, home, family, interests and work. This invasive influence can also be manifest in physical illness.
- 17.14 When a part, or the whole, of our lives is controlled by another person or influence, it is virtually impossible to break free by **human** means alone. St. Paul describes this difficulty in terms of our slavery to sin (Rom 7.14-19).
- 17.15 Our wrong relationship with God is put right through the death of Jesus on the Cross. The control of sin and other negative influences on our lives is **destroyed** by the power of God's Holy Spirit (Rom 8.2).
- 17.16 The controlling influence of others is **removed** when we place God at the very centre of our lives and when we allow Jesus to heal our wrong relationships.
- 17.17 It is only when we **surrender** fully to the control of God's Spirit that we become free (2 Cor 3.17).

18. Perceptions and Feelings

- 18.1 Our relationships with God, ourselves and others are governed by how we **perceive** ourselves in comparison with others. We may regard them as inferior, or superior. We may regard them as a potential threat or as a potential benefit to us. We may seek to exploit them or allow them to exploit us.
- 18.2 Wrong perceptions and negative feelings **separate** us from others and from God. The healing of Jesus sets us free to be close to others and close to God.
- 18.3 We perceive one another on the basis of **categories**.
- 18.4 We categorise some as old, some as young, some as academic, some not so. We categorise according to physical attributes, personality traits, positions held and lifestyle lived. We categorise on the basis of **gender**.
- 18.5 The process of categorisation is initiated by the necessity for us to establish a clear and reliable **relationship** with others - are they friend or are they foe? Do they like

me or hate me? Do they agree with me or disagree with me? Do they accept me or do they reject me?

- 18.6 **Ambivalence** in answering these questions creates **insecurity** and **uncertainty**, whether they appear to be relevant or not.
- 18.7 The process of perceiving others involves a **hierarchy** of processes of evaluation - Do I say 'this is a competent person?' or do I say 'this is a competent woman?' or do I say 'this is a woman who is competent?'. Is her competence or her womanhood the **predominant** reaction. My perception depends upon my understanding of competence, it depends upon my sex, it depends upon the generality of my **attitude** to members of the female sex.
- 18.8 When two people meet there is an immediate reaction in worldly terms to establish who is the **senior** of the two. This is based on who is richer, who is older, who is stronger, who is taller, who has power, etc.
- 18.9 The nature of a relationship is influenced by the degree to which those meeting, **embrace** one another and **enjoy** one another or compete with and challenge one another. Enjoyment may be based on shared beliefs and lifestyle; it may be based on common exploration. Clearly the sexual connotation of this is significant.
- 18.10 Society has perceived man as inevitably stronger, and therefore predestined to be the **dominant** gender, although this is being challenged in contemporary culture.
- 18.11 It is a question of debate as to which are the gender characteristics of individual men and women.
- 18.12 There is a difference between **perceived** and **actual** identity. It is distortion of perception with regard to ourselves and others which lead to difficulties in relationships.
- 18.13 Jesus shows us that others are to be **respected** and **loved** as unique individuals who are precious to God. He also shows that we are to respect and love ourselves.
- 18.14 Jesus teaches that we are all of **equal value** in God's sight and that those who seek to be first will be last. (Mat 20.16).
- 18.15 We may regard a relationship as **transactional**, in which there is a negotiated exchange of benefits for both parties.
- 18.16 Jesus teaches that our attitude to others reflects our attitude to **Him**. He said "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matt 25.40). Thus, as Christians, our perception of others must be that they can be as Jesus to us.
- 18.17 Christians see relationships as **opportunities** to love, serve and forgive. We are encouraged to give expecting nothing in return. Jesus urges us to go the extra mile and to turn the other cheek.
- 18.18 Relationships based upon the exertion of **authority** tend to inhibit mutual trust, sharing and intimacy. Jesus lived the life of lowliness - born in a stable, crucified with criminals, riding on a donkey, washing His followers' feet, yet in His servant role He exercised total authority.
- 18.19 The aim of **gaining** power, money and position directly governs our relationship with others. If we are primarily concerned with success and failure we will not walk easily with Jesus who had dubious friends, loved the poor and spurned money, power and human authority.
- 18.20 Emotions are given to us by God and enable us to **share** and **communicate** in our relationships with Him and others.
- 18.21 When our emotions are **damaged**, our ability to communicate and share with God and with others may become impaired and our perception of them may be distorted.
- 18.22 Our feelings at any given moment are subject to **change** depending upon variables such as the time of day, location, associated memories, physical illness etc.

- 18.23 Relationships which are based upon **feelings** and human **perception** alone will be unbalanced and often inconsistent.
- 18.24 God's Holy Spirit is Truth and Love. He enables us to see others through the eyes of Jesus and **empowers** us to love with the consistency of God's love, irrespective of our personal hurts and frailties.
- 18.25 It is often through our relationships with others that we become **aware** of our own faults and weaknesses. Negative feelings, when shared and offered to God, can point us to the areas of our own lives which need healing.
- 18.26 When we focus our attention upon our feelings and allow them to dictate our behaviour, we are at risk of **damaging** both ourselves and others.
- 18.27 Jesus comes to **share** in all our feelings and to heal the wounds from which they come. He transforms hatred into love, anxiety into peace, fear into security and guilt into confidence.

19. Balance and Breakdown

- 19.1 **Balance** is a crucial element to physical, spiritual and emotional health. It is a gift of God.
- 19.2 We can only experience balance in our lives when there is a **fixed central pivot** which is our reference point.
- 19.3 Balanced **relationships** depend upon a constant reference point. God alone is absolute.
- 19.4 Relationships which are based solely upon our **feelings** or on what others say, rather than upon God who is Truth, will be **inconsistent** and will ultimately break down.
- 19.5 God alone is **constant**. When we centre our lives around anything or anyone else, we are subject to imbalance and even breakdown.
- 19.6 Our **imbalanced** relationships are signs of our need for healing.
- 19.7 The balance which creates healthy relationships comes from the experience of the security of constant **love**. This is the basis of the family unit and should be visible in the **Family of God**.
- 19.8 Human family relationships depend fundamentally upon **commitment**. The contractual marriage relationship is permanent and binding. However, we now live in a culture of rapid change and temporary relationships which are given little or no value.
- 19.9 The breakdown of the relationship between husband and wife frequently leads to the rejection of **children** by one or other of them.
- 19.10 The collapse of healthy relationships within the family repeatedly leads to children feeling the acute pain of **rejection**. This makes them insecure. The emotional damage often remains for many years causing damage to their relationships and to future generations.
- 19.11 When people feel **insecure** in a relationship they become emotionally and spiritually impaired.
- 19.12 **Previously encountered** pain often causes a fear of commitment in subsequent relationships. It is for this reason that many couples live together without being married and have children in this state. The insecurity of non-permanent relationships has a damaging effect on both parents and their children.

- 19.13 **Breakdowns** in relationships which culminate in conflict are almost invariably rooted in a disputed claim to authority. Physical violence or verbal abuse gives the perpetrator, if only momentarily, total authority over his or her victim.
- 19.14 **Confrontation** and **conflict** essentially start in the hearts of individual men and women and are the root of all wars. In nations and tribes there is a point at which opposing forces become so antagonistic and mutually exclusive that relationships collapse and violence takes over.
- 19.15 A society in which human relationships are **damaged** on a large scale (as in our country today) is at risk of anarchy and collapse. The debasement and trivialisation of human relationships is a destabilizing influence upon society.
- 19.16 The **family** is the basic unit of society. When the family is threatened, society as a whole is at risk. The way in which we treat our children and the relationships we have with them are a measure of our **civilisation**. On this score Christian civilisation is now endangered.
- 19.17 The need to apply the teachings of Jesus to **families** and **nations** as well as individuals is self evident. National and family guilt, national and family repentance and national and family forgiveness, although dismissed by some, are powerful spiritual and political acts.
- 19.18 When the **sin** of wrong relationships is dealt with by Christ, broken relationships are healed. When God is our reference point, we experience balance in our relationships and in our lives.

20. Aberrant Sexual Relationships

- 20.1 **Wrong** sexual role models can cause considerable suffering.
- 20.1.1 With the growth of more single parent families a child may be completely deprived of the influence of an adult of the opposite sex. Many young boys have been deprived of a father as a role model and, therefore, subconsciously feel that they have been **robbed**. They may then go out in adulthood to seek that which they did not have i.e. male company.
- 20.1.2 Similarly, a girl brought up in a predominantly male environment may gravitate towards those activities directly linked to male gender. On maturing she will desire the **gentleness** and other female attributes of which she has been deprived by her unnatural circumstance, and may have a deep instinctive drive to seek female company.
- 20.1.3 Healing in this situation is to be found in the discovery of self-worth in Christ and the establishment of a healthy **child/parent** relationship with God.
- 20.2 Normal sexual development can be damaged, causing considerable pain.
- 20.2.1 The **pendulum** which swings in normal early childhood between a male and a female emphasis may for a variety of reasons become 'fixed' or 'frozen' in one position. Thus a male child may experience a trauma during a period of experiencing a female emphasis within his life. This trauma or other experience during adolescence may prevent him from maturing and he thus becomes locked into an opposite gender role.
- 20.2.2 The healing of this situation lies in dealing with the particular **event** in such a way that its powerful influence is removed and unnatural, destructive bonds broken.
- 20.3. **Trauma** and **abnormal** environment can damage sexuality.
- 20.3.1 A child or adolescent at a normal stage of sexual development may be confronted with a **shock** or be the victim of an offence which causes them to react violently away from the sex of the offender or cause of the shock. Thus the victim of a rape, especially in childhood and adolescence, may put all the blame upon **all** males, who are thus rejected in totality.

- 20.3.2 Hidden fear of a **repetition** of a trauma frequently forces people into the company of the same sex. Normal sexual attitudes then become introverted (causing intense loneliness) or directed towards the same gender (causing confusion).
- 20.3.3 The healing of sexual damage caused in childhood is always rooted in the giving and receiving of **forgiveness**, and the expression of **love** in the name of Christ towards the person who offended.
- 20.3.4 The person who is placed in an **abnormal** and **restrictive** environment in which free association with the opposite sex is prevented or strictly controlled, is particularly likely to be vulnerable to homosexual liaison. This has proved to be the case in men's and women's prisons and to a limited extent in the armed forces. It appears to demolish the argument that the homosexual condition always starts at **birth** or before.
- 20.3.5 There is growing evidence that people who are not intrinsically homosexual may be **led** into this pattern of behaviour by others, particularly when they are emotionally immature. Incontrovertible evidence of this is to be found in the consequences of assaults upon young boys in Scout Groups and public schools.
- 20.4 Sexual identity crises can distort normal sexuality
- 20.4.1 The homosexual experiences a personal **identity crisis** of enormous magnitude and tends to be in conflict with himself or herself.
- 20.4.2 Homosexuals seek to resolve the conflict through **same-sex bonding**. The conflict, however, is not resolved in this way.
- 20.4.3 The homosexual (especially the male) will constantly seek out new partners in a desperate (but subconscious) search for a **resolution** of his problems.
- 20.4.4 It is recognised that extreme **tension** and hypersensitivity is a characteristic of homosexual relationships.
- 20.4.5 The practice of homosexuality involves the desire to **possess** and consume what the homosexual sees as being in another person but which he or she lacks. This has often been referred to as 'cannibalism' because apparently cannibals eat what they admire hoping that the good traits of the person consumed will become theirs. In a similar manner the homosexual seeks to **own** the characteristics of his/her partner.
- 20.5 The condition of homosexuality can be changed.
- 20.5.1 There is considerable evidence to show that homosexuality is not a **fixed** all-life condition. For example the Pillard/Weinrich report from the University of Boston (archives of Psychiatry 1986) shows that brothers of homosexual men are more than five times more likely to be homosexual or bisexual than brothers from families which are totally heterosexual. Many heterosexuals have been drawn into homosexuality through a variety of different influences and encounters, often **reverting** with considerable pain and guilt to their original condition.
- 20.5.2 The disorder of homosexuality should not be seen as inherently sinful, but it should not be ignored that sometimes it is rooted in either a sinful desire or a demonic attack, the latter even being transmitted ancestrally. Experience points to the initial need for healing the **parent/child** relationships from which flows a developed sense of gender.
- 20.5.3 There is a remarkably high success rate in leading homosexuals into heterosexuality through **Christian healing**. Countless examples of this are to be found in the ministry of Leanne Payne. Rev. John. Hampsch has given much evidence of the healing of homosexuals through the work of 'Desert Stream' one of twenty-five groups listed in the central referral agency of Exodus International.
- 20.6 Aspects of homosexuality raise fundamental issues concerning society and a personal faith.
- 20.6.1 One of the characteristics of contemporary homosexuality is **promiscuity** which causes immense emotional damage. 'Gay' magazines invariably advertise potential sexual partners and the services of homosexual prostitutes. Multi-partner

homosexual activity was undoubtedly the most important single factor in the high incidence of Aids sufferers in this category.

- 20.6.2 There is widespread ignorance of the emotional and often physical **dangers** of active homosexuality. Male homosexuals practising buggery frequently develop serious physical difficulties because of the unnatural nature of the act.
- 20.6.3 There is widespread ignorance, particularly within the churches in the United Kingdom about God's power to heal homosexuals. This ignorance is clearly based on a lack of **experience** of this particular Christian healing ministry.
- 20.6.4 Homosexual child abuse and other sexual **deviant** behaviour often has its root in occult practice or involvement in the drug culture.
- 20.6.5 Many homosexuals are the **victims** of earlier assaults or the casualties of broken and corrupted families. The hurts inflicted upon them as children are manifest in their adult life.
- 20.6.6 The way in which we perceive ourselves and others is fundamentally **changed** when a person grows in Christian faith.
- 20.6.7 Radical changes, both **behavioural** and **relational**, come when the basic problem of homosexuality is properly dealt with and resolved.
- 20.6.8 The teaching of the Bible and the Church throughout the centuries is that genital homosexual activity is totally **unacceptable** and **sinful**. It has always been seen as emotionally, physically and socially **harmful** and corrupting.
- 20.6.9 'Gay' movements are today actively seeking to establish homosexual activity as **normal** and are currently targeting church organisations and specifically rejecting biblical teaching.
- 20.6.10 Those who resist them for perfectly valid reasons are **stigmatised** and they have even invented the word "homophobia" to describe those who disagree with them. Using precisely the same techniques as fascist and communist dictators they label those who disagree with them as suffering from a disorder!

21. Integration and Wholeness

- 21.1 We become whole when every part of our lives is held in perfect **balance**. This can only happen when we are truly one with God.
- 21.2 The integration of all the facets of our lives is the process of healing all our **relationships** - with others, with creation, with ourselves and above all with God.
- 21.3 The western world has adopted the thinking of the Greeks who separated the human being into body, mind and spirit. Integration is inhibited by this **fragmentation** of our lives.
- 21.4 It is **unnatural** to separate our everyday lives from our spirituality. Secular mankind is suffering because of its failure to understand the spiritual dimension of living.
- 21.5 Integration involves finding our true **identity** which only God can reveal to us. He does this by enabling us to see ourselves as He sees us. Pascal wrote "not only do we know God through Jesus Christ alone, but we do not even know ourselves except through Jesus Christ."
- 21.6 We are shaped and moulded by **personal** and **social** circumstances during the whole course of our lives. We inevitably become 'unbalanced' when there is a lack or an excess of any one type of influence exerted upon us.
- 21.7 It is God's desire to heal all the wrong relationships in our lives, both past and present, and to **restore** us to our true identity. Jesus gives us the desire and power to forgive those who hurt us. We can then be set free from fear, guilt, regret and obsession.

- 21.8 Wholeness involves **loving ourselves**. This love is God-centered and not self-centred. It enables us to look upward, outward and forward, rather than inward, downward and backward. It is thus a liberating influence.
- 21.9 Loving relationships are at the core of our Christian healing. Jesus affirms "you shall love the Lord your God....and your neighbour as yourself". He shows us the meaning of love. He shows us how to **give** and **receive** love. He also reveals both God and our neighbour to us.
- 21.10 Brokenness is the price we pay for fractured relationships. The process of healing is a process of **integration** and **wholeness** as opposed to disintegration and separation.

22. Intimacy

- 22.1 The Bible emphasises the **nearness** of God. (Ps 119.151, Ps 145.18, Is 55.6)
- 22.2 **Separation** from God is the root of our troubles.
- 22.3 One of the most fundamental problems in society today is human **loneliness**.
- 22.4 When we feel alone and **disconnected**, we experience insecurity, introversion, impaired judgement (through the lack of confirmation and discernment by others), and an inability to receive what God wants to give us through other members of the Body of Christ.
- 22.5 It is a human characteristic to be sensitive about matters which we consider strictly **personal** and private to ourselves. This sensitivity may lead us to shield these matters not only from others but also from the healing influence of God.
- 22.6 We all have **secrets** which we consciously or unconsciously keep behind doors which are bolted and barred. The Bible teaches that God is **all-seeing** and **all-knowing**. Consequently he knows all these secrets. In fact He knows us better than we know ourselves.
- 22.7 Psalm 139 emphasises that God knew us in our mother's womb, that He knows everything about us and that **we cannot remove ourselves from Him**, either in the heights or the depths. When we come to God we are actually naked before Him.
- 22.8 There is a fundamental fear in human beings about what we perceive to be the nature of God. We do not want Him too close in case He **interferes**. We do not want to hear Him speak in case we do not like what He says.
- 22.9 If we have not experienced God as a **loving Father**, His nearness may seem like the threat of intrusion by a higher authority.
- 22.10 Nothing can **separate** us from God's love (Rom 8.39). He breaks down every barrier.
- 22.11 We feel **insecure, lonely** and **rejected** when we are separated from God. On His Cross Jesus quoted Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?". He experienced the desolation of separation from God. He thus experienced the desolation of all who have expelled God from their lives or who have wandered so far away that they are lost and alone in the desert of life.
- 22.12 God, in Christ knows **precisely** how we feel. In Christ He shares our humanity. Jesus wept. Jesus could be angry. Jesus suffered and carried our sorrows.
- 22.13 Jesus establishes a very **intimate** relationship between us and God. He teaches that the hairs on our head are numbered. He is the Good Shepherd who knows each member of the flock and who is known by each one. God calls us by our name.
- 22.14 The Bible depicts God as one who takes **initiatives**. He is the God who comes. He comes to us in Jesus. He is constantly searching for the sheep that is lost. It is not

an issue of humankind's long search for God, but rather of God's long and persistent **search for us**.

- 22.15 Only when we allow God to come **close** to us do we really discover ourselves. When we acknowledge that God is a part of our lives we discover our true identity.
- 22.16 God reveals to us that we can only be **fulfilled** when we become as little children and allow Him to adopt us into His family and relate to one another as brothers and sisters. In Christ we become closer to God and simultaneously closer to one another.
- 22.17 Only when we allow God to come close to us can He really influence us. After His resurrection, Christ came to His followers. He entered into their room, revealed His wounds, gave them His peace. He **drew** near to them and breathed upon them. Following this they received His Spirit. Today, if we do not allow God to draw sufficiently close to us to breathe on our lives we prevent Him from giving us His Spirit, who is Love and Truth, life and peace.
- 22.18 Human disorders and diseases are rooted in our **separation** from God, which also separates us from ourselves and others.
- 22.19 When we are **disconnected** from God we are powerless. Jesus teaches that we are all branches of the one true vine and that apart, i.e. separate from Him we can do nothing.
- 22.20 When we enter into an intimate relationship with God a fundamental **healing** process is commenced. This healing process is a radical denial of our claim to **self-sufficiency**, **self-righteousness** and **self-healing**.
- 22.21 All our relationships are governed by our understanding of who **we** are and who **others** are. This, in turn, is governed by our understanding and experience of God as our Creator and the Ruler of the Universe, and of our acceptance or otherwise of Jesus Christ as Lord.
- 22.22 The early Church emerged as a community of people who shared their lives quite **intimately**. We, for our part today, both in Church and society, increasingly separate ourselves from one another. Individualism takes precedence over social well-being. As part of the living Body of Christ we discover that we are members one of another, fulfilling God's purposes and growing in faith. (Rom. 12.4)
- 22.23 Jesus clearly leads us into **intimacy** with God. This intimacy is not just personal - it applies to the whole Church, which is the Bride of Christ.
- 22.24 The Bible teaches that formerly we were **strangers** to God and therefore in unhealed relationships with one another. The great message of the Gospel is that "God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ." (2 Cor. 5.19) Jesus said "I no longer call you servants....I have called you friends" "love each other as I have loved you" (Jn 15.15 & 12).

23. Relationships Within the Body of Christ

- 23.1 We are called to **love** one another.
"A new command I give you : love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13.34 N.I.V.)
"This is my commandment to you : love one another" (John 15.17 REB)
"Now that you have purified your souls by obedience to the truth until you feel sincere affection towards your fellow Christians, love one another whole-heartedly with all your strength". (1 Peter 1.22 REB)
- 23.2 We are called to be **hospitable** to one another.
"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling" (1 Peter 4.9 NIV)
- 23.3 We have a responsibility to **bear one another's burdens**.
"Carry each other's burdens, that is how to keep the love of Christ." (Gal 6.2 NJB)

- 23.4 We are called to be **kind** to one another.
"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you". (Eph. 4.32 NIV)
- 23.5 We are called to **comfort** one another.
"Console one another, then, with these words". (1. Thes. 4.18 REB)
- 23.6 We are called to **encourage** one another.
"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing". (1 Thes. 5.11 NIV)
"Rather, day by day, as long as that word 'today' sounds in your ears, encourage one another, so that no one of you is made stubborn by the wiles of sin." (Heb. 3.13 REB)
- 23.7 We are called to regard others as more important than ourselves and to be clothed with **humility**.
"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." (Phil. 2.3 NIV)
"In the same way, younger people, be subject to the elders. Humility towards one another must be the garment you all wear constantly, because 'God opposes the proud but accords his favour to the humble.'" (1 Pet. 5.5 NJB)
- 23.8 We are encouraged to confess our sins, to **pray** for one another and to **forgive** one another.
"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective". (James 5.16 NIV)
"Be generous to one another, sympathetic, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ." (Eph 4.32 NJB)
"Bear with one another, forgive each other if one of you has a complaint against another. The Lord has forgiven you, how you must do the same". (Col. 3.13 NJB)
- 23.9 We are warned against **lying** to one another, against **speaking against** one another and against having law suits against one another.
"Do not lie to one another, now that you have discarded the old human nature and the conduct that goes with it,..." (Col. 3.9 REB)
"This is what you must do : speak the truth to each other, administer true and sound justice in your courts." (Zechariah 8.16 REB)
"Do not make complaints against one another, brothers, so as not to be brought to judgement yourselves, the judge is already to be seen waiting at the gates." (James 5.9 NJB)
"The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?" (1 Cor. 6.7 NIV)
- 23.10 Our relationship with one another should be obvious - greeting one another with a **kiss**, being **at peace** with one another and being ready to **wash one another's feet**.
"Greet one another with a loving kiss. Peace to you all who belong to Christ." (1 Peter 5.14 REB)
"Greetings from the whole brotherhood. Greet one another with the kiss of peace." (1 Cor. 16.20 REB)
"Greet one another with the holy kiss. All God's holy people send you their greetings". (2Cor. 13.12 NJB)
"Now that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet." (John 13.14 NIV)
"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other." (Mark 9.5- NIV)
"So then, let us be always seeking the ways which lead to peace and the ways in which we can support one another." (Romans 14.19 NJB)
- 23.11 Our relationship with one another must be on the basis of **fellowship** and being of the **same mind**.
"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1.7 NIV)
"Give the same consideration to all others alike. Pay no regard to social standing, but meet humble people on their own terms. Do not congratulate yourself on your own wisdom." (Romans 12.16 NJB)
"Now the God of perseverance and encouragement give you all the same purposes, following the example of Christ Jesus,..." (Romans 15.5 NJB)

24. Barriers to the healing of relationships.

- 24.1 We may refuse to believe that we need healing, and to identify the failures in relationships.
- 24.2 We may refuse to **accept** ourselves and to **love** ourselves.
- 24.3 We may refuse or perhaps be unable to **forgive** others.
- 24.4 We may refuse and perhaps be unable to **receive forgiveness** from others.
- 24.5 We may refuse or perhaps be unable to **love** others.
- 24.6 We may refuse or perhaps refuse to **receive love** from others.
- 24.7 Our decisions are dictated by our **will**. The power to implement our decisions is a gift of the **Holy Spirit**. He prompts us. He enables us. He empowers us.

25. Conclusion

- 25.1 The Church should be a **model** of right relationships. Jesus said "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (Jn. 13.35)
- 25.2 The Church is God's **instrument** for mending broken relationships. This healing ministry is central to the Gospel.
- 25.3 Christians should be totally committed to a **ministry** of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5.18)
- 25.4 **There is no human situation or damaged relationship which is beyond the healing power of God.**

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Note: For further reading on different aspects of the Christian Healing ministry, the following Maranatha Community publications are available from 102 Irlam Road, Flixton, Manchester M41 6JT Tel: 0161 748 4858 Email: info@maranathcommunity.org.uk

Teaching Notes:

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"Generational Healing"
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"The Healing Ministry Life Prayer"
"True and False New Age"
"Healing of Creation"
"The Body of Christ"

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The Maranatha Community is a growing Christian Community committed to Renewal, Unity and Healing. Its members include Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Salvationists, Pentecostalists and members of the United Reformed and Independent Churches. We are one in Christ. Our aim is to be more effective as Christians in the places where we live, worship and work. Maranatha has spread throughout the country.