

HARVEST

BY ANDERS LITZELL

*"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! **They are ripe for harvest...** Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor" (John 4:35b,38).*

It is 2012 and I have just been ordained a Deacon in London Diocese, serving my curacy in an inner-city church surrounded by hospitals. My wife Kate was desperately sick at the time with a concoction of tropical diseases. While I am Swedish, Kate is South African and was at the time travelling extensively across Latin America to develop the Alpha Course. This was the second time she had to undergo a complex treatment; the relapse probably triggered by complications around our eldest, Henry's, birth six months earlier.

It was a hard time. Very. But God was starting to whisper to us: "this time I will heal you, not the medicine". As we said our 'yes, we dare to believe' to God, He silently put two things in motion.

The one led us, half a year later, to a church we knew nothing about called Bethel, in Redding California; where Kate was comprehensively healed and could stop all her medications overnight. Not only that, but a sustained wave of physical healing broke out in our home church.

It came with crucible moments of real soul-searching for us, as when little Isaac died. Isaac had been treated at the neighboring Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and made a miraculous recovery – but it was temporary. We were also gradually discovering more about our son Henry's rare medical situation.

At the end of the day, we could only say with Peter "Lord, to whom else could we go?" and reaffirm our desire and commitment to see the Father glorified as His children are saved, healed and delivered in the name of Jesus Christ by the power of His Holy spirit.

But let's re-wind a moment. Right at the start I got this "silly" idea, to climb up in the roof-space of the church. The thought wouldn't go away. I don't know what I expected to find, except the church was built in 1703 and more than a little rickety. The attic was completely empty. Disappointed, I turn to climb down the ladder, which reached vertically up from the balcony. As I turn, I catch sight of a small blue book, right next to the trap door.

How it came to be there, I can only guess; I could just make out the faded white print “HEALING VENTURE” on the spine. Excited I opened it—cue goosebumps—and found that it was the account of a ministry called the Healing Homes of Africa, in Durban, South Africa, where Kate is from, established in 1945; I even recognised the specific location! The book was written by its founder Rev’d Edward Wickley D.D. O.S.L (whatever O.S.L. was...).

There is much to say about the Healing Homes of Africa and the astounding testimonies of physical and inner healing (ranging from a 2-year old child’s fingers growing out from nothing, to healing of PTSD for returning POWs). The Home also welcomed (in the terminology of the time) “Europeans” and “Africans” alike, to occupy over 100 residential beds. In time we shall find the way to honour what God did then, as a prayer: “Do it again Lord!”

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Much to my surprise, having read halfway through the book, God stopped me and said, “the book is not for now.” I put it aside, and we pursued the route that led us to Bethel as mentioned above. I did not read the book again until God had brought us to a church in Durban, where I would serve as the Rector.

Now, eager to engage with this inheritance again, I read the book cover to cover and began to research “OSL,” if it still existed. Eventually, I found my way to a Facebook group for the 2019 Orlando Conference. How we came to attend is another God-story of unlikely grace. In Orlando we were introduced to the ministry of inner healing on a level we did not even know existed, while our son back in South Africa experienced a dramatic physical improvement at the same time as we were praying for him with the Orlando team.

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In the time since, God’s call has matured in us, and we have received so much healing for ourselves while learning about inner healing from several sources but most prominently through Sharon Lewis’ ministry. God made it abundantly clear—though not through easy routes—that He wanted us to devote ourselves exclusively to the healing ministry, and so we have left diocesan ministry and established the Community of Christ the Healer, which is a registered

charity in its own right, but which meets as an OSL Healing Community both online and in person.

We only begun this ministry formally in April this year, but already we are running two concurrent *26 Miracles* courses (the first one led by the eminent Kathleen Adams via Zoom) and what we thought would be a small group meeting in our living room ended up spanning four continents, and the first Full members will have been inducted by the time this goes to press.

Our vision for the Community of Christ the Healer going forward is constantly being re-shaped as God reveals more of His abundance, and opens more doors. Truly God is shaping this, and we are not. Already we have been invited to run a workshop on recovery from trauma by the Westville Churches group, and as I’m writing this we have received an open invitation to minister to a Government Hospital in the area, which has just over 100 beds with mostly stroke, accidents or gunshot injuries—all but a few are in wheelchairs, or bedridden. While intended as a place for rehabilitation, many or even most patients end up spending the remainder of their lives there, as the poor communities they come from do not in any way allow them to live an independent life, so a discharge is dependent on family members’ ability to care for them. It feels to me in every way like a modern-day pool of Bethesda.

I have been marvelling at the mystery of how harvest works in the Kingdom of Heaven; I am at once being gathered into the safety of God’s embrace, and at the same time I am out there gathering with Him. The groups of people currently doing the *26 Healing Miracles* course with us are, likewise, at the same time being healed, and becoming healers. What will the future hold? I don’t know, but since Paul worships “*Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us,*” then it seems like it is my job to imagine big.

So I am imagining, with God, the raising up of these men and women—many of them young—to be those who will walk(!) into their home communities, and “report to them what great things the Lord has done.”



Kate and Anders left careers in Investment Banking and IT respectively for full-time ministry. They set up their married home in London when Anders was ordained in the Church of England with theology awards from Wheaton College, IL, Cambridge University/Ridley Hall and a PhD in progress. Anders served a curacy in London Diocese, before taking up a position as the founding Prior of the Community of St. Anselm at Lambeth Palace; Kate moved on to be head of Church Planting for Holy Trinity Brompton and drafting London Diocese’ growth strategy until the time came to put the growing family first—they have two children, Henry and Isabella. In, 2017 God surprisingly called them to South Africa and Kate’s hometown of Durban, and after four years as Rector of an Anglican parish, they founded the Community of Christ the Healer together, which now is their sole ministry focus.