

# Exposing the Invasion of the New Age in the Church

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This booklet will define and describe a number of occult and New Age practices that have found widespread acceptance in the American church today. There are so many of them, and they enjoy such widespread acceptance, that it may not be an overstatement to say that nearly every church in this country has at least one member who has done or is doing one or more of these things, completely without knowledge that they are engaging in sinful behavior. Because there are so many of them, and because new ones are constantly being introduced, this booklet will also attempt to give some broad principles that will help to identify whether a particular practice is occult or New Age.

*“For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. Strong meat belongs to the mature, even those who by reason of use have exercised their senses to discern both good and evil.” (Hebrews 5:13)*

The underlying philosophy, which these diverse practices share, is the concept of “Vital Force.” The belief in a vital force is shared by the Eastern religious philosophies of both China and India. This article will demonstrate that portions of these two religions have successfully invaded the American church as New Age occultism.

The concept of vital force is just like “The Force” in the movie Star Wars. It is said to be an ‘energy’ in, around, and through humans, connecting them to the rest of the universe and everything in it. It is a commodity that can be acquired, stored, exchanged, channeled, and used. Notice the use of the word “it;” the most significant aspect of the vital force is that it is impersonal, like the “god” of the Chinese and Indian religions. By contrast, a personal God, such as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaks to the people that He has made. He regularly speaks about uncomfortable topics, such as personal sin, as demonstrated in the following Bible passage:

*“Wash you, make you clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil; learn to do well.....Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but, if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.” (Isaiah 1:16-20)*

Conveniently for those who practice these religions, the impersonal “god” force of these religions never requires a person to repent of personal sin. It never holds a person personally guilty before a holy God of transgressing His moral law. And, it thus has no place for the bloody work that Christ did when he died on the cross to atone for the sins of the world. Therefore, these religions, and the occultic New Age practices that they have injected into the American church, are by definition anti-Christ.

What bait can the devil possibly have used to draw Bible-believing, Holy Ghost-filled believers in the Lord Jesus Christ into blatant, anti-Christ, New Age occultism? Satan’s drawing card to entice God’s people has been the promise of physical, mental, and emotional health and healing offered by alternative medicine and complementary therapies. Christians are flocking literally by the millions to these practices in an attempt to heal an ailment, to maintain what they consider to be optimum health, or to relieve mental and emotional stress.

Most of the practices mentioned here can best be conceptualized as Energy Medicine, that is, the disease in question is a result of the affected body part having too much, too little, or the wrong kind of energy flowing to

it and through it. This energy is synonymous with the term vital force, used earlier. The cure for the malady, therefore, is getting more energy or a better balance of energy to that limb, organ, or system. Energy medicine is practiced on a patient in many different ways, but they mostly seem to lump themselves into two broad categories, those rooted in ancient Chinese religion and philosophy, and those rooted in ancient Indian religion and philosophy.

Ancient Chinese religion and philosophy views everything in the universe as being linked together by chi (pronounced “chee,” and sometimes written as qi). Chi is the vital life “force” or energy that flows throughout the body along pathways (called meridians) that connect all organs and systems. Each meridian is said to affect a particular organ or body system. Disruptions in the flow of chi are said to cause imbalance and illness.

The following are therapies or disciplines which have gained widespread and nearly complete acceptance in the church today, almost all of which are based on the aforementioned occultic, New Age, and anti-Christ religious philosophy.

**Acupuncture** is an ancient Chinese therapy that uses very thin needles inserted at designated points (called acupoints) along meridians on the body to balance the flow of chi and to restore health. There are possibly as many as 10,000 trained acupuncturists in the U.S., and an additional 4,000 physicians who have taken classes to learn the technique. Acupuncture represents the biggest threat for people to inadvertently expose themselves directly to New Age occultism.

**Acupressure** is essentially the same practice as acupuncture, but without the needles. Firm finger pressure is applied to the acupoints to restore a balanced flow of chi to the affected body part.

**Shiatsu** is an ancient Japanese system of massage. It is based on the Chinese acupuncture system and applies gentle pressure to balance the flow of chi. It differs mainly from acupressure in that the pressure is applied in a rhythmic fashion and that it focuses on prevention rather than treatment.

**Reflexology** is a treatment based on the theory that parts of the feet (called reflex points) are related to specific body organs or functions. Stimulation by finger and thumb massage is believed to eliminate energy blockages that cause health problems.

**Chinese Herbal Medicine** is based on the philosophy that certain herbs will restore a balanced flow of chi to the afflicted area of the body. This therapy is often a last ditch effort by those patients with advanced cancer.

**Aromatherapy** involves the therapeutic use of odors from distilled plant oils. Aromatherapy says that the body vibrates at a certain frequency. These essential oils distilled from plants are also said to vibrate at certain frequencies. By applying one of these oils or a combination of oils to certain acupoints, many health problems are said to be solved. Also, vaporizing the oils into the air where they are then inhaled is said to bring many health benefits. Aromatherapy draws heavily on acupuncture theory and reflexology.

**Iridology** is a diagnostic technique practiced by proponents of a macrobiotic diet. The macrobiotic diet is based on the theory that certain kinds of food embody more or less of either the yin or the yang principle. The yin and yang principles are rooted in Chinese Taoist religious philosophy and are the opposing forces giving rise to the entire universe, including chi energy. In macrobiotics, foods are selected to eat based on their relative content of either the yin or yang principle in an effort to achieve a yin-yang balance. Iridology is based on the theory that all of the body’s organs and systems are represented by different points found on the iris of the eye. By studying the appearance of the iris, diseases can be diagnosed.

**Applied kinesiology** (sometimes called contact reflex analysis, AK, Behavioral or Bio-Kinesiology, or MRT) is a technique used to diagnose weaknesses or nutritional deficiencies in organs or systems, allergies, and more serious illnesses, such as cancer. The process is rather complicated. Basically, different substances are

given to the patient to hold or to put under their tongue. Certain trigger spots are touched along the body's meridians while the therapist tests the muscle strength of the patient's outstretched arm or thumb and forefinger. Perceived strengths or weaknesses in the muscle responses are used to determine the prescription and dosage of herbs, vitamins, and dietary changes. This practice relies heavily on acupuncture theory and the concept of chi energy, although the energy is described in more scientific sounding terms. Sometimes the therapist will even think certain kinds of thoughts while remaining silent to see what kind of muscle response the patient has. In other words, it uses the psychic powers of telepathy as part of its diagnosis.

**Homeopathy** is a method of treatment where tiny amounts of poison are diluted and ingested. These poisons are substances which would cause the same symptoms in the patient as those for which he is seeking treatment. The idea is that the body will respond to the tiny amount of symptom-causing poison in such a way as to actually be strengthened, much the same way as an immunization works. What makes homeopathy occultic is that the poison solutions are so incredibly diluted (literally, the equivalent of dropping a pinch of salt in the Atlantic Ocean), that there is actually none of the poison left in the solution. Instead, what is said to be left is its vital force, vital spirit, or energy footprint that has been left in the solution during the long process of dilution, shaking, dilution, shaking, dilution, and more shaking.

**Biomeridianism** is a diagnostic technique based on acupuncture, homeopathic, and reflexology theory. Probes attached to an MSA machine are placed at different points on the patient's hands and feet to identify the physiological source of imbalances which are causing the symptoms in the patient. Homeopathic remedies are usually recommended to treat the imbalances.

**Tai chi** (pronounced "tie chee") is an ancient Chinese martial art form designed to enhance the flow of chi in the body by certain flowing body movements. Particular attention is given to stretching the tendons, along which the chi is said to flow. The precise movements and breathing techniques result in a deeply meditative mental state.

**Feng shui** (pronounced "fung schway") is a way of arranging environmental surroundings in such a way as to attract or increase the flow of chi to a place or building. It is deeply superstitious and is filled with such injunctions as to keep the toilet lid closed so that the chi doesn't run down the drain. Feng shui also incorporates other superstitious factors such as horoscope, lucky numbers, placement, orientation, or shape of buildings and landscaping, etc., all in an effort to attract chi. It is based on the ancient Taoist religious volume entitled The I-Ching. Feng Shui enjoyed immense popularity around 2000-2002, and one could log on to the home pages of AOL.com or MSN.com to find out how to arrange your home furnishings using the principles of feng shui, but its popularity has seemed to wane lately. Perhaps people discovered the complex superstitions they would have to take into account in order to make it work for them. It is unclear exactly how Christians responded to this Oriental fad, and one can only hope that they were able to discern its occult roots.

**Therapeutic touch** (sometimes called healing hands, touch for health, or healing touch) actually does not involve touching the patient. In this technique, the therapist 1) clears his own mind to facilitate communication with the patient's energy field, 2) passes his hands above the patient's entire body to detect blockages in the normal flow of energy, 3) unruffles the patient's energy field to restore balance by sweeping stagnant energy downward past the patient's toes and out of the body, and 4) transfers his own excess energy to the patient to alter any misalignment in the patient's energy field. While bearing similarities to the Chinese therapies and possibly influenced by them, this technique is closely aligned with the use of psychic powers. As of 1995, this technique had been taught to over 40,000 people, many of them nurses working in hospitals and nursing homes. It was also being taught at 80 U.S. universities. "Energy field disturbance" is now an official nursing diagnosis.

**Reiki**, which is Japanese for "Universal Life Force Energy," is a practice where the therapist, who has been initiated to connect him to the metaphysical channel of reiki energy, puts his hands on the patient, transferring reiki to the patient to increase energy, reduce pain, produce deep relaxation, and promote a general feeling of well-being. Its formal name is the Usui System of Natural Healing.

Ancient Indian religion and philosophy views everything in the universe as being linked together by an invisible energy called prana (pronounced “prawna”). The Indian concept of prana energy appears to differ from the Chinese concept of chi energy in that an excess or imbalance of prana does not seem to be a relevant concept; the more prana the better. Prana is received into the body by breathing. Prana is said to circulate up and down the length of the spine through channels called nadis. One of the nadis is associated with femininity, coolness, intuitiveness, and the moon. The other one is associated with masculinity, warmth, aggressiveness, and the sun. As the prana travels through the nadis, it collects in seven consecutive energy centers called chakras. The chakras are associated with certain endocrine glands, and these glands are stimulated by the accumulation of prana, resulting in general health and wellbeing and heightened spiritual awareness and experience.

**Ayurveda** is the traditional healing art that has arisen out of this philosophy. Ayurveda sees the human body as a microcosm of the universe, consisting of the five elements of fire, water, earth, air, and ether (the spirit world), with each of these elements corresponding to one of the 5 senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight. Ayurveda seeks to let the body heal itself by taking the patient’s mind off of his sickness, deeply relaxing him, and focusing him on developing his spirituality. It does this through a regimen involving transcendental meditation, yoga, bliss therapy, primordial sound (such as chanting “OM”), and some herbal supplements. These disciplines are all designed to increase the presence of prana in the body. Ayurveda is being aggressively promoted from India by the infamous Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and in the United States by his disciple, Dr. Deepak Chopra, M.D. It has the potential to sweep through the American medical community like a tidal wave.

**Yoga** is to promote general physical, mental, and emotional health. Very commonly, yoga classes open with a series of poses called the Sun Salutation. The person practicing yoga begins with his hands held in front of his face in the universal Prayer Position. Then, he bows down and prostrates himself. Following some intermediate positions, he ends up in the Prayer Position. This series of exercises is intended to show respect for the sun and its life-giving power.

While most Americans are not actually intending to worship the sun through this ritual, and certainly no Christians would be intending to do so, it is, nevertheless, a mimicry of a pagan worship ritual, intentional or not. It is impossible to imagine the apostle Paul engaging in an imitation of a pagan sun worship ritual to relax his mind for a few minutes before his next gospel speaking engagement. Nevertheless, Paul exhorts the Christian to, “Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” If Paul wouldn’t do it, no Christian should do it. Moreover, the ancient and express purpose of yoga is to explore and plumb the deep realms of spiritual existence just as an astronaut would seek to explore outer space. It is not primarily or even secondarily a “workout” technique. The body movements are for no other purpose than to help the person doing them increase the flow of prana into their chakras, thus facilitating a transcendent spiritual consciousness which helps them experience unity (called samhadhi) with the impersonal Indian “god,” called the Brahman. In fact, the word yoga means “to yoke (together with the Universal Self/Life Force).”

The astounding popularity that yoga is currently enjoying makes it the single most likely port of entry into the an ancient Eastern philosophy of health and wellbeing. The method it uses to achieve its goals is to move the body through a series of ritualistic poses while the person practicing yoga focuses on regulated breathing. This combination of specific body poses combined with focused and regulated breathing is designed to lead the yoga practitioner to a relaxed and meditative mental state where the human soul is united with a Universal Spirit. Additionally, the flow of prana through the nadis into the chakras is said occult for Christians and non-Christians in America, and it therefore deserves special discussion here. Nearly every health club in the United States now has at least one yoga class, and it is not uncommon for larger-sized churches to host such classes as well. The classes that are found in churches and health clubs have usually intentionally tried to eliminate some of the more metaphysical sounding terminology and philosophy from their routines, attempting to focus entirely on the physical health and body strengthening benefits of this exercise. Sometimes they even add Christian music, meditation on Bible verses, etc, in an attempt to “Christianize” it.

Nevertheless, yoga is what it is, a spiritual worship ritual inextricably linked to an anti-Christ Indian religion. The question must be asked, if yoga is an anti-Christ spiritual poison of the deadliest sort, how diluted must it be made before one feels safe to drink it? Why drink it at all? Why not seek some other sort of physical conditioning? And, are the participants in the class being warned that, while they are drinking a “safe” version here (as if it were ever possible to really make yoga safe) that the yoga classes they might encounter elsewhere have grave spiritual consequences?

Consider the hypothetical case of a Christian woman who takes a “Christian” yoga class at her church. She loves the fellowship, the exercise, the praise music, and the scripture meditation. No mention is made of its occult Indian roots, no warnings are given about its close relationship with the New Age movement, and no rationale is given as explaining why this yoga is considered “safe” while all other yoga classes should be thoroughly avoided. A year later, she buys a house across town and begins attending a church that doesn’t offer yoga. She finds a yoga class, however, at a nearby YMCA. There is no praise music or scripture meditation, and she misses those things, but she is still getting a great workout. Also, the new visualization techniques she is taught during the times of meditation are making her feel good about herself and causing her to feel closer to God.

Another year goes by. She moves to Boston to take a new job and is having trouble finding a good church. Thankfully, however, there is a yoga studio right around the corner, so at least she can get a good workout while she looks for a place to fellowship. They do things a little differently at this yoga class; it seems a little more spiritually focused, but when everybody else is chanting “OM,” she just chants “Jesus.” What the teacher says about the Kundalini cobra spirit uncoiling from the base of the spine and moving up it to activate her chakras to bring her into Divine Consciousness seems really weird; during those times she just visualizes Jesus giving her a backrub from the base of her spine to the crown of her head. She never knew that Indian poetry was so beautiful and so spiritual. The teacher reads it over gentle music while they meditate. Those ancient Indian philosophers knew so much about God. Also, she’s made some new friends who are very health conscious. She wants to feel good about her body, so she’s starting to learn from one of them about how a macrobiotic diet could benefit her.

Another woman she met at the class is a certified acupressurist and was recently quoted in a Newsweek article about alternative medicine. The woman offered to give her a free treatment the next time she has one of her terrible migraine headaches. The new friend also said she would show her how reflexology might help her with some other minor health problems she was experiencing. The new friend said that, if the reflexology didn’t work, she could introduce her to another friend who owns a Chinese Herbal Medicine store. That friend could unquestionably diagnose the real root of these minor health problems using contact reflex analysis and then recommend some homeopathic treatments. And, the new acupressurist friend gave her the nicest housewarming gift...an aromatherapy candle.

This Christian woman is in big, big trouble, and the door to the occult was through the yoga class right in her very own church.

As is the danger with so many of these activities, a little yoga leads to more yoga. A little exposure to the occult leads to further exposure to the occult. Why not? If someone isn’t warned that even a little is dangerous, and the practices are not exposed as being occultic, why would someone be expected not to come back again for more?

*“For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and, if the root is holy, so are the branches.”*  
(Romans 11:16)

**But, what if the root is unholy?**

The practices described in this booklet, while widely accepted by mainstream America and by the American church, clearly have as their root the anti-Christ religions of China and India. If that is where they are rooted, then they are unquestionably tainted with those religions' occultism. Therefore, a Christian who indulges in them is participating in activities whose philosophical underpinnings are directly opposed to the biblical worldview and understanding of Almighty God which he supposedly professes. Christians are exhorted to:

*"...come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor 6:17)*

As if more reasons were needed to stay away from such therapies, the facts are that many of them are utterly discredited by scientific experimentation (iridology, aromatherapy, applied kinesiology), many others of them have no discernible basis in scientific fact (acupuncture, acupressure, shiatsu, reflexology, biomeridianism, chinese herbal medicine, therapeutic touch, reiki, hypnosis), and still others regularly do not deliver the promised benefits (ayurveda). The main point is that, to a one, these therapies are not scientific or provable, must rely totally on their metaphysical claims as the basis of healing, and cannot be separated from their spiritual underpinnings. Christians are not to look for spiritual benefits from the religions of the East and are not to submit themselves to spiritual activities performed by those who are essentially manipulating an occultic, anti-Christ spiritual energy force.

It would be reasonable to ask practitioners of these therapies "by what authority" are these claims of healing power made. The ultimate answers would have to come from the I-Ching or The Vedas. These books and the philosophies they teach, however, are incompatible with and mutually exclusive from the Bible. Jesus said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No man comes to the Father but by me." And yet, what if some of these therapies actually work?

*"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, whereof he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God tests you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deuteronomy 13:1-3)*

Just because something works doesn't mean that a Christian should participate in it. Chiropractors and health food stores seem to be the venues where most Christians get exposed to these types of therapies. Usually, an alternative medicine practitioner is involved in multiple alternative therapies. Thus, the well-meaning Spirit-filled Christian chiropractor may also do ayurveda and homeopathy...his lovely wife may teach yoga as well as do healing touch and reflexology. The well-meaning Spirit-filled Christian manager of the health food store may do an iridology diagnosis on you, then sell you some medicinal Chinese herbs and direct you to her favorite acupuncturist. The lateness of the times, the pervasive and accepted nature of such a large number of these occultic New Age practices, and the alarming fact that pastors do not seem to be warning their "sheep" from the pulpit and confronting these things when they are found in their churches require the average Christian to be alert, informed, discerning, and wise. Pretty surfaces need to be scratched in these dangerous days to discover what religious philosophies lie beneath. "We walk in this world as a man in a field of snow; all the way appears smooth, yet we cannot be sure of any step." – Thomas Adams (1614 – 1670)

Additionally, many Christians need to repent from their worldly idolatry of health. There is no magic bullet that will keep someone safe from sickness and cancer. It will not be found in fiber, in colloidal silver, in Vitamin C or E, in Barley-green, or in grape seed extract. It will not be found by a greater awareness of the state of the colon, by adjustments to the spine, by incessantly attempting to detoxify the body, or by balancing the blood pH. There is nothing wrong with any of these things in and of themselves. There is certainly nothing wrong with good health and with taking care of the bodily temple of God. However, the Christian does well to remember that all the body is really fit for is to hang on a cross, that it is perishing daily no matter what is done

to prolong its fitness, and that God calls the Christian to the joyful freedom of moderation in all things and to repentance from idolatrous preoccupations.

*“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”*  
(Psalms 20:7)

The Christian who finds himself tempted to be preoccupied with his health and with these alternative medicines might consider whether deliverance is needed in the areas of personal or generational occult involvement, rebellion against authority, and fear.

“Holistic” is a term which popularly describes nearly all of the aforementioned practices. Extreme caution should be exercised when you see this word because it means that a practitioner is wanting to treat the body and the mind. In fact, the term body-mind or mind-body is often used by alternative medicinal therapists. “Quantum Health” and “Intelligence Medicine” are other terms which are used to signify that people, animals, plants (and even rocks and minerals) all possess an innate divine intelligence at the molecular level that tends toward health, but sometimes needs a little help in the form of these therapies to clear the way for a better flow of spiritual energy. The problem for the Christian with holistic treatments, Quantum Health, Intelligence Medicine, etc., is that, again, the realm of the scientific and rational has been abandoned, and spiritual solutions are now being proposed. There are no spiritual forces that are neutral; they are all either from the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ or from the evil one. The spiritual well-being of His children is a realm God jealously reserves for His Church, not for the chiropractor, acupuncturist, health food store manager, or ayurvedic practitioner, and that brings up a final point...

## **What IS a Christian to do when sickness occurs?**

*“When they shall say unto you, ‘Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter,’ should not a people seek unto their God?”* (Isaiah 8:19)

The Bible gives instructions for how a Christian is to handle illness.

*“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And, the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and, if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed.”* (James 5:14-16)

When a Christian is ill, he is to go to the elders of his church. This verse reveals that God, in His wisdom, wants to affirm the authority of church pastoral leadership. Also, He wants to use the occasion of sickness in one of His children to confront any sin in the person’s life. The elders are to anoint the person with oil, pray for his healing, and extend God’s forgiveness for any sins that may be exposed. Such a process presupposes that the Christian is a committed member of a local church. This process is one of God’s methods of accountability. How rare it is for this process to occur! I daresay but maybe one church in ten will you find people encouraged to call their pastor or elders to anoint them and pray over them for healing!

## **What if, after submitting to this discipline, the Christian is still sick?**

If the Christian is still sick, he should go back to the elders. The beauty of God’s plan is that, just like all of these alternative therapies, it also considers the spiritual dimension of the person’s illness. The elders, in their God-given authority, may discern that there are spiritual forces at work here. Perhaps the person needs to go through the process of deliverance to have curses broken or demons cast out. Maybe this problem is purely physical in nature. Paul instructed Timothy to,

*“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities.” (1 Timothy 5:23)*

Or, maybe the person is just going to have to let the sickness run its course. It is the elders of the church to whom God will give discernment. How short the Church of Jesus Christ in America sells itself! God will supply all of the needs of His children when they seek with diligence Him and Him alone.

*“...send, ...and consider, ...and see if there be such a thing. Has a nation changed their gods...? My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit...my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” (Jer 2:10-13)*

## **In summary:**

1) Christians unquestionably should exercise responsible care for their bodies, but need not fret over their health to the point of idolatrous obsession.

2) Any energy-based, mind/body, holistic, quantum healing, or intelligence medicines or therapies should be summarily avoided. They are no less occultic in nature than horoscopes, hypnosis, palm reading, tarot card reading, Ouiji boards, crystals, crystal balls, good luck charms, and burning candles to saints. In fact, all activities from the far East, including karate, tae bo, ichiban, tae kwan do and every form of martial art, and everything that even resembles yoga should be viewed with extreme suspicion and vigorously investigated before participating. It would be far better to err on the side of NOT participating in an activity than to accidentally expose oneself or one’s children to the ever-pervasive influences of New Age occultism.

3) Christianity is not a shallow religion, and Christians are called to be very spiritual people. It is not necessary, however, to look to the occult to find deeper spirituality. Biblical examples of legitimate spiritual exercises include fasting, prayer, worship, Bible study, speaking and singing in tongues, and regular fellowship with other believers.

4) God has ordained that healing should begin by coming before the elders of the local church, who have the authority and discernment to pray over the believer and guide him spiritually.

*But there were also false prophets among the people,  
just as there will be false teachers among you.  
They will secretly introduce destructive heresies,  
even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--  
bringing swift destruction on themselves.  
Many will follow their shameful ways and will  
bring the way of truth into disrepute.  
(2 Peter 2:1-2)*

*For the time will come when men  
will not put up with sound doctrine.  
Instead, to suit their own desires, they will  
gather around them a great number of  
teachers to say what their itching ears want  
to hear. They will turn their ears away  
from the truth and turn aside to myths.  
(2 Timothy 4:3-4)*