

Faith Healing Failures

Four out of every five sick U.S. children who died after their parents put their trust in faith healing could probably have survived if medical treatment had been sought, according to a study published in the April 1998 issue of *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The report, which examined 172 child deaths the United States in faith healing families from 1975 to 1995, concluded that 140 of the deaths, or 81 percent, were due to conditions that had a survival rate exceeding 90 percent with treatment.

In addition 18 more of those who died would have had better than a 50 percent chance of living with treatment, and all but three of the children would have benefited in some way from medical help, the report said. The study was done by the University of California and a Sioux City, Iowa, group called Children's Healthcare Is A Legal Duty.

One case in the report was a two-year old child who choked on a bite of banana and showed signs of life for nearly an hour while her parents reacted by calling church members to pray. In another case the report described a 12-year-old girl who was kept out of school for seven months while a tumor on her leg grew to a circumference of 41 inches before her death.

Miraculous healing was indeed a gift of the Holy Spirit: *"To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit"* (1 Corinthians 12:9). However, these people have a *"zeal without knowledge"* (Romans 10:2). While their devotion to God and prayer may be commendable, they have failed to realize that miraculous healing, like all other spiritual gifts, disappeared when God's will was fully revealed. Again, Paul wrote, *"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away"* (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

God now only heals through His providence, which does not remove the need for proper medical treatment. These parents, although ignorant of the word of God, have put their trust in that which has passed away, but sadly their children must still pay the price.

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