

Contours of Biblical Christian Healthcare

Biblical Christian healthcare has six key characteristics:

- 1.1. It is Christ-centred
- 2.2. It is Bible-based
- 3.3. It is Character-carried
- 4.4. It is Patient-correlated
- 5.5. It is Situation-adapted
- 6.6. It is Principle-guided

1. Christ-centred

Only one Person deserves to have the central place in healthcare, and that is Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19: 16 And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name having been written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

No human being can replace Christ at the centre, whether it is a patient, family member, doctor, nurse or any other healthcare worker.

1.1 Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour of healthcare

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

Implications:

- healthcare is to function under His authority. In healthcare structures, authority is assigned to various persons at different positions. All such authority has been derived from His authority.
- only Jesus Christ has absolute authority. Humans have limited authority connected with accountability. Bearers of authority will give an account to Him about what they have done with their responsibilities.
- in situations where there is conflict between the ethical laws of Jesus Christ and those of human beings, His laws have the highest authority.
- true salvation is available in Jesus Christ only.

1.2 Jesus Christ is the Treasure-Keeper of all knowledge related to healthcare

Colossians 2: 2 c-3 Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge

Matthew 22:37 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

Implications:

- study His treasures. Any education that does not reckon with the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are in Christ, does not measure up to God=s standards.
- biblical Christian healthcare workers should be at the cutting edge of academic research and development. We are lovers of the truth, also the truth about healthcare.

1.3 Jesus Christ is the Definitive Model for healthcare staff

John 13:15 For I gave you an example, that as I did to you, you also should do.

Matthew 28:18-19 Going, then, disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit; teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you.

Implications:

- Follow His example in action. All healthcare workers should grow towards being Christ-like in all their ways.
- Follow His example in motivation. His agape-love is the highest quality motivator available to mankind.

1.4 Jesus Christ is the Ultimate Life-Giver in healthcare

John 14:6 I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.

John 5:26 For even as the Father has life in Himself, so He gave also to the Son to have life in Himself.

John 6:48, 50-51 I am the Bread of life. This is the Bread coming down out of Heaven, that anyone may eat of it and not die. I am the Living Bread that come down from heaven. If anyone eats of this Bread, he will live forever. And indeed the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Acts 17: 25 b, 28 For He is giving life and breath and all things to all. For in Him we live and move and are.

John 3: 36 The one believing into the Son has everlasting life; but the one disobeying the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Implications:

- Keep on receiving His life. Outside of Jesus Christ there is no life.
- Individuals or institutions without Christ are spiritually dead. Individuals or institutions that started well in Christ, but have gradually allowed Him to become a peripheral figure, will pine away. Clear examples of the latter, are many mission hospitals and educational institutions.

2. Bible-based

What does being Bible-base mean in practice?

2.1 We have certain convictions about the Bible:

The Bible is the infallible, authoritative, inerrant, revelatory and complete Word of God.

2 Timothy 3: 16; 2 Peter 1: 21.

2.2 We have a linear understanding of history

Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation. Genesis 1 & 2; Romans 8: 28-30.

2.3 We subscribe to a Biblical Christian World View

What is a world view? A world view is a comprehensive framework of ones fundamental beliefs regarding the whole of what is real (reality). Every human being has one, and thinks about these beliefs in a pre-scientific way. When one starts thinking about the whole of reality in a scientific way, one is busy with philosophy. In this course, we will do some systematic thinking about the whole of reality, but not full scientific thinking.

What are the components of a world view? A world view is made up of one=s pre-scientific thinking and beliefs about seven major facets of reality. These facets are:

Nr	World view facet and description	Philosophical term and definition
1	Knowledge: Beliefs about knowledge. Questions: How do I know? How do I know the truth? Addendum: Beliefs about knowledge.	Epistemology: the science or theory of the nature, sources, basis, methods and limits of knowledge.
2	Man: Beliefs about man. Questions: Who am I? What is my make-up? Addendum: Beliefs about man.	Anthropology: The study of man, especially the variety, physical and cultural characteristics, distribution, habits, social relationships, etc. of mankind. Here, the relationships between the inner ('spiritual') and the outer ('physical') man are emphasized.
3	Creation: Beliefs about the whole of creation other than man.	Cosmology: The branch of metaphysics that

	Questions: Where am I? Where does the rest of creation come from? What does it consist of?	focuses on the origin and structure of the universe.
4	What is: Beliefs about what is. Questions: Am I? What is the nature of my existence? What is? What is the nature of what is?	Ontology: The branch of metaphysics that focuses on the nature and essence of being, reality or the ultimate substance; of the nature and essence of all beings, their qualities and characteristics.
5	Values: Beliefs about values. Questions: What do I find really important? What has value? What is the most important in different situations?	Axiology: The branch of philosophy that focuses on the nature of values and the various types of values, such as in the moral, aesthetics, religion and metaphysics.
6	Purpose: Beliefs about the final end or purpose of all things. Questions: Where, if anywhere, am I going? What is the ultimate purpose of my life / history?	Teleology (purpose, end): The theory or study of final causes; the fact or quality of being aimed at a definitive end or having an ultimate purpose; the view that developments are the result of the purpose or design which they serve.
7	Society: Beliefs about the ordering of society. Questions: How do I relate to the rest of society? How should society function?	The institutional structures and procedures in different areas of society that proceed from the above six facets. Examples of areas in which one finds institutional structures and procedures, are: Civil-social, Ecclesiastical, Educational, Legal, Economic, Aesthetic, International politics, Healthcare.

3. Character-carried

3.1 Biblical Compassion

Definition: Controlled identification with the suffering of others leading to enabling action within the framework set by God.

'splanchnidzomai': Luke 11:33 But a certain travelling Samaritan came upon him, and seeing him, he was filled with compassion.

Matthew 9:36 And seeing the crowds, He (Jesus) was moved with compassion for them, because they were tired and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

3.2 Integrity

Definition: Uncompromising and steadfast commitment to ethically good attitudes and behaviour under all circumstances.

Job 1: 1b And this man was perfect and upright, and fearing God, and turning away from evil.

3.3 Perseverance in fulfilling our God-given calling

Definition: Maintaining one's running in the life-race to which one is called, in spite of all difficulties, dangers, hindrances or resistance.

Hebrews 12:1-4 So therefore we, having so great a cloud of witnesses encircling us, having laid aside every weight and the easily-surrounding sin, let us through patience run the race set before us, looking to the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus, who because of the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right of the throne of God. For consider

Him who had endured such gainsaying of sinners against Himself, that you do not grow weary, fainting in your souls. You did not yet resist unto blood, wrestling against sin. Note: the Greek work translated as Author, makes clear that Jesus Christ is both the Designer and Creator of our faith.

4. Patient-correlated = Total Patient Care

Not patient-centred, since Jesus Christ is in the centre of Biblical Christian healthcare.

Definition of Total Patient Care: The total needs of the total patient are to be met by a total team who collaborate to provide total care towards the attainment of total health.

4.1 Total needs

The description of the needs of patients will be determined by the world view of the describer. Therefore, their needs have to be Biblically defined. Only a Biblical defining of the needs of the sick will match their real / genuine needs, since the Creator knows best what His creatures need.

What needs are not:

X Greed is not need

X Lusts are not needs

X Selfish desires are not needs

X Sinful drives are not needs

The sick have needs in all areas of their humanness. Not all of these needs can be met at the same time, nor do they have to be. Needs ought not be met or relieved in sinful ways.

One has to take into account the relationship between:

X Personal versus general needs

X Real versus imagined needs

X Conscious versus un-conscious needs

X Urgent and/or important needs

4.2 Total Patient

Not cosmic holism: Where man is defined in relation to the cosmos, such as one finds in New Age or Eastern mystic circles. Example: the use of micro-cosmos and macro-cosmos imagery. There is a supposed link between man and the stars – the retina reflects the signs of the zodiac. Or there is a supposed link between certain organs, food-stuffs, energy type, season of the year, colour, etc.

Not Jungian holism: Where we are all supposed to share in the universal unconscious.

Not reductionism: Where man is reduced to only the physical / material (empiricism, materialism); or man is reduced to only the spiritual (some New Age circles).

But: Biblical anthropological holism. Thus the Biblical Christian takes into account the various facets of man and emphasizes that the hearts of both the sick and their care-givers are always in relation to either God or idols. Therefore healthcare can never be practised in a >neutral= way. The relation to God always exists, whether in a positive or negative way.

4.3 Total Team

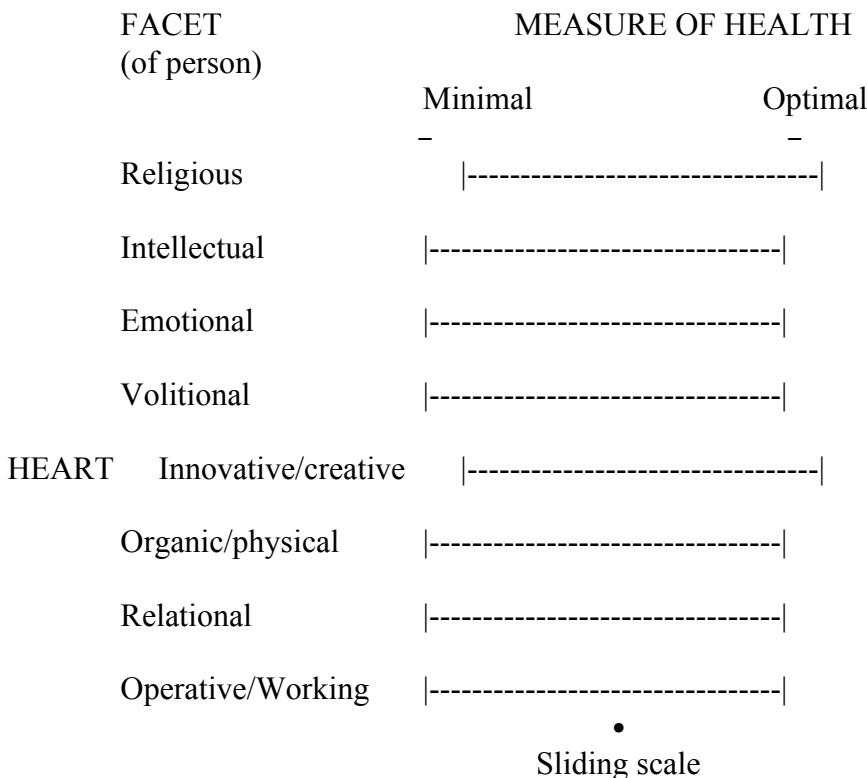
All members of the healthcare family should collaborate optimally with one another, the patient, the people surrounding the patient and the relevant sections of society.

4.4 Total Care:

Total care wisely integrates self-care, mantle care and professional care. See Addendum: Total Care

4.5 Total Health

Total health will only be possible in the new heaven and new earth. Now we strive for the maximum that is attainable in each facet of humanness in the light of each individual=s capacities.



4.6 Total Patient Care in Practice

- 1 Eye to Eye contact - Mark 10:21a *And looking at him, Jesus loved him, and said to him....*
Looking = "emblems" = looking at in an investigatory and intense way. Also see Acts 3: 4, 5.
- 2 Attentive Listening - Job 21:2 *Listen carefully to my words, and let this be your comfort...*
- 3 Wise Words - Luke 4: 22 a *And all bore witness to Him and marveled at the gracious words coming out of His mouth...*; Proverbs 13: 14; 15: 14.
- 4 Agape-Love - John 15: 9 *As the Father loved Me, I also loved you...*; 2 Corinthians 5: 14
- 5 Comforting Touch - Mark 1: 41 a *And being moved with pity, reaching out the hand, Jesus touched him, and said to him.....*
- 6 Prayerful Knees - Luke 5: 16 *But He was drawing back in the desert, and praying.*
- 7 Serving Feet - Luke 22: 27 b *But I am in your midst as One serving.*; Mark 6: 30-34

5. Situation-adapted

5.1 Location

Consider the influence of the situation in the following care-giving situations:

- a roadside in Russia;
- a war zone in Africa;
- in the midst of the dense forests of Kalimantan;
- a Japanese university hospital;
- private consulting rooms in Brazil;
- a primary health care clinic in India;
- a Chinese rural village.

5.2 Culture

Consider the different ways healthcare workers would have to use when serving among the following groups:

- Nomadic Berbers in the Sahara desert;
- Eskimo's in Greenland;
- Mountain tribes near Mt. Pinatubo in the Philippines;
- Mega-city slum dwellers;
- Aristocratic landowners;
- Illiterate waste dump scavengers.

5.3 Resources

Consider how healthcare workers would be able to serve if they had more resources available. In most countries, there is a serious lack of resources for healthcare.

Some examples:

- Hands only,
- Bare essentials,
- Fully equipped research centre.

6. Principle-guided

Principles form the river-bed in which our healthcare can flow. Without principles, healthcare would degenerate into a chaotic waste of resources, time and energy.

6.1 Obedience

Doing what God says because of reciprocal love.

1 John 4: 19 AWe love Him because He first loved us.@

1 John 5: 3 AFor this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not heavy.@ See also 2 John verse 6.

1 Samuel 15: 22 b ABehold, to obey is better than sacrifice!@

Luke 11: 28 ABut He said, No; rather, blessed are those hearing the word of God, and keeping it.@

6.2 Agape love

Sacrificially seeking the highest good for God, man and creation

John 15:12 (This is My commandment, that you love one another as I loved you.)

1 John 4:19-20 (If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one not loving his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God whom he has not seen?)

Agape has two major aspects in relation to healthcare:

- Benevolence: Seeking what is for the good of the patient. Good = the will of God.
- Non-malificence: Not harming the patient, or doing more good than harm. Examples: surgical removal of the appendix requires cutting open the abdomen of an individual in order to remove inflamed tissue; some types of chemo-therapy for the treatment of cancer have very unpleasant side-effects. In both instances it is acceptable to do some harm in order to do more good than harm.

6.3 Respect (including respect for the sanctity of life)

Respect for others from conception to the point of natural death and beyond.

This respect is based on the fact that man has been created in the image of God (Genesis 1: 26-28) and bought with the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1: 18, 19).

6.4 Justice

Giving to all patients and healthcare workers what is due to them, without unfair discrimination on any grounds. It is fair to deal with people in accordance to their talents, skills, personality and cultural background. These differences exist, but are not to be misused to condone injustice. Neither is it acceptable that people be treated as if they were mass-produced items.

Micah 6: 8 b What does Jehovah require of you, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

6.5 Reconciliation

To bring back to good relationship after estrangement. Between God and man, between man and man.

Therefore, on behalf of Christ, we are ambassadors, as God is exhorting through us, we beseech on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God, 2 Corinthians 5: 20.

Therefore, receive (accept) one another as Christ also received us, to the glory of God, Romans 15: 7.

6.6 Truth-honouring

The truth is grounded in Jesus Christ. His truth really liberates from sin and ignorance.

John 14: 6 AI am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.@

John 8: 32 AAnd you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.@

Honouring the truth has three aspects:

X Truth-telling: Promoting truthful and loving communication between healthcare workers, the sick and their family. Tell as much as they can take at a time so that they can make informed decisions about their lives and treatment. Ephesians 4: 15, literal Atruthing in love...@

X Confidentiality: Not making known to outsiders what has become known in the relationship with the patient. Exodus 20: 16 AYou shall not testify a witness of falsehood against your neighbour.@

X Root cause treatment: Not satisfied with symptomatic treatment only, but seeking and dealing with the root causes behind a certain disease pattern.

6.7 Accountable Authority

Romans 14: 10 b, 12 AFor all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then each one of us will give account concerning himself to God.@

Romans 13: 1 ALet every soul be subject to higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God; but the authorities that exist have been ordained by God...@

We recognize that God has delegated authority to all those in positions of leadership. They are accountable to God for what they have done. He does not accept any misuse of power, e.g. despotism or authoritarianism. He does not accept it if governments usurp too much power and authority for themselves, even if they do so with seemingly good motives. This happens when the state dominates and has a smothering control over healthcare services or when it impeaches on the personal freedom of those who operate in the health field.

The principle of Accountable Authority has two aspects:

- Accountability: willingly giving an account to those set in authority over us with an

attitude of being open for correction where necessary.

- Stewardship: Effective and efficient stewardship of all resources entrusted to us by God.

Implication: we must relate to those in authority and utilize delegated authority in God-pleasing ways.

6.8 Responsible freedom

Giving others the freedom to fulfill their responsibilities and to make sure that we are living in the freedom provided in Christ to fulfill ours. Others = the sick, their relatives, colleagues, etc.

Galatians 5: 1 Then stand firm in the freedom with which Christ made us free, and do not again be held with a yoke of slavery.

6.9 Hope

We need to help our patients find a positive future perspective which they can desire with confident expectation of fulfilment. In Christ, this is possible!

1 Timothy 1: 1 ... Jesus Christ our Hope....

Hebrews 6: 11 But we desire each of you to show the same eagerness, to the full assurance of the hope to the end....

Application:

1. Why?

God glorified through healthcare in Jesus Name: Biblical Christian Healthcare.

2. How?

Be salt and light!

Matthew 5: 13-16 AYou are the salt of the earth; but if the salt becomes tasteless, with what shall it be salted? For it has strength for nothing any more, but to be thrown out, and to be trampled under by men. You are the light of the world, a city situated on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under the grain measure, but on the lampstand; and it shines for all who are in the house. So let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father in heaven. @

2.1 Infiltration in present systems

2.2 Models adjoining systems

3. What?

Be part of God's solution.

3.1 Structural improvements

3.2 Healthcare education

3.3 Practice Total Patient Care

3.4 Join HCF/similar organizations

3.5 Role of local churches