

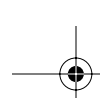
Foreword

To write a book about healing is a formidable task. It is so easy to lose focus and balance, becoming shrill and dogmatic while overpromising or making healing a form of Christian magic. Rick Richardson has avoided all these pitfalls and given us a rich, nuanced, thoughtful, experience-based, story-filled and practical guide to the healing ministry. He is able to do this because he sets healing in its proper contexts.

First of all, he understands healing to be an aspect of Christian transformation, not just relief of symptoms (though it often results in this). He sets healing in the context of the real issues of postmodern people: addiction of all sorts, gender issues, mother and father wounds, sexual trauma, marginalization. (This is a profoundly postmodern book that will touch our postmodern generation.) He sets healing in its primary context, which is God, God's presence, God's whispered word, worship, liturgy and the sacraments. He understands healing to be a journey toward wholeness that involves listening prayer, healing of memories, forgiveness, laying on of hands, use of images, service to others and so on.

This is a practical book. Richardson provides simple yet powerful healing exercises at the end of many chapters. He also gives the reader a step-by-step guide to beginning a healing ministry, including guidance in how to teach others to pray as well as outlining the pro-





cess of engaging in healing prayer with others. Richardson is also well aware of the dangers of a healing ministry. Chapter seventeen, where he deals with these issues, is alone worth the price of the book. In fact, all who engage in ministry of any sort should read this chapter.

Finally, this is a book that not only teaches but also evangelizes because it touches people at the places where the Spirit can work—those dark points of brokenness, longing, pain, disadvantage and injustice. Rick has written a book that sets evangelism in its proper context, which is spirituality and transformation.

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