The remarkable tale of a Nigerian doctor’s discovery of the healing power of Jesus Christ, by Hugh Sansom

Medicine and miracles

Dr Isaacs-Sodeye was working in his laboratory when an old woman came in carrying her lame four-year-old grandson. She wanted to thank the doctor for relieving the awful pain which the boy had been experiencing.

Then she said, ‘If you can remove the pain, you can also make the boy walk.’

Seeing the boy’s thigh and leg, withered by polio, the doctor told her that there was nothing he could do.

‘However,’ he went on, ‘I have seen my friend Jesus deal with such problems when other people have prayed. You hold on to the right thigh of the boy and I will put my hand on his head. Tell Jesus to repair the leg, and I will pray along with you.’

After praying with her, Dr Isaacs-Sodeye forgot about the incident. A fortnight later he was again interrupted in his work as a woman and a small boy came in.

‘Don’t you recognise us?’ she asked. ‘Don’t you remember praying for a crippled little boy two weeks ago? This is the boy!’

Then she pushed the boy forward and he ran to the doctor. The withered limb was fully restored.

Exam successes

Born in Northern Nigeria in 1934, Bill Isaacs-Sodeye had done well at school passing the London matriculation before he was 17. Through the help of an elder sister, he was offered a place on an A-level course at Acton Technical College in 1955 and the following year obtained A-level passes in physics, chemistry, botany and zoology.

Hoping to train as a doctor, Bill applied unsuccessfully to several of the London medical schools, and was forced to take a job as a factory hand in a biscuit factory while he studied part time for a general BSc degree.

He eventually qualified as a doctor in 1963, and made a special study of haemoglobin types in the blood of Africans, since he was himself a supplier of the unusual ‘sickle cell’ blood cells found in some Africans. This led to a further invitation to do research in biochemical haematology at the Cambridge University department of biochemistry.

While he was at Cambridge Bill carried out an experiment which showed that sickle cells could be changed into normal cells by treatment with a small quantity of male hormone. This led to a means of treating and ameliorating the sickle cell disease.

A 10-year-old girl was riddled with cancer. But, when Bill and the girl’s aunt prayed, she was completely healed.
A personal experience

The Rev Nigel Holmes, an Anglican minister and keep-fit enthusiast, who (like Bill) had previously trained as a doctor, describes his personal experience following a coronary thrombosis in 1993:

On a warm sunny day in April, as I walked to the shops after breakfast, I noticed a feeling of what I thought was indigestion, which passed off in two or three minutes. In the lunch period I cycled to the gym, did a circuit, and bowled in the net longer than usual, more than an hour.

I returned to the gym, had a shower, and got dressed, but as I combed my hair the same indigestion pain began, rapidly growing in intensity. At the same time I began to sweat and feel faint and dizzy.

I guessed I was having an ischaemic coronary episode and I decided to go straight to my GP's surgery, which is about 200 yards from the gym. I pushed and leaned on my bike, and entered the surgery where I had to sit down. The locum doctor saw me at once, gave me an aspirin to swallow and called an ambulance.

I was admitted to Addenbrookes Hospital cardiac unit, but the registrar decided not to give me a thrombokinase injection as he was not convinced I had a thrombosis. However, in time, the diagnosis was confirmed, in the front of the heart. My cholesterol was 6.2, I believe.

After 24 hours I was transferred to a ward, and my treatment proceeded uneventfully. I returned home after a week, on a regime of Beta-blocker and aspirin, and began a programme of rehabilitation.

I felt well and rested, but weak. I started to help at church services again after a month. When I was helping the Rev Janet Pratt at St Andrew's, Impington, she told me that Dr Bill Issacs-Sodeye was due to lead a service for healing on the Wednesday.

I came to it, went forward for prayer, and found it a helpful time as Bill laid hands on me, and prayed for healing. He then told me to believe my heart was healed.

At my visit to the cardiac clinic for tests, my blood pressure and cardiovascular response on a treadmill were very good. My cholesterol was registered as 6.4. At the out-patient follow-up clinic, the registrar told me I was a good candidate for angiogram, with the possibility of angioplasty. The angiogram, at Papworth Hospital in November, was straightforward.

At my final out-patient visit in April 1994, I was told that the angiogram had revealed a block in the anterior branch of the coronary artery, but that the heart muscle had made a complete recovery with no residual scarring, and that the other branches of the coronary artery were free of constrictions. At a subsequent test, my cholesterol level was 5.2, and my weight had been reduced by one stone.

I continue with my keep-fit regime, and consider myself in good health.

Wise words

All you who have been baptised have been clothed with Christ

Galatians 3.27

The military government did not like his booklet and Bill was advised to leave Nigeria

which afflicted many Africans.

On returning to Nigeria, Bill lectured at the medical schools in Lagos and Ibadan, where he eventually became professor of haematology.

Faltering faith

Bill had been brought up in a Christian home, but his own faith went through many ups and downs.

He saw some remarkable healing miracles at a Morris Cerullo meeting in Nigeria, but as a doctor he did not feel it reasonable to expect God to work miracles where ordinary medical treatment could produce the same result.

Then, one day, Dr Joe Smith, a colleague of Bill's at Ibadan University and a non-believer, was struck down with cancer (Hodgkin's disease).

Bill felt God urging him to visit him and tell him that, if he would trust God enough to ask him for anything, God would grant his request.

Surprisingly the colleague welcomed this message, and a few days later Bill and a Christian student went together to pray for Joe and lay hands on him. The student
startled Bill by prophesying that Joe, by then in excruciating pain and given only a few weeks to live, would be out of his bed in three days' time!

What would professional colleagues say when news got round that a consultant oncologist had allowed a student to give false hope to a dying patient?

Three days later, however, Joe got out of his bed, and was able to resume his academic career - and to testify to the love and healing power of Christ - for two-and-a-half years.

On another occasion, one of Bill's patients was a 20-year-old girl with quadriplegia, both hands and both legs being totally paralysed. The paralysis was caused by a cancerous growth in the spinal cord, high up at the back of the neck.

Realising that medical treatment seemed to be getting nowhere, Bill prayed with her with the laying-on of hands.

Immediately she started to walk, awkwardly at first, and gradually regained the full use of hands and legs.

Another patient was a 10-year-old girl whose whole body was riddled with cancer (Burkitts lymphoma), and whose case seemed hopeless from a medical viewpoint. But when Bill and the girl's aunt, a nursing sister, prayed, she too was completely healed.

Became vicar

Bill had enrolled as a part-time student at the Anglican seminary in Ibadan and was ordained into the Anglican Church in 1976. For three years he continued to work as a doctor and as a preacher, but in 1979 he heard the call to leave the field of academic medicine and to become the full-time vicar of a church in Kano.

An evangelistic and pastoral ministry in a predominantly Muslim environment provided many further opportunities for the healing power of the Lord Jesus to be proclaimed.

Bill still practised as a doctor, but this was now the part-time aspect of his work, and he saw some remarkable healings through prayer when medicine could do no more for the patient.

Invitations came to visit other parts of Nigeria, and there was also a visit to England under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society in 1981.

During that time, although Bill faced severe problems himself through the mental illness of his wife, God used him to bring healing to many people, including the restoration of sight to a woman born with a defective retina in one eye.

Wider ministry

In 1984 Bill resigned from the parish in Kano to make himself available for a wider and more prophetic ministry. In 1992 he published a booklet, *The Surgery Nigeria Needs*, which the military government did not like, and he was advised to leave Nigeria. He is now living and working, in an honorary capacity, near Cambridge.

Since arriving in England, "The Reverend Bill", as he is known, has been involved in a Lifeline counselling ministry and a 'Jesus Clinic for Needs' at Bar Hill, a few miles from Cambridge. God is still using him to bring healing, sometimes in a dramatic way. The healing of Jo Gerzimbke, who had been suffering for 10 months from a malfunction of the nervous system, diagnosed by her GP as chronic fatigue syndrome (or ME), and had been bedridden for four months, was carefully reported in *The Independent* on Easter Monday.

Jo was an atheist, and going to see Bill was a desperate last resort. When Bill asked her what the matter was, she burst into tears.

Bill at once told her that Jesus could heal her, but said that she must accept that Jesus was the same yesterday, today and for ever; that healing power comes from God alone; and that when two or three people are gathered in his name, Jesus is among them.

He invited her to ask God for forgiveness. Then, as they prayed together for her healing, Jo suddenly regained full use of her muscles and body.

In addition to making himself available to anyone as a channel for the healing power of Jesus, Bill Isaacs-Sodeye is hoping to use some of his time in England to undertake research into the church's healing ministry.

A few copies of Dr Isaacs-Sodeye's book *From Medicine to Miracles*, which was published in Nigeria, are available from 108 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE. Please send £3.50 and an addressed 9 x 6 envelope with 36p stamps.