

He's Got the Cure

Physician and author Don Colbert is teaching a whole generation of Christians that it's spiritual to be healthy.

Don Colbert is not a typical medical doctor. When he sees patients, he doesn't simply listen to their complaints, do a cursory exam and then scribble a prescription for drugs that will alleviate their symptoms. His goal is to get to the root of the problem—be it physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual—and resolve it so patients will not just feel better temporarily but will get completely well.

Colbert's whole-person approach has produced amazing results. One woman he began treating last October came into his office with Lou Gehrig's disease. She was in a wheelchair and had been told she had only two months to live.

Colbert began using chelation therapy to remove the high amount of metal he discovered in her body. He also weaned her off medications, put her on nutritional supplements, encouraged her to rest and recommended that she change her diet. When she came in for her appointment in June, she did more than walk into his office—she literally bounced, he says. A month later she called to tell him she was returning to work full time.

"She had to go back to her nerve specialist because they couldn't believe it," Colbert says. "They actually pulled her original slides to see if she did have Lou Gehrig's, and they said, yes she did."

Colbert, a Spirit-filled Christian since his college days, doesn't claim to work miracles. "I'm not saying I can heal Lou Gehrig's; all I'm saying is ... God has programmed our bodies to heal, once we remove the thorn."

In this patient's case, the "thorn" was heavy metal toxicity.

But that's only one of many underlying causes of illness that Colbert has identified.

"The thorn can sometimes be metal," he says, "it can sometimes be a toxic emotion, it can sometimes be a toxin, it can sometimes be a genetic problem. ... Once we find what it is, then we can start removing it."

Out of the Mainstream

Colbert, 47, has long been interested in health and nutrition. As a young man he read books about eating right and took up bodybuilding. But it wasn't until after he himself experienced a health crisis that he made nutritional and preventive medicine the primary focus of his practice.

A graduate of Oral Roberts University (ORU) medical school, Colbert opened his office in Longwood, Florida, the Wekiva Family Practice, in 1987. Within a few years, he became so busy he was seeing 40-50 patients a day. He was on call 24/7—and ultimately, he burned out. Not only was he exhausted, but he also developed such a severe case of psoriasis that he had sores all over his body.

The dermatologist he visited gave him several medications, some of which were like tar, he says, and made him smell like gasoline or motor oil. Some made his skin thin out and become shiny.

Convinced there was a better solution for his problem, Colbert began learning more about natural healing. He found that when he avoided certain foods, detoxified his body through fasts and other cleansing methods, took supplements, got adequate rest and reduced the stress in his life, the psoriasis went away.

As Colbert continued studying various kinds of nutritional therapies, he began to apply some of his newfound knowledge in his office. He also shared it privately with well-known

healing evangelist Benny Hinn, with whom he traveled monthly to verify healings at his crusades.

One day in the early 1990s, Colbert says, when he was a guest on Hinn's TV program, Hinn told him, "'Hey, Doc, all the things you share with me in private, I want you to write all that down and make it into a book and have it available for all our partners.'" Then Hinn told the TV audience that if they would send in a certain donation, he would mail them Colbert's book—a book that had to quickly become a reality because of Hinn's offer.

The result, *Walking in Divine Health*, was originally published by Benny Hinn Media Ministries in 1996 and was re-released by Creation House, now Charisma House, in 1999. The book has sold nearly 150,000 copies to date. Its publication marked a huge change in direction for Colbert.

"From that moment my life took a different turn," he says, "and the Lord was directing me more out of mainstream medicine." Eventually Colbert gave up his traditional practice altogether and changed the name of his clinic to Divine Health Wellness Center to reflect his commitment to helping people achieve divine health through holistic means.

Colbert's new approach goes against all his medical training. "We were mainly taught to put out fires," he says of his years in medical school. "A person would come in, we'd spend a few minutes with them and write a prescription. We'd never get to the true root of their problem.

"We'd never get to address the spiritual, the emotional, the psychological issues. We'd rarely have time to touch on those, let alone on the lifestyle changes that needed to occur, the dietary changes. ... I realized, In order to truly get to the root of their problem, I need to address the whole person."

Years before, Colbert had been exposed to another means of achieving health—divine healing. In his third year of medical

school, he suffered a heat stroke and nearly died. The muscles in his legs were damaged so badly he was told he would never walk again.

But his wife, Mary, a graduate of Rhema Bible school, would not accept the diagnosis and began to declare over him the Word of God concerning healing. She insisted that he receive prayer at ORU. Colbert was miraculously healed, and one year later, in 1984, he walked across the platform unaided to receive his degree in medicine.

That same year Colbert began his internship with Florida Hospital in Orlando, and he and Mary started attending Hinn's church. The first time they went, Hinn recognized Colbert from an article he had read in ORU's Abundant Life magazine about Colbert's healing and called him and his family—Mary and their 4-month-old son, Kyle—to the front.

The meeting was a divine connection for Colbert. Hinn began inviting Colbert to speak at conferences and to teach on various aspects of health at his monthly partners meetings. At first Colbert hesitated, he says, because he was shy. But Hinn forced him out of his comfort zone by repeatedly bringing him on stage before thousands of people to explain healings at crusades.

Colbert says his exposure to the sick people at the crusades convinced him that not as many Christians would need God's supernatural healing touch if they would learn to live according to His principles for divine health.

"We'd see people leaving the crusades smoking cigarettes, eating hot dogs, eating cookies and drinking Cokes—going back to the same old lifestyle that got them there in the first place," Colbert says. "What I used to say all the time is, if these people, instead of waiting in a line for five hours, would take 10 minutes a day and walk around their block, they wouldn't be in that healing line."

Getting the Word Out

Colbert believes many people suffer needlessly from illness simply because they don't know how to live in such a way as to prevent it. He quotes Hosea 4:6 (NKJV), "'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,'" as the scriptural explanation for their condition. Literally, he says, the ignorance of God's people is killing them.

Colbert has made it his goal to provide Christians with the information they need to live healthy lives. He says: "The bride of Christ is fat and out of shape, wrinkled, with toxic emotions running over. The bride of Christ is in no shape for a wedding gown.

So that's what I feel my mission is—to help get the bride ready for her wedding day."

As a means of fulfilling this mission, Colbert has written numerous books to share the knowledge he has gained through research, experience and postgraduate work in nutrition, exercise physiology and preventive medicine. In 1999, he began producing a series of small-format books, called Bible Cure booklets, on different health challenges such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and depression. Each year he has added to the list of titles in the series.

Tremendously popular even in the secular marketplace, the Bible Cure booklets, published by Siloam, can be found in every major bookstore chain as well as in many grocery and drug stores. Twenty-four titles are currently in print, with six additional titles scheduled for release in spring 2004. The booklets have sold nearly 2 million copies.

Sometimes people whose health is improved by applying what they learn in one of Colbert's books seek out the author to thank him. Mary tells the story of a woman in Virginia who met them at the airport with her entire family.

The woman, then in her 50s, had suffered from migraine headaches since she was a child, and they had gotten so severe that medicine no longer helped her. At times the headaches kept her in bed for weeks. One day, Mary says, the woman got hold of The Bible Cure for Headaches. After being on the program recommended in it for two weeks, her headaches went away.

"When we saw her it had been six months since she had had a headache," Mary says.

Colbert's book What You Don't Know May Be Killing You (Siloam, 2000) came out of testimonies such as this one. In talking to the woman who had been relieved of headaches, Colbert learned that she noticed a tremendous improvement in her condition simply by increasing her intake of water, as he recommends in the Bible Cure booklet. He was amazed to discover how little knowledge about the basic needs of the human body some people have.

In 2001 Colbert published Toxic Relief (Siloam) to make people aware of the continual onslaught their bodies are under from toxic substances in their environment and in the food they eat and to teach them how to restore health through fasting and detoxification. Recently revised and updated, this best seller has topped 200,000 in sales and is currently featured in Wal-Mart stores and many mainstream bookstores.

A related children's book, The Toxic Detective (CharismaKids), is set to release next spring. Geared toward children ages 4 to 8, it shows kids how following biblical principles can help them achieve and maintain good health physically and spiritually. Also slated for spring is Fasting Made Easy (Siloam). Mary's first book, Healing for the Wounded Heart (Charisma House), is due out in the fall.

Colbert's What Would Jesus Eat? (Thomas Nelson, 2002) made headlines throughout the country. From Dallas to New York,

newspaper reporters and columnists, as well as a feature writer for Newsweek, highlighted the book and quoted its author as the advocate of a Bible-based eating plan. In total contrast to the high-fat, high-sugar and high-salt diets of most Americans, this plan recommends whole, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain breads, fish, and limited amounts of kosher meat and dairy products.

Colbert is adamant that eating well and exercising are not the sole answers to our nation's health crisis, however. If we really want to live free from disease, we must overcome our deadly emotions as well as change our diets.

"I have found over the years that with every disease there's usually an emotion linked to that disease," he says. "And the emotion that so many Americans have is frustration. We have an epidemic of frustrated Americans here."

In *Deadly Emotions* (Thomas Nelson, 2003), Colbert shows how damaging negative emotions can be and how to resolve them. "If we can get rid of these deadly emotions it's like flipping a breaker switch off and then ... our bodies can be reprogrammed to heal again," he says.

All Colbert's books have made this now-famous doctor more popular. Their wide distribution is one reason 50 percent of his patients come from out of town, some from as far away as Switzerland and Zimbabwe.

But his private practice and his books aren't the only means Colbert uses to educate people. He and his wife host a TV show called *Your Health Matters* that airs weekly on independent networks. They teach on health as well as interview guests who have benefited from Colbert's recommendations.

One man who gave his testimony on the program had lost about 200 pounds with Colbert's help. He became so passionate about sharing the message of losing weight by eating right that he started his own company to teach people how to do what he had

done.

The Colberts also appear on other TV programs and speak at conferences and in churches across the country, teaching health through the Word of God. Next spring in Dallas they will host their first whole-person seminar, which will feature notable guest speakers and will focus on spiritual, emotional and physical health as well as biblical prosperity.

Preserving Our Temples

What message is Colbert trying to get across through all this education? “Christians, wake up and quit trashing your temple!” he says.

“I try to get people to start realizing that their body is the temple of the Holy Ghost and that most of them are trashing their temples with junk food, fast food, highly processed foods, sugars, hydrogenated fats—all the wrong kind of fuel. And I tell them, ‘If you put the wrong kind of fuel in your car, it’s not going to run right.’

“That’s one reason why so many people, even Christians, are sick. That’s why they are not only physically sick but also mentally sick—because it’s the wrong kind of fuel they’re putting in.

“If I can get it across to them that they have to start treating their body like it’s the temple of God, to start sowing good seeds of good thoughts into their minds and good foods into their bodies, then their body is able to resist disease.”

Mary believes her husband’s message is crucial. “We read a report about a year and a half ago,” she says, “where they did a study on different [religious] groups in America and the world—Muslims, Christians, Hindus, New Agers—and statistically, Christians came out the sickest group on Earth.”

But Mary is hopeful that the efforts she and her husband are making to educate Christians are going to help bring about an awakening in this country regarding health care. She believes they will encourage people to take better care of themselves and, when something does go wrong, to look for the root cause rather than simply using a drug to mask symptoms. She also believes they will inspire people to demand answers for their problems that are cheaper and more wholesome than drugs.

Some of those answers are the kinds Colbert gives in his practice. He recommends lifestyle changes (getting sufficient sleep, relaxing, laughing, exercising); dietary changes (detoxifying the body and eating more live, whole foods rather than cooked, processed foods, for example); and taking high-quality nutritional supplements. He also advocates listening to teaching tapes from spiritual leaders such as Joyce Meyer, Benny Hinn, John Hagee, Jack Frost and others to deal with emotional issues.

For certain cases, he may advise the use of alternative approaches such as homeopathy, chelation therapy, forgiveness therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, or Bowen technique (a special form of massage that teaches the body how to relax). He always offers prayer for those who desire it.

And yes, he does periodically prescribe drugs. "I'm not anti-medication," he says. "I'm short-term medication."

When patients have conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease or thyroid abnormalities, Colbert may use drugs in their treatment initially, he says, but his goal is to find the cause of their problem and then "to help them wean off their medication onto something natural." For difficult cases, such as cancer, he works with specialists who are treating the patient with conventional methods, helping to keep their immune systems strong while they undergo aggressive treatment.

"We put all these things together. ... It's not a simple little pill. ... But once you do the mental, the emotional, the physical, the nutritional, the dietary, all of this, then in two to three months these people come in my office just blown away," he says.

Colbert's whole-person approach is not without critics, particularly among members of his own profession. He doesn't often hear from them directly, he says, but his patients tell him about them.

"Some of them say, 'Your doctor is crazy; he's a quack.' But ... when a person goes to one of their doctors and they've been sick, but then they've recovered, that's the proof that it works," the doctor says.

Colbert is so elated by the positive results that the criticism doesn't faze him. "We have so many testimonies, it's amazing. Most doctors don't understand it because it's not in the textbooks. But all we do is just support the body, remove the 'thorns,' and the body many times is able to heal."

Seven Pillars of Health

To improve and maintain overall health, Dr. Don Colbert recommends following seven basic principles:

Drink two quarts of water a day.

Sleep at least eight hours a night.

Avoid stressful beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and reactions.

Eat more living foods and fewer dead foods.

Detoxify and desensitize your body.

Exercise.

Take nutritional supplements.

The Truth About 'Natural' Healing

Many doctors today prescribe herbal products—but consumer advocates warn that not all dietary supplements are safe.

Dr. Don Colbert and other physicians often promote the use of natural dietary supplements. But Colbert and his colleagues are also quick to point out that opinions widely vary about the safety and effectiveness of over-the-counter herbal products.

The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA) limited the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) ability to regulate makers of dietary supplements. Manufacturers, who lobbied for passage of DSHEA, must ensure that product-label information is truthful and not misleading, but they operate with virtually no oversight. Generally, they do not have to register with the FDA or gain the agency's approval before producing or selling dietary supplements.

A dietary supplement is any product (except tobacco) that contains a vitamin, a mineral, an herb or botanical extract, an amino acid, a dietary substance, or any combination of these ingredients. Herbal and botanical ingredients of dietary supplements include processed or unprocessed plant parts (such as bark, leaves, flowers, fruits and stems) along with extracts and essential oils.

"When it comes to purchasing dietary supplements, buyer beware," says Susan Burke, a registered dietitian at , the world's largest online subscription-based diet and fitness network. "Since the products are not closely regulated, you can't be certain what ingredients are in them, and you don't know how you will react to them."

If taken in high dosages or in combination with certain prescription medicines, dietary supplements may cause harmful results. Blood thinners, for example, should not be taken with St. John's wort, ginseng or Ginkgo biloba because these herbs

have blood-thinning agents.

“Just because something is natural doesn’t mean it is safe,” says Kathy Allen, R.D., of the Tampa-based H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute. “Like any drug, supplements have potential side effects.”

Under DSHEA guidelines, supplement manufacturers are responsible for making sure their products are safe. The FDA can take action only after a product reaches the market and receives reports of adverse reactions.

Ephedra, also known as ma huang, is an herbal product that has received much unfavorable publicity. This year the FDA urged banning the supplement, which has been associated with serious health problems including hypertension, irregular heartbeat, stroke and seizures. Some of these problems resulted in death or permanent injury. In 2002, a federal court in Alabama ordered Metabolife International, a San Diego-based supplements manufacturer, to pay almost \$4.1 million to four people who claimed they had heart attacks after taking the company’s diet pills containing ephedra.

These products, which are used as weight-loss aids and performance enhancers in sports, have been banned by the National Football League, Major League Soccer, the International Olympic Committee and the National Collegiate Athletics Association.

Of course, not every dietary supplement has resulted in the documented health problems that ephedra has caused. Some respected national organizations suggest taking certain supplement products.

Recognizing that few men and women receive the daily recommended allowance of major vitamins and minerals, the American Dietary Association encourages people to take a daily multivitamin. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force suggests that women who may become pregnant take a daily multivitamin

that contains 0.4 milligrams of folic acid to help reduce the risk of birth defects in their children.

Because iron deficiency is common among women, a National Academy of Sciences committee recommends that pregnant women take a 30-milligram supplement daily during the second and third trimesters. Vitamin and mineral supplements may be beneficial as long as they are taken as recommended and in conjunction with a healthy diet, according to Nagi Kumar, R.D., Ph.D., director of nutrition programs at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute.

“These supplements shouldn’t replace getting your vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals from fresh fruits, vegetables and other whole foods,” Kumar says. “After all, supplements can get expensive, and they aren’t as potent as food in its natural form.”

So where can you turn to learn more about dietary supplements and determine which ones to consider and which ones to avoid? Talk to your physician, Burke says, and do your homework. Visit reputable Web sites operated by nonpartisan organizations such as the FDA ([http://www.fda.gov](#)), the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine ([http://www.nccam.nih.gov](#)) and U.S. Pharmacopeia ([http://www.usp.com](#)).

Adds Burke: “The more reading and research that you do, the wiser you will be. Since it is known that certain supplements should not be taken if you have certain symptoms, knowledge is critical.”

Jeff Louderback

Delivered From Pain

Russ Stewart says he was freed from years of debilitating illness after following Dr. Don Colbert’s plan for detoxification.

When he awakens in the morning, Russ Stewart celebrates the

simple acts of taking a shower, dressing himself and taking a walk before beginning the day.

To him, there is no reason to dread Mondays—or any day. The 38-year-old pastor is now free from debilitating medical conditions that had plagued him with anguishing pain from the time he was a child in Oklahoma until he was introduced to Don Colbert's body-detoxification program last April.

A doctor had diagnosed the 11-year-old Stewart with juvenile arthritis, which caused swollen joints and impaired his mobility. Stewart was unable to participate in physical activities—no baseball at the neighborhood park or basketball on the playground. And it was only the beginning of the “sometimes tortuous” pain that gradually worsened as he grew from a boy into a man.

In his early 20s, doctors discovered that Stewart had psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. As the years passed, his fingers and toes became crooked. His knees and hips chronically ached. He was prescribed so many medications—everything from anti-inflammatories to methotrexate, a drug that was originally used to treat cancer—that a briefcase was needed to carry them.

The heavy load of medicine left his immune system weak, and he was prone to viruses such as colds and the flu. Typically, he took as many as eight 600-milligram ibuprofen tablets to make it through the day.

“I was constantly worried about losing my job,” says Stewart, who was an administrator at an assisted-living facility before becoming senior adult ministries director at Elsinore First Assembly in Lake Elsinore, California. “The situation at work became so bad that I was called into a meeting with the vice president to discuss my health and the impact it was having on my job performance,” Stewart adds.

Stewart experienced periods when he felt little discomfort,

such as the week of his wedding to Sandy and the honeymoon that followed in 1998. Those remissions were short-lived, however, and then the pain returned with seemingly greater intensity. By 2000, when he was 35, Stewart's arthritis was so severe that it affected 90 percent of his joints. More than 80 percent of his body was covered with red spots from psoriasis.

In 2000, Stewart was also diagnosed with fibromyalgia, a rare tissue and muscle disease, and migraine headaches that were so piercing he would miss work for a week at a time. The arthritis was so advanced that he walked with a limp, and every step was a challenge.

"I was so disabled by the arthritis that my wife had to put my shoes and socks on because I couldn't bend down," Stewart says. "At church, I wanted to lift my hands in worship, but I couldn't."

One night while sitting in his office, Stewart broke down and cried. "I asked the Lord why I suffered like I did," says Stewart, whose father was a pastor. "I called my parents and told them I felt like I couldn't take the pain anymore."

Divine intervention, Stewart believes, sparked his recovery. In the early hours of the morning he was surfing channels and went all the way to Channel 112, where Colbert was the guest on Richard Roberts' Christian talk show. Colbert was talking about his book *Toxic Relief*.

Stewart ordered the book, read it and followed Colbert's dietary guidelines. Three weeks and three days later, the detoxification program was finished. Within five weeks of beginning the program, Stewart's skin was smooth and clear, his migraines were gone, and his joints were free of pain. Stewart could finally walk without discomfort. He played golf and joined a fitness center for the first time. He shook hands with parishioners at church without a grimace.

"I had been so sick for so long it was like waking up from a

coma," Stewart explains. "Everything was and still is new, fresh and wonderful."

Stewart's dramatic recovery has affected several people, including his mother, who still lives in Oklahoma.

"She cried when she saw me for the first time after I was well. She hadn't seen me healthy since I was a little boy," Stewart says. "My mom had suffered from osteoarthritis for a long time, but she followed Dr. Colbert's program and is now pain-free and off her medications just like I am."

Stewart, who is 6-foot-1 and weighs 235 pounds, is slimmer as well as healthier. Since he started eating a nutrient-rich diet and exercising regularly, the man who was limited to the sidelines as a child has shed 25 pounds and is approaching his targeted weight of 205.

Says Stewart: "Now I can set goals and achieve them because the obstacle of severe pain is no longer in the way."

Divine Connection, Divine Call

Dr. Don Colbert's relationship with evangelist Benny Hinn helped him discover God's methods for healing.

When Don Colbert first met Benny Hinn the doctor had no idea what a significant role the healing evangelist would play in his life. Ever since Colbert went up to the platform in Hinn's church to share the testimony of his healing on a Sunday morning in 1984, the two have been friends and ministry associates.

Colbert credits Hinn with motivating him to pursue alternative approaches to healing. "In traveling all over the earth Benny got to meet many different people in natural medicines, from chiropractors to naturopaths to whatever, and he used to come to me and say, 'Dr. Colbert, what about this?'

"And I'd have to say, 'I know nothing about that; let me find

out, and I'll get back with you.' And I'd check into it and [see that] it does work in some people," Colbert says.

Hinn was instrumental in showing Colbert that there are other paths to healing besides traditional medicine, Colbert says.

After Colbert became ill in the early '90s as a result of the demands of his practice, he "started studying under the top people in the world in different areas of natural medicine," he says. He also started turning to natural methods.

At first his wife, Mary, was concerned. "Some of the avenues in which he was headed scared the dickens out of me," she says. "The people he was learning from were New Agers, some were Hindus, some were involved in Chinese medicines, all these different areas. ... Coming from a charismatic background, I'm thinking, Oh no, something's going to get in him or on him."

In response to her prayers for Colbert, the Lord showed Mary that throughout history He had been revealing truths related to health and healing to people around the world, regardless of their religion, and that the truths were separate from the religious aspect. He assured her it was possible to have one without the other.

Now she believes that what her husband has been called to do is "to go into all these different avenues ... without anything 'getting in him or on him' and glean from them some incredible truths that he's taking to the body of Christ."

A vision Hinn had after one of his crusades about six years ago confirmed Colbert's divine call, she says. She and Colbert were backstage along with Hinn and a handful of others. Suddenly Hinn sat straight up and said, "Jesus has just walked into the room."

He told Colbert that Jesus wanted him to put out his hands. He said he saw Jesus giving him some golden instruments that were

unlike any he had ever seen before. They were similar to surgeon's tools.

Then he told Colbert: "Jesus is placing the tools in your hands because He knows He can trust you. He's telling me to tell you: 'You are no longer called to your city; you are no longer called to your state; you are no longer called to your country. He has now called you to the world.'"

Both Colbert and his wife were overwhelmed. But Mary wondered what the vision meant. When she questioned its significance, the Holy Spirit explained, "I am about to resurrect some truths in the earth that have been dead, buried and hidden, and I'm going to give them to your husband to bring healing to My body."

Within a few months after Hinn spoke the word of the Lord to her husband, Colbert's practice and ministry expanded exponentially.

Colbert became so busy that he had to cut his time in the office back to three days per week. His continuing association with Hinn, as well as the publication of his books and more recent relationships with John Hagee and Joyce Meyer, have increased the demand for his expertise.

The doctor now divides his time among several related activities: seeing patients, writing, hosting radio and TV programs and teaching—all with the goal of fulfilling his call to bring healing to the body of Christ.

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