



Introduction

I am a physician, a healer by profession. Over the past two decades, I have written thousands of prescriptions to help support, sustain, and heal my patients' cardiovascular systems. Treating the sick has brought me much personal fulfillment and satisfaction, as well as material success. In 1992, however, I realized something was missing from my life. It was that sense of inner peace and happiness that so many of us are seeking. I constantly felt stressed, short on time, impatient, and dissatisfied. My focus had become attaining ever-increasing amounts of control, power, wealth, and prestige even though they brought me no joy. At the same time, I was haunted by the thought that I was not doing well in God's eyes despite my efforts to lead a good life and be a compassionate physician. I kept asking myself why God had put me on earth. What was my purpose in life? I could find no answer, no prescription for healing. The one patient I could not cure was myself—until I sought out Mother Teresa of Calcutta. I considered her to be the expert on living the Christian life.

Our first meeting took place in February 1992 in Tijuana, Mexico, at a homeless shelter run by her order, the Missionaries of Charity. It was there that I heard Mother's message about the purpose of life. I am convinced that God arranged that meeting, not only for my sake but also for everyone who would hear my story. That initial forty-five minute encounter led to many others. Our relationship lasted until her death in 1997 and took me first to Mexico, and then to Calcutta, India, to the motherhouse of the Missionaries of Charity. I visited their

orphanages, leprosy colonies, and the House of the Dying. This friendship also took me to Jenkins, Kentucky, in the heart of Appalachia, to soup kitchens and homeless shelters in Harlem and the Bronx and to an AIDS house in Washington, D.C. Later, it also led me to St. Peter's Square in Rome, and always back to my hometown of Youngstown, Ohio. Along the way, I experienced confusion, rejection, and even humiliation. With Mother Teresa's guidance, however, I discovered my purpose in life, and with it, her prescription for inner peace and happiness and the healing for humanity. Now, I want to share that prescription with you.

This book explains how Mother Teresa taught me about the purpose of life and her prescription for its healing, which is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Following the prescription means embracing the true purpose of life and the ten attitudes of spirit that go along with it: compassion and love, contentment and gratitude, honesty, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, humility, commitment to community, faith, and reverence for human life. Mother Teresa embodied all of these qualities. I heard her message about the purpose of life, and then I observed her at work to discern the ten attitudes I needed to add to my life.

The life story of the woman now formally known as Blessed Teresa of Calcutta is familiar to many of us—how she began ministering to people dying on the streets of Calcutta in 1952 and founded a religious order, the Missionaries of Charity, which now serves the “poorest of the poor” in more than five hundred missions in over a hundred countries. I do not attempt to repeat that history but to tell instead the story of what I learned from Mother Teresa. Perhaps it can help others who are dealing with the same spiritual malady I faced.

In the years before her death, I came to view Mother Teresa as my physician. As a cardiologist, I sometimes monitored her blood pressure and supplied her with various cardiovascular medications. But I did not heal her. Instead, I became her patient and she became my spiritual physician. She healed me.



54A, A.J.C. BOSE ROAD, CALCUTTA-700016

"As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren. You did it to Me"

1st. December '94

To
The Deputy Commn. of Police,
F.R.R.O. (Security Control)
237, A.J.C. Bose Road,
Calcutta

Dear Mr. Tapas,

I, Mother M. Teresa m.c. hereby
Certify that Dr. Paul Wright and American
National and one of our Missionaries of Charity
Co-worker, holder of Passport bearing No.083755642
issued in New Orleans on 17-6-94 and valid till
16-6-2004, has come to India to handover the
Medicines for me.

There was no time for him to obtain
the necessary VISA, hence he travelled without any,
but the Consul General of India, Mr. S.N. Ray had
advised him to travel to India immediately, hence
he came on 28-11-94 at C.A.P.

His Passport was taken away at the
Security Counter and he was told to collect the
same from your Office.

I shall be grateful if you will
handover his Passport today as he needs the same
for change of money and other formalities. He
will be leaving India on AIR INDIA on Saturday
the 3rd. December, 1994.

Thanking you, for your kind concern
and I assure you of my prayers always.

Encl: Copy letter of
Consul (S.N.RAY)

*God bless you
M. Teresa m.c.*

Now, I believe Mother Teresa would want me to make that healing advice available to others. I invite you to follow me as I tell you a little about my spiritual healing and how you can apply Mother's therapy to your life, no matter who you are or what you do. I have also included questions for you to consider, either for your personal journey or for group discussion. You may want to keep a journal as you move through this book. Go slowly. You cannot "take" the entire prescription overnight. You may want to try adding each spiritual attitude one at a time, over weeks, months, or even years.

I will be honest. Undertaking this spiritual therapy is not easy. It is not a formula for sainthood—few of us are called, as Mother Teresa was, to that special life. Her prescriptions, however, do require commitment and the understanding that some people, including close friends and family members, may be confused or even alienated by your new life. Once undertaken, this healthy new life will help you grow in love and compassion. It will give you the means to move from a mindset of frustration, anger, and self-centeredness to one of inner peace and sustainable happiness. Most important, Mother's prescription will empower you to discover and pursue God's unique purpose for your life.

Included in this introduction is a copy of a personal letter from Mother Teresa to the Deputy Commissioner of Police in Calcutta asking the Security Control to return my passport so that I could leave India and return home. This letter reminds me of the many things that Blessed Mother Teresa did to facilitate my spiritual journey. At the end of the book, as Appendix material, I have also included a listing of the houses of the Missionaries of Charity in North America. Perhaps you can get to know the wonderful men and women who are part of this order and find inspiration in their work for your life and work. There is also information about the Thomas A. Dooley Award, an award given for humanitarian service by the Alumnae Association of the University of Notre Dame. I was given this award in 2004, but information about this is not

included to promote my own reputation. It is to show that all of us can find unique ways to serve, giving our gifts and time to those who need it most. I found mine and I hope that—with Mother Teresa's prescription—you may find yours.

Peace be with you,

Paul A. Wright, M.D.
Youngstown, Ohio

PART **1** Mother's
Message



Something Missing

In 1992 I was enjoying the life of the successful American doctor. At the age of forty, I was a respected cardiologist, known throughout northeastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania. My partners and I had built a huge new facility that we envisioned as a regional state-of-the-art center for treating patients with cardiovascular disease. My personal life was just as fulfilling. My wife, Gayle, and I were happily raising our eleven-year-old daughter, Maria Alana. The three of us were excitedly going forward with plans to build a huge, costly dream home in an affluent neighborhood. Despite the long hours I worked, I also devoted time and money to community activities and local charities. To the outside world, everything looked perfect and complete. Yet something was missing from my life.

In spite of everything I had, all that I had accomplished, I still had not achieved my ultimate goal in life: inner peace and happiness. As my medical practice grew, so did my stress. Satisfying my expectations and the expectations of my partners, employees, hospital administrators, insurance companies, even family and friends, consumed all my time. Everyone wanted something from me. Even though I willingly supplied what they needed, I did not feel happy or at peace. Instead, pangs of insecurity, restlessness, and dissatisfaction nagged me. I continued to question why I was here. What was my true

purpose in life? What was the purpose of humanity? Finally, I concluded that I had misdirected my mental and physical energies. I could find the answers I needed not in the world of materialism and power, but in the spiritual world. I needed a closer connection to God and a way to be a success in his eyes, not just those of my partners and associates. How could I achieve that connection and find the way to happiness and inner peace?

My restlessness grew as the worry that I had actually accomplished nothing for humanity overwhelmed me. I wondered how God saw me and how he would ultimately judge me. To others, I appeared to be a successful, healthy, and productive person with a gift for healing. But inside, I was not at peace with the world or myself. What would it take to find that peace? Who could help me?

As a physician, I believed—and still do believe—that there must be some prescription or antidote to heal or at least improve almost any condition. So I followed the advice any physician would give to a patient suffering from a complicated illness. I sought out a specialist. It seemed logical that if I suffered from a spiritual malady, I should consult the person most capable of answering my questions about the purpose of life and how God would judge me. I wanted someone who would answer my questions as perfectly as anyone could.

I began to look for that person, and the name that I kept encountering was that of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. For years, her name had been synonymous with the term “living saint,” the only one I had ever heard of. I wanted to see what a living saint looked like. I wanted to feel her hands on my face and look into her eyes. Who else but a living saint would so perfectly embody the true purpose of life? She certainly would have answers to “Why am I here, and what is my God-given responsibility to others?” I needed to find out what motivated her, what gave her a purpose for living. How had she achieved such inner peace and happiness? Finally, I wanted to hear how



Paul Wright met Mother Teresa for the first time on February 1, 1992, at a center for the homeless run by her Missionaries of Charity in Tijuana, Mexico. A tired-looking, unengaged Mother Teresa was recovering from a recent heart attack.

she would answer the most burning question in my heart: How would God judge me at the moment of my death?

If Mother Teresa was a living saint—someone many people considered a perfect human being—then certainly the service she gave to the sick and dying was something we should all be doing. Still I had to ask myself three questions: Why did she give such wholehearted and selfless service to the sick and dying in such terrible conditions? Could I practice medicine under similar circumstances? Did God require me to do so?

These questions stayed in my mind and drove me to seek a personal, private discussion with Mother Teresa. Reading articles about her work, her philosophy, and her spirituality were no longer enough. Nor did I want to seek advice from other, substitute spiritual advisers who might be more easily

accessible to me. I wanted to hear Mother Teresa's message coming personally from her to me. I wanted to hear her voice directed at me. Only then would I believe, understand, and accept. That is why on February 1, 1992, I found myself walking toward a small homeless shelter operated by Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in Tijuana, Mexico.



SOMETHING TO CONSIDER . . .

1. What are the sources of confusion or lack of fulfillment in your life?
2. Where do you look for inspiration, for comfort?
3. Who is the person you would most like to emulate? Why? What qualities in this person attract you?