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In November 2017, my parish hosted Archdeacon Ron and his wife Deirdre for a Wounded Healers Conference. It was a delight to have them with us to experience and share in this gospel ministry.

I write this letter to the hesitant, whether you are considering to host or attend a Conference, or have decided to attend one and are a bundle of nerves.

The idea of hosting the Conference at Grace came from a parishioner of mine who first placed a copy of Ron's book *Deliver Us from Evil* in my hand. This parishioner had once been a member of a church Ron had pastored before his retirement from parish ministry.

I must confess, at first I was hesitant about hosting the Conference. As members of the same Anglican Diocese, Ron and I had met a few times, but I did not really know Ron all that well and was therefore reluctant about inviting him to discuss such a sensitive and, let's face it, an uncomfortable topic.

I must also confess that my interest in the book was first peaked when I learned Ron devoted a whole chapter in the book to his time as the Rector of a parish in Vancouver that had left him spiritually burned out. This was a safer entrance into the book for me because of its relevance to my vocation.

So why did I agree to host the Wounded Healers conference? Allow me to provide two reasons which may begin to address your hesitations or nervousness.

First, in the pages of the book I found the heart of the gospel. Ron's book is the story of a man—once treated as less than human—made new and whole by the power of the gospel. Although, his story is uniquely his own it is a story that points the reader to the story of God's joy in resorting the broken, a God who comes to bind the wounds which are uniquely ours with his grace and love. A gospel in which we meet the Lord who can make us well.

Second, in the pages of the book I also found the heart of a pastor. In telling of his story Ron is not concerned with self-promotion, but rather self-giving to help others. His pastoral heart is even more evident when you meet him in person: welcoming, warm, safe, compassionate, vulnerable and faithful. This pastoral presence is only strengthened by Deirdre, his partner in life and this ministry.

Ultimately, I was convinced that God wanted to use Ron to minister to hurting people. The gospel at work in his story and ministry could reach people in my parish in ways and places that I could not. My invitation to him to come to Grace was an implicit acknowledgment of my own limitations. His experiences of suffering and redemption are being used by God to bring healing and hope to others. I saw the evidence during our conference. I am glad we hosted the Conference. I pray that God's healing work continues.

In Christ,

The Reverend Rob Stringer
Rector Grace Anglican Calgary