

## **Wholeness:**

### **Christy Wimber with Katherine Welby-Roberts**

Christy Wimber is the daughter in law of John Wimber founding Pastor of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship in California. She has been a church Pastor in her own right as well as being an author and international speaker.

*“Wholeness”* came out of her experiences as a church leader in ministering to her own congregation and to Christians at conferences and churches around the world. She began to see that praying for healing wasn’t just about concern for the outward physical condition or illness, but encompassed the whole person, body, soul and spirit. Over the years Christy has witnessed a gradual move away from people wanting prayer for diseases and physical conditions to those wanting prayer for anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions.

She encountered church leaders who were having personal struggles with their own mental health problems but felt ashamed that they had to take medication to deal with them. Some felt they had to hide their condition from their church because of a perceived pressure that they had to be strong and hold it together for those they were pastoring.

And this was not restricted to the leadership, but also to church communities as well, where those facing their own mental health issues felt they had to suppress the impact of their condition because of a general lack appreciation and knowledge about mental health and the pressures of coping with its impact .

Christy writes from personal experience as does her co-contributor Katherine Welby-Roberts, daughter of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who has herself lived for over ten years with anxiety, depression and chronic fatigue. And as a result of the many mixed responses she has met in church fellowships, she questions how well communities are being equipped to respond to mental health issues.

The goal of healing, Christy says, is for all people to be loved by a loving God. *“Any model which causes people to feel pressure or responsibility to make healing happen for themselves would be the opposite message to the message of wholeness” (page 178).*

Our world is changing. Culture is shifting. What’s happening in the world when it comes to health and healing has been an obvious change. *“Wholeness”* is a book to remind us that, just as with anything else we should be growing in how we learn and deliver ministry. God wants to bring people into wholeness. And to achieve this, churches have to become safe spaces where anyone can come to receive compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Colossians 3:12). Places that *“do life with people in the midst of pain, hardship and even in the midst of messy addictions, actually just in the messiness of what life brings” (page 99).*