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Inner Healing: A Comparison of Freedom in Christ Ministries,
Theophostic Ministry, and Pastoral Care Ministries

Just as the term psychology covers multiple approaches to mental and emotional health (e.g., cognitive, clinical, analytic, etc), so also the term inner healing encompasses a wide range of perspectives. This paper will examine, summarize, and compare three specific models. These three models are Freedom in Christ, Theophostic Ministry, and Pastoral Care Ministries. A clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of these models, and wisdom to know which is most appropriate at the time, will be addressed. That wisdom is vital to the correct usage of those methods in any situation—especially when dealing with vulnerable people. For the purpose of this paper, biologically-based dysfunctions are not being addressed since none of these models provide pharmacology. Also, the supernatural effectiveness of each model is not being compared because each model attempts, in its own way, to depend upon the Holy Spirit for healing; therefore, God's willingness and ability to heal through these styles is not in question and will not be put into this box. What will be examined is the way each model promotes or inhibits the client's connection with that healing power.

Freedom in Christ, proposed by Neal Anderson, suggests that healing is appropriated through confession of sin, renunciation of false beliefs, understanding one's identity in Christ, and deliverance from demonic influence. All of these are effectuated through thoughts, choices, and prayers which are geared towards accepting the counselee's Christian identity. Anderson, in his booklet The Steps to Freedom in Christ, provides each client with several lists of actions, thoughts, and beliefs which they read through prior to prayer. The client then prays according to the format provided, plugging words and phrases into the appropriate areas according to the need.

Anderson places great emphasis upon the client's rational thought processes in his model, stating that "you will discover the nature of the battle for your mind and learn why your mind must be transformed so you can live by faith and grow spiritually" (Victory 19). According to him, the mind is "the control center of all that you think and do" (Steps 1). He places such a strong emphasis upon the mind because he believes it is the way we are saved and "we are able to know God personally because we have received the 'mind of Christ' (1 Cor. 2:16) in our inner selves at salvation" (Victory 35).

The intention of the Freedom in Christ material is to change the client's understanding of their own identity and purpose in life: "Many Christians are not living free and productive lives because they don't understand who they are and why they are here. Who they are is rooted in their identity and position in Christ. If they don't see themselves the way God sees them, to that degree they suffer from a false identity and poor sense of worth" (Victory 43). This faulty understanding affects the client's perceptions about themselves, God, and the world around them. Anderson states that a person's understanding must be corrected before they can change their behavior, for "people cannot consistently behave in ways that are inconsistent with the way they perceive themselves. You don't change yourself by your perception. You change your perception of yourself by believing the truth" (47). In essence, a person will live out their inner belief and perception, even if that is contrary to what they want. This perception is changed primarily through rational thinking, and "one of the greatest ways to help yourself grow into maturity in Christ is to continually remind yourself who you are in Him" (53).

Anderson, in his book Victory Over Darkness, does not say that feelings and emotions are insignificant, but does say that they are secondary to thoughts and perceptions: "In a general sense, your emotions are a product of your thought life. If you are not thinking right, if your mind is not being renewed, if you are not perceiving God and His Word properly, it will show up in your emotional life" (170). Anderson does recognize that there are deeper emotions than those resulting from present thoughts; however, these are only dealt with by changing the client's perceptions and beliefs which those emotions bring up: "You have no control over a primary emotion when it is triggered in the present, because it is rooted in the past. [. . .] You can, however, stabilize the primary emotion by evaluating it in light of

present circumstances" (187). In this process, Anderson believes that the way to find freedom from past injuries is to change what you believe about yourself until that memory no longer affects your self image.

The strength in Anderson's model is its ability to quickly identify and resolve large areas of thoughts and beliefs in a relatively short period of time. The use of charts and lists enables the client and counselor to easily locate faulty beliefs and perceptions. The counselee is taught to focus upon scriptural truth, which is eternal, instead of circumstantial feelings, which are temporal. The client's confession of sin is followed by acceptance of forgiveness and mercy, and the will is strengthened to resist future temptations to sin.

The Freedom in Christ material is also formulated to quickly identify where the client may be under a demonic influence or addiction. Every possible entrance of evil is examined and renounced. This is useful to prevent future acceptance of evil into the client's life.

The weakness in Anderson's model is its heavy reliance upon the client's thoughts and perceptions. If a counselee is suffering from any type of psychological or emotional wound that makes rational and logical thought impossible, then progressing through the material may not be possible. Also, a dysfunction that leads a client to focus too much upon thoughts—such as introspection or legalism—would potentially be made worse through this process.

By focusing mainly upon present beliefs and perceptions, Anderson leaves past painful memories untouched. The remembrance of an original wound potentially brings up pain and grief, requiring subsequent evaluations of thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions. For a mind that has been stretched to the breaking point already, this may require too much effort to be feasible.

Theophostic Ministry, introduced by Edward Smith, finds that emotional and psychological woundedness is rooted in lie-based beliefs which are traced back to root memories. Feelings of emotional distress are embraced and traced back to the earliest memory of that same feeling, and new feelings are experienced, removing the pain from the initial memory. Once the pain associated with the initial memory is removed, all subsequent memories are affected.

Similar to the Freedom in Christ process, Theophostic ministry also focuses upon bringing truth to the client's mind. Like Anderson, Smith believes that "what we think controls how we feel" (52). The difference is the way that each model works to change those thoughts. Freedom in Christ is as general as Theophostic ministry is specific.

Whereas Anderson focuses upon universal truths, "Theophostic ministry is a process in which the Holy Spirit reveals specific and personalized truth to the wounded mind of the one seeking freedom" (Smith 14). Smith "[does] not think it is possible to change our core experiential beliefs through willpower or by simply telling ourselves the truth" (52) because logical truth does not change core beliefs.

Experiences and memories have greater control over wounded emotions than rational thoughts does. Smith states that "in times of crisis or in emotionally charged situations, our experiential knowledge (the beliefs we hold that we have learned through experience) overrides our logical truth (cognitive truth such as memorized Scripture verses)" (35). The client may spend years focusing on thought patterns, but painful core beliefs always win. "When a counselor or minister implants truth into the wounded person's mind, the lies still linger. Cognitive truth is not enough" (43).

Smith views every memory as a source of either positive truths or negative beliefs, and these become the source of the client's perception of self, God, and reality. Whereas Anderson believes that pain originating in memories cannot be changed, Smith asserts that changing the pain of a memory is the only way to renew the mind: "What is the substance of our thinking that needs to be renewed? Everything that is in our mind that is lie-based. What is the context in which this faulty, lie-based thinking resides? Our memories! If we put our past/memories behind us, then how are we ever to be renewed in our minds?" (63). The pain a client feels is a sign that a lie remains unchanged in the memory. "Emotional pain is what we feel in our present state or is that which surfaces when a memory-based lie is triggered" (32). Wholeness comes when experiential truth replaces the lies.

Theophostic ministry does not renounce faulty beliefs or lies, for "to be free of the lies we believe, we must first identify and embrace them rather than suppress, deny, or denounce them" (Smith 33). These lies are rooted in earlier memories which need to be healed. According to Smith, "When we

follow our present emotional pain back to its source, we will find a memory of something occurring that made us feel the same emotion that we are presently feeling. We can find truth and freedom in this place" (59). When a present situation brings up pain and faulty beliefs, these actually facilitate the healing. The pain is traced back to the originating experience, where the emotion needs to be healed and the faulty lie is replaced with specific truth. This new truth needs to be experiential, not just rational, for "we can change experience only with experience" (69).

The counselor has the client focus upon the pain or faulty core belief and requests the client to think back to the earliest memory of a similar feeling. This process enables the counselor to locate the originating experience where that lie was implanted into the client's mind. The counselor then waits for God to speak truth to the client, bringing a new emotional experience to the originating memory. The counselor never suggests the new truth or experience; it comes only through the client. The client then associates this new emotional experience with the memory, and the new truth replaces the lie in all the affected areas.

Theophostic ministry does not focus upon deliverance from demonic influences. Smith believes that demons can only influence a person in areas where they are broken or wounded, and that inner healing will remove access points, causing the demons to leave. This does not mean that deliverance does not occur, but only that it is not a primary focus: "Theophostic Ministry is a mind-renewal ministry, not a deliverance ministry, and it does not see demons as the problem, or exorcism as the final solution. [. . .] I do believe many people are demonized, but I also know that these same demons can be sent away without any fight or resistance at the appropriate time, once the lies in these people's memories are replaced with truth" (Smith 158) .

Theophostic ministry is extremely effective for those who are in touch with their feelings and emotions. The source of the pain, lie, or false belief is addressed so that the memory itself no longer causes pain. No pressure is put upon the client to excessively control thinking, and there is no tendency towards legalism. The client often feels a large change in a relatively short period of time.

Healing the root of addictions or demonic influence prior to deliverance is far more effective than renouncing them while the core belief or memory is still wounded. The client is not feeling the original pull towards that root, and the symptoms are easier to release. The focus of the ministry session is never upon demons or the occult, and the client remembers only an experience of interacting with God. The integrity of memories is safeguarded by the counselor's refusal to initiate or suggest any new memory, experience, or truth. Where there may be a repressed memory, it is not forced into consciousness prematurely. This protects both the counselor and client from suggested or manufactured memories.

Theophostic ministry may not work for a client who is completely out of touch with emotions. In such a situation, attempting to trace back a feeling to an originating memory could result in new beliefs of hopelessness, frustration, and despair. Where a client may have a tendency to live according to feelings and emotions, this could strengthen that tendency to an unhealthy degree.

The process of embracing the lie and emotional wound and following it back to the source is an extremely difficult and painful experience. When the trauma was extremely great, the client may be unable to face the pain directly. This could also result in feelings of hopelessness and despair.

Since a Theophostic ministry session deals directly with root beliefs and lies, there is a danger that the new experience may have a lie hidden in it. If the counselor is not trained exceptionally well in understanding imaginative symbols, a worse lie—deceptively looking like a new truth—could take the place of the old one.

Pastoral Care Ministries, taught by Leanne Payne, uses the imagination, symbolism, and imagery to incorporate both rational thought processes and emotional experiences to facilitate wholeness. Images, as the bridge between thought and feeling, heal schisms between mind and heart, bring wholeness and maturity. In the Pastoral Care Ministry schools, Leanne Payne teaches attendees to understand the way that the reasoning mind and the intuitive heart function. Where Freedom in Christ addresses healing through rational thought, and Theophostic ministry approaches healing through experiences in the memories, Payne works to incorporate both into the healing process. By recognizing the language of both heart and mind, the client and counselor can quickly identify the best path to health.

According to Payne, all wounds are the result of separations in life, and it is the unhealed separations that cause emotional pain:

In order to gain wholeness and the opportunity to mature as persons, we must acknowledge and deeply repent of the separations in our lives. The primary separation is between the self and God [sin and unbelief], out of which issue the separations between the self and other selves [other people], the self and nature [the world around us], and the self of one's "deep heart" [schisms in thought and feeling]. The healing of this latter separation brings into harmony the intellect and the heart. (Healing 37)

Once these separations are resolved, wholeness is the natural result.

Pastoral Care Ministries views a painful memory as an experience in which forgiveness was never experientially given or received, and repentance is the willingness to rectify that:

In prayer for the healing of memories, we simply ask our Lord to come present to that place where we were so wounded (or perhaps wounded another). Forgiving others, and receiving forgiveness, occurs. In prayer for healing of the heart from fears, bitternesses, etc., we see primal fears as well as the lesser ones dealt with immediately: those fears that the sufferer often has not been aware of, never been able to name—they only know that their lives have been seriously restricted and shaped because of them. We see imaginations cleansed; we see the picture-making faculty of the heart cleansed. (Payne, Healing 137)

Payne would define inner healing as nothing more than forgiveness being practiced on the deep emotional level. In her view, the mind often first chooses to forgive, then the heart experiences the forgiveness and healing. This often involves renunciation of sin and vows, followed by healing of memories. Wholeness requires both working together.

In discussing the healing between mind and heart, Pastoral Care Ministries is not promoting a view of these being separate. On the contrary, the schism between the two—especially in western culture—is one of the largest separations which need to be healed. It is often the elevation of "head

knowledge" at the expense of "heart knowledge" that causes such a need for inner healing in the first place. "Christians use such phrases as head and heart and head knowledge versus heart knowledge to distinguish between discursive reason on the one hand, and intuitive, symbolic, feeling ways of knowing on the other" (Payne, Healing 157); however, complete distinction between head and heart is not biblical, for "on the Scriptures [. . .] the heart of man refers to both 'minds'—or as we say today, to 'head knowledge' as well as 'heart knowledge'" (161). Emotional wounds and sinful behaviors are most often the result of confusion between these two ways of "knowing."

Pastoral Care Ministries finds that the imaginative faculty is the optimal vehicle for healing this major schism. The client is brought into prayer and directed to focus on God and to ask Him to identify the source of pain and brokenness. In this prayer, "He shows us our hearts. To begin to understand the imagery is to begin to disengage the power of the symbolic confusion" (Payne, Healing 144). Once this confusion is recognized and the source is located, the counselor and client seek for the best symbolism or imagery that will restore and heal the wound. It is here that "symbol is the key for the fusion of thought with feeling. The symbolic mind, working properly, brings together head and heart" (172).

Payne also teaches people how to interact with heart and mind. This will often involve guided imagery; however, this imagery never stipulates the final truth. A client may be asked to imagine standing before the cross and seeing all the pain flow into it, but any responding images or pictures are not suggested—they come directly from God.

PCM also believes that understanding one's identity in Christ is necessary for healing. This is done through an act of "practicing God's presence" inside the client's soul. By imagining Jesus Christ stepping into the client and residing there, the client's new identity becomes more conscious than the old identity of sin and brokenness. In this, "the eyes and ears of our hearts are opened to receive the word He is always speaking. We enter into a path of obedience perhaps unknown to us before where we joyfully acknowledge, 'Jesus is Lord'" (Payne, Healing 25). As the client practices this, that identity becomes a normal part of life.

As well as instructing attendees in the best ways to facilitate healing, Payne also explains the three main barriers that prevent healing. Recognizing that almost all blockages fall into these three categories often helps give hope to the wounded client:

In the ministry of prayer for healing of the soul, we are continually helping Christians to hurdle one or another of the three great barriers to personal and spiritual wholeness in Christ. They are 1) the failure to gain the great Christian virtue of self-acceptance, 2) the failure to forgive others, and 3) the failure to receive forgiveness for oneself. (Restoring xiii)

As a client or counselee meditates upon each of these barriers, the appropriate steps become clear. Through this process, healings of entire areas often happen instead of isolated memories.

Using the imagination to bridge the gap between mind and heart (i.e., rational thought and experience) facilitates the healing of both thought and memory. The root causes of complex behavioral patterns can sometimes be identified in an extremely short period of time. It is rare that a client does not experience healing at one of the Pastoral Care Ministries schools, and the effects are usually very deep.

In the process of teaching on joining the "mind" and "heart", Payne often brings great healing to the division between men and women, healing the "true masculine and feminine."

Pastoral Care Ministries is extremely difficult to understand for the beginner. It is not uncommon for Payne's teaching to be referred to as "word salad" by those who hear her for the first time; even those who help teach the school will use that phrase concerning their first experience with her. Training to understand the languages of mind and heart requires a great deal of study and perseverance, as well as a major shift in worldview.

In this examination of Freedom in Christ, Theophostic ministry, and Pastoral Care Ministries, each model has been summarized and compared. Each process has significant strengths and weaknesses which make places for that ministry. It is important for any counselor to recognize the best process for helping a client find wholeness and healing. Recognizing that a client's personality will respond better towards certain types of inner healing will greatly increase that counselor's effectiveness.

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