

Title: Unresolved Issues in the Facilitator: One of the Most Important Hindrances

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Greetings all,

Just posted a new essay, "Unresolved Issues in the Facilitator: One of the Most Important Hindrances" on the "Ministry Aids" page of our web site.

Web site address: www.kclehman.com

Blessings,

Dr. Lehman/Karl

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**Unresolved Issues in the Facilitator:
One of the Most Important Hindrances**

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I. Introduction

After first learning Theophostic, I was applying all the principles and techniques as described by Dr. Smith, but I was not getting very good results – an occasional glorious healing, but lots and lots of frustration. The results I was seeing with Theophostic ministry were only barely enough better than what I had been seeing with previous tools to prevent me from quitting. However, when I went to Alathia and observed Dr. Smith working with volunteers from our group and patients that people had brought with them, I witnessed an efficacy that I had never seen before. I witnessed profound and rapid healing in every person with whom Dr. Smith worked. I knew enough to recognize he was working with clients with the same clinical picture and trauma history as my own clients. He would navigate interference, dissociation, guardian lies, demonic interference, and psychological defenses, and get to the core trauma and lies in 4 to 8 hours. I had been working with people with the same clinical picture for 6 to 12 months and was still stuck. Every time I went to Alathia I saw the same thing – Dr. Smith working with clients like my own, but demonstrating effectiveness that was 10 times what I was seeing in my practice. The fact that I didn't see anybody else (other than Dr. Smith) getting results any better than my own helped keep me from quitting, but once I had seen Dr. Smith working, the bar had been raised to a whole new range.

Observing Dr. Smith helped me to identify a number of "new" principles and ministry tools that

he had not described in the videos or manual¹, but often he would move smoothly past the places I usually got stuck and I couldn't figure out what he was doing differently – I couldn't perceive him applying any theory or ministry tools that I wasn't also using. This was incredibly frustrating and painful, but also hopeful – I knew there must be something I was still missing, and I was determined to figure out what it was.

Then I began to notice that each time the Lord revealed and resolved an issue in my own life, my efficacy in facilitating immediately increased a notch (initially, my own healing was the place we saw the most dramatic and consistent results). I became increasingly convinced that the difference between what I saw at Alathia and what I saw in my office was due to my own unresolved issues interfering with my ability to use Theophostic ministry. This growing conviction, coupled with the daily pain and pressure of clients who were still healing slowly and who were suffering tremendous pain and disability in their lives in the meantime, drove me to constantly press into my own healing work (healing trauma, mentoring with my pastor, fasting and prayer, every tool I could find). The “Examples Catalogue” section at the end of this essay is my “trophy” list of resolved issues, and includes brief descriptions of the ways in which they had been hindering my efficacy as a facilitator.

At this point, our assessment is that unresolved issues (truth-based pain, lies, judgments, vows, other sinful defenses, other sin, and demonic infection) in the facilitator are some of the most important hindrances to effective ministry. Furthermore, our perception is that unresolved problems are being stirred up in the facilitator any time he or she is experiencing anything other than calm, clear thinking, and confidence in the Lord's desire and ability to heal. Some may feel that this is an overstatement, but it has certainly been true for us.

We encourage and challenge every facilitator to test this hypothesis in his or her own experience: “Some truth-based pain, lie, sinful defense, other sin, or demonic infection is being stirred up in me if, while ministering to another, I am experiencing anything other than calm, clear thinking, and confidence in the Lord's desire and ability to heal.”

II. Unresolved Wounds (wounds which still carry lies and/or truth-based pain) in the

facilitator: We have observed a number of ways in which unresolved wounds in the facilitator can hinder his efficacy and/or safety.

A. Direct triggering of unresolved wounds in the therapist: Just like any other trigger, healing ministry sessions can activate unresolved wounds in the facilitator when any aspect of the session is similar to the original traumatic events that created the wounds. And unresolved wounds getting activated will always hinder the efficacy of the facilitator.

¹See “Theophostic Ministry: What is Unique?” on the Articles and FAQs page of our web site for a description of these “new” principles and ministry tools.

For example, I observed cheating, stealing, bullying, and drug dealing on my childhood playground, but it was not a good idea to notice or comment on these activities. If I was so foolish as to even look directly at the activity in question, one of the angry and dangerous kids involved would glare, and yell “Hey punk! Whatcho lookin at?” The internal child part that carried these memories learned, in no uncertain terms, “It’s not safe to look at or talk about problems.” In certain ministry sessions, the person receiving ministry would remind me of these angry kids from my childhood. Without my even realizing it, the internal child part carrying these memories would get triggered forward and go into “stay out of trouble” mode, which meant “Don’t look at or comment on anything that might make somebody angry.” This was a good strategy for not getting beaten up on my childhood playground, but it was a bad strategy for facilitating Theophostic ministry sessions. I discovered this (usually subtle) triggering impairment when an angry client yelled at me, and my frightened child memories and emotions came forward so strongly that I finally recognized them for what they were. Now I can see that whenever the person receiving ministry triggered these memories, I would miss important clues in the session because I was afraid to “look at problems,” or I would notice something like self pity or bitterness, but not say anything because I was afraid “to talk about problems.” After working on these memories and lies I noticed that I was able to calmly observe and comment on defenses, sins, etc. that I had previously been afraid to notice and/or talk about. Not surprisingly, this resulted in an immediate and dramatic increase in my efficacy in facilitating for each of the people who had previously triggered these memories.

B. Resonance triggering of unresolved wounds in the therapist: The phenomena of physical resonance provides a very helpful analogy for another way in which unresolved wounds in the therapist can be triggered. In physics, resonance occurs when the timing of a power source matches the timing of the receiving physical system. Pushing a child on a swing set is an example we are all familiar with. Your push will do the most good if you push them at just the right time (when they have come to a stop right in front of you, and are about to start swinging away from you). If you push them at any other time, your pushing will not be as effective, or will even slow them down. Another way to understand resonance at an experiential level is to do a simple experiment with two guitars. If you pluck a given string on one guitar, the corresponding string on the second guitar will start to vibrate (assuming they are both in tune). This is because it is *resonating* with the “same note” sound energy from the first guitar. It is impossible for the “B” string on the second guitar to sit, unaffected, if you play the “B” string on the first guitar. Also, the second guitar will only respond if it has a string tuned to the same frequency as the sound energy being sent from the first guitar.²

²Any musicians and sound engineers reading this will recognize that this is an extremely simplified summary of resonance, skipping all discussion of fractions and multiples of resonance frequency, etc.

We have observed a similar pattern with respect to unresolved wounds. If one person is describing details from, and expressing emotions associated with, certain unresolved wounds, anybody else in the room with similar unresolved wounds will start to “resonate” – the words and emotions from the first person will stir up similar thoughts and emotions in anybody else who has similar unresolved wounds. We have often seen this in our group training settings, where everyone in the audience with unresolved wounds similar to those being addressed in the demonstration will be crying by the end of the session. People facilitating Theophostic ministry are no exception. If the therapist has unresolved wounds similar to those being addressed in the ministry session, they will start to resonate with the person receiving ministry – the words and emotions of the person receiving ministry will stir up the therapist’s similar unresolved wounds. Like the physics analogy parallel, where it is impossible for the “B” string on the second guitar to remain unaffected when “same note” sound energy is in the air, our experience is that it is extremely difficult (impossible?) to avoid resonance triggering if we have an unresolved wound that is similar/identical to the one the person receiving ministry is working on. Also like the physics analogy parallel, where the second guitar will only respond if it has a string tuned to the frequency of the sound energy in the air, we will only resonate with a client if we have unresolved wounds similar to those they are working on. If we are resonating emotionally with a client, we are resonating because we have a place in our own mind with which the client’s pain/wound/lie can resonate. We will not resonate emotionally if we do not have similar wounds that are still unresolved.

Therefore, *resonance inherently includes triggering*. If the facilitator is resonating with a client’s unresolved wound, *by definition*, a similar wound is being energized – stirred up – *triggered* in the facilitator. The facilitator may be intensely empathic and compassionate in this place of resonance, but he or she is *also* being triggered.

Resonance triggering vs. empathy and compassion: In our experience, resonance triggering is at least as common and as important as reactive triggering, but often goes unrecognized because we mistake it for empathy and compassion. **Empathy** is the intellectual identification with the thoughts and feelings of another – putting ourselves in the psychological frame of reference of the person receiving ministry, and thereby *understanding* his or her thinking, feeling, and behavior. **Compassion** is feeling sorrow/regret that another is suffering, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate his suffering and remove the source of his pain.³ **Resonance triggering** is a spontaneous

³Definitions for empathy and compassion are adapted from *Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, (New York, NY: Portland House, 1989), and Kaplan, Sadock, and Grebb, *Kaplan and Sadock’s Synopsis of Psychiatry, Seventh Edition* (Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins, 1994) p. 841. It is significant that the Webster’s definition of empathy includes “or the vicarious *experiencing* of the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of another” (emphasis mine), and its definition of compassion also includes “sympathy,” which is defined as “*sharing* the feelings of another” (emphasis mine). This is consistent with

emotional response consistent with *having* the same/similar wounds and lies as the person receiving ministry. As opposed to understanding her suffering, being sad that she is suffering, and wanting to alleviate her suffering, resonance triggering is actually *experiencing* the same or similar thoughts and emotions as the person receiving ministry.⁴

Comparing our spontaneous emotional responses to clients working with certain wounds, *before* and *after* resolving the same/similar wounds in ourselves, has been very helpful in learning to tell the difference between resonance triggering and “clean” compassion and empathy. Before resolving the same wounds in our own lives, we experience empathy and compassion mixed with thoughts and emotions consistent with *having* the same/similar wounds and lies ourselves. After resolving the wounds in our own lives, we experience empathy and compassion, but not the thoughts and emotions corresponding to actually having the same wounds. Each time we have resolved a wound in our own lives that was resonating with material carried by one or more of our clients, our spontaneous emotional response has changed from the confusing mixture of empathy, compassion, and resonance triggering, to clean empathy and compassion. In fact, this is a good way to test Theophostic healing. If a certain wound has been completely resolved in my mind, I will no longer experience thought and emotion resonance when others talk about and/or work on similar wounds.

Resonance phenomena with truth-based loss/grief/pain: I often cry when I am facilitating Theophostic ministry sessions, and I used to think that this was simply a normal compassionate, empathetic response to the incredible truth-based destruction, loss, and sadness in the person’s story. However, my current perception is that I only cry as the facilitator when I am experiencing resonance with unresolved truth-based pain in myself.⁵ Charlotte first made this observation, and initially I disagreed with her perception – partially because I cried so often during sessions, and didn’t want to believe that I was being triggered so much of the time, and partially because my subjective experience was “I’m not being triggered, I’m just crying because I am empathizing with the pain in his story.” However, I have come to agree with her as I have observed myself carefully. As I have gotten more and more of my own healing, I have *more* empathy and compassion, but I cry less and less, and I have noticed a before and after difference for a growing number of specific issues. *Before* Jesus had taken the truth-based pain for the specific wound in question, I would usually find myself

the reality that most people routinely mix resonance triggering with what we call “clean” empathy and compassion.

⁴Note that we are referring to the *type* of emotion, not intensity. The *type* of emotion is the same or similar, but the intensity is usually much reduced.

⁵This is a tentative hypothesis, and I would appreciate feedback from you all regarding these thoughts.

tearing when a client was working with similar truth-based pain. Part of my emotional response would be true empathy and compassion, but when I looked closely, I could also identify truth-based pain in myself that was resonating with the client's similar truth-based pain. *After* letting Jesus come, and take onto Himself even the truth-based pain for the specific wound in question, I could feel a difference – I could feel that I no longer had my own pain resonating with the client's pain. I experienced empathy and compassion, but from a clear, calm place without tears – I experienced a mellow truth-based regret about what had happened to the person receiving ministry, and a deep desire to help them, but not pain and tears.⁶

Spiritual gift of empathy/prayer burden from the Lord?: Some have suggested that a resonance emotional response on the part of the therapist during prayer for emotional healing might be coming from a spiritual gift of empathy and/or might be a “prayer burden” from the Lord. I have heard anecdotal accounts that lead me to believe these are real phenomena, but they are somewhat mysterious, and I certainly don't understand them. Observing your emotional reaction to similar scenes in movies can be very helpful in discerning whether you are experiencing a prayer burden from the Lord as opposed to being triggered. Our thought is that if the same emotions are stirred up by a movie, that would indicate resonance triggering (it seems less plausible that the Lord is giving you a prayer burden for the actors who are pretending to experience the traumatic event being portrayed).

C. “Triggering” of positive emotions in the therapist: As discussed at length in “‘Triggered’ Positive Emotions”(forthcoming), all of us try to do things in the present that will temporarily comfort/cover/compensate/counter-act the lies and pain from our old wounds. When we succeed in doing something that counter-acts an old wound, we experience “triggered” positive thoughts and emotions that are the opposite of the negative thoughts and emotions that come forward when the lie is triggered. Pursuing the temporary relief of these “triggered” positive thoughts and emotions will impair our discernment, and draw us into making poor decisions.

For example, when our clients first started displaying physical manifestations of demonic interference, I thought “Wow, something really *is* happening! God *is* answering our prayers, I *am* important, I *am* special!” instead of my old lies of “Something's wrong with me, I ~~am~~ am not important or special enough for God/Dad to want to spend time with me.” Temporarily, I felt encouraged, excited, important, and special, instead of discouraged, flawed, unimportant, and ignored. Instead of recognizing these exaggerated, triggered positive emotions for what they were, I thought they confirmed that the physical manifestations were somehow important and valuable. Pursuing the triggered positive emotions from this present (apparent)

⁶See “Bereavement, Grief, and Mourning” on the Ministry Aids page of our web site for additional discussion of how Jesus can remove even the truth-based pain from old wounds.

solution to my old lies and pain impaired my discernment, and lead me to focus on the physical manifestations in an unbalanced way. My unresolved wounds and lies made me vulnerable to this error, and I can feel this area of impaired discernment losing power as the Lord heals the underlying wounds and lies.

Another example we have seen occurs when a person with “I’m not important” and “I’m not wanted” lies experiences dramatic success with Theophostic ministry. When the living Jesus Christ shows up and releases glorious healing right in front of her, it feels like the Lord has just chosen her to be one of His personal assistants – one of His special, inner circle – one of the disciples that travels with Jesus and gets to watch Him heal. The discouragement and low self esteem associated with the person’s usual “I’m not important” lies are temporarily replaced with the thrilling excitement of “I *am* important! God is answering *my* prayers. Jesus is showing up in *my* office!” The word spreads, and people start calling: “My friend just told me what happened last week. Can you make time in your schedule to pray with me?”, “Oh, *thank you*, for giving me an appointment. I was afraid there wouldn’t be any space left,” and “Please, can’t you just see me for *one* session?” The loneliness and rejection associated with her usual “I’m not wanted” lies are temporarily replaced with the warm affirmation of “*Everybody* wants me!” Without even realizing what is happening, the person will begin to compulsively pursue these intense positive emotions. She will neglect other responsibilities, her family, and herself in order to pursue Theophostic in a compulsive and unbalanced way. She will also make poor judgment decisions regarding when and where it is appropriate and/or safe to do Theophostic ministry, and she will often make confidentiality errors out of the intense pressure to tell others about the exciting things that are happening.

Obviously, being misled by triggered positive emotions can only occur where there are unresolved underlying wounds and lies. Carrying more wounds and lies will make a Theophostic facilitator more vulnerable to this problem, and resolving her own wounds and lies will make her less and less vulnerable to this particular variety of confusion and impairment.

D. General Comments Regarding Triggering in the Therapist: There are a number of observations/patterns/principles that seem to be true for all forms of triggering in the Therapist.

Triggering *always* causes impairment: Our experience is that if we are being triggered, then we are always being impaired, and the degree of impairment correlates directly with the degree of triggering. Reactive triggering may occur in response to real/true problematic behavior on the part of the client, but the reactive triggering will also inherently cause impairment. Resonance triggering is usually associated with legitimate empathy and compassion, but the resonance triggering will also inherently cause impairment. Triggering of positive emotions will feel good, but it will also inherently cause impairment.

Impairment of mental and spiritual discernment, gifts, and abilities: When we are being triggered, we are not able to minister out of the full measure of our gifts, discernment, training, etc. Triggering is like background noise when we are trying to hear, like dust in the air when we are trying to see. Our experience is that it is impossible to operate in the “zone” of optimal mental clarity, discernment, natural and spiritual gifting, courage, and non-anxious decision making when we are being triggered in any way.

Increased vulnerability to demonic interference: Our experience is that triggering in the facilitator increases her vulnerability to demonic harassment/interference. The degree of increased vulnerability seems to be proportional to the degree of triggering.

Child internal parts: I have noticed that I am especially impaired by triggering if the triggering causes internal child parts to come forward. In this case, not only am I impaired by being triggered, but there is also a child ego state sharing the “driver’s seat.” One reason a person will be especially impaired when triggered to a child ego state is that any training obtained as an adult will be carried in her adult mind. To the degree that a child ego state is triggered forward, her adult self will be out of the driver’s seat, and any training carried in her adult mind will be “offline.”

Over and over again, we have observed a cluster of several clients, with similar wounds and lies, all being stuck at the same place. I can work and work, but just can’t seem to perceive/discern the way through. Then I get healing for wounds and lies similar to those carried by these clients, and suddenly I can perceive the way out of the stuck place for them. A part of the problem that I could never focus clearly suddenly comes into focus. Some subtle detail that I could not previously see suddenly becomes visible. The overall problem, previously complicated and confusing, suddenly seems straightforward. Within weeks, each of these clients begins to move forward. When I look carefully at the whole situation, I can see that I was previously being impaired by my own resonance triggering. The problem that proved unsolvable when I was impaired suddenly becomes solvable when I am operating in the full measure of my gifts and abilities.

Triggering hinders, but does not preclude ministry: Our experience is that we can pick the low hanging fruit, even while being triggered, but that triggering blocks us from facilitating successfully in complicated situations. As mentioned above, the degree of impairment seems to correlate directly with the degree of triggering. The more intensely we are triggered, the more seriously we are impaired, and the less we are able to successfully navigate complicated situations.

III. Sinful Defenses in the Therapist: I have been sobered and humbled by how easily and how often my own sinful defenses interfere with my ability to facilitate Theophostic Ministry. Vows and judgments are the most common, but self-pity, denial, avoidance, and other sinful

defenses also show up on a regular basis.

Resonance phenomena with sinful defenses: We have observed that we can resonate with respect to sinful defenses in much the same way that we can resonate with respect to unresolved wounds. For example, several of my clients had intense judgments and bitterness towards the Lord. When they would start to express their judgments and bitterness, my internal child parts with similar judgments and bitterness would begin to resonate. If the person receiving ministry focused on this for more than a few minutes, my own judgments and bitterness towards the Lord would be triggered forward. I was very empathically *with them*, but unfortunately, I was *in the swamp* with them, and angry, triggered, child parts were driving. I was no more able to see the way out than they were. The person receiving ministry felt better in that they now had company in the swamp, but we would both wallow around in the same stuck place without any insight or movement forward. As soon as I dealt with my own judgments and bitterness towards the Lord, this stuck place with each of these clients began to move forward. When they would get triggered into judgements and bitterness towards the Lord, instead of resonating into child parts that would fall into the swamp with them, I was able to remain in my adult self, on the edge of the swamp, and perceive the Lord's guidance with respect to how to help them get out.

Vows: Unresolved vows carried by the facilitator will make it more difficult for him to perceive and follow the Lord's guidance. The internal pressure to obey the vow, to follow the vow can drive him to do things that will care for the vow, but that will hinder the Theophostic process. For example, the vow "I will never let anyone get angry at me" will hinder the facilitator from doing anything that might result in anger pointed back at him – the facilitator will avoid challenging sinful defenses (especially defenses like self pity that are usually painful to acknowledge), the facilitator will be reluctant to name and confront areas of unconfessed sin, the facilitator will be hesitant in stirring up anger-related triggers, and the facilitator will not want to work with angry internal parts. This vow will push the facilitator to *manage* the person receiving ministry in order to make sure she doesn't get angry at him, instead of providing a safe place where she has permission to feel and express *all* of her emotions.

Judgments: Judgments and bitterness have provided the best example in my own life of sinful defenses in the facilitator that hinder Theophostic ministry.

Judging the person receiving ministry will provide especially pernicious interference to the Theophostic process. I most frequently fall into judging the person receiving ministry when the session becomes "stuck" and I start to feel helpless and powerless. On good days, I recognize that I am being triggered, and that old wounds and lies are causing me to feel responsible – but powerless and helpless to fix the problem. I can then acknowledge this and ask the Lord to carry it (as described below). On bad days, I start judging the person who I perceive to be thwarting me in order to protect myself from feeling responsible, helpless, and powerless. I especially judge internal parts that

I perceive are invisibly blocking the process by withholding important information, but that don't even have the decency to acknowledge what they are doing. If they won't even acknowledge that they are present and that they are blocking the process because they are afraid, I can't even begin to address the problem, and this makes me feel *really* helpless and powerless. Anytime I want to punish a client and/or his internal parts for not cooperating, any time I want to *make* them get better, I know I am judging them in an attempt to protect myself from feeling helpless and powerless. Most people, and especially internal child parts, seem to have very sensitive and accurate judgment detectors. The person receiving ministry will not feel safe to expose his wounds, lies, and other areas of vulnerability if he is being judged, and this will surely hinder the Theophostic process.

These principles regarding judging the person receiving ministry are *especially* important for spouses working with each other. The most profound example of judgments hindering Theophostic ministry has been in my facilitating Theophostic ministry for Charlotte. The relationship is much more complex than with our clients. With a client, if the session becomes stuck because they are afraid to go forward, I might get triggered about being stuck, powerless, and helpless in that session, but I wouldn't have to live with the daily consequences of her unhealed wounds and lies. With Charlotte, not only would her fear of going to certain memories or emotions trigger me about being stuck, powerless, and helpless in the session, I would also have to live with the daily consequences of the wounds and lies that didn't get resolved. With a client, if the session became stuck, I would almost always assume it was because the adult person and/or an internal part was afraid to go forward for some reason – I wouldn't feel like they have other reasons to refuse to cooperate. With Charlotte, all of our unresolved past conflicts and current issues also affect me. My suspicious and frustrated internal child parts contribute especially “helpful” input: “She's not cooperating because she's selfish – she knows that if she admits this lie then she will have to admit that I am right about...,” or “She's not cooperating because she's stubborn and proud – she knows I am right, but refuses to admit it because she doesn't want to deal with the narcissistic mortification,” or “She's just being hateful – she's not cooperating because she knows this particular issue means a lot to me, and she is still punishing me for the time I...”

So, not only would the intensity of the judgment and bitterness be increased because the stakes were higher, but I would also judge Charlotte for being selfish, stubborn, proud, and vindictive in addition to judging her for being uncooperative out of cowardice (fearfulness turns into cowardice when it goes through the judgment filter). My judgments, self righteousness, and bitterness towards Charlotte triggered angry and defensive reactions in her, and these angry and defensive reactions got in the way of the Theophostic process. What a surprise! (sarcasm intended) – Charlotte couldn't open up her most vulnerable and shameful child places when she felt I was judging her for

being a selfish, stubborn, proud, vindictive coward!⁷ My ability to facilitate, her ability to receive, and our ability to work together as a team have all improved dramatically as I have been confessing and releasing my judgments towards her.

If you are trying Theophostic ministry with your spouse, you *must* commit to watching for any judgments that come forward during ministry times, and you must release them as soon as you find them. You will not be emotionally safe (or effective) as the facilitator if judgments towards your spouse are getting triggered forward during the ministry time. I actually call time out, in the middle of the ministry time, to release any judgments I identify as I am facilitating for Charlotte.

I have also noticed that it is easy for me to judge the people who have hurt our clients. I love the people we minister to, and it is understandable that I will feel anger that they have been hurt. But this anger often moves into judgment and bitterness towards those who have hurt them.⁸ When I have judgments and bitterness towards the perpetrators, I will have a blind spot with respect to perceiving and/or addressing any judgments and bitterness the person receiving ministry has against these same people.

Finally, I often fall into judging the Lord when a ministry session seems stuck, I don't know what to do, and it seems like He is not helping me (see "Judgments and Bitterness Towards the Lord").

Any kind of judgment in the facilitator's heart (judging the person receiving ministry, the perpetrators, or the Lord) will inherently impair her discernment and her ability to perceive the Lord's guidance, since it is sin. It will also give demonic spirits place and authority for interference harassment.

IV. Unconfessed Sin, Persistent Sin, Sinful Strongholds in the Therapist: Any sin in the therapist/minister's life will produce a blind spot regarding that same sin in the people they minister to, will impair their ability to hear the Lord's guidance, and will provide place and authority for interfering demonic spirits.

V. Demonic Harassment, Oppression, Infestation/Infection in the Therapist: It seems that demonic forces are working especially hard to hinder Christians from becoming competent and confident with Theophostic Ministry. This has certainly been true for me. In retrospect, I am amazed at how difficult it has been to learn Theophostic Ministry. Things that seemed so

⁷Actually, most of the time only one or a couple of these would be present in a given session, but occasionally Charlotte would get the whole pile at once.

⁸I know I have slipped into judging the perpetrators when the person receiving ministry is describing what was done to her and I start to fantasize "Robocop" revenge – usually variations of using that big gun he carries to blow various body parts off of the perpetrators.

complex and confusing when I was learning seem simple and straight-forward now. As I was learning, often when I would receive healing and corresponding deliverance, I would realize that suddenly some aspect of Theophostic would seem clear and simple, as opposed to confusing and complicated. I often would feel that scales had fallen from my eyes, that fog had cleared in my brain. My perception is that triggering was hindering my thinking, but also that demonic infection attached to my wounds and lies was specifically and directly working to hinder my ability to understand Theophostic principles. The more demonic infection I am carrying, the more effectively the enemy will be able to hinder my ability to learn and use Theophostic ministry. Resolving my own issues, including exposing and removing demonic infection, will clear the way for me to learn and use Theophostic ministry.

“Resonance” phenomena with demonic interference: I don’t know if resonance is exactly the right metaphor, but my experience is that there is some kind of phenomena that occurs when the facilitator and the person receiving ministry have similar demonic infections. For example, if both myself and the person receiving ministry have discouragement wounds and lies that are infected by spirits of discouragement, our corresponding demonic spirits seem unusually able to work together to interfere with the Theophostic process. The more demonic infection I am carrying, the more areas I will have that are liable to this kind of demonic resonance/teamwork. Exposing and removing demonic infection in my life will directly decrease this particular problem.

VI. Miscellaneous Comments:

Impaired client confidence in the therapist: Activation of any kind of unresolved issues in the therapist usually decreases the client’s sense of safety. Clients can tell when some problem is being stirred up in the therapist, and perceiving that the therapist is impaired understandably hinders their confidence and their ability to go to deeply vulnerable places. Our experience is that internal parts have especially sensitive radar. If they sense we are impaired in some way, they conclude that it is not safe to cooperate. They will then keep their shields up, and may not even acknowledge that they are present.

Note: If you *are* being impaired by some unresolved issue, it is better to acknowledge this than to try to hide it. Our experience is that the person receiving ministry can almost always (always?) tell that something is wrong. Many of us have old wounds of being invalidated and/or feeling crazy when people in positions of authority deny or ignore problems that we can see and feel. If the therapist denies or tries to hide when his old stuff is getting stirred up, it will re-traumatize these old wounds, and make the person receiving ministry feel even more unsafe. This has been a very vulnerable and humbling thing for Charlotte and I to do as therapists, but we have been pleasantly surprised by people’s responses. When I first started doing this, I was expecting the person receiving ministry to be upset, and possibly want to transfer to somebody else. Almost everybody has responded more along the lines of “Boy, I’m so glad you said that. I knew something was wrong, and I was getting that old, terrible feeling that I must just

be crazy. It feels so good to have you validate my perceptions.” In one situation, I got so triggered that I began to have physical manifestations of demonic interference (persistent yawning and coughing) to the extent that I had to ask Charlotte to come in and finish the session. To my surprise, our client felt relieved that I could be so honest and vulnerable about what was happening, and was also grateful to finally understand that my triggering had been the cause of our being so stuck at that particular place. She continued to work with me, and got good results in later sessions, especially as we were able to quickly identify and openly discuss when my unresolved issues got in the way. The best possible scenario is to press in to your own healing, so that your own stuff will get in the way less and less often, but when your stuff *is* getting stirred up, it is very helpful to humbly acknowledge this to the client.

One might respond to this essay with: “This is why I think Theophostic is dangerous – look at all these problems and risks – all the ways in which our own woundedness can impair our efficacy as Theophostic facilitators and even make us dangerous. This is why especially lay people should not be released to use Theophostic ministry.” I would respond with the opposite assessment: Churches/congregations/lay people and ministers who do not understand Theophostic principles and who do not use Theophostic ministry tools carry the same woundedness. The wounds of each individual impair his or her efficacy in every ministry he or she attempts, and ministries other than Theophostic have ways in which the woundedness of the minister makes them dangerous. It’s just that the churches, congregations, lay people, and ministers without Theophostic principles and tools are less aware of the problems, and are using less effective tools to address them.

VII. Summary Comments and Recommendations:

Sooo, **PLEASE** get your own healing: The most important way in which to address the phenomena discussed in this essay is for all Theophostic facilitators to be working on their own healing on a regular basis. Our experience is that being a Theophostic facilitator is one of the best ways to find your own unresolved issues. For me (Karl), getting stuck in Theophostic sessions has been one of the most persistent and effective triggers in my life. We strongly recommend every Theophostic facilitator have a setting where he or she can receive Theophostic ministry on an ongoing basis, so that he or she can quickly address his or her own issues as each issue is identified in the refiner's fire of being a facilitator.

Include prayer for yourself as the facilitator at the beginning of each Theophostic session: A second component of addressing the phenomena discussed in this essay is to open each Theophostic session with prayer that addresses the facilitator's own unresolved issues⁹.

⁹See “Opening Prayers and Commands: Prayer for the Facilitator, Parameters for the Demonic, and General Introductory Prayer” on the Ministry Aids page of our web site for

Include this prayer even if you're not being stirred up at the beginning of the session: We have found that it is helpful to acknowledge that we have wounds, lies, and sins that can hinder our ability to facilitate, even if we are not aware of any specific unresolved issues being stirred up at the beginning of the session.

Acknowledge it if your own issues are being stirred up: Sometimes I will notice that specific issues are already being stirred up, even at the beginning of the session. This is especially true for clients that have been "stuck." If I find myself not looking forward to a session, some issue in my own life is almost always being stirred up. As mentioned above, it is important to acknowledge to the person receiving ministry that your own issues are getting stirred up. I will usually make some simple comment, such as "I can feel that some of my own issues are getting stirred up as we prepare to start this session, so I am going to mention them specifically in the opening prayer." If the person receiving ministry is already familiar and comfortable with me doing this, I simply include the specifics about my own issues in the opening prayer without any introductory comment.

Include specifics (as appropriate): When we first started including prayer for the facilitator in the opening prayer, we just included a general reference to "sin, wounds, and lies." An experience in one of our supervision training groups led us to include the current instructions to address specifics. Everyone in the training group, including the facilitator and the person receiving ministry, knew that the facilitator had many traumatic memories around performance, with associated "It's not safe to mess up," and "I won't be able to do it right" lies. These lies were usually triggered in situations similar to trying to facilitate for a Theophostic session, and in fact had been intensely triggered by just thinking about trying to facilitate in the context of the training group. We all expected these lies to impair her ability to facilitate effectively, and in fact, the facilitator and the person receiving ministry had agreed that I would take over if the facilitator got triggered to the point that she was unable to continue. In the opening prayer, she humbly and explicitly acknowledged her fears, and *named the specific wounds and lies that were being stirred up*. She asked for special grace, specifically asking the Lord to carry her wounds and lies during the session. We were all surprised (including her) by how much this simple prayer seemed to help. My assessment is that her wounds and lies interfered with the process about one tenth as much as we all expected. The apparent benefit of her opening prayer was so dramatic that it led me to experiment with including specific details in my own opening prayers whenever I was aware of issues being stirred up at the beginning of the session, and I found that the more clearly

additional comments about the prayers we use at the beginning of each session.

I named and acknowledged the specifics of my issues that were being stirred up, the more effectively the Lord seemed to carry them for me. For example, in the place where our opening prayer asks for specifics, I might pray: “I am anxious about this session. I am afraid that I won’t be able to do it right – it feels like I am back on the playground, and I am afraid I will drop the ball and everyone will be mad at me.”

Pray out loud (as appropriate): It also seems that praying *out loud* increases the efficacy. I simply include any specifics about my own issues getting stirred up in the opening prayer that I pray out loud at the beginning of each session. My sense at present is that praying out loud helps me connect emotionally with the place that is being triggered, brings the issue into the light most effectively, contributes to healthy humility, and is a simple and powerful part of the appropriate transparency regarding my own issues being stirred up. I realize this is very vulnerable and humbling, but I have found it to be amazingly effective, and would encourage each Theophostic facilitator to experiment with praying out loud and including details.

Use good judgment: Of course good judgment needs to be exercised with respect to content when it comes to discussing the details and when it comes to praying out loud vs. praying silently. For example, it would not be appropriate to mention details or pray out loud if the person reminded me of a high school girl friend, and the issue being stirred up was sexual fantasy and guilt regarding unconfessed sexual sin with this high school girl friend. In this situation, I would acknowledge that one of my own unresolved issues is getting stirred up, let the person receiving ministry know that I want to take a brief time out to address this in prayer, and then address the details in *silent* prayer to the Lord.

Stop to pray for yourself as the facilitator if you notice you are getting triggered during the session: Again, as mentioned above, it is important to acknowledge to the person receiving ministry that your own issues are getting stirred up. I have found that after talking briefly with the client about whatever issue is being stirred up in me, it is important to pause to pray to address my issue. As with the opening prayer for the facilitator, our experience is that including specifics and praying out loud increase the efficacy of this prayer (with the same caveats about using good judgment). For example: “Lord, I can feel that I am getting triggered about not knowing what to do here. I feel stuck, and I can’t perceive your presence or help. I feel like I am back in first grade, and that you are like my teacher – complaining that it is not okay for me to be stuck, but not giving me the help I need to figure it out. Please carry this for me now and give me special grace, so that these unresolved wounds in my own life will not hinder me from fulfilling the role you want me to play in your plans to bring healing for (name of the person receiving ministry) .”

Consultations can be valuable: Another obvious implication of the material in this

essay is that it can be very valuable to get a consultation – try having a different person do the Theophostic ministry if Theophostic Ministry with one facilitator is persistently stuck at certain points. All of us are wounded. None of us are completely healed, none of us are completely free of any hindering or distorting junk. Our hope is that each Theophostic facilitator will be able to humbly acknowledge this reality, and recognize that their own unresolved wounds, lies, vows, judgments, other sins, and demonic infection may be contributing to the places they get stuck. We say, “a different set of eyes, a different set of lies,” meaning that other facilitators will have different unresolved issues hindering the Theophostic process. They will be less effective in some areas, but in other areas they will not be impaired where we are. The key is that a different facilitator may not have a blind spot in a crucial place that was causing you to miss important clues, and the new facilitator will therefore be able to navigate past whatever was causing the process to be stuck. Ideally, each Theophostic facilitator should have a few close colleagues with whom they can exchange this kind of consultation.

Observation consultation: It can also be helpful to ask your colleague consultant to observe your work, with specific focus on any ways in which your own issues are getting stirred up. This will be especially valuable if you are repeatedly getting stuck with clients who have a certain clinical picture, you suspect your own issues are being stirred up, but you are having difficulty focusing exactly what is happening. Note: if you obtain consultation, the consultant moves smoothly past the places you usually get stuck, and you immediately realize what it is they did differently – especially if they recognized a form of clutter you didn’t know about or used a ministry tool you weren’t familiar with – then the problem was probably a simple lack of knowledge. However, if they move smoothly past the places you usually get stuck *and you can’t figure out what they did differently*, then it is *very* likely that your own issues getting stirred up are interfering in some subtle way. In fact, this is exactly the experience that has motivated me to develop the material in this essay (and apply it in my own life). As described in the introduction, I kept observing Dr. Smith moving smoothly past the places I usually got stuck, but I couldn’t figure out what he was doing differently – I couldn’t perceive him applying any theory or ministry tools that I wasn’t also using. The ideal situation is to have a mentor who is experienced in providing this kind of observation and supervision, but I think most facilitators will be surprised by how much a peer colleague will be able to help if he is asked to watch specifically for this concern. In fact, I have been pleasantly surprised by the benefit I have experienced from simply focusing the principles in this essay more clearly and applying them to myself.

Observation consultant tips and tools: The core of what I do when I provide this kind of observation consultation is watch for any place where the facilitator is stirred up (not peaceful and calm, not thinking clearly¹⁰), and then call a time out to have a mini

¹⁰The facilitator not thinking clearly is a good clue that his issues are being stirred up in

Theophostic session with the facilitator. I simply ask him to describe whatever he is thinking, sensing, or feeling, and I do this until there is clarity with respect to what is being stirred up in him. You can stop as soon as the issues have been focused, since that is the blind spot he is asking you to help with. The facilitator can then follow-up later in order to resolve the issues that have been identified. If the facilitator is stuck, but she is not stirred up in any way, I assume there is some aspect of the problem that she has simply not yet learned about and/or recognized, and we then focus our joint attention on identifying this missing piece.

I use these same tips and tools when providing “observation consultation” for myself. In fact, I have identified many of my own healing targets by using this simple technique on myself in sessions where I am facilitating. I watch for any places where I am stirred up, and then pause internally to observe my own thoughts, feelings, or sensations. When I identify the issues that are being stirred up, I pause to acknowledge this to the person receiving ministry, pray as described above, and make a brief note to myself so that I can come back later to resolve the issues. Noticing when I am not thinking clearly has been especially helpful in identifying subtle triggering, and noticing persistent confusion in a session has been a helpful clue that I am not thinking clearly.

VIII. Example Catalogue: I am hoping (as time permits) to write out short case studies describing each of the specific examples listed below.

Examples of efficacy being hindered by direct triggering in the therapist:

“Stay away from my apparent healing” vs. “Test the fruit:” People who are receiving ministry will sometimes try to do the Lord’s job – quoting appropriate scriptures and telling themselves the truth – because they want to stay in control, they are afraid the Lord won’t come, or because they are so accustomed to using self-cognitive therapy that they do it automatically. Demonic spirits and/or internal parts will also often serve up false healing, usually in hopes that the ministry team will think that particular healing target has been resolved and go somewhere else. Helping the person receiving ministry to “test the fruit” is therefore an important part of Theophostic ministry. If the facilitator and the person receiving ministry can non-anxiously test any apparent healing, true healing is confirmed and anything that is not from the Lord is exposed. The facilitator and the person receiving ministry can address the source of the false healing, and then press on to receive true healing from the Lord.

However, if the facilitator is afraid of disappointment, he will avoid doing this. When I first started doing Theophostic ministry, disappointment wounds and associated “God will disappoint me” lies made me afraid to test the fruit. My

some subtle way.

attitude was “Stay away from my apparent healing” instead of “Let's test everything to make sure it's real.” If something happened that looked like it might be healing I got out of there as soon as possible. The last thing I wanted to do was to go back and try to stir up the original wound just to make sure the healing was legitimate. Why give the Lord a second chance to disappoint me? This fear of disappointment and avoidance of testing the fruit resulted in a costly blind spot in my ability to facilitate Theophostic ministry. I would consistently miss false healing, and the person receiving ministry would not get true healing in these situations because we would not recognize the false healing, address the source of the false healing, and then press on for true healing. The person receiving ministry would then become confused and discouraged after the session when the false healing “fruit” vaporized or began to rot.

“It's not safe to see or talk about problems:” Childhood playground cheating, stealing, and drug dealing. Described above under “Direct triggering of unresolved wounds in the facilitator.”

“It's not safe to challenge/confront, and it's especially not safe to persist in conflict:” kid defying bully and being verbally, physically, and sexually abused (forthcoming).

“I am going to disappointment everybody,” “I am going to mess up in front of everybody:” childhood athletic failures (forthcoming).

“I'll get sucked in over my head and drown:” fear that a problem will be too big for me, fear that I will be overwhelmed and not be able to handle it. Childhood near drowning memory (forthcoming).

“It's my fault, it's my responsibility, I have to fix it:” white middle class American in the 1960's, especially in our radical discipleship church with a heavy emphasis on social justice (forthcoming).

All “I'm stupid” and “I can't do it” lies that impair perseverance and confidence in myself: see the “I'm Too Stupid” and “Dissociation, Repression, Denial, and Avoidance: ‘Where did kindergarten and first grade go?’” case studies.

All issues that get triggered in me when I get stuck: For example, “God will disappoint me,” “I can't trust God to take care of me,” and judgment towards the client for making me feel helpless. Many of the other examples described above also fit into this category. See the “Dissociation, Repression, Denial, and Avoidance: ‘Where did kindergarten and first grade go?’” case study.

All lies impairing confidence in the Lord's presence, competence, and goodness: Lies about the Lord's presence, competence, and goodness undermine my

confidence in the Theophostic process, make me more vulnerable to other triggering, and undermine my authority in spiritual warfare.

“I don’t feel safe in the Lord’s care:” Losing my faith in God/Dad being omniscient and omnipotent when I got my head slammed in a car trunk (forthcoming)

“God the psychotic cult leader:” God is insecure, jealous of my ten speed bicycle, and wants me to sacrifice anything good to prove my allegiance. See the case study “God, the psychotic cult leader.”

“God is like my first grade teacher:” God will complain and criticize, and will blame me for not trying hard enough, but He won’t give me the help that I need. See the case study “Dissociation, Repression, Denial, and Avoidance: ‘Where did kindergarten and first grade go?’”

“God is like the absent playground monitor, God is like the absent high-school gym teacher:” “God is sitting in the teacher’s lounge drinking coffee when He should be on the job, protecting the vulnerable kids from being terrorized by the bullies.” (forthcoming)

“God, the incompetent and misdirected establishment:” Lie-based connections between God and the adult establishment at my school and in my neighborhood – well intentioned adults that did not understand what was happening on our playground and in our neighborhood, and that did not protect the vulnerable children. (Forthcoming)

“God is like the politicians:” Lie-based connections between God and the politicians that ran the world of my childhood. Lots of promises, but disappointing when it came to delivery. Excuses and explanations instead of actually fulfilling promises.

“Jesus the drug-using flower child/brain damaged hippie:” (forthcoming)

“Jesus, the naive, clueless liberal:” Lie-based connections between Jesus and the naive social activist of my 1960's childhood – people who believed that all of the problems in the world would be solved if the rich people would just give all their money to the poor people. (forthcoming)

“Jesus the angry liberal activist:” Lie-based connections between Jesus and the angry liberal activists of my 1960's childhood – people who told me that I was bad because I was a white, middle class American, and every problem in the world was my fault.
(forthcoming)

Examples of efficacy being hindered by resonance triggering in the therapist:
(forthcoming)

Examples of efficacy being hindered by triggering of positive emotions in the therapist:
(forthcoming)