

Strengthening the Spirit and Restoring the Soul:  
Identifying, Understanding and Healing the Blocks  
with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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### **ABSTRACT**

Many treatment providers claim to address the individual's treatment needs "body, soul and spirit." But what does this really mean and how do we as treatment providers do this? In this paper, we discuss the importance of the tripartite nature of man and how this nature corresponds with the triune God. We will present the importance of the much-neglected spirit in current healing work. Additionally, we will introduce Sozo, a practical inner healing tool used to identify the blocks that keep individuals from fully interacting with the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). This tool assists the clinician's work to restore the individual's intimacy with God, utilizing the core Christian value of forgiveness. Sozo, with the guidance of the clinician and through the power of the Holy Spirit, identifies and breaks off the lies that block an individual in their relationship with God and releases the truth of identity, who God is, and the freedom He has for each individual.

## INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is increasingly seen as an important aspect of psychological care. In recent years, there have been a number of studies that highlight the positive correlation between spirituality and psychotherapy. (Walker, Reese, Hughes & Troskie, 2010) (Webb, Robinson & Brower, 2010) (Pargament & Saunders, 2007). There have also been a number of research papers written discussing the benefits of forgiveness (Webb, Robinson & Brower, 2010) and inner healing in a therapeutic setting. (Garzon, 2005) (Garzon & Paloma, 2005) (Garzon & Burkett, 2002). In this paper, we will discuss the tripartite nature of man, defined as the body, soul, and spirit, as an important aspect in considering the whole person and providing comprehensive care. We will then discuss how the tripartite nature of man relates to the triune nature of God and introduce a powerful inner healing tool called Sozo. This tool is based on a tripartite understanding of the individual in relation to the triune nature of God. It utilizes the key Christian concept of forgiveness and works to alleviate shame and trauma in a client through a deeper connection with the triune Godhead.

## TRIPARTITE MAN IN RELATION TO THE TRIUNE GOD

We will begin with a discussion on the tripartite nature of man, to highlight the need to address the human spirit in counseling. We learn of the tripartite nature of man from the Bible. Several scriptures speak of our tripartite nature. In the letter to the Thessalonians, Paul prayed, “May God himself, the God of Peace, sanctify you through and through. May your *whole spirit, soul and body* be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and *He* will do it.” (emphasis added, I Thes. 5:23). The word “sanctify” as it is used here means to “set apart” and “to make something different and distinct, breaking old

associations and forming a new association.” (Guzik, 2011). The emphasis is on the completeness of God’s transformative work and His desire to set us apart as special and to make us new. God’s promise in this passage for wholeness and healing is powerful. As treatment providers, it is important to understand this powerful promise and to understand the differences between our role and God’s. Paul is reminding us that it is by God’s power that transformation is accomplished and that *He* is faithful in accomplishing this goal. Our role as helpers is to bring this hope to our clients. In Matthew 11:28 Jesus makes this promise, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and *I* will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and *learn from me*, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and *you will find rest for your souls*. For my yolk is easy and my burden is light.” (emphasis added). We can assure and remind our clients that no matter the difficulty or issues faced, God is faithful to heal them -- body, soul, and spirit.

This is an important message for our clients, so we need to educate and help them to understand their tripartite nature, the function of each part of that nature, and the inter-relationship between them. In this discussion, we explain that it is through the human body that we engage, interact with, and have conscious awareness of the material world (Nee, 1968). The five senses are the doorway to this awareness and interaction. Certain psychological issues such as eating disorders or addictions take a heavy toll on this aspect of the individual. It is helpful to discuss with them how their psychological issues interact and affect their whole personhood, particularly how these issues are being played out in the body. Psychiatry has made significant gains in treating the biological aspects of disorders and in helping us to better understand the role of biology.

The soul is defined as comprising the emotions (which proceed from the senses), the mind, and the will. The soul “aids us in the present state, and since the soul belongs to man’s

own self and reveals his personality, it is the part that gives us self-consciousness or self-awareness” (Nee, 1968). When clients are able to understand the function of their soul in these terms, it helps them to recognize how their thoughts, feelings and behaviors influence their healing.

As one thinks about the definition of the soul as being the mind, the will, and the emotions, it is clear that this is the primary realm in which psychology functions. Psychotherapy is the method by which psychology guides the individual in connecting with the self through understanding of thoughts (mind), behavioral choices (will), and the emotions. Expressive therapies have helped clients connect with their five senses. This in turn helps the individual to connect with their emotions, thereby gaining connection with a more conscious understanding of their perception, behavior (will), and their internal dynamics. The Greek word for soul is “psuche” from which we also get the word psychology. Therefore, it can be said that psychology is “soul-ology” whose highest goal is to help the individual gain greater awareness of the self. While this is a noble and worthy cause, it is easy for the Christian therapist to remain in the realm of treating the soul and neglecting the spirit. As a whole, the field has made great gains in recognizing the biological aspects of treatment and the understanding of the self, but we are still growing in our understanding and practice of the spiritual. As we recognize and understand this to a greater degree, the field of psychology will continue to be challenged to broaden its scope to include an understanding and applied practice of not only a focus on the soul and body, but the spirit as well.

And finally, the spirit is explained as that part by which we commune with God and by which alone we are able to apprehend and worship Him. “Because it tells us of our relationship with God, the spirit is called the element of God-consciousness.” (Nee, 1968, pp. 29). John 4:24

states that “God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” The Bible also tells us that Jesus perceived spiritual things in his spirit (Mat 2:8, Acts 6:10, 17:16). It is by our Spirit that we comprehend such abstract things as love, meaning, and purpose. While the body helps us connect to the material realm and the soul helps us to connect to our internal realm, the spirit helps us connect with the spiritual realm.

In fact, it is only through the spirit that the soul and body can fully interact with God. “But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God’s deep secrets. No one can know a person’s thoughts except that person’s own spirit and no one can know God’s thoughts except God’s own Spirit. And we have received God’s Spirit (not the world’s spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.” (1 Corinthians 2:10-12).

That is the main reason why it is so important to incorporate an understanding of the spirit in the Christian clinical world. If we are not careful, our work can actually undermine an individual’s spiritual connection with themselves and God by placing the emphasis on the soul (mind, will, and emotions) over the spirit. While the work of the soul is important, this can cause an imbalance in the person in which their soul is strengthened by the process of psychotherapy, and the spirit is neglected or relegated to a secondary, tertiary, or even non-existent role. In fact, without a spirit or body, our souls would only be conscious of self. Not so surprisingly, this statement sounds similar to one of the criticisms of Christian psychology made at times from the wider Christian community. One can see how when the emphasis is placed solely on the soul, self-focus becomes the by-product.

It is at this point in our discussion, that an understanding of the divine order and interaction of our tripartite nature is important. One of the ways in which we communicate the

divine order to our clients is by the simple explanation that we are spirit, have a soul, and live in a body. Another way to say this would be that *God* dwells in the *Spirit*, *Self* dwells in the *Soul*, while *Senses* dwell in the *Body*. The divinely intended order for the interaction of our tripartite nature places the *spirit* as the noblest part of man that occupies the innermost area of his being. The *body* is the lowest (and by lowest we by no means use this in a pejorative sense) and takes the outermost place. The soul's role is critical and is primarily that of mediator between the body and spirit. In sum, the divine order involves the spirit as head of the soul and body. The Spirit's role is to communicate to the soul and the soul exercises the body to obey the spirit order. When we were created, we were meant to be led by the Spirit of God. This divinely intended order was interrupted when sin entered the picture via the soul eclipsing the spirit as we chose our will over communion with God's spirit. But although our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. The mind and body are subject to blindness and decay, but the spirit is over them both. In counseling, we have the opportunity to invite the Spirit of God to minister to the spirit of man as we recognize that *God* dwells in the *spirit*, *the self* dwells in the *soul*, while the *senses* dwell in the *body*.

What happens psychologically and spiritually when the body is ruling over the soul and the Spirit? Or what if the soul is ruling over the body and spirit? In Matthew 26:41 Jesus cautions the disciples to "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." When the body is ruling over the soul and spirit, the psychological manifestations we see include things such as eating disorders and addictions. Likewise, when the soul is ruling over the body and spirit, mood disorders such as depression, anxiety and OCD are evidenced.

Careful understanding of the tripartite nature of man helps us, as clinicians, to assess what is happening and how we need to intervene on behalf of the individual as a whole person. Jesus is our perfect model of healing. He restored souls by healing all who came to Him by touching their bodies, and in this process, their souls and spirits were also healed. The story of the woman in Luke 13 is a perfect example of this.

On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, **11** and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. **12** When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." **13** Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. **14** Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." **15** The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? **16** Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" **17** When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

If the soul is impacted, the result will be a physical or psychological sickness. If the spiritual realm has affected a person's soul, spirit, or body, it is important to identify if the sickness has its source in an evil spirit or if the evil spirit was attracted to the sickness and made it worse. The spiritual gift of wisdom helps us to understand the cause and the prescribed cure. In His example of healing, Jesus "restored their souls by touching them, their bodies by healing them, and their spirits by reconnecting them with the priests." (Vallotton and Johnson, 2006, pp. 235).

As Christian clinicians, we can operate in a higher calling because "Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a



new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (II Corinthians 3:4-6). As ministers of the Spirit of God, we can walk in confidence and bring life as we respect the tripartite nature, body, soul, and spirit, and recognize that when one part is affected, the others are affected as well. We need help from God’s Spirit and his gift of wisdom and discernment to assess the problem and its solution. This is critical for our clients and our work with them. When we or they “are ignorant or resistant to the spirit realm,” they limit their process, discovery, and prescription to single dimensional mind-sets; this produces only symptomatic cures, instead of true wholeness. " (Vallotton and Johnson, 2006, pp.231). So by His Spirit and His word we can minister to the body, soul and spirit of man - “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, *it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare* before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:12 (NIV) (emphasis added).

### WHAT IS SOZO?

In 1997 at Bethel Church in Redding, California, a new inner healing ministry was born. Randy Clark, a healing evangelist, brought a training model of deliverance that had been developed in Argentina. The leaders of Bethel’s lay counseling ministry Dawna DeSilva and Theresa Liebscher soon applied the model in their prayer ministry. As a result of what they experienced and learned over many years, Sozo, a new model, was developed.

“The Sozo ministry is a unique inner healing and deliverance ministry in which the main aim is to get to the root of those things hindering your personal connection with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus with a healed connection with Father, Son

and Holy Spirit you can walk in the destiny to which you have been called.” (DeSilva, 2004).

Sozo highlights the importance of the tripartite nature of man in relation to the unique needs of each part and how the distinct members of the trinity meet those needs.

Since there was such a miraculous difference in people’s level of freedom after experiencing only one session, the church team decided to begin sharing it with other churches and organizations. In the 14 years since it was developed, Sozo Ministries has traveled nationally and internationally to train and equip others. Many travel from all over the world to experience a session with the Sozo Team. The ministry does not make claims of being a counseling or diagnostic center and is not a licensed therapeutic facility, but has seen complete healing with a variety of psychological problems with varying levels of severity including depression, anxiety, trauma, relationship problems and even Dissociative Identity Disorder. The importance of seeking professional help or taking psychotropic medications in adjunct to Sozo Ministry is not undermined. Little to no research has been done to verify claims of miraculous healings or levels of freedom achieved; Investigative and empirical studies will have to be completed to corroborate testimonies.

The word “Sozo” is a Greek word found in the New Testament. In the English translation of the word in the NIV the word is to “save” or be “saved”. The term Sozo is used 110 times in the New Testament. What is interesting about a closer look at this word is that we learn that the original Greek word “sozo”, not only means “to save”, but it has a deeper multifaceted meaning. It means, “to save, “to heal”, and “to deliver”. There is an exciting deeper revelation of salvation that comes with this word study. The “sozo” work of Jesus’ death on the cross was to accomplish not only salvation for souls, but also healing for our bodies and

deliverance for our spirits. At the foot of the cross, Jesus not only paid the penalty for the affects of sin on our souls (deliverance), but also on are spirits as we are restored in relationship with Him (for we commune with God spirit to spirit) and for the effect sin had on the body (for it is by His stripes we were healed). Sozo harnesses the full revelation of God’s salvific power and promise. In Romans 10:9 we learn that Jesus died to save our spirits, “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be *saved* {sozo}. In Matthew 9:22, we see how Jesus heals our bodies, “But Jesus turning and seeing her said “Daughter, take courage, your faith has *healed* {sozo} you, and at once the woman was *healed* {sozo}”; And in Luke 8:36 we hear of Jesus’ deliverance, “Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been *cured*” {sozo}. Therefore, the philosophy behind sozo is that the healing that God provides for us is for the whole self – body, soul, and spirit and that we can appropriate this wholeness and healing by faith. The intent of the sozo ministry is to bring full healing to the whole person.

### The “Father Ladder”

There are five tools used in the Sozo ministry. This paper will briefly discuss the primary tool in Sozo entitled the “Father Ladder”. (For further explanation of the tool(s) and ministry, or to be trained in the ministry, we refer the reader to the Bethel Sozo website). The tool is based on the premise that the ways in which we have been impacted by our earthly family and relationships affect our view of the Godhead and our (in)ability to feel connected and cared for by the Godhead. The Sozo manual explains,

The first institution that God created was the family. This foundation represents the function of each of the Godhead (Father God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit) in our lives.

When our family members do not understand, or are unable to fulfill their roles in our lives, we have a misunderstood view of the Father God, Jesus and Holy Spirit. The Father Ladder is a tool that clarifies/emphasizes this connection to heal the wounds and lies that have been learned from our childhood. (p.6)

The tool describes the needs of the body as identity, provision, and protection; the needs of the soul as communication and companionship; and the needs of the spirit as comfort, nurture, and teaching. The needs of identity, provision, and protection are met by earthly fathers; the needs of companionship and communication are met by siblings and friends; and, the needs of comfort, nurture, and teaching are met by mothers. Likewise, the needs that are met by earthly father are the same as the needs that are met by our heavenly Father; the needs that are met by our siblings and friends are the same needs that are met by Jesus; and, the needs that are met by mother are the same as those met by the Holy Spirit. The following diagram illustrates the relationship.

Father	Identity Provision Protection <i>(body)</i>	Father
Jesus	Communication <i>(soul)</i>	Siblings/Friends
Holy Spirit	Comfort Nurture <i>(spirit)</i>	Mother

This template helps to identify where an individual may have blocks to experiencing the fullness of the Godhead. For example, if needs such as “provision, security and identity” were not met in

childhood, wounds and lies are created about these needs and the individual will struggle to experience Father God meeting those needs. If our relationship with our mother was not one of comfort, nurture and guidance, our relationship and view of the Holy Spirit is skewed by lies and wounds. Our relationship with our peers and siblings plays a significant role in how we see Jesus. If needs like “companionship, friendship and communication” were not met, similarly, we will not believe Jesus can meet these needs. Thus, by repairing relationships through Sozo with our earthly community, we directly impact our relationships with the Divine.

Through prayer and simple questions the areas of greatest wounding are identified, and through prayers of forgiveness the blocks between the Godhead and the individual are removed. At this point, the lies that the individual developed around themselves, their needs, or around God are identified. The lies are renounced, and the individual asks God to replace the lies with His truth. In this process, a powerful connection between the mind and emotions is developed as the individual is lead to the point where they not only “know” the truth, but emotionally experience it as true as they hear directly from God and begin to feel a greater connection with Him on several levels.

The Father ladder can be used to frame a session by either questioning the individual about the relationship with their earthly families or by questioning them about their view of the individuals of the Godhead. The manual outlines a concise list of the steps in the process (once again we will refer the reader to the Sozo manual and training for details):

1. Ask the individual how he or she views one or more members of the Godhead (Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit), or ask what he or she believes the Godhead thinks of him or her.
2. Have the individual forgive the member of the family that corresponds with one of the Godhead.
3. Have the individual renounce the lie that the Godhead will treat him or her the same way.
4. Make sure the individual is able to accept the truth that the Godhead gives to him or her.

Sozo Manual p. 8

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKING FOR SOZO:**

### Healing and Attachment:

Currently, there is much discussion on the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, mental health and healing. Many long-standing therapeutic models are being re-evaluated within the context of religion or personal relationship with God. In 1969 John Bowlby described attachment as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" (Bowlby, 1969, p. 194). He believed that the earliest bonds formed by children with their caregivers have a tremendous impact that continues throughout life. Since that time, attachment theory has enjoyed significant impact in the field of social, developmental, personality and clinical psychology. (Reinsert & Edwards, 2009).

Attachment theory has also been studied in the context of religion and through the lens of God as the ideal attachment figure -- all loving and nurturing. (Kirkpatrick, 1992) In studies, it was shown that early childhood attachment to parents, either secure or insecure, would directly relate to how the child viewed their relationship with God. (Kirkpatrick, 1992) (Granqvist, 1998) (Reinert & Edwards, 2009) Therefore, if a child grows up with a secure attachment to their parents, then attachment to God will likely be secure; conversely, if the child grows up with an insecure attachment to their parents, then attachment to God will likely be insecure. (Granqvist & Hagekull, 1999) This is a simple formula that doesn't account for a number of outside variables and there are always exceptions to every theory.

Another theory from Granqvist (1998) provides research that shows children who grow up with an insecure relationship with nonreligious parents will often turn to God later in life, while those who grew up with an insecure relationship with very religious parents will often turn away from God and the religion they were raised in. When childhood abuse is factored into the

equation, one's view of God tends to be even more negative (Kennedy & Drebing, 2002). But in some instances when sexual abuse has occurred and there is evidence of trauma, subjects still seem to be spiritually thriving. (Reinert & Bloomingdale, 1999).

From a psychological perspective, Sozo helps to identify unhealthy attachments in order to provide a new healthier attachment with the Godhead. This is what Kirkpatrick called, "surrogate attachment." This means that when poorly secured individuals are able to connect with God in a meaningful way, they are able to experience an inner sense of security. Therefore, Sozo is a tool that is consistent with both hypotheses. This Sozo principle is supported in the psychological literature. Beginning with Kirkpatrick (2005), we have come to understand and study attachment theory as a critical aspect in understanding relationships to God and that this idea is observed cross-culturally (e.g., Rohner, 1986). Kirkpatrick theorizes that an individual's perception of God is the single most critical aspect in defining their other attachment relationships. Individuals with insecure attachments displayed insecure attachments with God, while those with secure loving attachments viewed God as loving and caring. Kirkpatrick calls this the "correspondence hypothesis" that leads to the "compensation hypothesis". The "main aim is to get to the root of those things hindering your personal connection with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus with a healed connection with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you can walk in the destiny to which you have been called." (DeSilva, 2004). What Sozo attempts to do is identify the unhealthy attachments, and then heal them to establish a new healthier attachment with the Godhead.

This is what Kirkpatrick called, "surrogate attachment." This means that when poorly secured individuals are able to connect with God in a meaningful way, they are able to experience an inner sense of security. The Father Ladder tool is consistent with both hypotheses.

“Human Beings are biologically primed to seek moral and spiritual meaning, and nurturing relationships are a central foundation for positive moral and spiritual development.” (Benson...et al, 2003) We are created for relationship with both people and God. Our earthly relationships will be a determinant in how we view God. Sozo and the Father Ladder tool can also be used for spiritual development.

### Healing and Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a key principle in the Sozo ministry. Many studies have shown forgiveness to be a powerful component in psychological and physical health. Pioneers in this area of research include Robert D. Enright, and Everet Worthington who founded the Campaign for Forgiveness Research. Studies on the topic have shown the power of forgiveness to positively affect heart disease, crime prevention, troubled marriages, family dynamics, and even international conflict. Enright and Coyle report that, “forgiveness may be taught and learned, and that the outcomes can be quite favorable.” Across all of the studies, there was not one instance in which a group experiencing forgiveness education showed a decline in psychological health. In fact, statistically significant improvement in such variables as hope and self-esteem, as well as significant decreases in anxiety and depression, were more the rule than the exception.” Enright developed “the process model of forgiving”, an early intervention to promote forgiveness. Phases in this model include the “uncovering, decision, work, and outcome/deepening phase.” In the uncovering phase, the unjust injury to the individual is identified and the related painful emotions are experienced. In the decision phase, the individual begins to understand that additional healing may be compromised unless a decision is made to surrender and a “heart conversion” or life change occurs. In the work phase, the individual begins to develop a new understanding of the injurer.



“The work phase also includes the heart of forgiveness which is the acceptance of the pain that resulted from the actions of the injurer.” And, finally, in the outcome/deepening phase

“the forgiving individual begins to realize that he/she is gaining emotional relief from the process of forgiving his/her injurer. The forgiving individual may find meaning in the suffering that he/she has faced. The emotional relief and new-found meaning may lead to increased compassion for self and others. The individual may discover a new purpose in life and an active concern for his/her community. Thus, the forgiver discovers the paradox of forgiveness: as we give to others the gifts of mercy, generosity, and moral love, we ourselves are healed.” (Enright and Coyle, 1998).

Sozo appears to guide an individual through all four of these phases quickly. Because it relies on the movement of the Holy Spirit in an individual’s heart and mind, Sozo may speed up the forgiveness process without compromising the depth of the healing and forgiveness.

One recent study found forgiveness to be a key in higher levels of mental health, social support and improved alcohol-related outcomes (Webb, Robinson & Brower, 2011).

Organizations like Alcoholics Anonymous, which does not promote one particular faith, utilize forgiveness as one of their core concepts, in an effort to help their members walk free from resentment and shame. It is this resentment and shame in many cases that keeps an alcoholic in the perpetual cycle of drinking to relieve suffering. Interestingly, in this study, forgiveness of self and others was shown to have a higher impact on alcohol-related outcomes than feeling forgiven by God. (Webb...et al, 2011) This highlights what we would describe as a “transactional” aspect to forgiveness. In other words, forgiveness is most powerful when it directly addresses the point of injury, the injured, and the injurer.

Forgiveness has been defined many ways by scholarly works and is not limited to traditionally religious or spiritual people. Some definitions of forgiveness include “a coping

mechanism with unique motivational and volitional qualities” (Toussaint & Webb, 2005); “the reduction of negative responses to an offender” (Gassed & Enright, 1995); “an increase of positive love-based emotions” (Worthington, Berry & Parrott, 2001); and “forgiveness does not justify the offenders actions or deny a legitimate negative response to the offense.” (Enright...et al, 1998). Current research would indicate that forgiveness interventions are stronger than alternative treatments. (Worthington, 2005)

### Inner Healing

In recent years, many inner healing prayer techniques and deliverance methods have evolved and received both empirical support and criticism concurrently. At the heart of all recent methods developed are the core Christian concepts of forgiveness and prayer. Investigation into the credibility of current inner healing methods has shown some positive results. (Garzon & Burket, 2002; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachel, 1997). Unlike clinical counterparts, trauma work from an inner healing perspective such as Theophostic counseling involves “a form of prayer designed to facilitate the client’s ability to process affectively painful memories through vividly recalling these memories and asking for the presence of Christ (or God) to minister in the midst of pain.” (Garzon & Burkett, 2002). Theophostic Ministry is an inner healing prayer technique created by Ed Smith in the late 1990s. The primary goal of the ministry is to identify maladaptive cognitions or lies and to ask Jesus to reveal His truth to the client in whatever way He chooses. (Garzon & Poloma, 2005) Core beliefs held onto by the client are investigated and rated based on a likert scale. Beliefs with high ratings are than explored with the client being asked to allow themselves to experience all the pain attached to the memory while giving permission to Jesus to dispel the lie at its root. This process continues as more feelings and

emotions surface until only complete peace is experienced when facing the memory. (Garzon & Paloma, 2005)

A clinical model that roughly appears to parallel the process observed in inner healing is EMDR or Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. During this non-Christian process clients are present for past traumas, triggers, and or future stressors, while maintaining their focus on external factors of tapping or bilateral eye movement. One of the main objectives is for the client to have insight into the painful memories and experience a shifting as to how they are being affected emotionally, mentally and or physically. The main differences between Inner Healing and EMDR stem from the Christian belief that during inner healing sessions it is the Holy Spirit who is bringing change. Inner Healing also differs from straight Biblical counseling in that in many current techniques, principles of psychology are actively incorporated into the protocol, while “maintaining a thoroughly Charismatic Christian approach.” (Garzon & Burkett, 2002) This is often frowned upon in some of the more traditional churches and by their methodologies.

David Seamond’s inner healing technique focuses on Jesus as the Lord over all of time, who can therefore, minister to an individual’s past, present and future circumstances and experiences. (Garzon & Burkett, 2002) Seamond focuses on wounds of the past as a precursor to the pain and brokenness of the present. His belief is to allow Jesus to go in and redirect or restructure the memory. When paired with other pastoral counseling and treatment, the technique is very affective. (Seamonds, 1988) There are in-depth processes to all models presented, which will be explored at a later date.

CIHP or Christian Inner Healing Prayer is another technique that focuses on the healing of the soul through a supportive relationship, attentive listening and asking for God to enter into

the sufferer's pain (Garzon, 2005). Similar to the other models, CIHP works in many cases with traumatic memories of the past and the willingness to ask God to enter into the pain and bring healing. Sessions are led by the Holy Spirit and examine wounds that range from personal to generational that are impacting the client's life currently. "When effective, many clients experience a powerful visual imagery; others sense a deep peace or the presence of Christ where pain once dwelled; and still others may hear the still small voice of the Spirit" speaking to them about their troubles." (Garzon, 2005)

### **SOZO AT WORK IN THE CLINICAL SETTING**

We, the writers, have witnessed first-hand the miraculous freedom others have received from this therapeutic process. In one session, a young woman was completely relieved of an eating disorder she had struggled with since her teens. In a training recently held for Christian therapists in San Diego, one of the women in attendance began to be set free from the burden she had carried because of incredible spiritual abuse endured as a child. In another training, a woman who felt there was nothing in her needing repair encountered anger she had held onto for her father because of the divorce her parents had gone through when she was a child. In a matter of minutes, she was able to forgive him and let go. None of these women realized the impact these issues had on them and how their decisions had been affected by them throughout their lives. We believe the shame and anger that people carry directly impacts all relationships from the point it begins to grow. Part of Sozo is to allow God to go back in and edit out all of the hurt in a given situation. Something miraculous occurs when pain that was felt for years is suddenly gone. For some people, it occurs in an instant, while others find relief over a slightly longer period of time.

In a recent experience, one of the writers, Margaret Nagib, Psy.D., who is trained in Sozo traveled to a group home for boys in Alabama. For many of the youth this was their last hope, having already been in juvenile hall, often as repeat offenders. Others were living homeless or as part of a gang before being admitted to this residential treatment facility. Margaret Nagib was part of a team of individuals who were there for ten days. At first, the team worked to earn the trust of the young men. This was not a Christian organization; therefore, informed consent regarding the spiritual and religious nature of the team's purpose was discussed and participation was voluntary. In individual and group sessions, the team made up mostly of non-clinician volunteers worked with the use of Sozo to help the boys experience their true identities and alleviate levels of anger and resentment. The Sozo tools were used to invite the boys to experience an all-loving creator who would not abandon them, though many of their earthly Fathers had. The results were nothing short of miraculous. Follow-up studies are needed but subsequent communication with several of the boys, even months later, pointed to sustained gains. One young man connected to God's heart for him in such a way that he was able to see himself beyond the confines of his identity as a juvenile delinquent. As he connected to God-given dreams and destinies of being the governor of his state one day, he saw himself helping young men who had grown up as he had. Another boy experienced complete forgiveness for the abuse he had endured for years. Many of the boys stated they were able to see God as the Father they had never had and were able to experience a connection and a feeling of love. Almost all of the boys said they now had hope when before there was none. We understand that Sozo is an immediate intervention and one that all people might not be ready for. There were some boys who would not engage in any way. We also realize there will be a walking out process for those who experience a change and a great need for continued mentorship and clinical help.

Through work in a residential treatment center in Chicago, we are consistently seeing women and young girls struggling with addictions, eating disorders, trauma from abuse, self-abuse and wounded ideas and beliefs about God. These girls come from all walks of life, some with intact family systems and some from abusive and chaotic homes. As supported by the literature, we endorse the importance of asking clients about spirituality and religion to assess the potential role it will play in relieving or exacerbating the client's trauma-related symptoms (Walker...et al. (2010). In our residential facility, great care is given to creating an open forum where questions about spirituality, religion and personal beliefs can be explored in a non-threatening manner. Sozo is one of the tools we use to help the women find freedom from some of the emotional turmoil and connect with a loving image of God.

### **CONCLUSION**

Sozo is a process by which counselors can engage their clients in what Saunders, Miller and Bright (2010) call "spiritually conscious psychological care." In their review, these authors argue, "Psychologists should always engage, at the least, in spiritually conscious care with all patients. I. (P.355). These authors have utilized Sozo in therapeutic and ministerial settings for the past three years and have found it to be a powerful healing tool. It is our aim to introduce this tool to the greater Christian psychological community. We seek to train others in this approach and in how to bring the power of the Holy Spirit into the counselling room. We believe that by integrating Sozo with research-based clinical modalities in therapeutic settings, we will see more people connecting with a personal God and with the passions and purpose in their lives. We have found that by using this approach and helping to deepen that connection with God, the transformation and healing of psychological issues is brought about in greater

depth and wholeness than previously seen with traditional Christian psychology. Through the unity of truths from the world of psychology and those from the world of inner healing, we see powerful healing and transformation occur. While the Sozo tools have not been studied in an empirical manner, the principles and tools are consistent with Christian psychology. We are excited to introduce this innovative tool to the field of Christian psychology and hope to train therapists to begin a new paradigm in therapy. In a word, we believe that integration looks like this - It looks like Jesus. How do we give the space to God to come in and help our clients? The healing we offer is for body, soul, and spirit; and, the author and provider of that healing is God (I Thes. 5).

For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and *Overseer of your souls*” I Peter 2:25.

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