

Key Words: Christian, scripture, theology, mental health

Is There a Scriptural Approach to Mental Health?

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There is no literal scriptural approach to mental illness as we know it today. This article presents a spiritual approach to scriptural stages of faith development as preparing for and fully embodied in Jesus, and interprets healing in light of transformation through Christ. Jesus, without sin, trusted God's love from conception and heals our basic distrust and lack of bonding that roots all mental illness. Jesus' obedience to tradition and God-given authority strengthens the virtue we need for the conversion and disciplined life needed to sustain healing. His surrender of human norms for trust in God in the desert empowers believers to an individuated trust in God which can then flow out to forgiving those who have hurt us and enemies and ultimately to living God's love despite persecution and even death. Healing is the work of God's Spirit which forms us in the image of Christ and ultimately of God's own triune love.

Introduction: My Involvement in Theology and Therapy

Since college I have been drawn to the relationship between psychotherapy and theology. When I began the study of theology in Frankfurt/Main, I became aware of a personal depression that blocked my feelings and made me anxious about life. I studied psychoanalysis to find the root of the depression, but the more I learned, the more depressed I became. Knowledge, I learned, of itself did not heal me. It simply made me more aware of the problem, as the law reveals sin but doesn't heal it. An article by a fellow Jesuit referred me to Isaiah 43:18ff, "Remember not the events of the past ..., see, I am doing something *new*! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers ... for my chosen people to drink" (NAB).¹ What touched me about that passage was that our creator is *now* at work, in the very heart of the earth. **Healing depends not on what went before (my Freudian analysis of beginnings) but on personal relationship to God who makes all things new. I then saw my depression as an inner dying, a dying to the old and an opening to new life.** It was not by understanding causes that I would be healed, but by surrendering my whole depression into the hands of God. In fact, my depression was the guide to what needed transformation through God's creative, infinite, eternally present Love! That was my first awareness of the importance of Scripture for healing.

Yet, despite this experience of scripture's relevance for healing mental illness, my study revealed that a direct scriptural approach to healing mental illness as we know it is not possible. The OT and NT writers did not know about mental illness as we do today. Scripture speaks mainly of demon possession.

The Evidence of Scripture

In two places Matthew speaks of "lunatics" (from the Greek word meaning "moon-struck" because mental aberrations intensified during a full moon or *luna* in Latin). The first passage, Mt 4:24, was just before the Sermon on the Mount: "His fame spread to all of Syria, and they brought to him all who were sick with various diseases and racked with pain, those who were possessed, lunatics, and paralytics, and he cured them" (all Scripture quotations are from the New American Bible). Here Matthew includes all kinds of illnesses and distinguishes between mentally ill people (lunatics) and possessed people. Jesus heals every kind of illness, including the mentally ill.

The other passage is Mt 17:14-18, where after his transfiguration, Jesus heals the boy who beat himself and fell into the fire. The father appealed to Jesus, "Lord, have pity on my son, for he is a lunatic and suffers severely; often he falls into fire, and often into water." Interestingly, in this case Jesus heals the boy by rebuking an evil spirit, a demon came out and the boy was cured (Mt 17:18). The disciples could not drive it out and asked Jesus why. Jesus said, "Because of your little faith. Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to

this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Mt 17:18-21). In this case, both Mark and Luke speak of possession and describe the boy's symptoms as those of an epileptic. Jesus heals him and proclaims that "nothing is impossible for one who believes." Healing such cases is not reserved to him, but it does demand growth in faith. Besides those two cases, the NT says little explicitly about healing forms of mental illness common in our day.

In the OT we have examples of people who display mental derangement, like Saul, whose jealousy of David drove him to seek David's death (1 Sm 18:8ff), or like Nebuchadnezzar who was driven mad by his own drive for power (Dan 5:18-21). These were interpreted as God's punishment for pride and moral failure. As we will see, this is still an important aspect to consider in our day. But the varieties of mental illness we have discerned in our day, from depression to borderline issues, to hysteria and obsessive compulsive disorders and ultimately catatonia or schizophrenia are not described in Scripture, so we have no explicit indication of how God would heal them.

Interpretations of Scripture

Besides the lack of direct information about mental illness in Scripture, we have the problem of how to interpret Scripture. Different experiences of growth and conversion in the reader will influence how he or she interprets the meaning of Scripture. We have hundreds of Christian denominations who all claim to be based on Scripture. For example someone with a legalistic mentality will be finding all the commands of God in Scripture (as postexilic Jews did).

Those who seek to find everything *literally* in Scripture either recommend a moral treatment of these issues, like the scriptural cognitive behavioral therapy of Jay Adams (*Competent to Counsel*, 1970) or deny the relevance of psychotherapy and deep healing totally and find these akin to New Age, like David Hunt (*The Seduction of Christianity*, 1985).² Both are partially right - **New Age is inadequate from a Christian perspective and moral choices are often key for healing - but exclusive reliance on their positions hinder other important interventions. In both cases, an exclusively *literal* approach to interpreting Scripture is inadequate for healing some forms of mental illness.**

Another position, accepting only the teaching of Scripture, rejects contemporary healing ministry altogether as relevant only for the time of Christ and no longer to be practiced. The impact of this view on Christian history is well documented in Francis MacNutt's fine book, *The Nearly Perfect Crime* (2005). Charles Kraft (1993, p.8), an evangelical theologian who began with this view, was brought to see that merely quoting Scripture was not bringing people to the freedom Jesus commanded us to bring. In fact, if one follows Jesus' word, healing was his command to his disciples (Lk 9:1). Others welcome psychotherapy by professionals, but reject healing ministry by non-professionals, whereas Christ told the seventy two to "cure the sick and proclaim, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand for you'" (Lk 10:9).

If neglecting the scriptural injunction to heal the sick is not an option, and a literal approach is inadequate for healing mental illness, is there another way of interpretation that would give us guidelines for healing mental health problems that were not explicit issues when Scripture was written?

Two Traditional Approaches to Interpreting Scripture

1) *Literal Interpretation* of Scripture is the sense intended by a scriptural author. To discover this is not as easy a process as might appear, as we have seen. Everyone has his or her own presuppositions and experience that is "read into" the text, which may or may not agree with the author's presuppositions. That is why we have so many different interpretations of the same text, all of which may or may not be what the writer had in mind. What does Jesus mean when he says, "I am the good shepherd?" The text does not tell us what it was like to be a shepherd in Jesus' time. We need background knowledge not given by Scripture. Or what does Genesis mean by creation in seven days? We need to know what literary form the author was using. Or what class of society Jesus really belonged to? Was he impoverished or a member of what we might call "middle class?" All this is needed for a full, literal interpretation of Scripture.

2) *Spiritual Interpretation*: The spiritual sense of Scripture is the "meaning which God has given to those things that are spoken of by Scripture according to their literal sense; and this meaning is Christ" (Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993, p.81). It is only from Christ that the Church learned of the spiritual sense in the first place. Jesus explained to the two disciples going to Emmaus how Scripture pointed to him, to the Messiah's need to suffer and so enter into his glory. Their hearts burned within them seeing Scripture in this new light (Lk 24:13-35). For the Christian, all Scripture points to Jesus and is fulfilled in Jesus. For the NT writers, only the "Old Testament" was "Scripture." The NT was not yet considered "Scripture." "The formula 'Jesus is the Christ' in fact signifies that in

the historical Jesus, the Christ-message of the OT is fulfilled, that who Jesus is, can be understood on the basis of the OT and the meaning of the OT is perceived in the light of the Christ-event" (Rahner and Razinger, 1966, p.37).

Christ fulfills the OT in several ways":

- 1) He fulfills "predictions" like that of a "suffering servant" as in Is 53, or that David's throne will last forever (2 Sam 7:16).
- 2) He fulfills God's "promises" like that of sending a Messiah (2 Cor 1:20: "For however many are the promises of God, their Yes is in Christ").
- 3) God also fulfills his "plan" in Christ, for Jesus is the "New Adam" restoring what God intended in the beginning.
- 4) And Christ fulfills the OT "types." All that was good and true in Joseph or Moses, Joshua or David, etc. is fulfilled without blemish in Christ.

So, we see in the OT how God prepared Israel for Jesus and how Jesus brings that preparation to fulfillment.

Scripture also is the way God prepared Jesus as human, for his formation was in light of Scripture. The sequence of righteous psychic and cultural traits of Israel are all types that bespeak the sequence of stages of Jesus' growth. It took Israel time to develop sufficiently to be ready for Jesus, and Jesus himself had to grow in "wisdom, age and grace before God and man" (Lk 2:52). Hence, according to the spiritual sense, God's intention regarding Jesus, we see two perspectives in the OT:

- 1) stages in God's preparing Israel for Jesus as the Messiah, and
- 2) stages in Jesus' development as a Jew and as the Messiah who summed up in Himself all that was good in Israel before Him (Quay, 1995, p.190).

As Ephesians 1:10 puts it, God has set forth his plan, in the fullness of times, "to sum up [recapitulate or unite] all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth." Thus, Jesus sums up in himself, not only the whole history of Israel, but all created being and becoming.

Taking Paul's lead, Irenaeus (Quay, 1995) wrote that Christ was born of a virgin because Adam also was, but Christ was also of the Spirit. He went without food in the desert because Adam sinned by eating of the fruit of the garden. Christ corrected all that was corrupted by the sin of Adam. The entire moral growth of Israel from Jacob onward is a pre-figuration of Christ's moral and spiritual growth during his life on earth (Lk 2:40). Not only does Christ keep the law perfectly in a literal sense – "which of you convicts me of sin?" (Jn 8:46) - he also fulfills it spiritually. As Matthew puts it, he goes beyond the ten commandments by the Beatitudes, while contradicting nothing they contain (Mt 5:18). He shows the perfection of love by his life and death.

This fulfillment of God's intent was extended to all humanity (and indeed all creation) through the resurrection of Jesus and the sending of God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit so unites us to Christ that human moral and spiritual growth, both individually and collectively, results from an interior participation in Jesus' moral and spiritual growth. We live with Christ's life, as Paul said, through the gift of the Spirit (Gal 2:20). Irenaeus asks, "For in what manner could we participate in His [God's] adoption of sons unless we had received from Him through the Son communion with Him and unless His Word had entered into communion with us, becoming flesh? Wherefore, He passed through every age of life, thereby restoring communion with God to all" (*Adv. Haer.* III, 18, 7, cited in Quay, 1995, p.194).³ This is a sharing not only in Christ's life as human, but through this, in His life as God. "For in times long past, it was *said* that man was created after the image of God, but it was not [actually] *shown*; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created. Wherefore also he did easily lose the similitude. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, He confirmed both these: for He both showed forth the image truly, since He became Himself what was His image; and He re-established the similitude after a sure manner, by assimilating man to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word (*Adv.Haer.* V, 16, 2 in Quay, 1995).⁴ As Rom 8:29 puts it, we are "predestined to be conformed to the image and likeness of the Son."

Individual Christians share Jesus' victory through Baptism, but we also share the sinful history of humanity which is the source of suffering and illness whether mental or physical, and we only gradually enter the transforming power of Jesus' victory. Jesus also shared this sinful history and took its effects on himself. As Heb 4:15 says, "He was tempted in every way as we are but without sin." *That, ultimately, is the scriptural basis of our healing both mental and physical.* Jesus became human, bore humanity's sins, recapitulated each stage of salvation history, and through his death and resurrection transformed each stage in light of the gift of the Spirit.

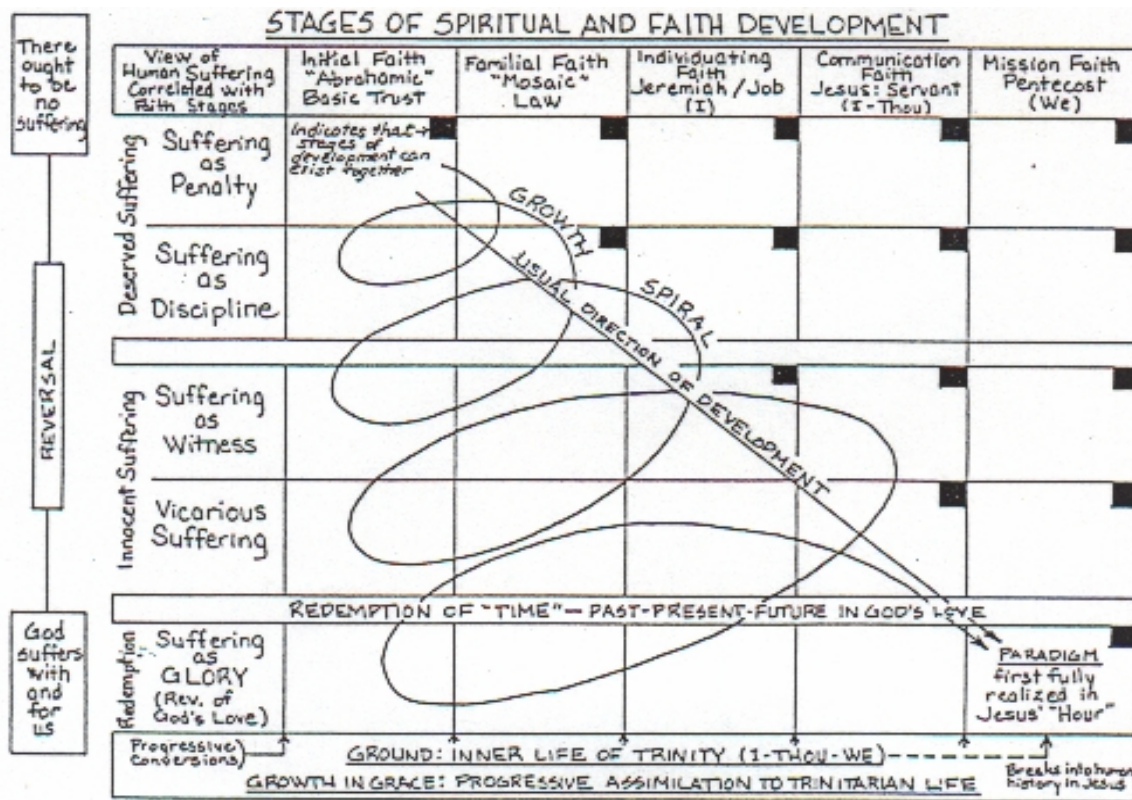
In short, the OT, according to its spiritual sense, is that portrait of the inner life of Jesus that we must learn to live if we are ever to live fully as becomes a Christian, if "we are to attain ...to mature manhood [and womanhood], to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13). The NT and Jesus' resurrection extends Jesus' influence not just to Israel but to the whole world and all humanity (Mt 28:18). In every culture we can expect to find holy people raised up by God's word to live a life pointing to Christ - as the patriarchs, Moses, and Joshua pointed Israel to Christ. Don Richardson (1974, 1981) has beautifully illustrated this truth from his experience of

primitive tribes in Dutch New Guinea. John Sandford (2000) has given a scriptural explanation of Jesus' importance for healing all nations. This is not judaizing. Rather, both Jews and Gentiles are called to live in Jesus. Though as Gentiles, "by life in Him we are made Jews, circumcised in the circumcision of Christ (Col 2:10-11) without any need to pass through biblical or contemporary Judaism" (Quay, 1995, p.201).⁵ In Him we recapitulate the pattern of biblical Israel through the gift of the Spirit.

Scriptural Patterns Revealed in Jesus

What are the scriptural patterns that are lived and redeemed in Christ? Many can be found but I will walk us through those I have worked with and indicate the healing appropriate to each. I have found the following diagram very helpful in indicating five main patterns that are grounded in Scripture and relevant for healing mental illness⁶:

Figure 1



We can keep this chart in mind as we progress through the evidence of Scripture and make applications to healing various mental illnesses. The stages - initial faith, familial faith, individuating faith, communitarian faith and mission faith - build on previous stages at the same time as bringing a new perspective to those stages. Since Jesus' death/resurrection/sending the Spirit is the final stage, it recapitulates and transforms all the preceding stages, even as presupposes their grounding.

Genesis and Initial Faith

The stages begin with the creation accounts in Genesis. God formed Adam and Eve in his own image (Gn 1:27), and gave them dominion over all living things. God walked with Adam and Eve in a garden with beautiful fruit-bearing trees (Gn 2-3), and directed them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil lest they die. They were naked but without shame. Their spontaneous openness to one another revealed their true selves even as it revealed God and it was a cause for joy, not shame. It was "not good for man to be alone" (Gn 2:18). So Adam

exclaimed in joy at seeing Eve, “this indeed is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh” (Gn 2:23). She was gift and God was giver - and their delight in the gift of each other brought JOY! This surely is a picture of human health.⁷

The sin of Adam and Eve, however, changed all that. By eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they turned from trusting God and from trusting each other. Now their nakedness brought shame rather than joy, for the attraction had turned them from God and no longer opened them to God. They hid, both from God, from each other, and from their own selves. Creation no longer served them (thorns and thistles would it bring forth), and their relationship was turned to control, domination and clinging, and was no longer a freely given gift. They were cast out of paradise, the place of wholeness and union with God, and handed over to labor, suffering and death. We have come to understand this as original sin, the origin of sin wherever it occurs. It gave rise to a history of lust, self-doubt, jealousy, hatred and murder (with Cain and Abel and later generations). This disbelief in love and consequent self-doubt lies hidden within and in a sense has become the root of all illness, especially mental illness. We now know that we are made for love, and that lack of love, with the intense trauma that causes, makes humans create self-protective defenses that ultimately isolate and bring death.

God’s first intervention was to destroy sinful humankind with the flood, but wiping out sinners proved to be no solution, for sin continued in the pride and scattering of the tower of Babel. The stories of the Patriarchs, beginning with the call of Abraham in Genesis 12, give a first indication of God’s solution. Abraham, already grown old, was called to leave his native land and obey God. We know the story, how his and Sarah’s faith was severely tested, how Isaac was finally born but Abraham was called to offer him up, how Jacob was favored over Esau and had to leave.

We know how Joseph, an OT saint, was favored over his brothers and incurred their jealousy and hatred. He became a type of Jesus by trusting God and forgiving his brothers even though he was the object of their hatred. His forgiveness, based on trusting God’s providence amidst his own rejection and hurt, brought about a kind of integration similar to Paradise.

He was helped to bring order to nature (through interpreting Pharaoh’s dream), to bring healing and unity to his family, and later to the disparate tribes of Israel who were formed into a people in Egypt. In Joseph we catch a glimpse of what is needed for individual and cultural healing, but it was a passing glimpse that was lost during their time in Egypt.

But let us pause in our story to see how this foreshadowing is fulfilled in the story of the Holy Family. We can only guess at Jesus’ early trust from his later confidence in face of rejection and death. Little is said of his childhood, but we do know the trust in providence of Joseph and the willing service of Mary. Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp and ultimately of John, saw Christ as the New Adam redoing our beginnings without sin (as did Paul in 1 Cor 15:45). He also saw Mary’s faithful obedience as undoing Eve’s disobedience. He writes, “But Eve ... having become disobedient, was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race; so also did Mary ... by yielding obedience, become the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race” (*Adv Haer*, III, 22, 4).⁸ All believers are similarly called to share that freedom from sinful distrust in God’s love. “God chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him” (Eph 1:4). As Jesus and Mary learned faith by remaining even to the cross, so we also are called to companion Jesus even to the cross. Irenaeus saw even death on the cross in light of God’s redemption more than as rejection for sin. Jesus joined sinful humanity, subject to death, that death itself might be transformed. “God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man” (*Adv Haer*, III, 18, 7).⁹ For death, besides being a punishment is the beginning of sin’s healing since it reveals sin and stops it from proliferating and gives room for new creation. “But He set a bound to his [state of] sin, by interposing death, and thus causing sin to cease, putting an end to it by the dissolution of the flesh” (*Adv Haer*, III, 23, 6).¹⁰ One could argue similarly that that suffering, also springing from sin, is not just a punishment for sin, but a revelation of our need for healing and a guide to what is needed for that healing. At its root, suffering reveals what brings death and what calls for transformation in Christ through forgiveness and healing.

Whereas turning away from God’s love brought sickness and death, turning back in the power of the Spirit to trust God’s love is the root of healing. So Jesus’ inaugural proclamation was, “Repent and believe the good news” (Mk 1:15). The good news is “God loves us when we are still sinners” (Rom 5:8). Or as 2 Cor 5:21 says, “God made him who did not know sin to be sin so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.” Christ became the curse we deserved for our sin, so that we might receive the blessing (Gal 3:13). **This is a message that strikes at the root of all mental illness. God loves us whatever our state, and when we let that love in and love ourselves and one another, healing begins.**

Examples

1) A powerful example came from a therapist who was learning to invite Jesus' truth into her client's issues. The client she was helping had been sexually abused when younger and was into prostitution and drugs. Every attempt of this therapist to change her perspective brought no change. Finally, in one of their sessions the therapist simply asked if it was alright to take some time and simply ask God for help and the client agreed. As they were quiet and expectant, the client heard a word that changed her life. God said, "You are good!" **Such a simple word, but when God speaks it, God creates it.** She became a changed person. She gave up drugs and her promiscuous life style, and started to attend Mass frequently. God had loved her when she was still a sinner, and she began to live according to her new appreciation for herself. There will be hurdles down the road, but she had been given the foundation for healing.

2) In a series of audio tapes on Joy Bonding, Jim Wilder (*Joy Bonds for Growth, n.d.*)¹¹ has correlated health with the ability to come back to the joy of being loved. As children we learn joy by having parents who are "glad to be with us." If parents are avoidant, distracted or even abusive (especially early on), the child fails to develop a healthy attachment and joy. **True of every mental disorder is a deficiency of healthy, joyful attachment.** At 12 months of age a good mother will begin to intentionally make her child feel bad. Not everything now brings joy to the mother. For example bowel movements have to be controlled. If not, shame develops (Mommy is not glad to be with me) and Mommy's face will track the shame. Mommy synchronizes her face with her child's. Mother cleans the child till she and her child are glad to be together again. By repeating this many times, they can get back from shame to joy. If they cannot get back to joy, then they learn to avoid feeling shame as if there is no way back. They have to learn the path back from all the negative feelings (sadness, fear, shame, anger, disgust and hopeless despair) if they are to be able to experience all the feelings at full strength and know how to get back. When there is no joy, or no way back to joy, the child (and the child in all of us) avoids feeling, or learns to disassociate from certain feelings as too overwhelming. **So what Jesus has done by freely entering into conception and birthing and early childhood moments is to be "glad to be with us" in every situation. He has opened up the joy of seeing the face of God as filled with love no matter what condition we are in.** Jesus' death and resurrection, as we will see, has assured us all that there is nothing that cannot be transformed to the joy of love, to begin the process of healing.

The Exodus and Promised Land - Familial Faith

It was not enough to simply receive God's free gift of love. The people had to learn to live by it. At the 2006 Association of Christian Therapists Conference on Long Island, Fr. Benedict Groeschel spoke of a change in counseling methods to emphasize growing in a disciplined, virtuous life. He had written a little book called *The Virtue Driven Life* (2006). The "unconditional positive regard" of Carl Rogers (1961, p.283) was not the whole story. There is a goal in life, and happiness springs from acting according to that goal.

According to the OT, God gives the goal: "Be holy for I am holy" (Lev 11:45). The goal is to live according to the principles laid down by God on Mt. Sinai - to act according to God's Law and God's direction. What each Israelite decided to do would bring life or death not only to themselves but to future generations. For God is "a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their father's wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generations; but bestowing mercy down to the thousandth generation, on the children of those who love me and keep my commandments" (Ex 20:5-6; see also Ex 34:6-7; Num 14:18 and Dt 5:9-10). This stage I have called "familial faith."

When Israel did not live according to God's commandments, Scripture is clear about the result. Their grumbling in the desert led to a plague of serpents. Their failure to fight for the Promised Land led to an extended stay in the desert. Their adapting to the religion of the inhabitants of the land instead of sustaining their obedience to Yahweh, finally led to exile from Israel and the deep national depression of the Exile. **Failure to discipline their lives in obedience to Yahweh led to that collective mental illness.**

In the NT John the Baptist's preaching a baptism of repentance showed the need for conversion of life to prepare the way for Jesus. Jesus had lived a life of submission to authority and the Law. He came to John for the baptism of repentance as representative of the people. Jesus called people, like the Samaritan woman, to face their guilt (her having had five husbands) in order to receive the "living water" of Spirit renewal (Jn 4:15-18). He tells the cripple by the pool, "Go and sin no more lest something worse befall you" (Jn 5:14). At times Jesus had to fight and sacrifice for the truth to maintain his integrity with God and announce the "Good News" of God's truth, as Israel had to fight the resident pagan nations to take hold of the Promised Land. Healing requires discipline and commitment.

“Do you *want* to be healed?” Jesus asked the invalid by the pool in Jn 5:6. This is a discipline that is always presupposed in healing. We must choose life and develop the skills to follow through if we are to persist in living a healed life.

Examples

1) Sometimes the sin that causes mental illness is not conscious. Carl Jung (1968, 58-61) tells of a 30 year old woman at the Burghölzli Asylum in Zurich where he was serving as a beginning psychiatrist. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia of a depressive character. Jung questioned the diagnosis and administered his word association test. The results showed disturbances with several words, and led Jung to a hidden cause. She was the wife of a well-to-do man in a very fine position and apparently happy. Her husband said the depression came on about two months after her eldest child had died. It turned out that in her little town where she grew up there was a rich young man that was every girl's hero. Her family persuaded her that he wouldn't think of marrying her, so she married another nice man and for five years was happy. Then a friend told her, “Didn't you know that first man was in love with you and was disappointed when you married another?” That set a fire in her but she repressed it. Shortly after, she was bathing her boy (2) and little girl (4) in water that was infected with typhoid fever. She noticed the little girl sucking a sponge but did not interfere. She also gave the infected water to her boy. The girl got typhoid and died, the boy was saved. She had, then, what her unconscious anger wanted - the denial of her marriage in order to marry the other man. She had committed murder but didn't know it. Jung had to decide whether to tell her or not. When he finally did, she exploded emotionally but when she came down to the facts, three weeks later they were able to discharge her. There had been no crime, but instead of going to jail she had herself sent to the lunatic asylum. She was saved from the burden of insanity by facing the burden of her conscience! In her case, the “familial” pattern of moral responsibility was suppressed but took its toll nonetheless.

2) Her acknowledging her sin would also have “saved” her offspring, for such unconscious sin and turning from truth and God is “visited on” those that come after for “four (or more) generations” until someone, like Joseph in the OT and Jesus in the NT, carries the burden in God's love and forgives. Some years ago, our small prayer team was asked to pray for a woman crippled by depression who was not helped by therapy or healing prayer. It turned out that a great-grandfather had turned away from a priestly vocation and against God and this turning away had affected his many children and their children. When we prayed for forgiveness for him and release for his offspring, the woman we were praying for got healed of her depression. She had become a burden bearer for the family, carrying those sins as Jesus had carried our sins, and bringing them to God's healing love. The deeper healing gets, the more we encounter intergenerational issues.

The woman Jung described “knew” what she had done but could not face the truth. Her mental illness was bringing her unconscious guilt to light. The woman we prayed for didn't know the source of her depression, but still was carrying its effects. God's law is written in our hearts and requires restoration individually and/or collectively to fully release God's healing love. Bringing our responsibility or the intergenerational source of responsibility to light, despite our resistance to the truth, is an essential step toward healing.

The Exile and Promise of a New Covenant – Individuating Faith

One of the most devastating experiences in Israel's history was their exile to Babylon. With the collapse of the northern kingdom, and this overthrow and deportation of Judah to Babylon, Israel experienced a cultural and theological breakdown. Was Yahweh really in charge of their history? Hard questions are hinted at in the prophets of the Exile. “The way of Yahweh is not just” (Ez 18:25, 29). Why should the sins of our fathers who are no longer alive have to be borne by us the living (Lam 5:7)? The sense of Yahweh's absence is well expressed by Zephaniah: “Yahweh does neither good nor evil” (Zeph 1:12) (von Rad, 1962, p.391-392). It seemed as though Yahweh no longer guided Israel.

The Exilic prophets proclaimed the Old Covenant broken because of their failure to observe it (Jer 31:31ff, etc). Hope would come only from a New Covenant which Yahweh himself would effect. Theologically speaking, the people are consigned to the realm of death where they can no longer be reached by the saving events of old (Ez 37; Is 59:10; Bar 3:4) (von Rad, 1965, p.271-272).¹²

This is the cultural breakdown that enlightened my experience of depression. Isaiah 40-55 was written during the Exile. “Remember not the events of the past” Yahweh says, “See I am doing something new!” (Is 43:18-19) This marks a new breakthrough of God's creativity that has several facets. In the first place, it goes beyond social history to the individual. Ezekiel 18 says, “You have heard it said that the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. As I live - it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks - there will no longer be any reason to repeat this proverb in Israel” (Ez 18:1-3; Jer 31:29-30). Unlike the familial faith stage, the sins of the fathers are not visited on their children in this stage. Fathers, sons, grandsons, will each be judged individually and rewarded or punished

according to their own choices that they *now* make. They cannot even trust in their own previous righteousness (Ez 18:31-32; 33:13). All depends on what each one *now* chooses.

Further, a new perspective on the meaning of suffering is opened up. Previously, Israel saw suffering as resulting from guilt and sin. Now the innocent Jeremiah suffers intensely for his courageous witness to Yahweh in face of a totally condemning leadership. He knew of no afterlife (von Rad, 1962, p.387-391), so remaining true to Yahweh in a hostile world left him a bitter man, asking Yahweh to destroy his persecutors as is only just (Jer 18:23). The question of innocent suffering was addressed by the Book of Job, where Satan is permitted by God to bring intense suffering on Job. Job's challenges are silenced when he encounters the mystery of God. The suffering of Jesus is the ultimate answer to his search. The further question of helping others through suffering for them (as does the "suffering servant" of Is 53) was not addressed at all till Jesus.

A third aspect of exilic faith - besides focus on the individual and attention to innocent suffering - is a universal monotheism. Second Isaiah actually speaks of Cyrus as Yahweh's instrument (Is 41:1-7, 25-29; 45:1-5) indicating God's universal lordship. Now Yahweh is not just Israel's one god, he is *the only God* (Is 41:21-24; 43:8-13; 44:6-8; 45:20-24). All is focused on Yahweh, and Yahweh's lordship reaches all, both individually and collectively. This breakthrough to an immediate relation to God is key to integrating all the different aspects of ourselves.

Finally, post-exilic Wisdom literature reveals an interiorization and almost incarnation of God's Spirit, now seen as feminine. The Spirit searches our depths, reveals unseen obstacles to God's presence, but also provides one's interior guidance. Wisdom is a master artisan, playfully at work with Yahweh in creation and delighting to be with human children (Prov 8:22-31). She is the opposite of voluptuous Aphrodite who invites men to sacrifice chastity (von Rad, 1962, p.444).¹³ Approach her with your whole heart (Sir 6:26), for whoever turns to her "she welcomes like the wife of his youth" (Sir 15:2). It is as though she is in touch with the inner soul of the world, the nurturing meaning that comes not from the outside (from Tradition), but from within each individual who responds to her invitation. This is not Egyptian fate (*Maat*), which nowhere calls for a human response. Wisdom is peculiarly Jewish, an opening up of the inner dialogical nature of reality seen as on-going creation (von Rad, 1972, p.174). She is the fountainhead of life. Jung speaks of the anima, the feminine in men who leads them to their inner God connection as the animus leads women. At this point Scripture focuses on monogamy as God's desire for humanity.

Thus, a whole new faith vision emerges with the Exile: a focus on each individual, a mysterious awareness of innocent suffering of Yahweh's servants, a monotheistic view of God as ongoing creator and universal Lord, whose companion Wisdom creates in those who respond an inner Spirit of life and faithful love. Yahweh is now mystery, beyond our human ability to fully understand, but calling for committed surrender and endurance.

Jesus experienced this individuating purification as he confronted Satan's temptations after his Baptism. His earlier "finding in the temple" was like his Exodus experience that allowed him to submit to his parents and the culture in a God-directed way. In the desert he confronted the demonic deep temptations of Israel and responded by surrendering all to God - bodily needs, prestige, and power. He quoted Scripture for each temptation - "we don't live by bread alone, but by every word from the mouth of God" (Dt 8:3), "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test" (Dt 6:16), "God only shall you serve" (Dt 6:13). Israel had grumbled about the manna, had demanded signs and power. Jesus chooses a single-hearted devotion to God. He was not misdirected by family or culture, but saw everything and everyone in relation to God. It is this surrendered love that purifies our relationships and frees us from the negativities of our traditions. This pattern of going beyond traditional learning to individual, personal encounter with God is key to healing imbedded destructive tendencies.

Examples

1) My personal depression, as I said earlier, introduced me to this stage. I also had lost hope in a positive future, and my self-analysis was only making matters worse. God's word to "See I am doing something new!" (Is 43:18-19) changed all that for me. It lifted me from the depression of my mother and ancestors, it encouraged me to accept the suffering as an innocent, and it opened me to a surrendered love that I previously knew nothing about. I also became aware of a love beyond what was utilitarian. After much soul-searching, I purchased a Spanish guitar just because I loved it. Abraham Maslow speaks of "being values" rather than "deficiency values." Being values, like the good, the true, the beautiful, the one, etc. are sought for their own sake. I learned through this breakthrough that the ministries God gives are never just for God or for others, but always for the minister him or herself also.

2) Therapists like the family therapist Richard Schwartz ("*Releasing the Soul*" in Walsh, 1999, pp.223-239) are learning the importance of persons connecting with their spiritual center. It is our God connection. Prevailing theory has been that persons have no "core" self, that identity depends only on upbringing and culture. Schwartz found, however, that there is a compassionate center present in clients who come from abusive parents. He found ways to help clients disengage from their "parts" (by climbing a mountain and leaving them behind, or putting them in a room) so that the observing, compassionate Self (as he called the spiritual center) would remain. A genetic

explanation was too materialistic for what his clients experienced. By centering in their Self, they were able to unload their pain and could feel a warm energy flow through their bodies, blissful or rapturous, oceanic and boundaryless. They sensed their life's meaning and occasionally received direct advice. He wrote, "I began to conceptualize the Self as the soul of the person - the place in them that was God, or through which God-like energy could flow" (Walsh, 1999, 227). He decried the loss of the soul in therapy. Schwartz learned to take time to center himself before seeing a client so he could establish a "Self-Self" connection, and let the client's parts (manager, exile and fire-fighter parts as he came to call them) surrender leadership to the Self.

One client named Julie (as her Self) was allowed by her "manager" part to approach a child-like exile part of her that was in pain. After Julie held and comforted the exiled child part in her imagination and the child part trusted that Julie cared for her, Julie asked the child part to show her what she wanted Julie to know about the past. She remembered being ridiculed for being fat. This memory freed her to take the black shame from her heart. She felt lighter and more playful and her depression lifted. It seems the parts of oneself, like people, need to know that what happened to them has been recognized by someone who is significant to them, in this case by Julie's own Self. Also burdens contain spiritual lessons that will lead us to our true selves if understood. As I see it, Schwartz had discovered the healing road God prepared for us in Jesus' experience of the pattern of Exile. By moving beyond one's parts (formed by one's tradition) to an individual encounter with God and one's compassionate self, the burden carried by the parts could be released and an inner freedom attained.

3) In midlife many things can happen - divorce, failure in work, sickness, loss of loved ones, children going astray. It may seem as though one has lost contact with God. One might feel alienated from church and family and feel that one's life has been all for nothing. As the Servant in Is 49:4 says, "I thought I had toiled in vain, and for nothing, uselessly, spent my strength" One's conscious integration in society (i.e. ego development) has left other aspects of one's individual uniqueness undeveloped and suppressed. These suppressed aspects emerge in the form of unwanted tendencies, fears, angers. At some time or other there is hopefully a break-through of "spiritual experience" springing from one's spiritual center - what has been called the "superconscious."¹⁴ This center is beyond rationality, much as the subconscious is pre-rational. It is from this dimension of the personality whence come intuitions, artistic inspiration, love, and a personal experience of God (Assagioli, 1971, p.40-46).¹⁵ Its emergence frees aspects of one's wholeness that have been denied consciousness by the effort at social integration and are thereby relegated to the "dark side" of one's personality. From there they manifest as guilt feelings, shame, mystery, etc. That is why the transition to this dimension of individuating faith is disorienting to one's "normal" view of life. There is demanded a sort of "dying" of the conscious self as one opens to this new transcendence, whether it is experienced in a "great love" or in a more direct experience of God.¹⁶ One's personal self is now not so much agent as respondent. God takes the initiative and one has to learn a new way of co-operating with the power and influence of this new dimension.

However, this is only the vision of that which transcends us, not yet its realization. In time, because one's relationships and ways of acting are still patterned on the old model, the experience ebbs, love cools, or one loses the vision of the spiritual and is left with a conscience sensitized by the experience but with the same old narrow self and guilt. In fear of this state, one may intensify efforts at purification, but this only deepens one in the previous self-structure and increases alienation (Assagioli, 1971, p.46-49). This is what Israel did when they were restored to Jerusalem - they intensified obedience to the Law for fear of another exile. It took Jesus to teach submission to transcendence. It is a long and difficult process, but the necessity of this individuating step is a universal pattern.

Jesus: Ministry of Reconciliation and Restoration - Communitarian Faith

Still, Jesus takes us even further. When we look at his ministry through the lens of stages of development, it becomes clear how simple yet ground-breaking it was. Isaiah 53 said that the Servant would be treated "as a worm and no man, yet it was our sins he bore." Isaiah continues, "He was spurned and avoided, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity ... we held him in no esteem. Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured ... by his stripes we were healed" (Is 53:3-5 *passim*). It was as though God revealed the mystery of Jesus five hundred years before Jesus actually lived it out. Nowhere else in the OT do we see suffering for others even adverted to till Jesus, yet it directs us to the most important key to healing and mental health. The pattern of communitarian faith goes beyond seeing all in light of God. It moves to become a coworker with God in facing suffering to bring healing to those in need.

Already in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus proclaimed we are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Why? "That you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust" (Mt 5:45). In other words, if we are grounded in God, as we saw was true of individuating faith, we will see others through God's eyes, with compassion and desire to heal. This would not be helpful to those who need to learn to stand up for themselves - those in the familial faith stage. Done

too early, the effort to love one's enemies may only repress one's hurt. The Matthew, Dennis and Sheila Linn address this issue very well in their book, *Don't Forgive Too Soon* (1997). We first need to be able to stand up to evil. But when we trust God entirely, as Jesus did, we begin to see God's hand in everything that happens. As Joseph in the OT, when we see with God's eyes, we can get past the hurt to see God's call to bring sin into the light so it can be repented of and forgiven.

Not only are we to forgive our enemies, we are to sacrifice ourselves in loving them. This is clear from Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. The scribe, wishing to justify himself, asks "who is my neighbor?" Jesus tells the story. The Levite and priest pass the beaten man by for fear of ritual defilement, whereas the Samaritan takes pity. Jericho was a Jewish city and the half-dead man was also a Jew. If the man died on the way, there would be summary justice! The Samaritan was taking his life in his hands to help him. At the conclusion of the parable, Jesus changed the question. "Which of these, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robber's victim?" (Lk 11:36) Not who is my neighbor, but who made this person a neighbor. Where there is no love, put love and you will find love.

Examples:

1) It is amazing what changes can come when we look at our life through the eyes of God, not through our problems. Some years ago, a group was ministering to a woman who was in a mental hospital unable to cope with life. She had been seriously abused by her parents and it had crippled her. Those praying for her were not helping so they asked for any suggestions I might have. **It occurred to me that she had to choose her parents, since when we reject our parents we end up experiencing the very things we are trying to avoid. She had no human reason to choose abusive parents, but I had learned that God chooses our parents not just for our sake but for theirs.** She had faith in God and was able to choose them for what God wanted to do for them through her. Whatever happened to them I don't know, but she was healed enough to leave the hospital and begin to minister to mental patients like herself. "It is in giving that we receive," St. Francis wrote (Reference?), giving as God has given to us.

2) A moving example is given by Karol Truman in *Feelings Buried Alive Never Die* (1991, p.109-111). A Jewish lawyer, called "Wild Bill" because of his handlebar mustache, was an inmate of a concentration camp near Wuppertal in Germany. After the war, he helped the American soldiers in getting medical and other help for the prisoners, often working longer hours than they could. The officer who told his story thought he had been there for only a short time because of his energy and erect posture, and his ability to reconcile hostile factions within the camp. His papers showed, however, that he had been there six years on the same starvation diet as the other prisoners. It turned out that he had watched the Germans shoot his wife, two daughters and three young sons while they spared him because he spoke German, English, French and Russian as well as his native Polish and could be used as a translator. What changed him was a decision he had made. As he said, "I had to decide right then whether to let myself hate the soldiers who had done this. It was an easy decision, really. I was a lawyer. In my practice I had seen too often what hate could do to people's minds and bodies. Hate had just killed the six people who mattered most to me in the world. I decided then that I would spend the rest of my life - whether it was a few days or many years - loving every person I came in contact with" (p. 111). "Loving every person" was the power that kept him well in face of every privation. Such creative love brought healing, not just to himself, but to the many he inspired to forgive and be reconciled. God's own love was released in his lived decision to love.

The Ultimate Gift: Jesus' Death and Resurrection:

I have often asked people, what is it that makes Jesus' dying on the cross so important? He was not healing anyone. All but a faithful few of his disciples scattered and were left with black despair. And yet we celebrate the cross as central to our redemption. Why? How does Jesus' death figure in our quest for healing?

First, we need to look at why death as we know it came at all. It stemmed from God's command to Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "From the moment you eat of it you are surely doomed to die" (Gn 2:17). "God formed man to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made him. But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and those who are in his possession experience it" (Wisdom of Solomon, 2:24). **Death is our final enemy as Paul says (1 Cor 15:26), the final stage of human existence that Jesus assumed in order to transform it.** Satan kept us in slavery through fear of death (Heb 2:15). Jesus made it the gateway to incorruptibility. "Death where is your sting," Paul says, "The sting of death is sin." "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor 15:55-56).

This, of course, is hind-sight. Jesus experienced death in all its horror, not just physical death, but the ultimate effect of the sin of humankind, separation from God. **His "primal scream" "My God, my God why**

have you forsaken me?” (Mk 15:34) is the unspoken scream of every mentally ill person, indeed of all of us. It is the ultimate and deepest shock, the overwhelming experience that renders us helpless, and destroys our relationships with one another. **In drinking that cup of death to the end, Jesus revealed something that went even deeper, a Love, God’s Love, that will never end.** Jesus also sent forth his Spirit to empower us to love with a love that will never end.

His death “bears much fruit” (Jn 12:24). This is unique. The Maccabees died in refusing to disobey the law. They showed great courage, but nothing is said about their empowering others. Jesus died to give us life. He showed absolute love. From the cross he spoke to his mother, “‘Woman, behold your Son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home [lit. into *his own (eis to idion)*]” (Jn 19:26-27). Through his dying, if we embrace it and unite our dying with his, we, like his mother and beloved disciple, are born into a new family, a holy family. Now, after the resurrection, the disciples are called “brothers and sisters.” As Jesus said earlier, “My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and keep it” (Mk3:31-35). It is this new family, living from the death/resurrection of Jesus, that is the final healing. “Death is at work in us,” Paul said, “but life in you” (2 Cor 4:12). “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church” (Col 1:24).

This new family reaches all the way back to Adam and Eve and forward to the fulfillment of humanity. Jesus is the “New Adam,” as Paul put it, but also the one who is subjecting everything to himself so that he might restore everything to communion with God (1 Cor 15:27-28). Christ’s resurrection is an event in God, which shares God’s eternal time. It is also a bodily event that transforms our bodies and frees us from the consequences of ancestral sins and unhealed wounds as well. We have found that much healing involves such healing of the consequences of ancestors’ sins and wounds.

Examples

1) One of the most difficult mental illnesses to heal is anorexia. Dr. Kenneth McAll (*Healing the Family Tree*, 1982) had a lot of experience with anorexics, especially the ones who were referred to him because other psychiatrists had been unable to help them. In an article for the *Journal of Christian Healing* (1983, vol. 5, 1, pp. 24-27) he gives the outcome of 18 cases referred to him after hospital treatment had failed. A private Eucharist or communion service with prayers for apology was celebrated for ancestors with dramatic results. The article describes four of these cases in more detail. Since the initial writing, the author had treated 64 cases (through 1981). Four had refused to cooperate, one was persuaded the treatment was “of the devil”, but 49 received sustained relief, and 6 of those were instantaneous. Those Dr. McAll treated were a select group which had not responded to other therapies, but they show that in not a few cases our illnesses are rooted in ancestry (McAll, 1983, p. 26). Murray Bowen estimated that it would take five or six generations of mental illness to culminate in psychosis. It is Jesus’ death and resurrection that offers us hope, even if healing has to go back to Adam and Eve. **We belong to God’s new family, and God is not mentally ill.** Jesus is present to our ancestors - “Before Abraham came to be, I AM” (Jn 8:58) - and no one is beyond his power to heal.

2) Jim Wilder (1999, pp.100ff.) grew up in Colombia where there was violence, rape, and brutal killings all around him. He saw how ordinary Christian farmers were turned into brutal killers by the violence of their upbringing. People would feel the rush of power through killing when they had been victims all their lives. That same method had been brought into the United States. As a therapist, he felt called to deal with the most wounded sexually and ritually abused people who were not healed by counseling alone but needed new families and healing communities. Of the many survivors served by his facility in Los Angeles, those with such a community got better, while those without it did not get better no matter what counseling they received. In some cases he felt called to provide such a healing family and his experience showed him most clearly how we need to grow ourselves to provide that help for others.

Crisis came into his own family. His wife, Kitty, who had given him permission to provide such help, got jealous of Rose and Wendy who had become spiritual daughters to Jim. He was torn between being faithful to his commitment to them and to his wife. He went through a deep depression as even spiritual discerners said he must have been wrongly led. Finally, when requests for talks stopped and he was near falling apart, he and Kitty agreed to fast till God spoke. When he was down to 145 lbs, God spoke to Kitty that he was indeed called to spiritual fatherhood and she to a new role, helping the deaf. She was greatly relieved for a time, but then when Jim returned from ministry one afternoon, she was sitting on the sofa with a doll. She had regressed to being a little blond girl with her dolly. It turned out that she had been traumatized in Africa by the absence of her missionary parents. With good intentions, they had caused her trauma. She got better with medication, studied sign language as her new call,

and little by little she and Jim became a family of elders, where she also could be a spiritual mother. “Kitty was now doing the impossible without demanding control,” Jim wrote, **“I tried to control you,” she said one day, “because you were easier to control than my emotions.”** Jim concluded, “It is no surprise that through the weakness of others, redemption reached my house” (Wilder, 1999, p.310).

Our Call as “Healers with the Heart of Jesus”

This short statement of the goal of the Association of Christian Therapists - to be healers with the heart of Jesus - is a fitting summary of the scriptural approach to healing mental illness that I have presented. All Scripture, God’s Word in history, is a foreshadowing of The Word Incarnate, as Jesus himself indicated. It prepares for Jesus and is brought to fulfillment in Jesus. So Jesus passed through each of the stages of development that we have presented and opened healing for each stage.

He was conceived as “New Adam” free of original sin, from Mary as “New Eve,” and so restored basic trust in God’s love despite uprooting from home and persecution. In Jesus, our trust in love is restored as our *initial faith* foundation for all healing.

Jesus’ hidden life of submission to his parents and Torah in obedience to his Father, as we saw from Lk 2:41-51 - the “finding in the temple” - transformed ordinary life and law to become response to God. Discipline and growth in virtue are essential ingredients of healing in this *familial faith* stage.

Jesus’ leaving home, his baptism by John and temptations in the desert confronted the cultural temptations from his tradition and his single hearted trust in his Father grounded *individuating faith*. He could then call people to “repent and believe the good news” that God’s loving kingdom and “new creation” is now at work. In Him our Self as link to God is opened up and we can be delivered from inherited generational patterns.

Jesus’ public life, formation of his disciples, forgiveness of enemies and suffering for others inaugurates the novelty of *communitarian faith*. Jesus’ parables reflect this stage, especially the “Good Samaritan” (Lk 10:29-37) and the “Lost Son” (Lk 15:11-32). He shows us that when we turn wounds to redemptive love, we get further healed.

Finally, in his courageous acceptance of human hatred and death for love of his Father, Jesus opened healing for all human, all creation and all time. In surrendering his life for love of God and all humanity, Jesus revealed God in a new way - a Trinitarian Community of Self-giving Love. It is the Father who did not spare his own Son for love of sinners, the Son who did not spare himself and the Holy Spirit who issues forth to draw all creation into this good news. Because Jesus took on the effects of human sin and sickness as a bridge to God, all illness can now be seen in light of God’s self-giving love for all, a sharing in Jesus dying that gives life (2 Cor 4:12). This is the final goal of faith development and healing.

What Jesus has done we also are called to do, “Greater works than these shall you do, because I go to the Father” (Jn 14:12). But deeper than “doing” is “being.” God chooses to work through us and He won’t do it any other way. We were made in the image and likeness of our Triune God. This likeness was lost when Adam and Eve chose to turn from God by knowing good and evil for themselves, and began imaging God in their own defensive way. Their choice was the foundation of all our illnesses, mental and physical. But God never forgot his vision. With great patience God worked with his chosen people, with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, the judges, the kings and David - always promising a final prophet, priest, king. Despite Israel’s infidelity, God fulfilled all those types in Jesus, who through his faithful love unto death revealed who God really is - a community of love so glorious that the Father did not spare his own Son for love of us, not turning from our hurt and self-hatred but receiving its effects with the deepest compassion and forgiveness, which released their loving Spirit to reform us in that very likeness of God. As we are reformed in the image of God’s self-giving love, we are healed - step by step being transformed as was Jesus.

Acts shows that Peter and then Paul lived the pattern of Jesus. Jesus has become our ultimate foundation, the New Adam, and Mary (and believers) the ones transformed in his image and New Eves. Only by growing into their likeness will we become the healing community that God needs, for God wants to (and will) heal the world, but through those who are reformed in Christ’s (and the Trinity’s) likeness.

In summary, if Scripture is interpreted in light of its fulfillment in Jesus, and Jesus’ development is considered in light of scriptural stages of salvation history, we can understand how transformation through Jesus and the Holy Spirit heals mental illness. The root of mental illness is distrust in love caused by abuse, neglect or ancestral conflict or abandonment, etc. Jesus, without sin, trusted God’s love from conception until death, and through his resurrection in God’s eternal NOW and sending the Holy Spirit he empowers that trust in those who believe in him despite hardships. A lack of discipline and conversion from sin leads to failure to sustain healing. Jesus’ obedience to tradition and God-given authority empowers the virtue we need to live a disciplined life. His surrender of human

norms in the desert to put all his trust in God gives believers the strength to risk an individuated trust in God which can then flow out to forgiving those who have hurt us and even enemies as Jesus did, and ultimately to giving one's whole life for God's love despite persecution and even death. That total self-giving love is the ultimate healing which transforms humans into the image of Christ and ultimately to the image of God's triune self-giving love.

End Notes

¹ This translation is from the *New American Bible* (NAB), revised edition (1986). All Scripture quotes will be from this translation unless otherwise noted.

² Charles Kraft, *Deep Wounds, Deep Healing* critiqued Hunt and McMahon's position: "Their assumption is that since certain techniques are used by the Enemy [New Age] the techniques themselves are infected and therefore wrong for Christians" (p. 8). It is important to see that these techniques have been put in the universe by God to be used for his purposes. When the technique is empowered by God, the process is right.

³ The citation refers to St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book III, Chapter 18, paragraph 7. Further references are similar. This translation is from Quay, 1995, p.194.

⁴ Trans. from Roberts, A., Donaldson, J & Coxe, A. C. (1997), S. 544.

⁵ I prescind here from whether Jews are still called to live as Jews even after conversion to Christ. (See the persuasive argument of Mark S. Kinzer, *Post-Missionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005) that Paul and the other apostles lived as Jews even after their conversion, and that the Jewish race will be called as a whole to Christ before the end - presupposing it will still be an identifiable people.)

⁶ For a fuller explanation of this chart see Robert Sears, "Healing and Family Spiritual/Emotional Systems," *Journal of Christian Healing*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1983), pp. 10-23. Also "Characteristics of Stages of Faith" in his website: www.familytreehealing.com/otherresources.

⁷ Jim Wilder (2004) has shown that joy is foundational for human development. Joy comes from appreciative relationships and facilitates brain development as well as emotional development.

⁸ Trans from Roberts, A., Donaldson, J & Coxe, A. C. (1997), S. 545.

⁹ Trans from Roberts, A., Donaldson, J & Coxe, A. C. (1997), S. 548.

¹⁰ Trans from Roberts, A., Donaldson, J & Coxe, A. C. (1997), S. 545.

¹¹ See E. James Wilder, *Joy Bonds for Growth...* (ICBC International, 1551 Indian Hills Dr, Suite 200, Sioux City, IA 51104).

¹² This does not mean that the New Covenant had no link with the past. Rather, these prophets believed that the new event would follow the pattern of the old - as a new Exodus more glorious than the first, a better covenant, a more effective suffering of the Servant. As von Rad puts it: "The old is therefore renewed, it is present in the new, in the mysterious dialectic of valid and obsolete" (p. 272.).

¹³ Von Rad states: "The motif of love-language spreads out so widely in the texts from Prov 1-9 via Sirach and on to the late Wisdom of Solomon that we are obviously here dealing with a range of ideas which the teachers have developed along a broad front" (See his *Wisdom*, 166). Carl Jung called attention to this softening in pre-Christian Wisdom as a step in individuation just prior to the coming of Christ which he saw as the emergence of wholeness or the Self (*Answer to Job*, in *The Portable Jung*, ed. Joseph Campbell (N.Y.: Viking, 1971), pp. 550-563). Individuation in his view begins as a rule with the emergence of the shadow with its accompanying guilt and suffering (as we saw with the Exile) and later unfolds in counter-sexual images (anima/animus) as inner link to wholeness. In this case history's development does seem to reveal a universal law of development.

¹⁴ It is difficult to give in detail all the sources of evidence for my stages or for the present application to individuating faith. My own dissertation has provided much data by examining Freud, Jung, and Moreno in the light of Mühen's theology of the Holy Spirit; see *Spirit: Divine and Human. The Theology of the Holy Spirit of Heribert Mühlen and Its Relevance for Evaluating the Data of Psychotherapy* (Fordham University, 1974, see my website: www.familytreehealing.com/books) pp. 378-477. Further evidence has come from the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius: human freedom is needed even to begin the *Exercises*, a spiritual break-through initiates the Second Week, it is integrated in one's life in the Election and Third Week, and moves to a missionary thrust in the Fourth Week and *Contemplatio*. What I have found most helpful to describe the stages is the work of C. G. Jung (quite widely available) and his follower Roberto Assagioli. Thus, Jung found the distinction between personal self ("personal unconscious") and spiritual self ("collective unconscious") to be verified the world over and in every age. These are not separate; the personal self (or ego) is a particular reflection of one's total spiritual self that is developed as the ego stabilizes itself in the world. Jung saw this social stabilization of the ego as the work of the first half of life, till about age 35 to 40 (see "The Stages of Life," in *The Portable Jung*, ed. Joseph Campbell [New York, 1975] pp. 3-

22). Spiritual experience could occur before this, but it could not develop fully unless the ego was thus strengthened. Erikson's stages in the life cycle would basically correspond to the work of this stage, only the key to individuating faith is not a strengthened ego, but the surrender of ego to the self as described by Jung and Assagioli. Conflicts in this stage, according to Assagioli, "occur between the 'normal' drives, between these drives and the conscious ego, or between the ego and the outer world (particularly human beings closely related, such as parents, mate or children)" (*Psychosynthesis* [New York, 1971] p. 43).

¹⁵ Assagioli (1971, p. 40-46) gives a fine description of the indications preceding and accompanying this "spiritual awakening." The "ordinary man" may begin to experience a vague and elusive "lack," which may lead to intensified activity to escape the sense of meaninglessness. This might increase even to the extent of despairing of life itself. The break-through itself of the spiritual dimension opens one to an ecstatic experience of love and truth and a whole new generosity toward life. A helpful article describing the spiritual dimension in a systematic way is by Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., "A Psychological Model with a Spiritual Dimension," *Pastoral Psychology*, vol. 23, 1972, pp. 31-40.

¹⁶ Assagioli's description focuses more on the mystical aspects of this break-through, whereas "ecstatic love" itself shows many of the same qualities as the break-through of the self. It de-centers the person and places one in a new interpersonal context that reveals its grounding in a transcendent Other. See Solovyev, *The Meaning of Love* (London, G. Bles: Centenary Press, 1945), pp. 58 ff.

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