



God and Soul Care

What Ministers Need to Know

AACC Charlotte
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Christianity is Therapeutic

Modern psychology did not invent therapy

In the gospels Jesus was a healer of the body

Now he is a healer of souls (and the body indirectly)

“He restores my soul” (Ps 23:3)

“By his stripes we are healed” (1Pet 2:24)

All of church life has a therapeutic dimension

It's all about God

Secular psychotherapy and counseling has
the Self as its center of focus

Christian psychotherapy and counseling has
Christ as its center of focus

God created us for his glory (Is 43:7)

What is human flourishing?

The capacity, tendency, and often experience humans have of developing their myriad powers of personhood-in-communion to maturity and expression in life.

-adapted from Christian Smith, *To Flourish or Destruct*

What is glory?

The outshining of God's greatness, beauty, & love

-see Jonathan Edwards, *The End for Which God Created the World*

And God created us for his glory (Is 43:7)

Glory and Love in the Trinity

God is love (1Jo 4:8, 16)

What is love?

Delight in the other

Desire for the other's good

Desire for fitting union with the other

Face-time/joint attentional focus

Sharing of thoughts, feelings, desires, story

And God created us for his glory (Is 43:7)

What is the Nature of the Trinity

A vigorous, loving communion

Fallen opposite: co-dependence

Three vigorous personal agents

Fallen opposite: narcissism

God desires that the church be the image of
the Trinity

“Let us make humans in our own image, after our likeness
(Gen 1:26)

The Beauty of God

Sovereign Majesty

Perfect righteousness

Perfect love and compassion

Our healing is promoted as our communion with the triune God is experienced: a perfect Father, brother, lover, and indwelling helper

Humans are created good

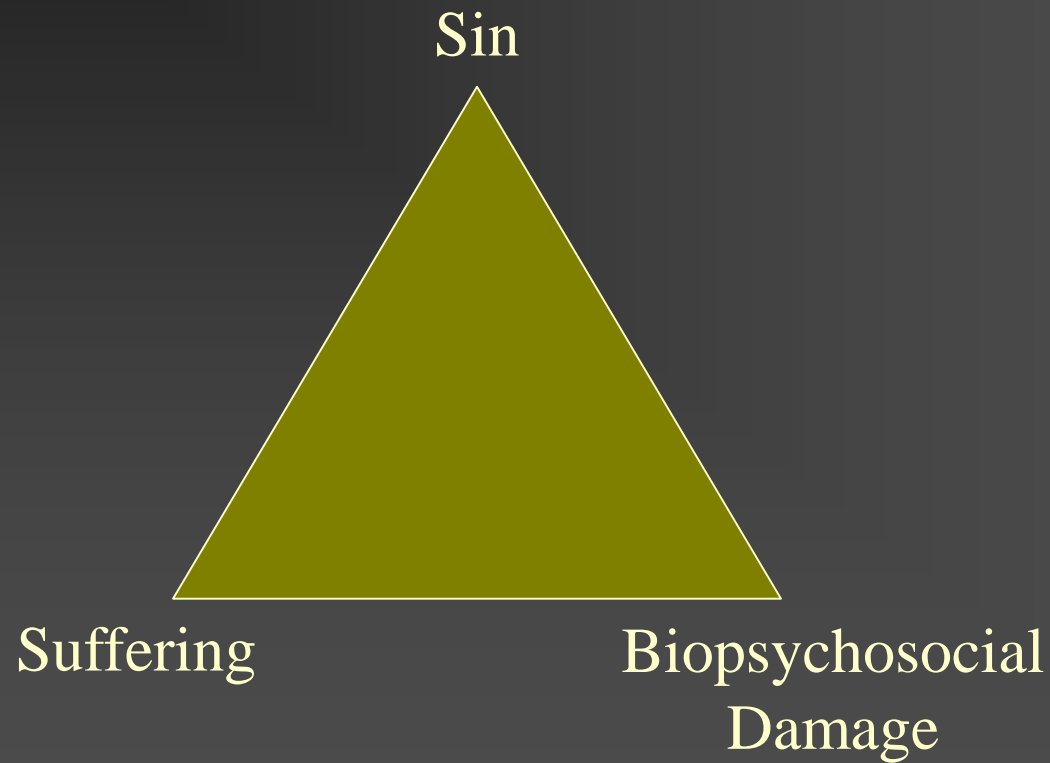
Humans flourish in a relationship of dependent worship and love with God

All created structures are good

Self-love is redeemed by becoming theocentric

Gratitude for one's strengths and gifts

A Christian Model of Psychopathology



Union with Christ is foundational to Christian psychotherapy and counseling

What is union with Christ?

God the Father identifies us eternally with his Son in his humanity

Christians are perfect and complete in Christ the moment they surrender their life to God

Christians are united to the story of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and exaltation

Union with Christ's Life

Christ is the perfect human
He's the word of God to us

Union with Christ's Death

Christ suffered the punishment due for our sins
So there is therefore now no condemnation for
those who are in Christ (Ro 8:1)

Christ has taken away all of our shame and guilt
(both true and false shame and guilt)

Union with Christ's Resurrection

Believers have been raised from the dead to walk in newness of life (Ro 6:4)

This new life spreads through new thoughts, new feelings, new experiences, new memories, new relational patterns, new self-understanding, and new story

Union with Christ's Exaltation

Our true self is seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6)

He and the Spirit are praying for us continually (Ro 8:26, 34)

The Importance of the Local Church

The local church is a divine laboratory in which God's redemption is realized collaboratively

We practice loving, forgiving, and being forgiven in this space

All aspects of church life have a therapeutic dimension and ought to be related to the healing of individual Christians and the body of Christ

A Christian Personality Model

A conflict model based on the division caused by Christ's life, death, and resurrection

Our sinfulness has been crucified and Christ is raising our true self from the dead

So our fallenness is passing away (1Jn 2:8, 17) and more and more we are becoming a new creation (2Co 5:17)

Redemptive differentiation

Differentiating the old self and the new self

Old self is all that is fallen: sin and damaged creation
(brokenness)

New self is all that is being redeemed: created goodness
and redemptive blessings

		Internal-Relational Dynamics	
		New Self, Desirable	Old Self
Structural Features		Creational	Damaged Creational
Directional Dynamics		Redemptive	Sinful

Redemptive Integration

Redemption brings everything within into increasing and harmony in union with Christ and communion with God

Increasing harmony among our beliefs, desires, motives, emotions, actions, and relational patterns

Brokenness is reclaimed as “weakness” that glorifies God

Even my sin gets brought into my new self understanding

A Future with God

No more suffering

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away (Rev 21:4)

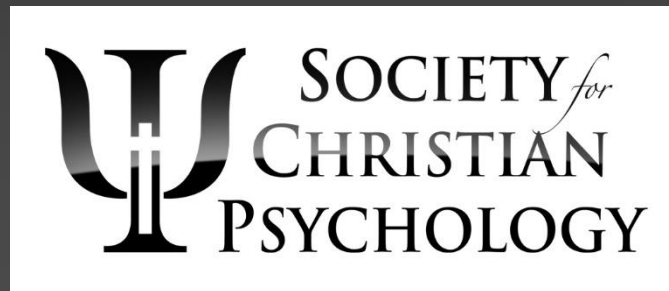
We will be like him and have no more sin (1Jn 3:2)

Perfect justice will be realized

We will dwell in unqualified bliss



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