

2221 Theory and Practice 2: Lecture 12

THEOPHOSTIC PRAYER MINISTRY

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INTRODUCTION

Theophostic Prayer Ministry (TPM)¹ is a method of healing based on the assumption that 'lies' or 'untruths' inferred by young minds in both traumatic and non-traumatic incidents have been incorporated into the memory structures bringing ongoing disorder in thought, emotion and action. Invoking the presence of the Lord Jesus, TPM aims to re-cover these untruths in order for the sufferer to hear or see what Jesus wants to do with the problematic situation. TPM, for many people, is a controversial healing practice: for some it smacks of cultic practices of a highly suggestive and

¹ I have chosen to equate TPM and Ed Smith, the creator of TPM, throughout.

hypnotic character. Often such opponents would claim that TPM strays far from the Bible's in its use of fantasy and imagination. However, for others, it is almost joyful liberation from all the hard work of sorting through a hurting person's issues; the very fact that Jesus is invited into the person's situations is almost a guarantee that substantial, supernatural healing will occur and more especially, puts TPM in an exalted place above the human-made contrivances of other healing practices. This lecture will argue that all of these responses are faulty and rest on questionable assumptions that ought to be challenged. TPM, it will be argued, is a thoroughly human endeavour subject to all the temptations of the human condition. Any attempt to claim for TPM a superiority over other approaches is misguided because God is at work in all forms of healing even when that makes a less overt appeal to the presence of God. Nevertheless, TPM's central concern to promote an experiential shift from lie-based darkness to the truth of the Light of Christ represents a positive development for Christian life.

Theophostic is based on the two Greek words *theos* meaning God (cp., theology), and *photos* meaning light (cp., photo). God's light is understood as the healing light of the truth of God. This notion of the healing light echoes the work of Agnes Sanford (1983) who wrote the highly popular *The Healing Light*. She with others developed the 'healing of memories' movement and has been accused of being 'mystical' and of having unorthodox views of God (Fletcher, 2005). Sanford's² views have been developed further by Ruth Stapleton Carter, Betty Tapscott, Dennis and Matthew Linn, and John and Paula Sandford (through *Elijah House Ministries*). The main features of Sanford's original ministry were the preference for experience over rationality, and the pragmatic view of truth (Fletcher, 2005: 150), features that appear to be dominant within TPM (Theophostic Prayer Ministry, 2006c: n. p.).

² Sandford's son was the well-known Jungian therapist, John (Jack) Sanford.

1. Main character of TPM: mind-renewal and truth:

Smith summarises theophostic prayer ministry as, 'intentional and focused prayer with the desired outcome of an authentic encounter with the presence of Christ, resulting in mind³ renewal and subsequent transformed life' (2005: 14). The presence of Jesus Christ is understood as the light of truth. TPM's 'mind renewal'⁴ (Smith, 2005: 24, 25) is brought about by meeting with the Truth, who is Christ, who offers *specific* truth to the individual as compared with general cognitive-rational truths known by the person about his situation. However, TPM does not denigrate the latter even regarding it as part of the mind-renewal process (Smith, 2005: 33-34).

Some might categorise it as a peculiarly Christian form of 'cognitive therapy' but that description is not altogether correct. Cognitive therapy works at replacing *unscientific* thoughts by *scientifically tested* ones.⁵ TPM is not interested in doing this. Contrariwise, although TPM espouses the idea that the untruths we believe produce negative mood and emotional states, TPM does not believe that our attempts to change these lies at the logical-rational or verbal levels will undo their effects. More especially, TPM is well aware that trying to change these lies using *general principles* of rationality or science is often futile. Additionally, the self-effort underlying such attempts masks an apostate independence from the Creator, which is also a prescription for failure. Hence, undoing these lies is understood as being accomplished only by willingly bringing the revealed lies to the light of the truth in Jesus Christ and receiving a personal word from the Lord that leads to *experiential change*.

³ According to Vine, mind *in this context* means 'counsel, purpose' (1969: 69). However, in the NT, 'mind' is often equivalent to the OT 'heart' denoting the centre core of the person. Smith does not appear to define what he means by 'mind' but see below.

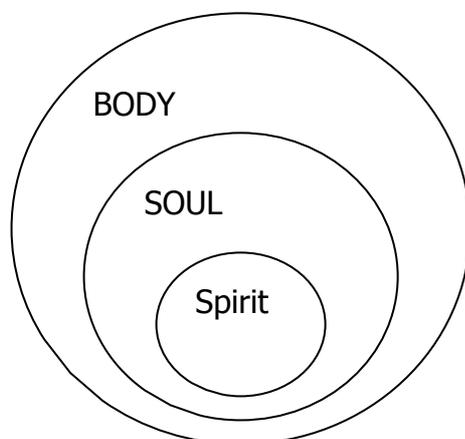
⁴ Allusion to Romans 12: 2 ('Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect' NRSV).

⁵ Or, irrational with rational self-talk.

2. TPM's anthropology

a) Distinctive trichotomy: Spirit, soul and body

Smith's views are governed by his acceptance of a distinctive⁶ trichotomous⁷ understanding of man. For Smith, humanity is spirit, soul and body, which are understood as existing hierarchically, with the spirit being most important, the soul next and the body last of all. When converted, the spirit is renewed completely by the putting on the righteousness of God but the soul (mind) remains the seat of lie-based thinking and the 'appetites' of the physical body are the means by which we are tempted to sin (Miller, 2005: 16). Lies plus appetites aroused and combined lead Christians into sin. According to Miller (2005: 16), a friendly critic, Smith believes that the Christian's spirit is the true self 'which perfectly reflects the moral nature of Christ'. In contrast, the mind holds all memories, particularly lie-based memories that require renewal for the 'perfect righteousness of [our] spirits' to 'shine forth' (Miller, 2005: 16).



b) Self-inflicted troubles and others-inflicted wounds

An assumption of TPM is a distinction made between 'self-inflicted' problems (sin) and 'others-inflicted wounds' (Smith, cited in Community Evangelical Free Church, 2007; Maier & Monroe, 2003). These two are dealt with

⁶ I say 'distinctive' because other views of trichotomy do not place some importance on the spirit as opposed to the soul.

⁷ A view famously espoused by Watchman Nee.

differently according to Smith (Maier & Monroe, 2003). The former requires the sacrificial blood of Christ. The latter is inhabited by a lie and hence requires the healing light of Jesus. Smith's main concern is for the latter.⁸

When those presently wounded have undergone trauma and other negative situations in life *for the first time as children*, they create false beliefs or develop incorrect perceptions in their critical moment such as 'nobody cares about me', which begin to cause them ongoing pain when triggered by events of a similar structure in later life.⁹ Why are children prone to create these false beliefs? Smith gives an interesting answer saying that it is *not* because of their corrupt heart *per se* (Smith, cited in Maier & Monroe, 2003: n. p.). Rather, children's immaturity, their proneness to believe the lies of others, and their dependence on others form the basis for the development of lies.

(i) Steps in the TPM process

Four steps are succinctly given under 'Principle Five' at Theophostic Prayer Ministry (2006d: n. p.): '(1) identifying the present emotional pain, (2) discovering the original memory container, (3) exposing the original lie(s) implanted in the memory container, (4) receiving truth from the Holy Spirit'. And another more critical voice summarised the process using Smith's earlier works perhaps thus: 'For true healing to take place, the person must re-enter the experience of the memory and embrace the lie before they ask God to speak into their experience' (Maier & Monroe, 2003: n. p.). However, both these formulations require our understanding that the lies that damage us

⁸ Some has made much of this distinction (Community Evangelical Free Church, 2007; Community Evangelical Free Church Staff, 2001) seemingly wanting to allow only the category of individual sin. However, the Scriptures clearly indicate that we can be sinned against (Matt 18: 15-22; Luke 17: 3); common sense also suggests that the process outlined in Matthew and Luke's gospels cannot be carried out by young children or with adults that are not Christians. Additionally, sin is not only individual but has a communal character (e. g., Luke 19: 41-44; 1 Cor 15: 21-22).

⁹ A classical psychodynamic explanation.

are lies that are experientially believed not just verbally or intellectually apprehended.

(ii) Illustration

The experience of a friend of mine whose mother had very recently died illustrates some of these features:

The Prayer Minister (PM) asked me how I was feeling. I told her that mum had just died and how guilty I now felt that I had not visited her more before her death. Then she asked me if I could remember the earliest memory I had of feeling that way with mum.

The PM can see the association between guilt surrounding mother and looks for a link between this present pain and some past creation of the association between guilt and mother.

My earliest memory of feeling this way was coming into the kitchen when I was a kid to find mum crying and when I asked her what was wrong, she said it was P's birthday -- my sibling who was killed in an accident at 4 -- and should have been here now. She kept on crying. The PM asked me how I felt and I remembered feeling that I didn't exist. That my mother just wanted him back and that she didn't see me. I told the PM that I felt I was all wrong and should have been a son to replace him.

What is the 'lie'?

I think she then asked me either, could I see Jesus in the picture or what did I think he would say about this. I realised that the whole feeling I had of guilt about not visiting her (because I had the cancer threat and then ended up having surgery which I had to recover from) was just more of the same old feeling that I wasn't what she really wanted or that I was not enough for her. I had the strong feeling that God did not see me this way.

'God did not see me this way!'

Then she prayed for me and after that whole experience, the crushing guilt [THE NUB OF THE PAIN] just went. I had normal sadness but not the

intense pain of feeling I was "wrong." The PM also hugged (held) me for a long time when I was crying afterwards, which was healing for someone like me.¹⁰

This short account allows us to identify the four parts of the process of TPM: the present emotional pain of guilt and shame; then finding the original 'memory container' in the kitchen scene; exposing the lie and then receiving the truth.

3. Responses to TPM

a) Opposition

A number of negative responses exist (Bobgan & Bobgan, 1999; Community Evangelical Free Church Staff, 2001; DeWaay, 2003, 2007; Fletcher, 2005; Furlong, 1999-2006; Maier & Monroe, 2003; Wilbur, 2003). The most extreme view among these is that of Bobgan and Bobgan (1999) who accuse TPM of 'psychoheresy'.¹¹ A less strident response is that of DeWaay (2003, 2007) who suggested the TPM is neither biblical nor scientific. However, though apparently weighty objections as these appear to be, neither are as substantial when examined critically.

(i) Not biblical

First, when DeWaay (and others) speak of 'biblical', he means 'to be found in the text of the Scriptures' as evidenced by his statement: '[t]he simple facts are these: the basic theories of Theophostic Ministry are not found in the Bible' (DeWaay, 2007: n. p.). DeWaay illustrates his contention by searching the Scriptures to see where the term (or an equivalent) for 'emotional pain' – a term used in TPM -- might be found! He could not even find the word 'emotional' even in the large number of bible versions he used. At this point, one might ask either, does that mean emotional as an adjective should not be used by Christians because we cannot find the word in our bibles or, does

¹⁰ The incident could also be explained in psychodynamic ways using Malan's triangle of conflict (see week 14's lecture in semester 1). The hidden feeling is anger with the mother for not accepting her. Defence is repression and anxiety is also experienced.

¹¹ However, they accuse any viewpoint of heresy if it combines the Christian faith with anything reminiscent of secular insight.

it rather mean that DeWaay's methodology is wrongheaded. I submit it is the latter. I would suggest that the bible does not set out to be a 21st century scientific psychology textbook. The scriptural Word is designed to make us 'wise unto salvation' (2 Tim 3: 15); in short, the bible is a redemptive book and treats all areas of life in terms of this unique focus.

By implication, DeWaay suggests that 'basic theories' for helping others with problems that evidence themselves in disordered emotional functioning should be found in the bible and if TPM's ideas are not found there then Christians should brand them as unbiblical. DeWaay's assumption is that biblical means explicitly mentioned therein whereas I would class 'biblical' as both explicit and implicit. For example, we have no *explicit* biblical warrant for using computers but as computers are a technological development of our time we have an implicit warrant to use them for good.

DeWaay and others operate with the often unstated, *extra*—biblical principle (!) that nothing outside the biblical text can be used in dealing with people's problems. To do so, according to DeWaay seems to invite the danger of being unbiblical. However, nowhere does Scripture (ironically) indicate that *only* Scriptural material readies us to be 'completely equipped unto every good work' (2 Tim 3: 16). The (OT) Scriptures¹² are *profitable*, good for a number of things but the idea of sufficiency, which DeWaay is implying, is not mentioned. His position ignores or fails to understand the implications of the general revelation of God in creation (e. g., Rom 1: 20; Ps 19; Isa 28: 23-29). For if God reveals his wisdom and instruction even in farming methods, which are said to 'come from the Lord' (Isa 28: 29) even those who do not believe in him will experience something of the truth. This reality is borne out in scripture by the fact that the Babylonian writings and

¹² In context, the 'all Scripture' in 2 Timothy 3: 16 refers in the first instance to the Old Testament scriptures but by extension the whole of the bible can be also involved. However, at the time of writing to Timothy, the oral tradition took the place of the written word.

the Hebrew wisdom writings have passages that were similar (Nitzan, 2006: n. p.). Furthermore, the Hebrews *borrowed* their wisdom proverbs from the Egyptians!¹³¹⁴

And, our commonsense bears witness to the fact that the ungodly do us good in many areas of our lives? Do not non-Christians provide us with many good things in terms of technology? Hence, by simple extension, my argument is that non-Christians also provide insights in theory formulation as well because we all exist in the common world that God has made and are not merely subject to our own phenomenological experience of unknown noumenon as the Kantian tradition would teach. Of course, those theories will be rooted in non-Christian understandings. We must not forget that. We must be careful not to allow ourselves to be shaped by the rudiments of worldly wisdom (1 Cor 1: 18-24; 3: 18-23). But, closing our eyes to what God has provided in the work of other human creatures is arrogant. We need to be discerning but we also need to do that in a spirit of meekness and humility knowing that we too are in solidarity with fallen humanity.¹⁵

We should simply fall back into a simple Biblicism as if the mere reliance on bible texts was the way to ensure absolute truth. This supposed assured procedure is also fraught with serious problems all of which can involve us, like the Pharisees, in grave error. First, we must make choices as to which scriptures or emphases we will use? Second, when these scriptures or themes are *applied*, we are open like everyone else to the possibility of error. Third, even the Scriptures themselves show us that Scripture itself is not sufficient to answer even the major problems of life! Observe how the church sought to deal with the contentious issue recorded in Acts 15 as to

¹³ According to von Rad (1972: 9) 'a whole passage from the wisdom book of Amenemope [was] taken over almost word for word into the biblical book of Proverbs (Prov. 22.17-23.11)'.

¹⁴ I would want to say along with others that these wisdom passages are placed within a wholly different religious context from those in Egypt or Israel's neighbours.

¹⁵ By this expedient they attempt to place their brand of practice on a level of godly obedience beyond that of others.

whether new Gentile converts should be circumcised and be commanded to keep the Law. Holy Scripture was clear on this matter but the apostles decided to do something different relying on the sign that the Holy Spirit was given to the uncircumcised. They relied on the experience of the apostles Paul and Barnabas. They did not require Gentiles to be circumcised even while binding them to keep four rules (only two of which survive today!)

The Bobgans make much of the need to rely on the Scriptures and the direction of the Holy Spirit. And, with this rubric, I could not agree more. However, the Scriptures themselves point the Church towards the revelatory creation ('his eternal power and godhead' (Rom 1: 20)), towards the wisdom, word and Spirit that are integrally bound up with its functioning and with humankind's as well, all of which points towards the eschaton or End.

(ii) Not scientific

DeWaay also charges TPM with 'not being proved by careful, scientific research' (2007: n. p.). Putting aside DeWaay's elementary gaffe in stating that science proves¹⁶ anything, the question of supporting any procedure such as TPM with scientific evidence is formidable. Even well-known psychological therapies find it hard to summon scientific evidence to support their 'effectiveness': the usual way of operationalising the efficacy of a therapy (Jones & Butman, 1991: 34-35). Many rely on anecdotal evidence, which is not to be dismissed but can be accepted alongside systematic, scientific evaluation. However, Garzon (2004) and the TPM has also published some outcome research summaries of further work done by Garzon (Theophostic Prayer Ministry, 2006a: n. p.), which indicate promising results for the scientific examination of TPM.

¹⁶ Science does not set out to prove anything: science seeks to confirm or not confirm, to support or not support particular hypotheses.

DeWaay argues that he has never charged that TPM does not work only that it is unbiblical. However, he clearly alleges that TPM is also unscientific but seems to forget that scientific evidence will be collected on the basis of the *experience* of those affected by TPM. He cannot have it both ways. He cannot allege that TPM is unscientific but also reject the experience of those involved in TPM because such experience will be the basis for the scientists.

b) Panacea?

Smith, in his earlier works, proclaims TPM as a panacea. While I also judge that the Bobgans' criticisms of Smith's TPM are hysterical and unbalanced proceeding from a position that has tried, judged and executed Smith because, in their opinion, he is involved in *psychoheresy*, defined as combining 'God's Word' and 'psychology' (Psychoheresy Awareness Ministries, n. d.). Hence, Smith has no chance of being commended by the Bobgans because he has been rejected before his work has been read. However, Smith does present TPM in an overly positive and triumphalistic context (Bobgan & Bobgan, 1999: 13-31) in his earlier work. Nevertheless, this earlier spirit of regarding TPM as a panacea for all human problems has been recanted and revised with time (Miller, 2005; Smith, 2005: 21).

c) Guaranteed results?

TPM may run the risk of imagining itself to be infallible. After all, if the power of the Spirit of Christ is being invoked and the Spirit is being asked to speak into the life of the wounded person it may appear that a positive outcome is guaranteed. However, Miller (2005: 12) pointed out that in his careful evaluation and observation of TPM training that it is not an 'infallible process. Miller (2005: 13) observed after first-hand examination of TPM training, 'sessions wherein the recipients reported answers from Christ that seemed quite credible and others wherein the answers seemed quite dubious'. However, the TPM work of Lehman and Lehman (2006: 1-3) has outlined the need for careful discernment of the answers the wounded

person receives; they reported that the TPM training with Smith made them aware of this need for discrimination (Lehman & Lehman, 2006: 2).

4. Some foundational problems with TPM

The problems mentioned are not so much problems as to method but as to philosophy and theology. They encompass evidences of an unorthodox anthropology which leads to an unorthodox view of sin implying classical nature-grace thinking. I would emphasise that these are not the only problems that TPM evidences.¹⁷ But, probably none of these issues need affect the actual conduct of this ministry *if some important revisions were carried out.*

a) Difficulties with trichotomous anthropology

TPM rests part of its credibility on its belief that the trichotomous view of humanity is biblical and therefore grants to TPM some of its legitimacy. However, I believe that it is not necessary or even desirable for a Christian view of the person to be garnered from fragments of scripture. So, whether trichotomy is biblical or not is not especially relevant for me.

(i) Two major texts

However, even allowing that consideration, the trichotomous view of the person is highly speculative and hardly conforms to even a superficial reading of scripture. For example, if we allow that trichotomy finds its strongest support in First Thessalonians (5: 23) (because only there are three terms mentioned) then will we also allow that quadchotomy is supported by the injunction to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength (where incidentally soul and mind appear to be distinguished) (Mk 12: 30; Lk

¹⁷ TPM's views re Satanic Ritual Abuse and Dissociation are also areas that require examination, which is beyond the scope of this introductory paper. Miller, in a careful evaluation says, '[w]e caution Christians who practice or receive TPM to be discerning about Smith's teachings on the sin nature, sanctification, and satanic ritual abuse' (2005: 28).

10: 27). The other text that trichotomist use (Genesis 2: 7) hardly supports trichotomy as it is understood above; the text advances the *Hebraic* understanding that humans are animated bodies of 'dust' (Bratcher, 2006: n. p.).

(ii) Hebraic understandings of soul, spirit, breath

According to Genesis (2: 7), the breath (or spirit) of life is breathed into the 'dust-man' and he became a living, animated soul, being or person (*nephesh*, the Hebrew for 'soul'). We do not have three parts according to this presentation. 'Soul' is the whole person: a *living* soul because of the breath of life. But, the breath of life is not a thing or a part of the person. The breath is simply the breath and when it ceases we have a dead soul (e. g., Num 19: 13, where 'dead body' translates 'dead *nephesh*' that is, dead soul)! Even animals have *nephesh* or souls (life) (Genesis 1: 20, 21, 24, 30; Prov 12: 10) and in so saying *nephesh* and *ruach* (spirit, breath) converge. Nor does the apparent dividing of spirit and soul in *Hebrews* (4: 12) strengthen the trichotomy position much because three parts of humanness are not even mentioned. Even if one decides from this text that spirit and soul are different, the text does not teach that the spirit is superior to the soul. However, in any case, the point of the Hebrews' text is hardly to teach us the makeup of humanity (soul, spirit, joints, marrow) but rather to affirm the penetrating power of the Word of God.

Smith claims that the spirit is perfect following conversion but then what do we make of St Paul's words to Christians 'to cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and *spirit*' (2 Cor 7: 1, emphasis mine)? Also, if sin occurs because of the combination of lie-based thinking in the soul-mind and the appetites of the body, why did Jesus say, 'For out of the heart [not the mind] come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander' (Matt 15: 16)? These questions show the Hebraic anthropology, which is transferred into the NT, employs terms that are best

not circumscribed by rigid definition. The person tends to be always understood as an individual, that is, whole and without parts (Stricker, 1991: n. p.). Bratcher comments helpfully that the English words 'spirit' and 'soul' now have a range of accumulated meanings from centuries of use that the Hebrew words simply did not have (2006: n. p.). 'Spirit' meant simply breath or wind. Soul (Hebrew, *nephesh*) has a range of meanings in Scripture, including 'person' but also 'hunger, appetite, throat, or even dead corpse' none of which equal its usual meaning in English!

b) Nature-grace dualism

Smith, in agreement with many Christians, appears to adopt a *nature-grace*¹⁸ dualism.¹⁹ I say 'appears' because I have not as yet found clear evidence of his acceptance of this dualism except in one testimony on his website (Theophostic Prayer Ministry, 2006b: n. p.) and a comment made by Maier and Monroe (2003: endnote 65). In the former the 'Western worldview (it isn't real unless you can see, touch, taste, smell, hear it)' is contrasted with the 'Biblical worldview' of a 'supernatural reality beyond our senses' (Theophostic Prayer Ministry, 2006b). This so-called 'Biblical worldview' is a reduction of the bible's message, which is that all things seen and unseen are created and sustained by God. Of course, realities exist beyond the senses but that teaching is believed by many outside the Christian faith. Even pagan belief holds to that. What is distinctive about the Christian faith in this area is that God is involved with the seen as well as the unseen, the ordinary as well as the extraordinary. Jesus, in fact, criticised those who

¹⁸ 'Nature' can be understood as the domain of life that does not require revelation or divine intervention. 'Grace' is the domain of the activity of God. Much less problem occurs when these are denominated as creation and redemption.

¹⁹ Smith's appears to follow the medieval (800 AD – 1400 AD) church's accommodation of the Greek dualism of form/matter with the Christian nondualist ground-motive or basic driving force of creation-fall-redemption. Form/matter became conflated with fallen creation to equal 'nature' and redemption was understood as 'grace', which adds something onto nature. For nature-grace thinking, 'nature' [creation] is understood to be semi-autonomous ruled over by 'grace'. When 'nature' (e. g., Galileo's science) fails to confirm to the dogma of the Church then 'grace' operates to correct it. This thinking also understands the action of God in terms of his supernatural intervention into a 'natural realm'.

were always looking for 'signs' (e. g., Matt 12: 38-40; Jn 4: 46-54) and not looking for ordinary, uneventful but life-changing truth, which was found in following him in obedience (e. g., Matt 12: 50).

However, this dualism also evidences itself in two other ways: first, in his post-conversion anthropology above where the spirit, is considered beyond the reach of fallen 'nature', and second, in his 'supernaturalism'. With regard to the latter, I am assuming that Smith believes that the work done in TPM is 'supernatural' and that therefore he operates within a natural/supernatural schema.²⁰

However, the natural/supernatural division assumes a self-enclosed, independent nature that is occasionally visited by the supernatural power of God in miracles and extraordinary wonders. The problem with such an understanding is that the 'natural' is assumed to function almost without the involvement of God (whereas, we wrongly believe that the 'supernatural' is where we really see God at work).

But, the natural, or creation only continues to exist and function because of the daily upholding power of God (e. g., Ps 95: 4-5; Ps 104; Col 1: 15; Heb 1: 3). Without that superintendence, creation would fall into nothingness. Only God is supernatural or better uncreated. Satan is not supernatural nor is any of the angels. These being are all created. When we experience something that is 'supernatural', we are experiencing something that is completely natural or creational, which is fallen, being renewed. Sometimes that happens in a quickened, intense way, an extraordinary way; other times, more slowly. But, all good healing is divine healing, is God redemptively dealing with his stricken, fallen creation nursing it back to better health through the restorative arms of the Son and the Spirit.

²⁰ By the way, I do believe in miracles and in the extraordinary! But, I don't understand the extraordinary within a natural/supervision dualism.

I do not dispute the testimonies of what people have experienced through TPM or their extraordinary experiences. Not at all! What I do dispute is our tendency to call such things 'supernatural'. Extraordinary things happen but that is no reason to divide the creation into two levels of meaning: independent nature that runs on cause-and-effect and supernature, which intrudes into those cause-and-effect links.

The scriptures do not use the word 'supernatural' but the words, 'signs' or 'miracles' for those actions of God, which are extraordinary. Nothing is wrong with the ordinary; observe that God reveals himself to humanity in the ordinary, the heavens (Ps 19: 1). God is still working within the ordinary but less often he works in an extraordinary way that we behold with wonder.

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