

Position Paper#3: Process of Change, Sanctification, Role of the Holy Spirit, and Clinical Skills

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Sanctification according to Apostle Paul's writing to the Ephesians church illustrates the mystery of God's grace upon to mankind, Ephesian 2:8-10, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of own; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Clinton, 2001)." Reflecting on Apostle Paul's statement shows the perfectness of God, and mankind sinful nature, God does not require us to be perfect for us to be accepted as his own. Therefore, sanctification is not a noun or a verb but an adjective describing the evidence of God's marvelous gift, sending his only son to the cross to died for my sins, Christ's blood shed on Calvary, a man without sin, yet human and being God made the ultimate exchange and experience humanity perfectly, surrendering to a painful death and resurrected, so that one day we shall be made perfect when He returns.

The question can be asked, how does one experience the feeling of sanctification, according to Kilian & Parker, (2001), viewpoint from their analyzation of Wesley's doctrine, "it is the result of lifestyle transformation guided by the Holy Spirit, once an individual has accepted Jesus Christ as their savior and enters into a special relationship with God." There is a life transformation revolutionizing personal character, thoughts and actions guided by the Holy Spirit into submission to God's plan. Daily evidence manifestation is seen in interpersonal relationships, personal and professional demonstration of compassion to the poor and the weak. Another aspect of sanctification is living a life that is well integrated or having a wholesome life. Wong, (2022) describe "wholesome life as the process of reconstructing one's life, thriving for, or seeking to finding purpose, life balance, and coherence in a destabilizing world, transitioning from brokenness to wholeness." This experience of sanctification a spiritual process of

developing a special relationship with God, seeking to know him better and obeying his commandments, illustrate similarity in psychotherapy when the client enters counseling seeking to achieve wholesome understanding of self and desire to be emotionally stable (Wong, 2022).

The integrating theology and psychology theory and practice requires mindfulness of counselors theological and cultural background to maintain a healthy ethical position avoiding biases for secular and Christian clientele. According to (Oden, 1994 as cited in Kilian & Parker (2001) “there are difference in the fundamental teaching amongst Evangelical Christians which have been divided into three groups; reformed group consisting of Protestant /Reformed, Lutheran, and Baptist churches, Liturgical group consisting of Anglican (Episcopal in the US), Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches and Pietistic group consisting of Wesleyan evangelicals, Holiness, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches (Kilian & Parker (2001).” Each group having their own worldview increases implications for clinician’s practice and requires self-awareness and competency on integrating theology and psychology in clinical practice to facilitate change within client’s life. In addition to Christianity, there are many religions globally approximately 4000, the most prominent Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism, is it possible to have religious competency and does all academia provides formal religious education to counselling students?

Competent religious sensitive counseling requires as a counselors I must have an in-depth understanding of the client’s religion and to respect their religious worldview. Facilitating change begins first with me the counselor, ensuring therapeutic alliance, I must increase religious learning to gain understanding and show genuine acceptance without bias or any form of judgements (Wong, 2022). This is an example of sanctification, loving God with all my heart and soul and loving my neighbor as myself, Matthew 22: 37-38 (Clinton, 2001). Religion

certainly can help in facilitating positive change during the counseling process. To apply religious sensitivity counseling that is ethical and competent, all Mental Health Counselors must display the proper knowledge and respect. It is imperative to demonstrate a certain degree of critical self-reflection in one's own religion and culture influences, behaviors, and assumptions. In reflecting on the role of the Holy Spirit, my clinical skills and my desire to assist my clients facilitate change, there are valuable questions I must inquire of my heart and seek to be in congruence with the Holy Spirit to be an effective and competent counselor.

Corey (n.d.) discussed in VISTAS online article, "that religion, faith and spirituality is most valuable and authentic source to bring peace to become fully human enabling us to become in touch with clear thinking, feeling decision making." The power of the Holy Spirit can create emotional homeostasis, clarity of the mind, thoughts, and action, liberating the soul and bring oneself to full awareness, rebirth and guiding human hearts with compassion for another, it is the Father, Son & Holy Spirit, the Triune, Creator of the universe, giving the gift of peace when we have opened our hearts. My full awareness, trust and understanding of God's omniscient, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence can do all things in me and through me.

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