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Position Paper 3

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Through the Holy Spirit we are given the opportunity to change. As counselors, we encounter numerous clients who come searching for help in their mission to change their behaviors or who are mandated to change due to their circumstances. In our career and as Christians, we can encourage our clients in their walk.

In Bird's text she states, "God's Spirit, as given through Jesus, plunges us into a river of blessing; he gives life, saves and sanctifies, unites believers with Jesus and with each other, and equips and empowers them to be a spiritual people ready for earthly labor as much as eternal life" (Bird, 2016). Throughout our lives, we have the opportunity to encounter common grace from the Lord and as believers, we attempt to be sanctified through the Holy Spirit. Through this desire we work towards avoiding sin and confessing our sins. As counselors, we bestow our knowledge and training on our clients in order to reflect on how certain behaviors lead to certain results, how we can offer grace and how we can teach our clients to offer themselves grace.

Growing up in a Haitian Pentecostal church, my experience of the Holy Spirit was a "spirit" that would take hold of a person during service and cause them to shout or speak in tongues. During service, I would be told that we must be baptized by the Holy Spirit and that it was a goal to be reached or that the Spirit was "moving in this place." We were also taught that the Holy Spirit moves through our lives as a guide and comforter. In McMartin's text, he declares that the work of the Holy Spirit is seen as quick and sudden, whereas the work of psychological growth is measured and slow. He also mentions how psychological growth encounters pauses or setbacks. At times we may believe that we will pray to the Holy Spirit that a task be taken and that right away things will change. However, in terms of psychological growth, certain steps must be taken so that we can reach a set of goals. For example, a client who comes in for help with setting boundaries with a family member can pray to God that their

family respects their wishes and visits at approved times. However, this doesn't mean that the family will stop visiting unannounced. Certain steps that can be taken can include the client not opening the door when they stop by unannounced or continually vocalizing their boundaries and removing themselves from spaces where their boundaries are not respected.

McMartin then goes on to state, "The Holy Spirit is believed only to have an impact on the application of saving grace through the atonement of Jesus Christ in regeneration and sanctification: (McMartin, 2015). As Christians we are taught that we are redeemed through Christ. He explains that "Redemption is a distinct act of God in a creation that has fallen away from God, not something that the world can generate on its own" (McMartin, 2015). We are given the ability to change but have to want to change. The decision to come to therapy and work with the counselor in order to be free of certain cycles and habits is something we face everyday as potential counselors. In terms of the clinical skills in facilitating change, we teach our clients to reframe their behaviors, create goals, address cycles, address strengths and weaknesses, get out of their comfort zone, push themselves past their limits, advocate for them, teach them to advocate for themselves and so on and so forth.

In her text Bird explains that, "The Holy Spirit is said to be another paraklētos who continues the ministry of Jesus" (Bird, 2016). In the past I've heard the Holy Spirit to be a helper and an advocate for us. As we work with our clients and advocate on their behalf, the Holy Spirit helps us to offer support and grace. McMartin agrees with Bird's sentiment in that the Holy Spirit completed the work that was begun during creation and works contrary to sin of the world. Kim Van Daalen states, "The Holy Spirit may use psychotherapy as an aspect of God's grace to serve believers in exploring and even understanding areas that are not described in Scripture, such as the importance of early childhood experiences. This may help people understand some of

the reasons for their behavior, relationship patterns, and thinking processes"(Kim Van Daalen, 2015). Kim Van Daalen explains that through the Holy Spirit Christians seek to change their behaviors and way of thinking in order to lead a better life. This does not mean that their whole world is changed or that we are here to push our beliefs. This means that we can help understand what they encountered and work on how to make things different.

Bird states, "The Spirit not only reveals things but also ensures the effectiveness of the revelation itself" (Bird 2015). I've always heard of things being "revealed" to believers in dreams, prayer and spending time with the Holy Spirit. As counselors, we help our clients "reveal" aspects about themselves through introspection and digging deeper into what brought them to our office or zoom. We work with them to understand why they do what they do and how it affects them and the ones they care about. Bird declares, "What the gospel promises, the Holy Spirit actualizes: life, love, joy, and peace. In our spiritual life, the Spirit speaks, leads, helps, witnesses, and even inhibits where necessary" (Bird, 2015). I want my clients to live happy and healthy lives. I acknowledge that not everything I want for my clients will necessarily happen or be what they themselves want. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit works to help believers and advocate and heal those who connect. Through common grace, some clients can experience the grace that they might not have experienced.

In order to change, we need to be intentional about actions and honest about our strengths and weaknesses. As counselors, we provide support to our clients in order to help them reach their goals and become a part of their community. Kim Van Daalen says, "The fact that secular people have turned away from God and do not submit to his design and goal for human life leads them to interpret the world differently" (Kim Van Daalen, 2015). Although we attend a Christian university and come from a Christian background, we will be counseling in the secular world and

have to acknowledge that most times our clients will not come to session expecting to be taught how to let the Holy Spirit lead their lives. They may come to us with goals for the future, past trauma, issues in their marriage, running away from abuse, etc. Whatever their presenting concerns, we can help them change aspects of their life.

References

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