

## A STUDY OF JAMES E. LODER ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN RELATION TO CHURCH MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

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### INTRODUCTION

While our Lord Jesus Christ was ministering in this world, He was concerned about teaching and preaching the way of God, which are related to cognitive development. Just as He grew in wisdom, that is, in cognitive aspect, so He wanted His people to be developed in the same aspect. "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people (Matt. 4:23, NIV)."

What we should notice is that not only did He care for the intellectual sphere, but also for the physical, social and moral, which are deeply related to the spiritual. He never separated the spiritual from the others:

News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them (Matt. 4:24, NIV).

The world in which we live and minister is highly developed, technologically and medically. But many people are suffering from various illnesses, resulting from physical, intellectual, emotional, social and moral distortion. For all the sophisticated medical treatment in this computerized, scientific world; we can easily see many "cyber magicians" working on the Internet. When we surf on the Internet, for example, if we type 'magician' on the Yahoo, we can find 626,000 results with the name of 'magician.' This fact clearly shows science cannot solve the fundamental problems of human beings in this postmodern world.

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Our loving God really wants his people to be holistic and healthy. He loves and wants them to be healed from their sicknesses, caused by physical, emotional, social and moral failure:

He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you." (Exodus 15:26)

However, a famous Anglican Benedictine nun Raphael confessed:

Several years ago, for example, a schoolgirl who took her religion very seriously after her confirmation in the Church of England remarked: 'Christ commanded us to preach the Gospel and heal the sick; I do not see the sick being healed', and she left the Church to become a Christian Scientist. This is no isolated instance, and challenges us to examine how far the Church is fulfilling her healing ministry today, and what still remains to be done (Frost 1985, 1).

This is, however, not only the sad story of the Church of England, but also the regrettable story of many Korean churches. Though the whole world cries out for help, the church seems to have no power or will to help them.

If we are to call ourselves the servants of God, church ministry leadership must hear the cries of the suffering and have compassion on the sick. We must know that sickness may come from not only physical diseases or accidents but also emotional hurts of their past and spiritual separation caused by personal sin.

Therefore, this article seeks to apply the human development theory of James E. Loder to spiritual development, which is not an aspect but the essence of who and what we are (Downs, lecture notes of 2002). In so doing, the writer will discuss the ideas of Loder, who has experienced the miraculous healing power of the Spirit. Thus the purpose of this article is to scrutinize the peculiarity of spiritual development from the Loder's study and to relate the characteristics to church ministry leadership, especially for healing and counseling ministry.

In order to achieve the purpose, the writer will first briefly explore the deep and broad thoughts of Loder, which are an integration of theology and psychology, exploring human development from a theological perspective (Downs, 1). Second, to explicate spiritual development, the theory of Loder will be explained in human development will be compared to with the developmental theories, such as those of Piaget, Erickson and Kohlberg. Lastly, the writer will seek

to apply his approach to church ministry leadership, especially to healing ministry, in which counseling ministry is included.

### AN INTEGRATION OF THEOLOGY AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT WITH THE THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF LODER

In this section, the writer will explore the thoughts of Loder, which integrate theology and psychology on human development.

#### The Relationship Between the Holy Spirit and the Human Spirit

The primary concern of Loder is the study of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. In the preface of the second edition of *The Transforming Moment*, he writes:

The first and uppermost concern is to understand the relationship between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit in a way that takes account of the human sciences (particularly psychology in the developmental and psychoanalytic traditions) as well the theology of the Holy Spirit (particularly in the Reformed theological tradition) (Loder 1989, vii).

In fact, the aim of the book is to describe a patterned process which characterizes the nature of the human spirit and the work of the Holy Spirit in human experience (Loder 1989, 1).

On the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit, exploring two introductory themes, which are the history of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the rise of modern science, Loder again states:

First, the struggle of the human spirit to grasp the ultimate intelligibility of the universe in modern science and to grasp the ground of that intelligibility in the inner nature of God, unites these themes on the topic of "spirit." Second, despite many significant and lasting successes in both these themes, the human spirit has failed to retain its integrity as spirit and the result has been a collapse into dualism in potential resolution through the recovery of an integrity of "spirit," we have the two key topics upon which the major themes of this chapter converge (Loder 1992, 20).

Showing how a theological perspective enlarges our understanding of human development from birth to healthy adulthood, he titled his book, *The Logic of the Spirit*. In the book, he uses the developmental process (the human spirit) and theological inquiry as frameworks to understand spiritual development. He contends:

In a word, approaching the study of human nature through an understanding of the human spirit in the context of a Christian theology of the Holy Spirit promises to move current understandings available through the human sciences toward a postmodern world. . . . However, the larger aim of my inquiry is to demonstrate the overall context that a Christian theology of the Spirit provides for the study of human nature, and especially for issues of purpose and meaning implicit in and often insufficiently articulated through the facts and theories of human development (Loder 1998, xiii).

From this, one can apply his ideas to church ministry, especially in healing, in that the wholeness and health of human development can be achieved only when the human spirit and the Holy Spirit meet.

### The Peculiarity of Spiritual Development

To Loder, spiritual development is not one of the aspects of human development, but the core essence of human development. Loder explains the special characteristics of spiritual development as follows.

First, he contends that spiritual development is different from the ordinary life span, where the immediate aim is always the creation of adaptational worlds without any clarity about purpose or ultimate meaning (Loder 1998, 66).

Second, the human spirit is in fact the center of human development, as Loder says, "To understand the human spirit is to gain entry to the central driving force in human development that separates humanity from the rest of nature." (Loder 1998, 4) This peculiarity forces church leadership to recognize the importance and considerations of what we are doing in church ministry. Spiritual development is the integration of human development, therefore with the things from above, the things below also must be considered.

Third, the purpose or ultimate meaning of life must come from beyond the human spirit. The human spirit needs the One who is beyond itself. Using the image of the Mobius Band, he explains why the human spirit is inevitably related with the Holy Spirit. He adds:

The logic of the human spirit will always point beyond itself, but by itself it has not ultimate ground for itself as spirit without reducing spirit to one of its products, a work of art or a scientific advancement. The spirit qua spirit has no way to be nourished, deepened, healed, or given purpose; the danger is that the human spirit will be reduced to what it can produce and become consumed by its results. So, what is called for is One who is infinitely conscious, intelligent, and intentionally creative, whose very presence brings order out of chaos and continually restores the spirit to itself as spirit. That is what is needed (Loder 1998, 10).

Here again, we can get the idea that the human spirit is ‘nourished, deepened, healed, or given purpose’ only when it is with the One.

Fourth, therefore, spiritual development is not an aspect of human development, but is the center of who and what human beings are. Human development can be seen in several interwoven aspects, physical, cognitive, affective, social and moral. For each aspect, research has been made by Piaget, Erickson and Kohlberg. Then what about the spiritual aspect? Loder thinks that spiritual development is not an aspect, but is the center of all human development. He states:

Ego development (Erikson, Piaget, Kohlberg, etc.) may be seen as circumambulation around the center, the Absolute Unity of being, but left to itself ego development is inextricably rooted in negation and eventual death. Spiritual development consists in increased access between the ego and the Divine center, not in ego development per se (Loder 1992, 284).

This means that he insists that all the aspects of human development should interplay toward and for spiritual development. It means that only when the Holy Spirit intervenes with the human spirit, does the human development become healthy and whole.

In short, Loder integrates theology and psychology in exploring human development in theological perspective. He concludes:

Second, it seems evident that *the development of the ego* and all its various competencies (for example, language, intelligence, moral judgment) *unfolds along a different axis from that of spiritual development*. The two axes of development may intersect and complement each other, but they diverge preeminently as to primary aim. The ego’s aim is adaptation to its physical, social, and cultural environment so as to maximize satisfaction and ensure survival (Loder 1998, 72).

Therefore, we can conclude that the spiritual development is the center of all human development and it is necessary for people to “be satisfied by the Spiritual Presence of Christ, the Face of God” in order to have the answer to their basic questions (Loder 1998, 341).

## THE METHODOLOGY OF LODER COMPARED WITH OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES

In this section, the writer will examine Loder’s methodology. His theory of human development will be compared with other developmental theories, such as those of Piaget, Erickson, and Kohlberg.

### The Methodology of Loder

Loder presents an approach to studying the human spirit which strives to understand the relationships between human development and theology. Thus, his methodology is to relate the two entities.

One of the examples can be seen from the ministry of Jesus. When a paralytic was carried by four, Jesus said, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). In this case, Jesus demonstrated that he has the power to forgive sins by healing the paralytic (Loder 1998, 38). This is the relationship between human healing and theology. Loder continues:

Healing and forgiveness are seen to occur in a differentiated unity. They occur together (unity), but each remains distinct (differentiation), and the divine power to forgive sins is understood as logically and ontologically prior to and independent of the act of healing (asymmetrical order). The two notions of healing and forgiveness are so ordered that forgiveness is free and unconditioned, but healing is seen as existing in the service of Jesus' power to forgive sins. ... The far-reaching methodological implications of this approach centers on the relational unity itself. If we recall the *analogia spiritus*, then it is evident that in the interdisciplinary relationship between theology and the human sciences, we are seeking the present and manifest unity of Christ's Person in whatever issue may be at stake. (Loder 1998, 38-39)

The methodological process of Loder is phenomenon (experience), understanding (social sciences), reflection (theology) and judgment (decision) (Downs notes, 1).

Three critical points regarding the methodology are: (1) the necessity of transformation of human science in order to accept theological concerns; (2) the divine and human togetherness in Christ; and (3) the divine exercising logical and ontological priority over the human. These points again give the probability of applying Loder's approach to church ministry leadership in healing ministry. Loder states:

First, the natural or human science involved must undergo a transformation whereby its limitations and implicit rejection of theological concerns must be negated in order that its positive findings can be appropriated by cognate theological themes in the bipolar unity that is the essential shape of this method. Second, this bipolar unity is definitively set forth in Chalcedonian formulation of the person of Jesus Christ. . . . Third, the essential character of this bipolar relational unity is described . . . as an "indissoluble differentiation," "inseparable unity," and "indestructible order." The last of these three essential characteristics

of the Chalcedonian understanding refers to the asymmetry that pertains between the divine and the human in Christ, with the divine and the human in Christ, with the divine exercising logical and ontological priority over the human (Loder 1998, 37).

### Comparison of Loder with the Other Developmental Theories in Human Development

In understanding human development, Loder contends that two classical doctrines must be considered regardless of the age. He writes,

The two classical doctrines central to any discussion of theological anthropology are the image of God, or human likeness to God, and original sin, or human distance from God. These are not topics for just one phase, but for the whole life span; each stage of development influences and illuminates the human meaning of the doctrines even as the doctrines provide theological dimension to the stages, separately and as a whole (Loder 1998, 109).

Using classic Freud, Erickson and Piaget categories, he shows the importance of the first years as the time when the human spirit drives us to interact with and understand our environment. The human spirit, he contends, quests for identity, and finds its identity, not just in human experiences, but in the *face of God* (Downs, notes, 2). Here Loder differs from the rest of the human developmental theories. The theological perspective is deeply rooted in his developmental theory in his essential questions of “purpose and meaning of life.”

For the period of ego formation and identity, Loder uses the categories of Freud and Erikson to explore human development, including Piaget and Kohlberg. Loder, however, critiques Kohlberg. Downs summarizes:

He also engages Piaget and Kohlberg, critiquing Kohlberg for his failure to address the question of **why** a person should seek to be moral. Kohlberg explains the process of the development of moral judgment, but never clearly explains the motive for morality. Such is the poverty of exploring development devoid of theological perspective. It is Loder’s contention that the dynamic of the human spirit must also be considered, and God’s engagement with us through His Spirit is the missing piece in the normal equations of human development (Downs notes, 2-3).

Loder differs from the other human development theorists in terms of theological perspective in expounding “the motive for morality.” That is, he alone emphasizes the “purpose and meaning of life.”

## THE PROBABILITY OF APPLYING LODER'S APPROACH TO THE CHURCH HEALING MINISTRY

Having explored the characteristics of Loder's theory of human development, it is time to relate it to church ministry leadership. Loder used his theory effectively in his counseling and healing ministry. This writer will seek the application the theory in healing ministry.

Mentioning the centrality of spiritual development for health, Maddocks, while summarizing the idea of Carl Jung, states:

It was Carl Jung, perhaps the greatest mind in this century, whose researches led him to find that there is a purposeful center of reality with which man needs to be in conscious contact for his full health. Man is seldom in sound physical and mental health unless he can find some way to relate to this center of being whom he calls God. Man's very life requires for its full health acknowledgement of God and his direct influence on the world (Maddocks 1990, 5).

From Jung, we learn the fact that sickness and healing are closely related to one's relationship with God. Evidence for such an idea comes from Mark 2:5. Loder also proves the relationship between healing and "a purposeful center of reality." He states:

The logic of the human spirit will always point beyond itself, but by itself it has not ultimate ground for itself as spirit without reducing spirit to one of its products, a work of art or a scientific advancement. The spirit qua spirit has no way to be nourished, deepened, healed, or given purpose; the danger is that the human spirit will be reduced to what it can produce and become consumed by its results. So, what is called for is One who is infinitely conscious, intelligent, and intentionally creative, whose very presence brings order out of chaos and continually restores the spirit to itself as spirit. That is what is needed (Loder 1998, 10).

Here is what church leadership should accomplish in ministry. Not all ministries and activities of the church ministry should be focused on relating the human spirit and the Holy Spirit. God's people, however, are 'nourished, deepened, healed, or given purpose' only when it is with the One (Loder 1998, 10).

Therefore, first, the writer can conclude from the human development theory of Loder that the primary ministry of church must be to pay more attention to relate human spirit and the Holy Spirit. Second, in teaching and preaching, especially in counseling ministry, one must pray and organize that the Holy Spirit be with the sick people and their spirit wish to meet the One who can cure and make us whole in body, soul and spirit. Such wholeness can come only by contact with the reality of God. Maddocks again states:



Such wholeness may be experienced in real religion which enables man to be touched by the reality of God. It is this experience which can weld man into a whole, can integrate him, and give his life meaning. As Morton Kelsey remarks 'In the last analysis, real health of body and mind depends upon one's religious life', though I would add that such a life must, like the universe, the creation of our Creator, be a constantly expanding and enlarging experience (Maddocks 1990, 5).

Third, church leadership must not separate spiritual development from other developments. Physical illness and moral failures are closely related with spiritual ones. Fourth, regarding physical and moral illness, church leadership must take divine intervention seriously. Fifth, church leadership must guide the people to find out the purpose and meaning of life, and to experience God.

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