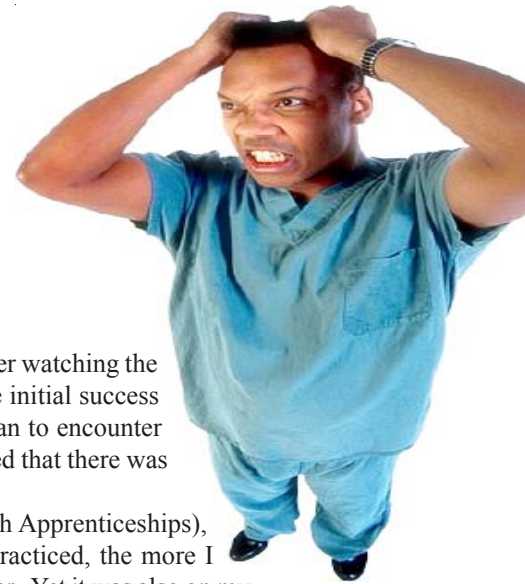


# Moving Beyond the Learning Curve in Theophostic Ministry!



I discovered that there was still much to learn about doing Theophostic Ministry even after watching the video series and reading the big green seminar manual. This is not to say that I didn't have initial success right after going through Basic Training, because I did. However, as I kept using it, I began to encounter issues and situations that tried my faith and tested my own inner world of belief. I discovered that there was an experiential "learning curve" in becoming an effective Theophostic minister.

My first wave of defense was to pursue further training (the Advanced Seminar and both Apprenticeships), and as a result I began to see greater fruitfulness in ministering to others. The more I practiced, the more I experienced doing the ministry, the more the principles began to make sense and come together. Yet it was also on my course of experiential learning that some of the greatest frustrations stirred up (exposure) and the temptation to retreat back to old ways was strongest. I believe it is in this phase of learning that we are most tempted to become discouraged, disillusioned, and to discontinue ministering Theophostic healing prayer to others. However, it is during this important phase that the Theophostic minister has the most opportunity to have his own lie-based thinking exposed and healed. There is no question that Theophostic Ministry has revolutionized my counseling practice as a licensed clinical social worker. Yet even after four years and 5,000 hours of administering TPM, I still occasionally get stuck in a ministry session. I share this as a way of encouraging those of you who are just beginning to minister TPM, so that you don't slacken in your resolve to make use of this vital ministry tool.

It is important to know that this "learning curve" is a normal, to be expected part of the training process *in* which the rubber meets the road and *from* which highly effective ministers emerge. As you persevere through the initial "learning curve," I am convinced you will discover, as I have, that Theophostic Ministry is a highly effective tool for bringing emotionally wounded people into freedom.

I have discovered that when Theophostic Ministry does not seem to be working the way you think it should be, there is always a reason. So I would encourage you not to give up when this happens. I would encourage you, instead, to develop the qualities of persistence, patience and tenaciousness as you seek to administer the process to wounded people. I have personally seen my success rate go up as I persistently, patiently, and tenaciously pursued further training and continued to offer the ministry to people during their sessions. As I have refused to blame my getting stuck on the person receiving ministry or on the process itself—or even on forces beyond my control—and have chosen to take personal responsibility for my own thinking (lies), I have watched my effectiveness in using the process soar.

The early stages of administering TPM require taking a "risk" in ministry. The risk involves becoming totally dependent on Jesus to the point that if He doesn't come through, we will be left "holding the bag." When this happens (and it will), we may be tempted to shrink back from using Theophostic and revert to our more familiar, comfortable cognitive approaches to ministry. We may feel inwardly pressured to take back the control of the session. For what if it the person can't get into memory or it appears that "God did not speak" or he gets stuck in some other way? Will he become discouraged in his faith? At these moments, our traditional counseling approaches may appear safer, less "risky," for both us and the person receiving ministry.


When the process doesn't go forward as *we* think it should, we may be tempted to either put Theophostic on the shelf altogether or to at least stop using it with the person we are presently ministering to. This is not to say that there will not be times when, as novices, we will get in over our heads. If, for example, we encounter dissociation, SRA, or abreaction, but are not yet equipped to handle them, we will need to consult with and defer to others more skilled in ministry. But even if this happens, we still need to persist in ministering to others, stay patient with ourselves, and be tenacious in our efforts to learn and grow.

Also, in using Theophostic healing prayer I am discovering that, as is true in other areas of our lives, how we handle our failures (exposure of our own lie-based thinking) often determines our level of success. I believe there are persons God intends to use mightily in this ministry who become discouraged and fall by the wayside. When we give in to the discouragement, frustration or other self-defeating emotions that surface in these moments, we are succumbing to the lies in our own minds. My experience has been that these emotions are not produced by a failing method of ministry, but by the exposure of my own thinking. As I mentioned, I have watched the success of the process increase as I have found healing for my own lies. It is amazing how much easier it is to know the right thing to do when you are operating in peace rather than pain.

As a young married man in my mid-twenties, I was a Christian, had just finished graduate school, had my second professional job, and life seemed to be going well and on track. Unexpectedly, my lovely, supportive wife Beth became ill with Crohn's Disease. She handled it well, but I was not expecting my 26-year-old wife to be ill and fatigued. I watched other people with Crohn's have great difficulties, including surgeries, medications and side effects. Although I was thankful it was not something more serious, I was concerned and discouraged about her health and the future. Suddenly, the future did not seem so certain and secure. I started to doubt God, and over

time my doubts slowly spiraled downward into a crisis of faith. In retrospect, I was “greatly triggered.” It would have been a wonderful opportunity for me to receive Theophostic healing, had I known about it. When the rubber hit the road, my faith wasn’t as strong as I had thought it was. My lie-based thinking was exposed, revealing feelings and experiential beliefs of fear, abandonment and powerlessness.

I praise God that today, 20 years later, my wife is doing well and God continues to heal both of us, but there have been many difficult times when our faith has been tested. God has always been faithful, even when I was almost without faith. God has been faithful in progressively forming faith in me. So I am confident that just as God used the crisis of faith in my life to cause me grow and develop, so He will use crisis and stressful times in your life to help you grow and develop—including in your ability to effectively minister Theophostic prayer. If you will stay the course, God will use the stuck and stirred-up places to help you grow as a person and as a facilitator. What happens to us as we are learning to minister more effectively is really a metaphor of what is happening to us in our personal walk with Christ.



From 1878-1880, Thomas Edison and his associates worked on at least 3,000 different theories to develop the incandescent lamp. Light is made by using electricity to heat a thin strip of material (filament) until it gets hot enough to glow. Before he got through, Edison recalled, he had tested no fewer than 6,000 vegetable growths, and ransacked the world for the most suitable filament material. “The electric light has caused me the greatest amount of study and has required the most elaborate experiments,” he wrote. “I was never myself discouraged, or inclined to be hopeless of success. I cannot say the same for all my associates.” To which he added, “Genius is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.”<sup>1</sup>

There is much in Edison’s approach to working through obstacles and attitude about not giving up that will serve beginning Theophostic facilitators well. What a blessing the electric light (which transforms darkness into light) has brought to the world because of Edison’s persistence. How much more eternally significant is a growing worldwide community of Christians with a healing anointing that can bring the truth and light of Christ into our experiential darkness and lie-based thinking. Our challenge is to persist in bringing God’s light and truth into a dying world. To do so, we must become proficient in following the Holy Spirit’s leading.

The best way to mature as prayer ministers is to continue studying the materials and stick closely to the guidelines and principles, attend all the training sessions you can attend, and observe and interact with others who are skilled and experienced in doing ministry. I found that every training I attended added new dimensions to my skills, answered my questions, and clearly enhanced my level of success. As soon as I started to practice Theophostic prayer and learned about the Advanced Training, I made plans to attend the training in Alathia. Since that time, I have attended two more Advanced Trainings, as well as the Level I and SRA Apprenticeships. I highly recommend that *all* persons desiring to grow in their ability to effectively minister Theophostic Ministry attend *all* levels of training.

Some say they cannot afford to go for further training. It was for me, as for many others, a sacrifice of time and money to take several days off work, travel to Kentucky, and be away from my family in order to attend the training sessions. Yet it has been well worth the investment for me personally. I have reaped increasing dividends in the fruitfulness of my work and, best of all, in my capacity to “join God in what He is doing,” as Henry Blackaby, author of “Experiencing God,” teaches. Nothing in life is more gratifying than being a vessel that God works through.

Wherever you are on your journey as a Theophostic healing prayer minister, hang on to your persistence, patience and tenaciousness and believe that the Lord will elevate your fruitfulness to another level.

1. (Franklin Institute Online, “A Spark of Brilliance”)



Frank Meadows is in private practice in Virginia. He will also be presenting during the TPM International Convention in MN. in November, 2003.

**If you are applying a specific application for Theophostic Ministry in your personal ministry, please send it to me. Tell the rest of the Theophostic community about your application. I will be happy to have you. Send in a brief summary of your article for consideration in one of the forth coming issues of this Journal. Send to TPM, PO Box 489, Campbellsville, KY 42719 or send it email [tpoffice@kyol.net](mailto:tpoffice@kyol.net). FAX it to 270-789-2967**

