

Christ in You: How the Body Conceals and Reveals Pain

What we call “gut experience” includes bodily awareness of what the Paul calls “the bowels of Christ”. But interpretation of such experiences can be difficult, especially when there is a history of trauma or early childhood injury. Bessel Van der Kolk wrote that, in trauma, “the body keeps the score.” But how does the body conceal, and potentially reveal, the score? And how can the Spirit help navigate and heal these deeper wounds? How does this understanding shape how we love and counsel others?

V. Ellsworth Lewis, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist who is currently writing, teaching, and consulting. He began his career as Chief of Psychology Service at a U.S. Army Hospital. He then worked with severely emotionally disturbed children for Monterey County (California) Children's Services, before becoming Clinical Director of programs in eating disorders, sexual abuse treatment, and crime victim services at Gundersen Health (Wisconsin). He later became Psychology Supervisor at Lovelock Correctional Center, where he was also Sex Offender Treatment Coordinator for northern Nevada. He transferred to Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Service, where he provided psychological assessment and treatment for the Second District Court (Nevada) Mental Health Court. His current writing projects include focus on a phenomenological psychology that is distinguishably Christian while remaining planted in bodily experience and human longings. In *Visceribus Christi (In the Bowels of Christ)* was presented for the 2023 CAPS conference (the Christian Association for Psychological Science). He is married, with five adult children and three grandchildren.

I. Rescue Operations

- A. 17-year-old Turk rescued from rubble after earthquake:
“I had nothing with me. I just tried to pass the time.”
- B. Therapy as Rescue: helping clients dig out parts of their selves that are viscerally buried.
- C. To “save” (Greek: *sozo*) also means to *rescue*, and to *heal*.
- D. God’s first recorded question to man, “Where are you?”(Genesis 3:9), was not rhetorical. It was soulful.
- E. Death in the Garden: Original Dissociation
 1. We find ourselves mentally outside ourselves ...
 2. With our own bodies turned into objects of observation.
 3. *Sozo* also means to *make whole again*.
- F. Forces that “bury” parts of ourselves are varied ...
 1. Not limited to catastrophic losses or physical threats.
 2. All that we *do not want* to experience ...
 3. All that we are *told not* to experience.
 - a. “Strong” and “Weak” emotions (Stoicism)
 - b. Awe, the sublime, and smallness (Romanticism)
 - c. The Sacred Harp: Christ in you (Enthusiasm)
- G. Interoception as the “voice” leading “rescue” efforts
 1. Interoception defined
 2. Interoceptive self-report
 3. Interoceptive resonance

[Slide 7]

II. Harmonics of Dialogue: First, Second, and Third Voices

- A. First voice: words as data
- B. Second Voice: theories (words about words)
- C. Third Voice: nonverbal communication
- D. What to believe when voices are incongruent?
- E. Word Games: etiquette regarding incongruencies?
 - 1. Guises and Disguises
 - 2. Disguised to Whom?

[Slide 15]

III. The Visceral (Fourth) Voice

- A. Clamming Up: how the body inhibits itself
 - 1. Suppression (holding back)
 - 2. Sub-pression (pressing down)
- B. “Listening” with One’s Throat
 - 1. The globus sensation
 - 2. Inverse relationship between aging and vocal crying
 - 3. The cycle of suppression: pivotal moments in therapy
 - a. Spontaneous (intrusive) globus pharyngeus
 - b. Elicited (therapeutic) globus pharyngeus
 - c. Resonant (transpersonal) globus pharyngeus--
- C. “Listening” with One’s Chest [Slide 21]
 - 1. Pain/anxiety— distinct in size, fixed in location
 - 2. Probably a tightening or spasm of the trachea or esophagus,
 - 3. Normal response to even mild cognitive stressors.
 - 4. Alien: often inexplicable, unrecognizable source.
 - 5. Ex-pressive: anxiety/pain evaporates when ex-pressed.
 - 6. Globus in the chest?
 - 7. Represents, emotionally and physically, a “swallowing” or sub-pression of globus pharyngeus.
 - 8. Intervention “frees” the pain from the chest to the throat.
 - 9. Resonance (transpersonal) can be learned and tested here.
- D. “Listening” with One’s Heart [Slide 26]
 - A. The Biblical lexicon and iconography of the “heart”
 - B. Diaphragm: the living ground of the heart.
 - C. Diaphragmatic heart: crying, laughing, moaning, hooting.
 - D. Spatial dynamics of the heart
 - 1. Expansion (joy)
 - 2. Release (peaceful release)

3. Bowing (deep admiration and moral awe)
 4. Shrinking (heartache, heartbreak)
 5. Sinking (grief)
 6. Seizing (anxiety, crippling of joy/sorrow/longing)
- E. Anesthesia: from coping to compulsion/character [Slide 30]

IV. Relational Theranostics

A. Theranostics Defined and Adapted

1. Where am I right now relative to my body?
2. Where is Father-God relative to my body?
Co-relational Vulnerabilities: father, authority figures
3. Where is Jesus relative to my body?
Co-relational Vulnerabilities: brothers, peers
4. Where is Holy Spirit relative to my body?
Co-relational Vulnerabilities: mother figures, sisters, muses

B. From Pain (Body) to Wound (Event):

1. Identify the first associated wrong and wrongdoer.
2. Locate Christ: "Where were You?"

C. From Wound to Action ("As We Forgive"): [Slide 35]

1. "Where is the wrongdoer now?"
2. "Where is Christ for you right now?"
3. "Are you *willing* to leave the wrongdoer at the Cross?"

D. Goal of Christian Counseling?

Direct communication with Immanuel (God-with-us, Christ-in-us, Indwelling Holy Spirit) on any life concern.

E. Listening Prayer: Interoceptive openness before God

1. "Speak, for your servant is listening" (I Samuel 3:10)
2. The Theophanic Body (Kleinig)
3. Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect ... (Chan)