



**Physical Behavior, Phenomena, and Manifestations:
Summary, Practical Applications, & Sample Prayers**

(Revised 10/5/2001)

Summary

It is important to be aware of the significance of physical phenomena. Physical behavior/manifestations/phenomena can provide memory information, drain off emotional energy, distract, be an indicator of some other interference (internal parts and/or demonic), or indicate the healing work of the Holy Spirit. People can also fabricate and/or embellish manifestations to get attention, and demonic counterfeit manifestations can be sent to cause confusion and division. I have been amazed by how often I have noticed each of these once I was aware of the different possibilities and began watching for them. I have also been pleasantly surprised by how easy it has been to identify and address the problematic sources of physical phenomena, once I was aware of the different possibilities and understood the basic principles involved.

I. Interference

- A. Pressure leaks: Negative emotions provide the trail that leads to the underlying trauma and lies, but the emotional intensity often has to get to a certain point before important connections are made. Physical behavior, phenomena, and manifestations can drain emotional energy and thereby actually hinder the healing process. We have found that if the person chooses not to use any of their “coping” tools (including obsessive behaviors), suppresses nervous habits, and suppresses any manifestations/phenomena that are under their control, the emotional intensity builds more quickly and the healing work is enhanced. Likewise, if we address involuntary manifestations/phenomena by binding demonic spirits and/or working with internal dissociated parts, the emotional intensity builds more quickly and the healing work is enhanced.
- B. Distraction: Both internal parts and demonic spirits seem to know how to produce physical phenomena in order to distract the person receiving ministry. If they can get you to focus on interesting physical phenomena you may lose your focus on the painful memories and/or strategic targets you were working on. The physical phenomena can also confuse and/or frighten the person receiving ministry, which is especially distracting.
- C. Indication of underlying opposition (internal parts and/or demonic spirits): Our perception is that spontaneous physical manifestations are sometimes simply the visible physical indicator of interference on the part of unseen internal parts and/or demonic spirits. The session described in “Prayer for Emotional Healing, Spiritual Opposition, and Physical Manifestations” provides a good example. Our client experienced twitching and jerking during prayer at charismatic prayer meetings and also during our EMDR and/or Theophostic sessions. The twitching and jerking did not seem to be under her voluntary control, but did stop immediately when we bound demonic interference. Her perception was that internal emotional healing had stopped when the manifestations began, and had

resumed with our commands to bind interference and the cessation of the physical manifestations. My perception was that the physical phenomena were not blocking the healing directly, but rather were external evidence of the demonic opposition that was blocking the process – “side effects” produced in the physical body as demonic spirits opposed the Holy Spirit’s healing work.

- II. Human fabrication/embellishment: The basic principle of behavior modification theory, “If you reward a certain behavior, it will increase,” is supported by extensive research. My assessment is that most renewals have created a social environment where physical manifestations are rewarded with positive attention. Even when the leadership consistently teaches a balanced and mature position, my observation is that many common dynamics in human nature result in a renewal culture where physical manifestations are rewarded with positive attention.¹

Many people have not received enough positive attention in their lives. Maybe they are not particularly attractive, and have never excelled at something that made them stand out in a good way. Maybe their wounds and lies have made it difficult for others to be with them – like the ways in which my chronic pressure and anxiety made it tiring for potential friends to spend time with me. Even more important, many of us carry lies connected to the wounds of not receiving enough positive attention from key people in our childhoods: “I’m not special enough for him to want to spend time with me,” “There’s something wrong with me,” “I am a loser,” “Nobody wants to hear what I have to say.” In addition to bringing positive attention, the physical manifestations themselves can have strong positive emotional meaning that temporarily soothes these wounds and lies: “Look! The Lord is touching me! I *am* special, He *does* love me, He *is* answering my prayers, I am included – not a reject.”

While I believe it is rare for adults to consciously and deliberately fabricate manifestations, I think it is common for people with dynamics like these to slip into “stirring up”/ “leaning into”/embellishing the manifestations, often in ways that they are only vaguely aware of, or that are completely unconscious.

Also, while it is probably rare for adults to consciously and deliberately fabricate manifestations, people with significant dissociation may have internal child parts who are more susceptible to positive attention, and more readily respond with embellishment and/or even fabricating physical phenomena.

NOTE: If you are feeling resentment and/or judgment (condemnation, self righteousness) towards the people you think may be fabricating or embellishing their manifestations, then you should not be the one to address the problem. *Please* deal with any judgment on your part before attempting to address these concerns.

For those who would like additional material regarding the phenomena of human fabrication and/or embellishment, I have found Dr. John White’s comments to be particularly helpful,

¹My perception is that the senior leadership in the Toronto renewal consistently teaches a balanced position, encouraging participants to focus on the Giver (our heavenly Father) and not the gifts, on lasting fruit in their lives and not on the physical manifestations during services.

balanced, and non-judgmental².

III. Demonic counterfeit manifestations intended to cause confusion, fear, and division: As mentioned above, physical phenomena can disrupt prayer for emotional healing by confusing and/or frightening the person receiving ministry. Our perception is that the enemy also produces counterfeit manifestations in “renewal” group settings in order to cause confusion, fear, and division in the Church. As also mentioned above, physical manifestations have strong positive emotional meaning for many of us. In fact, all the dynamics that make one susceptible to embellishment and/or fabrication also make one susceptible to the deceiving spirits that produce counterfeit manifestations. These dynamics, in combination with our personal wounds, lies, psychological defenses, and sins can open the way for counterfeit manifestations. It has been sobering and humbling to discover how easily my own needs, desires, wounds, lies, defenses, and sins combined to give the enemy place and authority to produce counterfeit manifestations in my life³. My assessment is that counterfeit manifestations are the physical phenomena that feel the most odd/inappropriate/disturbing/disruptive⁴, and the timing of manifestations I perceive to be counterfeit seem designed to maximally disrupt the larger ministry purpose of the service.

IV Physical memories: The person receiving ministry experiences physical memories when the brain plays the memory track that stores the movements or sensations of the person’s body from the traumatic memory. The physical movements and/or sensations will replay aspects of the traumatic event, and can provide valuable clues and/or confirmation regarding the traumatic memories being addressed.

V. Physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit’s presence

A. “Side effects” of the Lord’s healing work: We have observed situations where physical manifestations seemed to correspond to the Holy Spirit’s healing work. The physical manifestations did not appear to contribute to, or be a part of the healing process, nor did they appear to interfere with the healing process in any way. “Side effects” in medicine provide a good analogy: there are many medical treatments that cause “side effects” – physical manifestations that are not inherently a part of the intended healing benefit, but are the natural effect of the treatment on some other part of the body.

B. “Side effects” of the Lord’s presence in worship: There are many examples, in the Bible and in church history, of people experiencing physical manifestations in association with a

²See John White, When the Spirit Comes With Power, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), p. 58-72.

³See “Deceiving Spirits and Counterfeit Manifestations: How Wounds, Lies, Internal Parts, Repression, and Denial Can Give Them a Place” on the Articles and FAQ’s page of our web site for a discussion and my case study example of some of the internal dynamics that can open the way for the enemy to produce counterfeit manifestations.

⁴I do not perceive that certain manifestations are from the Holy Spirit while others are demonic counterfeit, but rather that a given manifestation (for example, laughing) can sometimes be from the Holy Spirit and sometimes demonic counterfeit.

special visitation of the Lord's presence.⁵ Many of these accounts do not mention any healing, but rather indicate that physical manifestations are simply the response of the physical body to the Lord's overwhelming presence. Personal acquaintances who have experienced physical manifestations during intense worship describe feeling as if their nervous system is directly affected by the power of the Lord's presence and glory.

- C. Play, especially with internal parts: We have observed thousands of people displaying physical manifestations in different charismatic renewal settings. In some situations, the overall feeling we get is that the Lord is *playing* with His children. Just as human fathers play with their children – not to “get something done,” but because play is fun, they love their children, and they like to put the two together. Many of us have internal “child” parts that had to grow up much too quickly. When I observe the “silly” manifestations that sometimes occur during renewal services, it sometimes seems that the Lord is playing with these “inner children.” This is consistent with observations from Theophostic sessions. Many people receiving Theophostic ministry have had childhoods that weren't childhoods – childhoods full of pain and fear, with little or no play. A number of people receiving Theophostic ministry report that at some point in the healing process, Jesus came into the memory and initiated play with the child that never got to play during his/her “real” childhood (often much to the person's surprise). Dr. Smith includes an excellent case study example of this phenomena in the Theophostic basic training manual: “Ruth Ann had lived a very hard and disappointing life as a child... She had no memories of playing dolls or games as other children did... During one session... Jesus walked into her memory carrying a big red ball. She began to laugh and said, ‘This can't be real. Jesus is carrying a giant red ball and is calling me over to play.’ I said, ‘Don't be troubled by what He is doing. He knows what your heart desires and needs for healing.’ She spent an extended period of time playing ball with Jesus...”⁶ See also John Arnott's The Father's Blessing, for additional examples of the Lord “playing” with His children.⁷

Practical Applications/Tips

Simply being aware of the importance of physical phenomena is helpful. Keep your eyes open, with the awareness that physical phenomena can provide memory information, drain off emotional energy, distract, or be an indicator of some other interference (internal parts and/or demonic). I was amazed at how often I discovered these different patterns once I began watching for them.

⁵The description of the Apostles appearing drunk on the day of Pentecost is one of the best examples (Acts 2:1-13). Biblical characters sometimes fell down and were unable to move when they encountered the Lord's near presence (Ezekiel 43:1-4, 44:4; Dan 8:17,18, 10:1-9; Rev 1:12-17). The Bible clearly teaches that we would die if we looked upon the unshielded glory of God – death being a dramatic “side effect” of the Lord's full, unshielded presence (Ex 33:18-20). For examples in Church history, see The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. I (New York: S. Converse, 1829), p.133-34; Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney (New York, 1876) p.12-23. Guy Chevreau, Th.D. provides a lengthy summary of physical phenomena in the Great Awakening, Catch the Fire (Toronto, Canada: HarperPerennial, 1995) p.70-144.

⁶Ed Smith, Beyond Tolerable Recovery. (Campbellsville, KY: Alathia Publishing, 2000), p. 138.

⁷John Arnott, The Father's Blessing (Orlando, FL: Creation House, 1995), p. 13,25,26.
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Whenever you observe physical behavior/manifestations/phenomena, it is important to consider all the possibilities as you discern what to do. I find it helpful to refer to the outline included on the ministry aids page below.

I don't worry about the physical phenomena as long as the person is consistently moving through the Theophostic process to healing (the initial lies no longer feel true, the initial traumatic memories become peaceful and calm). I observe, especially for clues that physical memory can provide, but I don't intervene in any way. Whenever I see physical phenomena that don't appear to be physical memories and that don't seem to hinder the healing process, I assume that they are manifestations of the Holy Spirit's healing work.

Be especially careful to watch for and eliminate "pressure leak" behavior and phenomena when the person "can't get a hold of anything" and/or when the process keeps bogging down for lack of emotional intensity.

Suspect that a physical phenomena is providing a pressure leak when the physical phenomena is brief (seconds to a couple minutes) and the person experiences relief/decreased intensity immediately after the phenomena.⁸

Look carefully for internal parts and/or demonic interference when there are a lot of physical manifestations but the person does not move through to healing.

Consider especially underlying opposition when physical manifestations are prolonged. Before we learned to discern and bind underlying demonic interference, clients would frequently experience physical manifestations for extended periods during EMDR and/or ministry time.

Nervous habits and obsessive behaviors: Clients usually understand the concept and agree to do anything that will turbo-charge the process, but they usually forget during the session. They are busy being stirred up so you will need to gently remind them to keep letting go of the pressure leak behavior.

Judging attitude: If you feel resentful, condemning, or self righteous judgment regarding these issues, then you should not be the one to address them. *Please* deal with any judgment on your part before attempting to address these issues. This caution is especially important regarding concerns that someone may be fabricating or embellishing their manifestations, but should also be considered regarding each of the possible causes of physical phenomena/manifestations.

Comments Regarding Physical Phenomena/Manifestations in the Context of Renewal: Our study of the history of renewal movements indicates that physical manifestations/phenomena have consistently been one of the largest sources of confusion, fear, and division in the wider Church regarding each of the renewal movements. Our hope is that a better understanding of the different possible causes, and preparation of ministry teams that can non-anxiously and non-judgmentally deal with each of the different causes, will dramatically decrease the problems associated with the physical phenomena/manifestations that often come with renewal.

The Church as a Grace-Based rather than Shame-Based Family: One very significant achievement of many churches which embrace renewal by the Holy Spirit, even with all of its

⁸Of course this does not include relief indicating completed Theophostic healing.

messy manifestations, is the establishment of the church as a place of safety and welcome for all. For those who can receive it, this grace-based atmosphere is a refreshing change, and a major avenue of healing in itself. All too many of us are familiar with the opposite characteristics, that of shame-based families, where appearance is everything, and acceptance and belonging are constantly in jeopardy if one acts outside of family expectations. While we do think it is wise to identify and address the various sources of manifestations, we also advise caution to those who find themselves focusing constantly on all the potential problems and how to manage them. We suspect some of what gets labeled as discernment is actually the triggering of people's shame and/or fear lies.

Physical Manifestations: Possible Causes, Summary Outline

I. Interference

A. Pressure leaks

1. Learned, voluntary coping behavior
2. “Nervous habits”
3. Obsessive compulsive behavior
4. Spontaneous phenomena that can be suppressed (parts and/or demonic)
5. Spontaneous phenomena that cannot be suppressed (parts and/or demonic)

B. Distraction

C. Other: Indications that other interference/opposition is present

II. Human fabrication/embellishment

III. Demonic counterfeit manifestations intended to cause confusion, fear, and division

IV. Physical memories

V. Physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit’s presence

- A. “Side effects” of the Lord’s presence in worship, intimacy
- B. “Side effects” of the Lord’s healing work
- C. Play, especially with internal parts

Physical Manifestations: Sample Prayers

“Lord, I want to receive anything that is of you. I want to be free of pride and pretense – I want to be free to worship You in any way You lead me to, I want to be free to play in your presence. I also want to release and/or remove any way in which the physical manifestations in my life are in the way of your better plans.

“Lord, reveal to me the meaning of the physical manifestations in my life.

- Help me to recognize manifestations that are evidence of Your presence, that I may open my heart to you more fully. Help me to recognize manifestations that are play, or some other gift, so that I may embrace them and receive all the blessings you have prepared for me.
- Help me to recognize physical memory, so that I may go with you to the underlying wounds you want to heal.
- Help me to recognize and release any manifestations that are pressure leaks. Please give me the courage and grace to stay with any painful emotions You bring forward. Give me the courage and grace to go with You to any sins and/or wounds You want to deal with.
- Help me to recognize and release any way in which I turn to physical manifestations as a substitute for intimacy with You.
- Help me to recognize and release any manifestations that are distracting me from sins and wounds that you want to expose and deal with.
- Help me to recognize any manifestations that I am fabricating and/or embellishing, consciously or unconsciously. Give me the grace to confess and release this behavior. Show me how to participate in Your plans to address the underlying needs.
- Help me to recognize manifestations that indicate demonic interference. Please expose the underlying demonic interference, so that I can stand with the authority you have given me and remove it.
- Help me to recognize demonic counterfeit intended to bring confusion, fear, and division. Please expose the wounds, lies, defenses, and sins in my life that make it possible for the enemy to produce these counterfeit manifestations. Give me the grace to deal with these wounds, lies, defenses, and sins.”