

Author's Connection – A Personal Interview

BookReview.com – July 2003 (Revised 2021 for dates)

Chalberg, a pastor and cofounder of Shepherd's Care Ministries, had a definite purpose in writing this book. He intends to suggest ways in which we can find the real God for ourselves by exposing the inadequate conceptions of God, which prevent us from seeing Him. He comprehensively accomplishes just that as he writes about a woman with Multiple Personality Disorder. He gives a complete history and profile of more than 66 personalities that make up the system of this individual, and he allows the personalities to tell their own stories, in their own words, as they come to know God through Jesus. Chalberg does not camouflage or water down the descriptions of evil encountered in these lives or their responses to that evil.

This book will deepen your understanding of MPD, as well as the miracles sent by God to heal, renew and give everlasting love, as each part remembers and learns to deal with the truth of their abuse. Chalberg poses fascinating questions such as, "Does each personality of a multiple have their own soul before God, or is integration of the personalities into one soul the only way they are acceptable to God?"

The book is remarkably well written, well organized, and shows a broad knowledge of the subject. However, Chalberg does not boast. He gives all honor and glory to Jesus. He causes the reader to question the potential of mankind to do good yet affirms God's power to cause good to come from the evil that we do to each other. One can't help but appreciate and feel his love for Jesus, and his burning dedication to help shattered people, as it is so perfectly depicted in his words.

The Author Connection – interview questions & answers

- **Who were your earliest influences in your reading and writing growing up and why?**

My earliest influence for both was my second-grade teacher, Ms. Jackson. I had a crush on her, and I got the best grades in class to be seated in front to be near her. In junior high, my stepfather (of four) encouraged me to escape gang involvement in the Barrio by sending me to the library with a reading list to complete. These authors included Homer, Plato, Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury and John Steinbeck. He also suggested that I could meet girls there and that helped to keep me there after finishing my assignment. He also helped me in my creative writing skills. As a young adult, my greatest influence was my friend Bruce Ferry. He introduced me to C.S. Lewis, Henri Nouwen, the Biblical Prophets and personally to Jesus Christ. His openness in sharing the truth of the Gospel in practical ways, helped guide me in my search for truth to authors like Peter Kreeft, Jacques Ellul, Thomas Aquinas, John Stott and Morton Kelsey.

- ***Shattered People: Journeys to Joy* is a remarkable volume of work – how did this series begin? Discuss your background and experience and how that helped you write this series.**

I grew up in Texas for the first 10 years and except for several near-death experiences, it was a fairly normal life. However, the next 16 could be described as dysfunctional in too many levels to cover here. Moving to California with my mother and 4 brothers was the beginning of the 'school of hard knocks.' Although I didn't recognize God in my life during these difficult and tumultuous years, I could look back later in life as an adult Christian and see how He would turn "*what was meant for evil into good to His*

glory.” Life continued to be filled with many hardships after accepting Jesus in my life, but I was being taught a new perspective for dealing with them. By the time the Lord called me into the pastoral counseling ministry to profoundly abused people, I had survived; sexual abuse, family suicides, gangs, alcoholic and drug-addicted stepfathers, divorce, corporate bankruptcy, the ‘60s, some measure of wealth and poverty, more near-death-experiences, a successful 2nd marriage, and many other encounters with God’s grace. He had prepared me to be real in my empathy for connecting to the people who would become the resources for the *Shattered People* series. I am still learning about the power of God’s unconditional love for me in Jesus Christ and how to share it first. He gave me the task of giving this same love that carried me through life’s difficulties to the people who needed it most. At the end of *Journeys to Joy*, I tell the story of how God called me to write these books.

- **In Book One: *Journeys to Joy*, you begin by saying, that “being a pastor is one of the most challenging and difficult vocations in the world today.” Please explain.**

If you ask most Christians today about their expectations of their ‘spiritual leaders’; you will find that they are expected to lead exemplary lives, moreover, lives without sin. While accomplishing this impossible task, they are expected to teach truths without error, about God in the manner and traditions of those who have called them to that position...who also pay their salary based upon their performance of these tasks. They are asked to manage the household of the church with the dexterity of a benevolent father, the vision of a prophet, the Wisdom of Solomon, the rhetoric of Paul, the results of Billy Graham and all of this within budget. Most clergy are not well trained in the skills of designing a working budget, before they are thrust into the responsibility of staying within one. Many are not prepared for the rigors of providing pastoral counseling to the diversity of needs in their rapidly changing society, enmeshed in an ever-increasing global community. A pastor’s success is measured in numbers and growth factors, and the personal sacrifices often required for this vocation are not considered.

When a man or woman is truly called by God into this profession, the sacrifices and difficulties are inconsequential when being obedient to God’s call, one not driven by the numbers. A single person’s growth spiritually is as important to God as the growth of a nation. In this life, everyone needs to feel appreciated for the work they do and in their purpose for doing it. For the pastor or priest, the expectation of appreciation is often fulfilled only within a vision of a future eternal reward, over fulfilling rewards here on earth. Each one has to choose which call is to be obeyed first...the call of God defining their ministry, or the call of the church defining their job as pastor.

- ***Journeys to Joy & Journeys to Love* tells of choices made on paths and journeys of faith. Can you describe how individuals were able to go from one stage to the next without falling backward – I.E. = “The Narrow Path”, “Stumbling on the Higher Path”, “Finding Paths of Truth”, “The Soul’s Search for Reality” and “In Search of a Refuge to Worship”?**

Actually, many times in our search for truth we will make the wrong choice and stumble backwards in the healing process, as the people in the books discovered. In the early years, they could be stalled for weeks and the pace of recovery was slower then. With each failure or disappointment, the recovery time grew shorter as they learned that bad choices by them and others are inevitable and a part of life. It was the love of Christ in our journeys, which picked us up and encouraged us to risk moving forward again, often in very discouraging circumstances. Jesus asks us to let Him share the yoke of carrying our burdens together, while telling all His disciples to help ‘bear one another’s burdens.’ Throughout the *Shattered People* series, you will read how the love of God consistently moves the individuals forward into the next

stage of healing, despite their choices or the choices of others, as quickly as they were willing to trust in Him again. You will also read how some choose the easier path with fewer burdens and miss God's best for them in the lessons of life. God loves us enough to let us make our own choices in any situation. The possibility of falling backward is always present, but so is Jesus. He meets us where we are in life and offers His strength to begin the journey again...present with us.

- **Can you discuss here a few of the abused people talked about in the *Shattered People* series and how they are doing now?**

To understand the significance of what I'm about to share, one will have to read about their healing journey in the last two books, *Journeys to Hope & Journeys to Peace*, to more fully grasp the awesome power of God's love in their lives. Ann's struggle to define herself through teaching, will not only change and challenge everyone within the System, but it will also have a dramatic effect upon the lives of hundreds of students. A miraculous event in 2003 will make Ann the final person to accept Jesus as Lord, and a new journey will begin for the entire System.

I began this journey with 66+ people in 1994, and in 2005 there will be 9 surface people and 9 who remain inside. No one has died or given up their life in order to blend or integrate, as everyone has chosen freely to do so for themselves. Those who remain are 'more' than they were before the blending and reveal this through their individual gifts being shared. How many will remain as a multiple for God's purposes...only God knows, yet we see already His plan being fulfilled within the lives of these individuals.

Maria, the weakest adult dealing with the tragedies of her life, has become the strongest one in her faith in God, only rivaled by the 10-year-old, Mariann. Liz has progressed in controlling her anger, but she still likes to stir-up the Suburban Christian Church with her gift of prophesy. Each of the adults and children who remain will learn from the trials and choices of those who go before them and become better people because of it. They will mourn the losses of long-time fellow travelers yet celebrate with the new creations that each one becomes in Christ.

- **Book Two, *Journeys to Love*, brings up many questions which challenge our understanding of God and who we are in relationship to Him as created beings. Can you lightly touch on some of these? "Does the soul live in two dimensions?" "How does one hear God's voice above all others?" Why do you say that Dissociative Identity Disorder (Multiple Personality Disorder) is a gift from God...and what is it?**

The last question is the easiest to answer. The human psyche/soul was created to know, receive and experience the true love of God from conception. An infant or young child, sometimes even an adult – though rare, encounter traumatic events like sexual or ritual abuse from people with power over them. Often, it is from people the soul understands as someone who is supposed to love them with God's love, like their parents, pastor, priest, or family member. For these severely abused, the psyche has 2 basic options with which to respond to this contradiction within our very purpose for living...our need to give and receive unconditional love that is not painful, but joyful and fulfilling. The soul can shut down and die by losing the will to survive, or it seeks a method to endure the prevailing pain in order to salvage life, yet life without purpose is not living... only existing. The dynamic of dissociation of identities... or persons allows for existence to continue and our search for meaning before God.

When God gives the gift of DID, it is for the 'soul' purpose of surviving the trauma so that the child can one day come to know the truth about God and make their own choices about life and death accordingly.

The soul/psyche creates another person to receive the traumatic event to the body/mind, thereby removing the stress and strain of comprehending the abusive act on the first person. A wall, or partition, is created within the mind (not the soul), to keep the memories of each life separate, for the self-protection of all lives residing in one body/mind, a spiritual survival mechanism. When the soul/psyche reaches a point of maturity that can deal with the horrors of life's realities, these partitions may collapse due to outside triggers, proper diagnosis, and/or God's intervention, so that healing can begin to help us understand just who **we** are. Yet, sadly, without proper diagnosis and assistance, healing may not occur in this lifetime. This ties into the first question, "does the soul live in two dimensions?"

We are created as sentient, spiritual beings, so that we may know our Creator and live-in fellowship with God. We freely acknowledge that God created both the physical and spiritual dimensions, has dominion over both, and chooses to reside within the spiritual dimension...where most people find God easiest to accept and comprehend, because His efforts in the physical realm are usually met with fear and apprehension at what we can't explain. God created our souls, the only part of us that can communicate with God, with the ability to transcend dimensional barriers, including physical life/death itself. Our soul, therefore, is not limited to this physical existence and yet, each soul identifies itself by its encounters separately in each dimension. The physical dimension has the perimeters of time and life lived within the natural laws given to it by its Creator. How we individually define ourselves as a person here, is dependent upon our experiences in relationship to others within this physical world. We are the center of our physical universe through self-definition. Our carnal nature can fulfill itself here without limitation in this dimension only, yet we have a spiritual nature that yearns for more.

The spiritual dimension is timeless and God is its center. Our souls will seek God out in both plains of existence...all the while "asking Him to prove His existence" to our understanding. While the soul may coexist in both, it has to be open to receiving God as and when He chooses in both, in order to become transcendent with Him in relationship. Historically, every time God intervenes in our physical world, we attribute it as something too miraculous to understand, or too tragically bad to accept... and classify both as 'acts of God'. Thus, our need for Jesus Christ to help our souls bridge the gap of understanding in both dimensions becomes clear. Our soul can connect to Jesus Christ as God in this physical world, while maintaining the connection to our spiritually timeless Father God residing in the other.

The question of 'hearing God's voice above all others' is, of course, relevant here for both dimensions. We encounter people in our physical dimension, and spiritual entities in both dimensions, who are either trying to draw us nearer to God or keep us separated from Him. Little children hear God's voice and they are instinctively drawn to it, while more 'mature' adults will restrain their instinct to reply. Jesus said, "*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*" The more we learn to trust His voice while being obedient to His will, we train our soul to hear through our heart and overcome our fear of why He talks to us at all. Our heavenly Father's voice, whether it's the voice bringing peace in the midst of chaos, protection in our time of need, or simply His Spirit felt inside when we are in His presence, helps us become trusting of His voice. We can become so familiar with His consistency of voice, word and will, that it isn't as important how He speaks to us as why, and the multitude of surrounding voices become as whispers before the continual love song in our Lord's voice. Jesus said this,

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My 'word,' (logos – the Divine creative voice of God) and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come unto judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live." John 5:24, 25.

Hearing God's voice empowers our "ears to hear and eyes to see" life in its reality. In both dimensions, God's voice is consistent with His revelation in Jesus Christ, His written word in the Bible and His love for mankind, as shared through the Holy Spirit. Whether I hear a still small voice in my heart, feel and hear the thunder of His voice in His words given to us, or have it reverberate in all of my physical and spiritual being with the sharing of His love audibly in prayer in this physical realm... I celebrate in the knowledge that He loves us enough to keep talking to us even when we refuse to listen.

- **What do you hope to achieve with the *Shattered People* series and what do you want readers to take away after reading these books?**

My hope is that my readers will gain a new perspective of God's love and His desire to bring healing into their lives, and through their stories bring healing to others. For the survivor of abuse who has been separated from God out of fear or a sense of betrayal, I hope they will learn through these life stories how God never forsakes us or abandons us to this world. He is constantly giving His love to sustain us and empower us, to survive the evil that we do to each other. In this physical life we will experience sorrow and pain, but nothing can separate us from the love of God in this life or the next, if we don't allow it to in this finite moment. Telling these stories to survivors of abuse can change despair into hope and abandonment into belonging.

For those who provide caring and counsel to these survivors, these books offer a simple yet effective approach for sharing God's love and power with them, by allowing God to use us in the way that He chooses, while not allowing our efforts to be restricted by mankind's understanding of the process. When we allow our fear of the unknown to define how much, and in what manner, we share God's unconditional love... we inhibit God's efforts through us at every turn. Anyone can offer assistance to broken people on their journeys, if they choose to allow themselves to become involved in their lives, in obedience and availability to the will of God.

- **What has been your feedback from readers?**

Many have contacted me after reading the books and stated how it has changed their life. They noted how it has given them a better understanding of the kind of issues that a survivor of abuse faces every day. Empathy and a greater willingness to approach seemingly unapproachable people have increased, because of understanding more about those who are labeled 'different'. When people read about another's suffering and are able to identify in and with that pain, they also are better able to share in the healing process in a cathartic way by joining them in the journey.

One pastor wrote how it changed how he ministers to 'street people' in his downtown church, because of his clearer understanding of the lack of choices in their lives. Another said how it taught him how important it is to train people within his congregation about how to provide this same care, because of the time required that he could not do himself. The professional side of responses have been mostly praise for such an in-depth clinical, yet practical, study of Dissociative Identity Disorder and severe abuses like clergy abuse and SRA. Many find themselves struggling with how to apply these methods.

The readers who understand and identify with the books the most, have been the severely abused and their families, even though it is difficult for them to read and work through the books, because of the memories relived. The stories I've heard, of how it has helped them begin the journey of healing for the first time, are the most fulfilling for me. My requests for receiving free pastoral counseling over my Internet chat room have dramatically increased, specifically around the issues of healing from clergy abuse and ritual abuse. These contacts say the books offer a private and confidential place to begin the healing within the

chatrooms. My purpose for writing them has been affirmed many times over already, by the readers who have begun a renewed relationship with God.

9. What's next?

The first two books of four in this series represent just over 6 of our 16-year journey together so far. I structured these books around their real-life journeys to illustrate how people who have endured so much... never have to give up hope for changing their reality and perceptions of God in Jesus Christ. Their story is representative of many cases of abuse across the spectrum, not only in the questions they asked or the trials they faced, but in the real struggles encountered by people everywhere in their relationship with God. *Journeys to Hope & Journeys to Peace* will reveal not only more of their miraculous unfinished journeys but will include many other survivor journeys. We learn together as healing continues with suffering and tears, so does the joy and laughter of encountering God's healing love in increasingly more miraculous ways. My challenge is to finish these last two books while traveling to share these same subjects.

My latest challenge in ministry is preparing to offer instruction and guidance in the healing ministry to my Catholic brothers and sisters requesting my intervention in individual churches. Though I've offered it for years, it has only recently become an actual opportunity that I don't wish to pass up. A good example is a recent news article on clergy abuse in a local paper, which included a brief column about my counseling ministry in this area, it produced an average response of one or more victims every day seeking help for various issues of abuse since it came out. I trust that the Lord will direct us in how to accomplish this ministry if it becomes widely known.

- **What was the last book you read?**

"The JOURNEY: a spiritual roadmap for modern pilgrims" by Peter Kreeft, IVP; at the same time, I read, *"Houses that change the World" the return of the house churches.* By Wolfgang Simson, OM Publishing.

- **What are your hobbies and how do they enhance your writing?**

My hobbies are golf, nature photography, science fiction movies and teaching about the love of God. The golf teaches me discipline and humility. The photography teaches me patience and awe before God's handiwork. Science fiction movies keep my imagination open and ready for the unexpected and unimaginable. Teaching about God's love keeps me dependent upon His presence and listening to His voice, in order to share His love with those in need of it... especially in my writing and counseling.