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Pastoral Counseling and the Kingdom of God

Cheryl A. Furtak
Loyola University Chicago

PASTORAL COUNSELING AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

by

Cheryl A. Furtak

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We live a mystery of everlasting love:
Jesus, the living Lord,
the God who came to earth
to die and rise again;
We live your mystery, Lord.
--Michael Connolly

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In thanksgiving for the power of God at work in the world I dedicate this thesis to all who welcome God's loving presence into their lives. I am especially grateful for the faith, confidence and inspiration of my parents, friends, and those whom I have met along the way. You have shared your vision and you have challenged me beyond self-security toward an ever increasing embrace of the mystery of God's Kingdom. For this, I thank you.

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VITA

The author, Cheryl Ann Furtak, is the daughter of Ann Mary (Di Bartholomeo) Furtak and the late Mitchell Joseph Furtak. She was born November 22, 1958, in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan.

Ms. Furtak obtained her Catholic education from Transfiguration Elementary School, St. Ladislaus High School and Dominican High School of Detroit, Michigan.

In 1975, she began studies at the Institute for Pastoral Liturgical Ministries, Detroit, Michigan and received her certification as a Liturgist. In May of 1979, she received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies and Psychology. Upon completion of her degree she was accepted into the novitiate of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth of Western Pennsylvania where she professed first vows as a religious until August of 1986.

Ms. Furtak has completed a Masters of Pastoral Studies from the Institute of Pastoral Studies, Chicago, Illinois. She received an assistantship in pastoral counseling at Loyola University of Chicago, enabling her to complete the Master of Arts in 1989.

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CHAPTER I

AN UNDERSTANDING OF PASTORAL COUNSELING

Introduction

> Pastoral counseling is rooted in two disciplines of knowledge: religion and behavioral science. While both fields have an identifiable integrity, the interplay between them is difficult to resolve both methodologically and conceptually. By and large, pastoral counseling emerges in its contemporary form as a practice of ministry whose focus is the suffering person seeking healing and wholeness. Pastoral counseling is still in an early stage of development as a discipline that produces its own integral structure under its own terms and methods. The most critical current and future issue for pastoral counseling is the shaping of its own discipline which guides the practice of the pastoral counselor and at the same time enhances insight and knowledge of both religion and the behavioral sciences.[1]

Dr. Ewing, Executive Director of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, nicely summarizes the current state of affairs regarding pastoral counseling as a developing discipline. He acknowledges the need to bring two disciplines of knowledge into an identifiable integration both in theory and in praxis.

Critical to the development of pastoral counseling as a unique discipline with its own terms and methods, is its ability to define itself as a specific and distinct enterprise within the helping

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[1]James W. Ewing, "Epilogue: Pastoral Counseling Issues: Current and Future," in Pastoral Counseling, eds. B.K. Estadt, Melvin Blanchette, and John R. Compton. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983), p. 287.

professions. Pastoral counseling must grapple with its own identity rather than allow itself to be defined by other disciplines.

Dr. Ewing raises in a concrete and practical manner pastoral counseling's critical problem of integrating psychology and theology. Pastoral counseling does not endorse the primacy of the one methodology over the other. Instead, as the literature reveals, pastoral counseling claims actually to be the concrete process of integrating psychological and theological insights and methods.

Ewing openly acknowledges that integration is not easily accomplished. He calls for the concrete articulation of the discipline of pastoral counseling in a way that will guide those engaged in the discipline and will advance both religion and the behavioral sciences.

Preliminary Observations

Currently, within the helping professions there are a myriad of resources, theories, strategies, and philosophies available to any practitioner. Many of these resources postulate specific ways the professional ought to be and to act in the therapeutic realm. As materials multiply, the therapist's need for a background or framework from which to assess becomes increasingly clear.

At the same time, considerable discussion continues as to what makes pastoral counseling specifically "pastoral". While explicitly

theological language may not be a deciding criterion, pastoral counseling must certainly in some concrete way address the power of God at work in the world. For the most part, this is addressed from the viewpoint of the pastoral counselor. Occasionally, the client will also raise, address, or begin to delve into the depths of this reflection. Yet, for the most part, it is the pastoral counselor who is acutely aware of the transcendental nature of the therapeutic activity and is prepared to share this awareness with the client or to follow up the client's initiative.

The challenge remains for the pastoral counselor to interpret the counseling activity from an integrated theological and psychological viewpoint. This viewpoint should be continually refined and enriched by study and reflection, allowing the two disciplines to remain in dialogue, informing each other.

Pastoral counseling is distinguished by deliberate reflection on the power of God at work in the world. This is one element of pastoral counseling which differentiates it from counseling in general. As pastoral counselors we communicate to those seeking help and assistance that we are concerned with the deeper issues of life. We provide for those who come seeking health and wholeness, an avenue in which they can speak freely about their pain, struggles and frustrations. How we view God and life and how we make meaning for ourselves have direct impact on the way we will be and act toward those who seek our help. While religious issues may not be an ac-

tual subject of discussion, for the counselor with religious convictions there is no such thing as "value-free" therapy.

Therefore, as pastoral counselors we need to be able to assess and incorporate the resources available from psychology, theology and spirituality in order to serve effectively the needs of our clients. Our method of assessing available psychological and theological resources must be rooted in the world view that guides, motivates, and calls us to pastoral ministry rather than counseling in general. It must reflect our recognition of God's activity in the world and our efforts to cooperate with that activity.

The Purpose of this Study

This thesis addresses the problem of integration in the discipline of pastoral counseling by describing a process that pastoral counselors use in the practice of the discipline. I believe that the process individuals use to integrate psychology and theology in the practical activity of the discipline can be used to address the problem on a broader theoretical plane that involves the discipline as a discipline. I will illustrate a particular process I have found helpful in an effort to give an explicit form to the implicit claims of the discipline.

As we develop professionally and ministerially, we find ways of doing things that work for us. While the process of integrating

is difficult, each one of us engages in it. Sometimes we achieve an effective integration and sometimes we do not. We expand our theoretical knowledge, reflect on our pastoral goals, and hone our therapeutic techniques and strategies through ongoing education, supervision and dialogue with colleagues. In this way we are stretched beyond our present way of doing things and discover ways of proceeding that we can share with others. This networking of approaches has prompted the writing of this thesis.

While preparing and training for pastoral counseling I, like my classmates, grappled with the question, "What makes pastoral counseling different from counseling in general?". Struggling with this question, I examined what both theoretical writers and practitioners had to say about the discipline. I grappled with the identity questions regarding the discipline itself, the activity of the discipline and my role as a pastoral counselor. Once I began working as a pastoral counselor, I could also draw upon my personal experience with clients.

From my varied ministerial experiences and my deepening theological education, I had presupposed a theological frame of reference which would serve in developing a psychological frame. As time went on, I realized that a completely theoretical framework from either individual discipline would not meet the problem of remaining true to both disciplines. I had met the problem of integration, and I found myself struggling.

Some of us do our best thinking "psychologically" while others do it "theologically". Few of us are able to do both simultaneously or with equal proficiency. As my classmates and I continued to struggle with the demands of pastoral counseling's two constituent disciplines, a hearty discussion led someone to remark, "There's got to be a way to think in both disciplines, simultaneously. Why is this so hard to do?"

Intuitively I believed that there was a way to bring life to the integration process. As I grappled with the broad identity questions, I realized that for me pastoral counseling is specifically different from counseling in general by the way it draws upon the conviction that God is the primary source of strength and motivation. At this point I turned to the Scriptures and my own personal life journey. This led me to realize how well a biblical metaphor could serve the practical needs of the pastoral counselor both as a conscious tool for understanding and integrating psychological and theological issues and as a not entirely conscious criterion for evaluating specific therapeutic developments.

The kingdom of God is a metaphor familiar to those engaged in ministry. It is a recurring phrase in the synoptic gospels, ancient Christian writings, and ecclesial documents of various denominations, and ministers are frequently reminded that they minister for the sake of the kingdom of God. As one familiar with the metaphor I began to question what I was learning about human psychology by ask-

ing, "What has this to do with the kingdom of God?" Simultaneously I grappled with my understanding of the metaphor itself. At this stage I began to see connections between the metaphor of the kingdom of God and the activity of pastoral counseling. Finally, as I began to work with clients and reflect on the therapeutic activity, insights regarding the kingdom of God sprang naturally to mind as I dealt with particular psychological issues. I found that I was better understanding the therapeutic process, the person before me, and myself while engaged in the process.

The following chapters address the process of integrating psychology and theology in the discipline of pastoral counseling. Chapter Two reviews the literature to clarify identity and integration issues. Chapter Three proposes a biblical metaphor consonant with the person of the pastoral counselor. Chapter Four reviews my experience in achieving a dialogue between the activity of pastoral counseling and a personally meaningful biblical metaphor. Chapter Five tests the process by applying it to a particular area of pastoral counseling, namely, working with addictive systems. The final part of the thesis explores the usefulness the process illustrated can make to the larger issue of resolving the interplay between religion and the behavioral sciences in the discipline of pastoral counseling.

By reflecting on a process of integration used by pastoral counselors in the activity of pastoral counseling, we are able to

develop guidelines which help us organize our attitudes, our thinking, and consequently, our way of being and acting as pastoral counselors. This process can also help us to look critically at the resources available from psychology, theology and spirituality and assess their effectiveness in our daily practice.

Illustrating the integration process also helps us to develop an inner-knowing of who we are and what we are about in the practice of pastoral counseling. This inner-knowing can contribute to the development of a fundamental confidence regarding the practice of our ministry. In turn, increased assuredness sparks more creative energy, and the generation of additional creative energy enables us to use our imaginations more effectively as therapists. In short, our clients benefit and we benefit as well.

Dr. Ewing, like many other writers and practitioners in the field, has recognized the need for guiding principles for pastoral counselors. He has urged those engaged in pastoral counseling to set their minds, hearts, and pens to the task of developing integrating approaches that work both methodologically and conceptually. Some practitioners have begun to do this for themselves and for others. Some have used metaphorical language to describe the activity and the person engaged in the enterprise of pastoral counseling. This thesis is my answer to Ewing's call to articulate individual methods of striving for integration of psychological and theological issues and approaches.

CHAPTER II

PASTORAL COUNSELING: THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION

Introduction

To engage in a process of integrating insights from theology and from the behavioral sciences, we are first required to articulate an informed understanding of what it is we say we are about. This chapter illustrates how writers and practitioners in the field have grappled with the identity questions regarding the discipline and the activity of pastoral counseling.

In reviewing the literature of pastoral counseling, two parallel lines of development require attention. First, the cultural debate between religion and the behavioral sciences. Second, the attempt to hold fast to the baptismal call to ministry as understood in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Both shed light on the identity questions of pastoral counseling.

As a discipline, pastoral counseling is emerging with its own identity, while still highly influenced by both the behavioral sciences and religion. Just as the human person is required to differentiate from his or her family of origin, pastoral counseling continues to grapple with the developmental task of differentiation. In the process, pastoral counselors are learning to appreciate and

acknowledge the origins of their discipline without remaining bound by them. They realize that unless differentiation occurs on a disciplinary level, it will be difficult for pastoral counseling to claim its own space in the professional world.

Pastoral counselors are struggling to liberate their discipline from its origins and to facilitate its emergence as a free and creative response to the ongoing dialogue between science and religion. At the same time, they continue to recognize the complexity of the issues they must face in defining their professional and ministerial identity.

Pastoral counseling also gives testimony to the experience of liberation as an activity. Pastoral counselors are committed to the process of liberation in the lives of those who come seeking health and wholeness. Those who took the first steps toward the development of this new way of ministering to persons sought to free themselves from the limited methods of the past in order to free those seeking counsel from simplistic responses to the complexities of human living.

A brief look at the historical development of pastoral counseling reveals the extreme youthfulness of the developing discipline. This youthfulness is positive in that idealism and altruism are potentially at a peak with the powers of creative imagination productively at work. However, just as we must take care not to

forestall the development of the not-yet-mature human person, we do well to be careful not to endanger the development of pastoral counseling by any premature identity foreclosure, moratorium or diffusion.[1]

As pastoral counseling continues to differentiate from its family of origin in search of its unique identity, it has begun to test out ways of self-definition. We must be careful and remain tentative in our efforts to define the discipline and the activity of the discipline in order to leave room for change and growth. Like a differentiating young adult, the discipline of pastoral counseling is changing in critical ways to meet the challenge of new issues, methods and structures. For example, what was once primarily Protestant, white, male-cleric, parish based ministry is now expanding to include Catholic and Jew; male and female; ordained and non-ordained; White, Hispanic and Black; parish ministry and counseling centers. While these specific issues are not addressed directly in this thesis, we will try to develop a tentative working definition of the activity of pastoral counseling. Doing so will enable us to use what is already available and will enhance our understanding of the critical components pastoral counseling needs to retain while the process of differentiation continues.

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[1]Joan Scanlon, Ph.D. and James Halstead, Ph.D., "Psychology and Theology of Human Development," unpublished lecture, Loyola University of Chicago, Fall 1987.

The Aim, Function, and Purpose of Pastoral Counseling

A review of the literature of pastoral counseling suggests that, essentially, its aim is liberation. The theme of liberation permeates the literature and can be used as a key to its interpretation. Seward Hiltner, one of the pioneers of pastoral counseling, believes that pastoral counseling and "other counseling" are similar in that the "generic aim of counseling is new insight, with proof in action."[2] He holds that insight is what will bring about freedom and freedom will bring about action.

Hiltner believes that many persons who seek professional therapists are "troubled, at the root, by the meaning and destiny of their life and the life of mankind."[3] He firmly believes that, "Specific symptoms of various kinds constitute the presented problems and impel these people to move. But the root problem is deeper and higher than the immediate motivating irritation."[4] That deeper root problem is the meaning and destiny of human life. In order to deal with the root problem one must deal with that which prevents persons from living whole and healthy lives:

> Broadly speaking, the special aim of pastoral counseling may be stated as the attempt by a pastor to help people help themselves through the process of gaining understanding of their inner conflicts.[5]

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[2]Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling: How Every Pastor Can Help People to Help Themselves, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1976), p. 95.
[3]Ibid., p. 119.
[4]Ibid.
[5]Ibid., p. 118.

Through understanding of their inner conflicts, persons can become free. In freedom, persons can truly live and move and have their being.[6] The process of liberation allows them to experience belonging, a sense of purpose, and meaning in their lives. Hiltner describes this movement from bondage to freedom:

> There is a sense in which the aims of pastoral counseling are the same as those of the Church itself— bringing people to Christ and the Christian fellowship, aiding them to acknowledge and repent of sin and to accept God's freely offered salvation, helping them to live with themselves and their fellow men in brotherhood and love, enabling them to act with faith and confidence instead of the previous doubt and anxiety, bringing peace where discord reigned before.[7]

Hiltner paints a portrait of pastoral counseling as intimately involved with liberation. Pastoral counseling creates the opportunity for persons to face life's conflicts, struggles, sorrows and joys, and to gain insight and understanding. Insight and understanding allow persons to choose freely and to act in the world in an autonomous yet responsible way for the good of themselves and consequently, for the good of all humanity.

According to Melvin Blanchette, professor in Loyola of Baltimore's Pastoral Counseling Program, "Two functions that pastoral counseling can fulfill are (1) to enable a person to become free in

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[6]C.f. Acts 17:28.
[7]Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling, p. 19.

order to be responsible, and (2) to enable a person to deal with pain."[8]

Blanchette believes that "before a person can be responsible, he or she must first experience what it means to be free."[9] Rather than being victims of the pain life deals them, persons can come to see that the "boxes" in which they live have openings— "windows are raised and doors are opened to possibilities and alternatives."[10] He states that

> Pain is caused by our reaction to the expectations placed upon us because we exist— both those expectations we place on ourselves and those we allow others to place on us. Growth is the result of dealing with the stresses involved in living.[11]

Dealing with pain leads to growth. Growth leads to an increased sense of freedom. Freedom leads to action for self and for others. In a very real sense, the aim of pastoral counseling is to assist persons in finding new ways of looking at reality, and subsequently, new alternatives for living.

In summary, pastoral counseling aims to help persons to become free, responsible, and able to deal with the pain of being human. As a process of liberation, pastoral counseling seeks to help per-

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[8]Melvin C. Blanchette, "Theological Foundations of Pastoral Counseling," in Pastoral Counseling, eds. B.K. Estadt, Melvin Blanchette, and John R.Compton. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983), p. 19.
[9]Ibid.
[10]Ibid., p. 24.
[11]Ibid.

sons help themselves; to grow in freedom from the obstacles preventing them from enjoying liberation; to generate options and choices; to take responsible action; and to bring about an increase of health and wholeness not only for themselves but for all of humankind. It is this vision of liberation that has spurred the growth of pastoral counseling into what it is today.

The Origins of Pastoral Counseling

Put simply, "pastoral counseling has evolved as a specialized form of ministry greatly influenced by the behavioral sciences of the twentieth century."[12] Its origins are two-fold: 1) it is a cultural and intellectual response to the dialogue between science and religion; and 2) it is a contemporary response to the baptismal call of ministry as understood in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Three separate but interrelated sources of influence emerge within these origins: 1) the critique of theology and religion by science; 2) the use of psychological knowledge and skills in pastoral ministry; and 3) the use of psychology in theological education.

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[12]Orlo Strunk, Jr., "A Prolegomenon to a History of Pastoral Counseling," in Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling, eds. Robert J. Wicks, Richard D. Parsons and Donald E. Caps (NY: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 15.

In a chapter entitled, "A Prolegomenon to a History of Pastoral Counseling," Orlo Strunk, Jr. writes:

> In a general sense, the beginnings of contemporary pastoral counseling may be traced to the cultural and intellectual concerns contained in the dialogue between science and religion. That dialogue— both in its ancient and modern forms— became especially evident at the turn of the twentieth century. In part, then, the beginnings of a pastoral psychology whose praxis would come to be called pastoral counseling, even pastoral psychotherapy, were, like so many other "innovations," a reflection of wider cultural interests.[13]

Strunk notes that as psychology received recognition as an academic discipline, theology was criticized for its response to the reality of human suffering. Theology was seen to be losing sight of the pastoral dimension and engaging in the highly intellectual pursuits of scientific classical studies. Critics questioned how theology had become so far removed from the realm of human experience. It appeared that theology pursued interests of no immediate practicality, while psychology promised much to ordinary people. Psychology offered new ways of responding to the practical daily struggles of human living.

On a broader level, two major works offer a symbolic representation of the dialogue between science and religion. Strunk cites the pioneering efforts of William James in The Varieties of Religious Experience. James boldly argued that theology was no longer exempt from critical accountability, at least not from a psy-

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[13]Ibid., pp. 15-16.

chological perspective.[14] Strunk also notes that the publication of A.T. Boisen's The Exploration of the Inner World,[15] represented "most clearly the way in which a psychosocial perspective tended to find its way into theological education, despite resistance."[16] The influence of psychology was gradually taking up hospitable residence in the halls of theology.

In a lengthy quote from Paul Johnson, Strunk notes, however, that the dialogue between theology and the behavioral sciences was not smoothly conducted. In fact, theology was not only faced with the challenge presented by psychology, it was also inundated with challenges from other disciplines— challenges to the self-appointed authority it had long enjoyed:

> The conflict of theology with psychology intensified during the years when psychology was enjoying a crescendo of influence in the modern world. Earlier in the 20th century, theology was accommodating its perspectives to a modernism influenced by the natural sciences and secular culture. This seemed to endanger the supernatural revelation and unique authority of the Christian position.[17]

As quoted by Strunk, Johnson highlights the predominantly Protestant effects of the conflict, citing the dramas of the Hitler regime and the evangelical challenge of Karl Barth. He notes that theologians of that generation rallied to the teachings of Barth in

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[14]Ibid. p. 16.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Ibid., p. 17.
[17]Paul Johnson, "Pastoral Psychology in the Christian Community," in Spiritual Life 15 (1969): 58-64, cited by Orlo Strunk, Jr., "History of Pastoral Counseling," pp. 17-18.

such a way that a cult of supernaturalism developed in which "theology recoiled from engagement with a scientific culture and retreated into other-worldliness."[18]

This retreat into other-worldiness effected a "renaissance of classical theology in its prescientific grandeur" and "psychology had become invisible in the halls of theology."[19] As a result, existentialism and ontology displaced the psychology of religion, while pastoral psychology yielded to pastoral theology and pastoral care.

Johnson believes that this was all brought about in an effort to preserve the supreme status of theology as "the queen of the sciences."[20] One can appreciate how this fear of displacing theology influenced the struggle of pastoral studies to give equal weight to psychology and theology. Inherent to this struggle is the risk that the pendulum will swing too far in one direction.

Johnson reminds us that in the historical development of the debate between psychology and theology, new complexities were introduced. Other sciences began to move in, "lustier than ever," permeating and inundating the halls of theology. Eventually theology seems to have had no choice but to address the pressuring forces of these sciences. As a result, psychology began to return to the

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[18]Strunk, "History of Pastoral Counseling," pp. 17-18.
[19]Ibid.
[20]Ibid.

scene and theologians were "vying with each other to employ psychology as an auxiliary science, to understand the nature of man, Christian education, pastoral theology, and Christian ethics."[21]

Johnson closes his overview by stating that there was "scarcely a theological doctrine that has escaped this searching and mounting dialogue with psychology."[22] All of this points to the intensity and complexity of the struggle between science and religion and accentuates the current problems facing pastoral counseling and its sibling disciplines of pastoral care and pastoral psychotherapy today.

If psychology came to see theology as "fair game" and if theology, in its defense, pressured by this evolving human science as well as other disciplines, found it necessary to meet the cultural and intellectual challenge, then one might conclude that pastoral counseling is the offspring of a tumultuous love/hate courtship between science and religion.

If we view this as part of pastoral counseling's family of origin, it is not difficult to understand why the problem of integrating psychology and theology remains such a delicate issue for the discipline today. For better and for worse, it appears that this is part of pastoral counseling's legacy and cannot be separated from its emerging identity.

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[21]Ibid.
[22]Ibid.

Just as any individual person's emerging identity is shaped and influenced by a number of factors present in the family of origin, pastoral counseling is not exempt from this range of influences. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the additional sources of influence that contribute to pastoral counseling's emerging identity.

A review of the literature clearly denotes that pastoral counseling's origins are firmly rooted in the baptismal call of ministry as understood in the wealth and heritage of the Judeo-Christian tradition. As a form of ministry, pastoral counseling adheres to foundational principles commonly found in any form of Christian ministry, yet the manner in which the ministry is enacted has qualitative differences not necessarily prerequisite in other forms of ministry.

Like all ministers, pastoral counselors are pastoral counselors because they are called by virtue of their baptism to a particular way of being with others. This way of being is a concrete expression of participation in the work of Christ for the sake of God's kingdom.

What differentiates pastoral counseling from other forms of ministry can be seen in the activity of the discipline. In the activity, the pastoral counselor utilizes various skills that are not necessarily of primary focus in other forms of ministry. The pas-

toral counselor completes a particular form of training and preparation that includes the development of theological and psychological expertise. This training and preparation enables the pastoral counselor to enact the work of the Gospel utilizing particular skills, theoretical frameworks, and understandings of the human person within the context of a counseling environment.

What differentiates pastoral counseling from counseling in general has largely to do with their differing families of origin. Strunk makes a point to note in his writing that, "modern pastoral counseling— no matter how specialized and how closely identified with current human sciences it may be— is deeply colored by the long and rich history of pastoral care."[23] This history of pastoral care has been a "rich part of the tradition of Christian ministry from the earliest days."[24] Thus, we are back once again to the Judeo-Christian tradition as an additional source of influence, within pastoral counseling's family of origin.

Because pastoral counseling is both a professional and a ministerial activity, the problem of integrating disciplines and the difficulties of differentiation are more complex than in counseling in general. The challenge of holding theology and psychology in creative tension and of being professionally credible in both psy-

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[23]Ibid.,p. 15.

[24]Barry Estadt, "Pastoral Counseling Today and Tomorrow," in Psychiatry, Ministry & Pastoral Counseling, eds. A.W. Richard Sipe and Clarence J. Rowe. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1984), p. 41.

chology and ministry increases the imperative for the pastoral counselor to engage in some process of integration of disciplines.

In an effort to preserve the integrity of religion and the behavioral sciences, Donald Browning, professor of Religion and Psychological Studies, cautions that, "we should not too quickly permit the implicit religious and ethical horizon of the social sciences to replace the explicit religion and ethics of the Jewish and Christian tradition".[25] To lose sight of the Judeo-Christian tradition would be to lose sight of what distinguishes pastoral counseling from counseling in general. Browning argues that it is critical to continue to see the Judeo-Christian tradition as "a major source for the interpretation of life."[26]

With a similar concern, Wayne Oates states his "comprehensive point of view" with the hope that pastoral counselors will incorporate this into their own "conceptual overview" while doing the work of pastoral counseling:

> Pastoral counseling is unique in that pastoral wisdom, developed through the history of synagogue, temple, and church, refuses to permit the therapeutic enthusiasms of the moment to enchant the pastor with one side or another of the great polarities that characterize human nature.[27]

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[25]Donald S. Browning, Religious Thought and the Modern Psychologies: A Critical Conversation in the Theology of Culture, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), p. x.
[26]Ibid.
[27]Wayne Oates, Pastoral Counseling, (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 27.

> He [the pastor/pastoral counselor] does not just pick and choose this and that from various scientific therapies. Rather, he exercises critical appraisal of their strengths and limitations from his historical, theological, and ethical knowledge.[28]

Oates is legitimately concerned that the integrity of pastoral counseling as a form of Christian ministry be preserved. It is not difficult to comprehend the potential dangers of accepting a particular therapeutic strategy or technique without first having considered its implications and ramifications within the framework of what distinguishes pastoral counseling from counseling in general.

Together, Strunk, Browning, and Oates summarize intuitive cautions regarding the activity of pastoral counseling. In an effort to preserve the unique contributions of science and religion they urge that any emerging identity, would do best to rely on that which has motivated and sustained its struggle for development as a unique discipline: the praxis of the Judeo-Christian tradition. If pastoral counseling is to emerge with a healthy identity from its family of origin, it must acknowledge and readily make use of the wealth of its rich, long Judeo-Christian history of ministry.

Viewing the activity of the discipline and those engaged in the activity, Barry Estadt, locates the origins of pastoral counseling in the desires of those engaged in ministry:

> The pastoral counseling movement had its origins in the interest of individual clergy and religious in utilizing the theoretical body of knowledge and clinical skills of the contemporary helping

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[28]Ibid., p. 29.

> professions of psychiatry, psychology and social work with the overall ministry of the Church.[29]

The goal of these ministers was to use these resources to enhance their ministry. Estadt's statement supports the view that, pastoral counseling originates from the tradition and trenches of ministry which are intimately connected with the overall ministry of the Church which "survives on the purpose of the increase of the love of God and neighbor;" that is to say, the Kingdom of God.[30]

When synthesizing an understanding of the emerging identity of pastoral counseling, it is particularly helpful to look at the activity itself and those engaged in the activity. The question, "What is pastoral counseling?" remains intricately connected with the question, "Who is a pastoral counselor?" To separate the minister from the ministry appears to be inappropriate. The separation would seem to violate the underlying values of the origins of pastoral counseling as an integration of theory and praxis, culturally and intellectually influenced, while ministerially rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Pastoral counseling has emerged as the concrete manifestation of the dream and vision of a wholistic process of healing and liber-

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[29]Estadt, "Pastoral Counseling Today and Tomorrow," p. 43.

[30]Oates, Pastoral Counseling, p. 35. Oates affirms the meaning of the Kingdom of God as "the fellowship of those- gathered and scattered- who are known to each other in the increase of love of God and neighbor."

ation which views the human person in a way that encourages the healthy integration of all aspects of the personality.

The pioneers of pastoral counseling acknowledged and grappled creatively with the power of God at work in the world. Companioning others in pain, they sought ways to tend to the whole person and to take account of all that contributes to being human. These pioneers incorporated in their methodology the resources available to them from various bodies of knowledge. Using this knowledge, they responded in an integrated way to those who came seeking health and wholeness. They offered an alternative way of viewing life. This alternative did not limit itself to viewing, interpreting, or understanding the client according to psychological or theological principles alone.

Influenced by the behavioral sciences and religion, the forefathers and foremothers of pastoral counseling envisioned the way persons in the helping professions ought to be in the world. They looked for wholistic ways to respond to the pain of those seeking guidance. They courageously refused to limit themselves to merely psychological or merely theological ways of viewing reality. They sought something more.

Gradually, a process emerged which integrated resources from various disciplines. Persons in the trenches began to employ ideas

and approaches from a variety of disciplines and schools of thought. What we have available in our time is the fruit of their labor.

In our own day too, pastoral counselors have dreams and visions for the future of our discipline. The task is to flesh out these dreams in order to make them realistically plausible.[31] Given the times we live in, our fleshing out must be both professionally credible in the field of mental health and ministerially rooted in the Gospel.

The origins and current expressions of pastoral counseling are intimately connected with the visions that have shaped and still influence the development of the field. Our environment and the current trends will continue to influence us. Deep down inside we must hold fast to the dream.

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[31]Stanley Hauerwas, The Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 150 ff. Speaking about character, narrative, and growth, Hauerwas asserts, "For the story itself demands that only those who are willing to be the story are capable of following it." Likewise, pastoral counselors are faced with the ardent challenge to be the story of the kingdom of God if they are to follow the story. This demands "perfection" which Hauerwas understands as, "full participation in an adequate story."

CHAPTER III

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS A LIBERATING EXPERIENCE

Introduction

Having examined theories regarding the integration of psychology and religion in the discipline of pastoral counseling, I now wish to consider an example of an overarching biblical metaphor which illustrates that integration on a concrete level.

As a resource, the scriptures are inexhaustible. Over the centuries they have inspired and shaped our reflection on the ways of life and the ways of death. Biblical metaphors have the capacity to be individually and collectively meaningful. They provide a common language rooted in fundamental human experience.

To be of integrating value for the pastoral counselor, an overarching biblical metaphor needs to have personal meaning. While I have chosen the biblical metaphor of the kingdom of God to illustrate the integration of psychological and religious insights, each pastoral counselor can search the wealth of the scriptures to find a special metaphor. This search encourages the pastoral counselor to gain a deeper appreciation of the scriptural tradition within which he or she operates.

To be effective, a biblical metaphor should reflect the counselor's personal assumptive world view. It needs to resonate with the depths of the person's interior life so it can crystalize and focus in an instant the heart of what he or she is about. It must respond practically and concretely to the individual's sense of personal vocation as manifested in his or her world.

The process of "finding" a biblical metaphor is, in itself, a valuable experience that challenges the person engaged in the process to grapple with the most basic question, "What do I really believe?" This question is refined to a more specific subset of questions. One begins to wonder, for example, "What do I believe to be true about psychology? The human person? Theology? The Transcendent? Ecclesiology? Mission? The activity in which I am engaged?"

The process of searching for a biblical metaphor also challenges the person to emerge with a deeper sense of self and a broader sense of life. The pastoral counselor's personal, professional, and ministerial growth toward the Transcendent, toward mystery, toward commitment, and toward love can be enhanced. One can emerge from the process with a heightened sense of his or her self as a gifted person, graced by the power of God, enriched by the wisdom of the community of faith, and keenly aware of one's participation in life.

The Metaphor of the Kingdom of God

In Chapter Two as we grappled with the identity issues of the discipline and activity of pastoral counseling, we noted that fundamental to what makes pastoral counseling different from counseling in general is its roots in Christian ministry. The metaphor of the kingdom of God is familiar to anyone engaged in ministry. Since all of Christian ministry springs from the Gospel, with Christian ministry the kingdom of God is intimately connected and can serve as a basic example of how a biblical metaphor can enlighten the process of pastoral counseling.

Appearing thirteen times in Mark, thirty-eight times in Matthew, and twenty-eight times in Luke,[1] the phrase, "the kingdom of God" is of evident significance after even a cursory reading of the synoptics. Scripture scholars agree that the central message of Jesus' proclamation is the announcement of the kingdom of God. Scholars also agree that it is Jesus who is the proclaimer of this kingdom. As the Liberation theologian, Juan Luis Segundo states, "The person who is to come is somehow identified with what is to come once the time is fulfilled; that is, the kingdom. The former

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[1]The exact number is not of ultimate importance. The numbers above are from John A. Sanford, The Kingdom Within: The Inner Meaning of Jesus' Sayings, (NY: Paulist Press, 1970), p. 41. The reader will note that Edward J. Ciuba cites the phrase occurring in the New Testament more than 100 times, 70 of those times in the synoptics alone. See Who Do You Say That I Am? (NY: Alba House, 1974), p. 47.

introduces the latter."[2] It is Jesus who shows us the reality of Israel. And, it is this reality that serves as the inspiration for all of his activity: to proclaim the kingdom of God.

In his work, The Parables of the Kingdom, C.H. Dodd synthesizes the ideas of well known scholars in the field. First, Dodd states that the focus of attention is on God. The kingdom is of God. The kingdom is not "of justice," or "of peace," but of God. He concludes that the ambiguity of the term found in the Greek translation, Βασελια, as well as the familiar Aramaic, malkuth reveals that,

> ...the substantive conception in the phrase "kingdom of God" is the idea of God, and the term "kingdom" indicates that specific aspect, attribute or activity of God, in which He is revealed as King or sovereign Lord of His people, or of the universe which he created.[3]

Though St. Paul refers to the kingdom of God "not as a matter of eating or drinking, but of justice, peace and the joy that is given by the Holy Spirit,"[4] the central focus of attention must be on God.

Second, Dodd links the term "kingdom" to the activity of God, to God's way of being and doing in the world of His creation. When

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[2]Juan Luis Segundo, Jesus of Nazareth Yesterday and Today, Vol II: The Historical Jesus of the Synoptics, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), p. 87.
[3]C.H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, (NY: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1961), p. 21.
[4]Romans 14:17 (NAB). [NAB = New American Bible]

using the phrase, Jesus described a reality that stretched beyond the immediate Palestinian world. Jesus spoke of a cosmic reality in which God is the primary focus of attention and in which all of creation tends toward this primary focus. Essentially, Jesus announces that it is time to look at God's activity and our relationship with this God in a new way.

Using the Aramaic language, Jesus announced the "malkuth of Heaven". This announcement is rightly perceived as a source of irritation for the Pharisees because it points to God as the center of attention and puts them in the background. God is the Lord of the universe, and even the Pharisees are subject to God. Jesus shifts the emphasis from an overly-scrupulous demand for adherence to the Torah, to submission, reliance and confidence in the ways of God. The long enjoyed control of the Pharisees is put to question. By presenting a new way of understanding God, Jesus challenges and exposes the oppressive ideology of the rabbinical order.

Third, Dodd reminds us that God is "King," not in the sense that we "obey his commandments," but that we are "confronted with the power of God at work in the world."[5] In confronting we learn obedience. This new look at God gives the oppressed an avenue of hope: they are no longer to be victims of oppression, but are called to be heralds of freedom. Persons who live in freedom are a threat to those concerned with self-serving power and control.

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[5]Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, p. 29.

Jesus comes on the scene, criticizes the current order, provides an avenue for persons to publicly process their pain and invites them to practice social imagination.[6] This makes for an unruly group of free persons in a world governed by those concerned with power and authority.

Current Concerns

In our current day, much debate has arisen as to the language of the phrase, "the kingdom of God". Some rightly believe the phrase supports the faulty ideology of a white male hierarchy.[7] They claim it allows the subjection of people to earthly powers that dominate rather than liberate. These powers purport that they hold the keys to the way in which persons will find entrance into the kingdom of God. A subtle form of control manipulates the masses into thinking that the "work of God" rests on the shoulders of a select few and that the ultimate coming of the kingdom depends on the interpretations of these privileged few.[8] This misinterpretation is

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[6]For a further description of this process, see W. Brueggemann, Hope Within History, (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1987), pp. 7-26.

[7]For example, McFague's position is that the term, "kingdom" can no longer be understood in its gospel sense because of intervening historical usage and the development of gender critical consciousness. See Models of God: Theology for a Nuclear Age, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), p. 63 ff.

[8]For an exposé on the exploitation of the distinction between kingdom and Church, see the following works: James H. Ebner, God Present as Mystery, (Winona, MN: St. Mary's College Press, 1976), pp. 73-87; and Richard P. McBride, Do We Need the Church?, (NY: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 14-15; 94.

rightly of concern. What is presented in this thesis is quite contrary to the views of proponents of this elitist ideology.

It is not difficult to see how the liberating concept announced by Jesus could be used for one's own purposes, intentionally or not. It is important, then, that we reiterate that the kingdom of God is <u>of God</u>. To substitute any other prepositional phrase would do injustice to the originating source.

Both Wilfrid Harrington and Andrew Greeley remind us that it is God who establishes God's activity.[9] It was God who decided to intervene in history, and it is God who determines the course of intervention. Lest we succumb to our human desire for control, we do well to remember the fragility of the phrase in order not to lose sight of its original intent.

It is helpful to recall that if the activity of God is of God's design, then our reception of the activity is a gift. God's kingdom is in our midst, within, and among us because God is gracious. Edward Ciuba describes our part in receiving God's gift: "...like a little child, helpless and dependent, we receive this gift from a gracious God."[10] To think of ourselves as "helpless and dependent" in a world that sometimes seems to call us to perfect inde-

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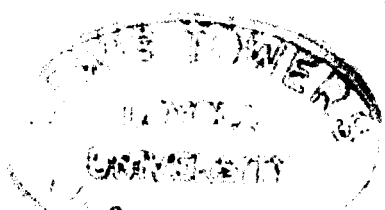
[9]Wilfrid Harrington, <u>Explaining the Gospels</u>, (NJ: Deus Books Paulist Press, 1963), pp. 55-57; Andrew Greeley, <u>The Jesus Myth</u>, (NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1971), pp. 39-61.

[10]Edward J. Ciuba, <u>Who Do You Say That I Am</u>?, NY: Alba House, 1974), p. 53.



pendence, is mind-boggling. And yet we are required to journey deeper; to touch that powerlessness that is part and parcel of our human condition. Until we are able to grasp the notion that we are not the center of the universe, the good news will elude us.

When we are able to make the journey deeper, we realize that we are, indeed, poor. Rather than adopt the over-scrupulous attitude that we are wretched sinful people who must do everything possible to "make up" for our sinfulness, we can acknowledge our limits and leave room for God to be God. We can see the kingdom truly <u>of God</u>. We can approach the power of God at work in the world, within us and among us, with awe and mystery.

Rather than turn the power that belongs to God over to those who represent a system that claims to have all the answers, we are called to walk freely, knowing that every person, every system is subject to sin and guilt even when most noble. This insight allows individuals to be responsible for themselves rather than to put blame on others or expect others to tell them how to be or do in the world. And this is the kingdom Jesus came to proclaim: a reality that calls us to take responsibility for our own lives, to walk in freedom, not in the bondage of our sinfulness; to live in love, not fear.

Some prefer to speak of the "kingdom of God" as the "reign" of God or the "realm" of God. They see this as an alternative transla-

tion that makes the phrase less offensive and less open to faulty ideology.[11] Scripturally, these are accurate translations and can be supported by a variety of arguments.

While I accept the position that we need to employ an all-embracing language for God's presence within and among us, I believe that it is possible to retain the wealth of tradition as well. It is important to speak of God in a way that is respectful of God and responsive to our need and desire to be in relationship with God. At the same time, it is important to allow the tradition to speak to us in our own day. This is an especially delicate task that must take account of the dignity of every human person.

One biblical theologian of our time, Walter Brueggemann, dares to make the assertion that the phrase "kingdom of God" retains application for our own day. He ponders the phrase as an interesting "juxtaposition of terms,"[12] suggesting that the antiquity of the phrase can be relevant for us today:

> The word "God" conventionally refers to what is awesome, other, transcendent, spiritual. The term "kingdom" refers to power as it is organized to make a difference in the real world.[13]

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[11]See Greeley, The Jesus Myth, (NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1972), p. 37; and Pheme Perkins, Reading the New Testament, (NY: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 91. Also, I am indebted to the challenges and inspirations of the late John Sinnwell for his use of the phrase "realm" of God.

[12]Brueggemann, Hope Within History, p. 22.

[13]Ibid.

As a single phrase, "kingdom of God," provides the "core metaphor for a new social imagination" in which every other social construction of power and authority is judged and critiqued.[14]

In our own day, we might describe the activity of God as an all-pervasive "presence". To be confronted with the power of this all-pervasive presence at work in the world challenges self-security and gives hope to those who have been broken by the self-proclaimed powers of the world. The kingdom of God is clearly a stumbling block for the righteous and a refreshing source of liberation for the oppressed. As stated earlier, the Good News which Jesus speaks is good news only for those who are willing to receive it. It is bad news, however, for those who have become complacent in their own little world where they have made themselves the focus of attention.

While all arguments are worthy of attention, it is not the purpose of this thesis to defend my decision to retain the word, "kingdom." The kingdom of God metaphor has and continues to be part of the Judeo-Christian Tradition. I have chosen to retain the traditional form of this ancient metaphor believing that it has the capacity to transcend the limits of language and inspire us in our own day.

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[14]Ibid. Brueggemann also emphasizes that, "The parabolic articulation... is important, because it is the only way that the imaginative project can keep from becoming flattened into a new system of coercion and exploitation."

"Behold, the Kingdom of God is Among You."[15]

Over the centuries considerable debate has ensued among scripture scholars as to the exact meaning of this short phrase which occurs only once in the New Testament.

Essentially, the debate centers on eschatological concerns regarding the exact nature and proximity of the referent of Jesus' proclamation. Did Jesus mean for his hearers to understand the kingdom of God as already present or as something yet to come? Can it be both? If already present, how does one recognize the kingdom; and how does one reconcile one's contrary experiences? If yet to come, how does one prepare for it; and how long must one wait?

In the gospel of Luke, the author uses the Greek phrase, ἐντὸς ὑμῶν, which has been argumentatively translated to mean, "within you" or "among you".[16] Variations on the theme of ἐντὸς, can be found in other scholarly works, which offer a variety of translations. Cited by Dodd, C.H. Roberts argues "persuasively" that the phrase means, "in your hands," or "within your power." He believes that the kingdom of God is not something to be awaited anxiously, but is an "available possibility here and now".[17] One might question, "Then, what are we waiting for?" This is precisely Jesus'

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[15]Luke 17:21 (JB). [JB = The Jerusalem Bible.]
[16]C.H. Dodd, in The Parables of the Kingdom, presents a synopsis of the problem of interpretation. The reader is advised to refer to pp. 21-40 and pp. 62-64 of his work.
[17]C.H. Roberts as cited in C.H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, p. 63, n. 2.

point: "Look around you. What do you see and hear? God's all-pervasive presence and activity is here and now."

For most of us, reflection on the proximity of the kingdom is influenced by the particular translation of the scriptures that we use in our everyday life. For those who pursue an exegetical look at the phrase, biblical commentaries highlight the variety of translations available. The commentaries provide an additional source of wisdom. Variations of the theme are cited as: "already present in your midst," "in your midst," "in the midst of you," or "within your grasp."[18]

In the King James Version (KJV) we read that the kingdom of God is "within" you. This implies that God's activity resides inside the human person. Like the mustard seed, the kingdom is planted in the ground of our being (Mark 4:30-32). It is within us that the seed must take root. However, it is possible that it will not take root at all (Matthew 13:29-30). This possibility implies each person's freedom to accept or reject God's in-breaking. How the kingdom grows and why some do and others do not experience growth is not known to us. Like the rooting of the seed, the growth of God's kingdom is a mystery (Mark 4:26-29).

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[18]Raymond E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmeyer, and R.E. Murphy, eds. The Jerome Biblical Commentary, (Englewood-Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 150; R. Fuller, L. Johnston and C. Kearns, eds. A New Catholic Commentary on Scripture, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1975), p. 1013; and Pheme Perkins, Reading the New Testament, p. 92.

The Jerusalem Bible (JB) notes that the kingdom of God is "among you." This variation on the theme suggests that God's activity is present not only inside individual persons but among them as well. Similarly, the Revised Standard Version (RSV) reads: "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you." The kingdom of God is present when we gather and in the spaces between us.

In our own day, both translations remind us of the communal dimension of God's activity. Lest we become too comfortable with the notion that God's kingdom within us could possibly be for our sake alone, the interpersonal dimension is brought to our attention, challenging us to look at the power of God at work in the world; in the realm of human inter-relatedness.

The New American Bible (NAB) states that the kingdom of God is "already in your midst". In the time of Jesus, and in our own day, God's in-breaking is a reality in human lives. Like the persons of first century Palestine, we are called to confront God's presence in our world. We are urged to stop looking for short term solutions and to rely on that all-pervasive, ever faithful covenant which God has established among us. What we hope for is already. We need only see and believe.

Yet, while our faith tells us that God's activity has begun, that the power of God is at work in the world, our experience reveals that God's work has not reached final completion. We look

around us at a world in chaos, oppression, and bondage and we say to ourselves, "There must be more. This can't be the whole of life." In this sense, the kingdom of God is also a hope for the future: for the "good time coming" and for the "final and absolute state of bliss in a transcendent order".[19]

Even in our moments of greatest optimism we are painfully aware that the world in which we live is far from perfect. Though acutely aware that God's deliberate presence in the world had asserted itself in a new way through him, Jesus noted that the kingdom would be brought to completion only in God's own time (Mark 14:32-33). The day and the hour are not for us to know. For our part, we are called to cooperate with God's activity and to live in service of God's sovereignty over us as exemplified in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We look to Jesus and his primary proclamations for a glimpse of how this new relationship might look.

In the context of this view of the kingdom of God, the specific role of the pastoral counselor is to walk hand in hand with the Jesus of the Gospel as proclaimer of Good News to those who come seeking alternative ways of viewing reality. Jesus did not come to "fix" things. He did not repair every situation or cure every sick or misguided person he encountered. He left people to continue to struggle with the reality of life. He came to offer a new way of

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[19]Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, p. 23.

making meaning of the turmoil, the nonsense, the oppression, the poverty, the loneliness, the depression.

Those who assume the role of pastoral counselors enter into the lives of others as Jesus entered into the history of God's People and as Jesus enters into our own individual and communal lives today: to offer an alternative way of knowing, of being and of doing in the world. Here we do well to heed the words of Karl Rahner, "Ally yourself with what is genuine, with the challenging, with what demands everything, with the courage to accept the mystery within you."[20]

Jesus and the Announcement of the Kingdom

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me;
therefore, he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring glad tidings
to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives,
Recovery of sight to the blind
and release to prisoners,
To announce a year of favor from the Lord."[21]

Following the work of John in the wilderness, Jesus comes on the scene announcing that the kingdom of God has come. The promises of God are fulfilled. Jesus urges his hearers to repent and believe for what is about to take place is quite different from what they

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[20]Karl Rahner, "Thoughts on the Possibility of Belief Today," Theological Investigations, vol. 5, trans. Karl-H. Kruger (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), p. 21.
[21]Luke 4:18-19 (NAB).

had anticipated. To use the words of Dodd, "Something has happened, which has not happened before, and which means that the sovereign power of God has come into effective operation."[22] Dodd believes that "the old order closed with the ministry of John; the new begins with the ministry of Jesus."[23] All that the prophets of old had desired to see is a part of the here and now (c.f. Isaiah 61:1,2; 58:6). And so, Luke begins his theological reflection on the message of Jesus with Jesus' reference to the familiar passage from Isaiah and his announcement that the kingdom of God which had been proclaimed is no longer something to come in the near future but a "matter of present experience".[24]

Upon Jesus' announcement, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing," those in the synagogue at Nazareth sat in amazement. "How could this be?" "Isn't he the son of the carpenter?" They were "filled with indignation," quickly expelling him from his home town (c.f. Luke 4:21-30).

Despite resistance, Jesus proclaims the deliberate in-breaking of God's presence in the world. This kingdom was much different from the one for which people had hoped: it was of God and not of the human order. Because it was of God, this kingdom was founded on a new way of relating with God and with each other: a new covenant. In this new covenant, "Shalom" would be restored:

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[22]Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, p. 29.
[23]Ibid., p. 33.
[24]Ibid., p. 31.

> The Good News Jesus proclaimed about the kingdom of God was predicated upon the sovereign will of God, making salvation available to all men [sic]. "Shalom" or peace, that quality of relationship between God and man resulting in harmony, integrity, wholeness, freedom from fear, anxiety and fragmentation, was made possible in the person of Jesus.[25]

Few had anticipated the kind of radical conversion which Jesus required. They were disappointed. Jesus' "kingdom" was not in line with their idea of what a kingdom ought to be. Jesus' kingdom did not embrace their political and nationalistic aspirations for power and vindication. Instead, participating in the new kingdom would

> determine the way men [sic] would regard each other, their quality of concern, compassion and forgiveness for one another; it would ask men to leave everything behind and adopt its principles; it would provide its members with a joyful stance toward the future— no matter what.[26]

All that was necessary was a change of heart.[27] If the Old Testament covenant metaphor is summed up as relationship, then the kingdom of God metaphor is best understood as God's Great Dream for humankind to live in a quality of relationship that leads to life, health, and wholeness; that leads to God.

Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God is the persistent reminder that we have been given the very best and are required to accept or reject it for what it is. To settle for less is to risk

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[25]Ciuba, Who Do You Say that I Am?, p. 51.
[26]Ibid.
[27]Comes from the term, metanoia, which calls attention to the deeply interior quality of repentance. For the synoptists, some kind of interior renewal must accompany the forgiveness of sin. See, The Jerome Biblical Commentary, p. 127.

extinction; our hearts will become so hardened that perhaps even God will not be able to save us.

Jesus is talking about a very serious and difficult enterprise. For Jesus, the announcement of the kingdom of God and the acceptance of God's gift in the hearts of all who hear was a matter of life or death.[28] Andrew Greeley suggests that,

> ...perhaps after a time it became clear to Jesus that in one level of their personalities they most certainly understood what he said; they pretended not to understand precisely because they realized the full implication of his Good News and understood the staggering metanoia that would have to occur in their lives if they should take him seriously.[29]

Greeley believes that in response to a serious look at Jesus and his message, their "terribly seductive human material activities would have to be seen in a different light. Perhaps even as games."[30] Greeley suggests that people refused to hear what Jesus was saying because it was "too spectacularly good."[31] He states that, "Jesus was rejected and ultimately executed not because of greed or ambition or fear, but rather, because of cynicism. If there is any

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[28]The Old Testament foreshadows this concept, "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6, RSV).

[29]Greeley, The Jesus Myth, p. 50.

[30]Ibid. Greeley has a point, but in a spiritual sense there is also much demanded of those who choose to accept God's gift and live in the kingdom. The kingdom must also be viewed in light of the cross. What may seem to be failure must be metamorphosed to triumph in the Easter event.

[31]Ibid.

prophet more obnoxious than a prophet of doom, it is a prophet of joy."[32]

The liberation theologian Juan Luis Segundo and the Capuchin Michael Crosby support a quite different explanation for the rejection of Jesus' message.[33] While they acknowledge cynicism as a by-product, they say that first and foremost the problem was one of authority, power and wealth. They affirm that Jesus was rejected then and is rejected now because persons are obsessed by greed and ambition. The rich have no time to hear, let alone listen. The poor are so desperate they will welcome any suggestion of hope.

In our own lives we can see that our rejection of the message of Jesus has elements of both explanations: finding the message too hard to believe because it is too good to be true; and resisting the surrender of our comfort and concern for authority, power and wealth. With our bellies full we have no time to hear, let alone listen to the suggestion that we might not be as full as we would have ourselves believe.

When asked by the disciples of John, "Are you 'He who is to come' or do we look for another?" Jesus replied in the familiar words from Isaiah:

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[32]Ibid.

[33]See the following works in particular: Juan Luis Segundo, Jesus of Nazareth Yesterday and Today, Vol II: The Historical Jesus of the Synoptics, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985) and Michael Crosby, Spirituality of the Beatitudes, (NY: Orbis Books, 1981).

> Go back and report to John what you hear and see; the blind recover their sight, cripples walk, lepers are cured, the deaf hear, dead men are raised to life, and the poor have the good news preached to them.[34]

In his response Jesus makes it known that, "The dream of Isaiah has become a reality."[35] Let any doubt be dispelled, for "a decisive turning point has occurred. And Jesus has come to announce it."[36]

The Kingdom of God is Like...

What is most striking in a review of the synoptics is that nowhere is Jesus reported to define the kingdom of God by saying, "The kingdom of God *is*..." Rather, the evangelists report Jesus saying, "The kingdom of God *is like*..." The primary tool of Jesus' descriptions of the kingdom is parable.[37]

Jesus had an unqualified gift as a great story-teller.[38] He was able to capture his audience with stories that related to their own experience capturing their attention yet leaving them completely surprised. For the end of the story was not as they might have predicted. There was an eventual twist that often left them unsettled, having to ponder and discover the meaning for themselves.

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[34]Matthew 11:3-5 (NAB) [c.f. Isaiah 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 61:1].
[35]Greeley, *The Jesus Myth*, p. 42.
[36]Ibid., p. 43.
[37]For a challenging window into the world of parable see John Dominic Crossan's, *The Dark Interval: Towards a Theology of Story*, (Niles, IL: Argus Communications, 1975).
[38]See Sloyan, *Jesus in Focus*, (CT: Twenty-third Publications, 1983), Chapter 12, "The Storyteller," pp. 87-93.

In this manner, Jesus spoke of the kingdom. In this manner, he gave us a preliminary glimpse of what the kingdom is like. The kingdom of God is not predictable by normal course of events. It cannot be reduced to (and therefore be controlled by) conventional understanding, logic, or reason. The kingdom is surprising, refreshing, new; it is also unsettling and disruptive to the common ordering of things. The kingdom demands personal investment and energy. Discovering the meaning of the kingdom requires a personal search.

But how is one given the opportunity to take part in this kingdom? Two parables are instructive in this regard: the hidden treasure in the field and the pearl of great price:

> The reign of God is like a buried treasure which a man found in a field. He hid it again, and rejoicing at his find went and sold all he had and bought that field. Or again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant's search for fine pearls. When he found one really valuable pearl, he went back and put up for sale all that he had and bought it.[39]

Reflecting on these verses raises a number of points worth our attention. First, it is possible for us to recognize the value of the kingdom. There is something within the human person that recognizes a "good buy". Both the person of the field and the merchant were somehow able to recognize the value inherent in the object of their attraction. They had the potential to recognize goodness.

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[39]Matthew 13:44-46 (NAB)

There is "delight" in recognizing the kingdom. Finding something of value is delightful. The probability that the object of value is worth more than what one already has acquired is even more delightful. After all, it is a "great buy," so selling what one does possess is no great loss. Or is it? Imagine the difficulty of selling everything one has worked to acquire.

Recognizing the kingdom moves us to sell what we must in order to possess it— even if this means selling everything we have. Despite the difficulties, a certitude and pervading sense of "rightness" about the adventure move the person of the field and the merchant to do what they need to do, regardless of the cost or pain. They drew on their resources in order to acquire the object of their delight. This implies their freedom to choose or refuse the opportunity. Delight both inspired and sprang from their commitment to purchase regardless of the cost.

The point of Jesus' telling seems to be that having found the treasure, persons no longer had a need to look further; that all their longings and needs were satisfied. This is consistent with Jesus' urge to "seek first his kingdom" (Matthew 6:33). Still, we might wonder, "How does the story end?" Or more importantly, "How does the story continue?" Jesus gives no further narrative. Additional insights must be drawn from the example of his life.[40]

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[40]The gospel writers, however, encase their parables with verses that are meant to illuminate the parables. In Matthew 13:52, Jesus is reported saying, "Every scribe who has been trained for the king-

Because we know that the kingdom is unpredictable as well as unsettling, we can surmise that at some point the treasure of the kingdom cannot be kept as one's own personal discovery. In fact, it is not meant to be solely a source of personal contentment. Inherent in the treasure is the eventual need and/or readiness to share it. One need only recall the fate of the rich fool in Luke 12:13-21. The man tore down his old barns and built a new storehouse for his wealth, only to learn that he was to die that evening.

Jesus encourages the sharing of the treasure with others: "Your light must shine" (Matthew 5:16). In other words, the treasure is given so that the entire household may benefit. Salt when gone flat loses its potential to add spice to life. Doesn't this happen with our "treasure" as well? If the value of the treasure is not actively shared, it becomes dormant, losing its flavor and its special appeal. In the parable of the talents, Jesus reminds us that we cannot simply bury the treasure given us (Matthew 25:14-30). The treasure has not been given to be buried in fear, but ought to be invested unselfishly to produce thirty, sixty and a hundredfold (cf. Mark 4:20).

It is not difficult to imagine that even the experience of possessing the treasure is not enough. As the biblical theologian Walter Brueggemann suggests, "Israel has a chronic discontent with

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dom of heaven is like a housekeeper who brings of his treasure what is new and what is old."

the present."[41] Persons of hope, poets and prophets, do not settle for what already is— as good and wonderful as that might be. They want more.[42] Not "more" in a self-centered sense (as in the case of the rich fool), but "more" in the sense of a burning desire for justice, equity, and freedom.

The same can be said for persons of the kingdom. A concern for the well-being of all of humankind leaves us unsatisfied until its accomplishment. This "more" is the desire for the kingdom in its completion. It is the refusal to settle for anything but the best— God's Great Dream for all.

Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done[43]

C.H. Dodd states that, "...eternal life is the ultimate issue of the coming of the Kingdom of God, and this coming is manifested in the series of historical events which unfolds itself in the ministry of Jesus."[44] In describing the wonder of the kingdom of God in its potential impact on our own lives, Andrew Greeley notes how Jesus spoke to what Greeley calls "the most fundamental questions" with which humankind is concerned:

> Is reality malign or gracious? Jesus replies that it is gracious to the point of insane generosity. Is life absurd or does it have purpose? The reply of Jesus is that not only does it have

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[41]Brueggemann, Hope Within History, p. 84.
[42]Ibid., pp. 80-84.
[43]Matthew 6:10 (NAB)
[44]Dodd, Parables of the Kingdom, p. 35.

> purpose but that God has directly intervened in human events to make it perfectly clear what the purpose is. What is the nature of the Really Real? Jesus' response is that the Really Real is generous, forgiving, saving love. How does a good man [sic] behave? The good man is a person who is captivated by the joy and wonder of God's promise. In the end, will life triumph over death or death over life? Jesus is perfectly confident: The kingdom of his Father cannot be vanquished, not even by death.[45]

When Jesus responded to the disciples of John in the words of Isaiah,[46] his ministry was already revealing the kingdom's ultimate reality. "The impact upon this world of the 'powers of the world to come' in a series of events, unprecedented and unrepeatable," were "now in actual process".[47] There was no turning back. God had made a radical choice to be known more fully. It was an "act of God's grace to reveal His Kingdom to an unrepentant generation."[48]

The kingdom of God of which Jesus spoke also had to do with a hope for the future: for the "good time coming" and for the "final and absolute state of bliss in a transcendent order".[49] As our Jewish brothers and sisters continue to pray, "May He establish His Kingdom during your life and during your days, and during the life of all the house of Israel,"[50] so we, their Christian counterparts, pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done."[51]

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[45]Greeley, The Jesus Myth, p. 48.
[46]See Matthew 11:2-6 (c.f. Isaiah 26:19; 29:18 ff; 35:5 ff).
[47]Dodd, Parables of the Kingdom, p. 35.
[48]Ibid., p. 30.
[49]Ibid., p. 23.
[50]Kaddish in the Jewish Authorized Daily Prayer-Book, translated by S. Singer, authorized by the Chief Rabbi, and published by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1908, p. 86.
[51]Matthew 11:2-6 (NAB).

Jesus has not been represented here as solely an "apocalyptic preacher," forewarning people of God's final judgments,[52] because for our purposes it is beneficial to see him as one who embraced ambiguities, thereby giving us a more dimensional view of God's power at work in the world. Jesus criticized the Pharisees' failure to respond with empathy to persons in pain. He challenged their one-sided way of thinking and confronted their inability to tolerate alternative ways of viewing reality. That ambiguity and paradox are natural elements of our experience of the kingdom of God is evident in Ciuba's remarks on a reality that is at once already and not yet:

> ...because the Kingdom is already present, and yet, not fully realized, there will always be a tension in the human experience of a person who acknowledges the reality and demands of the Kingdom. The tension is between the "already" and the "not yet," between a promise believed and lived and a fullness still to come, between hope for future glory and the disillusionment over present failures.[53]

Doesn't this view of the kingdom of God now and to come resonate with our experience of being human? Doesn't it seem an appropriate metaphor for our human struggle with the ambiguities of life? Could another metaphor be better used to express that painful moment of truth in human experience when we realize how far we have come and how far we have yet to go; when we realize no absolute decision exists, but that truth resides in what is, what is yet to come, and what is in between?

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[52]Ciuba describes the on-going deliberation of scholars who represent the already and not yet aspects of the kingdom of God. See p. 54 ff of his text.

[53]Ciuba, Who Do You Say that I Am?, p. 55.

Jesus reminds us that there is always a temptation to rest on our laurels, to settle for what we have "accomplished;" for the way we make meaning in our lives, for our accustomed lifestyle, and for our cherished definitions of good and bad.[54]

Jesus reminds us there is more to come: for better and for worse, we may for a time have to undergo trial.[55] We are warned that "whoever puts his or her hand to the plow but keeps looking back is unfit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). And yet, the rewards of a life well lived, "all because of me," are worth any cost, even if others should hate, despise, or utter all kinds of slander against us (c.f. Matthew 5:11-12). In the final days, "None of those who cry out, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of God but only the one who "does the will of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Only those who have done the will of God, who have acted justly, loved tenderly, and walked humbly with God[56] will hear the long awaited words, "Come, share you master's joy" (Matthew 25:23).

As Greeley has reminded us, we have already been given what is needed to walk as children of the kingdom. We have the power of God at work in the world: within us and among us. The kingdom yet to come keeps us poor, in want for something more. It calls into question our images of self-sufficiency reminding us that we are not the

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[54]See Luke 11:37-52 (NAB). The inside/outside theme is a constant one in Luke. Inside cleanliness is superior to outside cleanliness.
[55]See John 15:18-27 (NAB).
[56]See Micah 6:8 (JB).

center of the universe but that the gift of God's promise fulfilled in our hearing is meant to be shared (c.f. Matthew 10:8). Jesus reminds us that God's home is for all and that we cannot prevent God's power from operating in the world. We are called to be free and we are called to participate in the freeing of others.[57]

[57]See Mark 2:15-17 (NAB).

CHAPTER IV

THE KINGDOM OF GOD METAPHOR IN THE PRACTICE OF PASTORAL COUNSELING

I have attempted to present a psychologically and historically informed understanding of the discipline and activity of pastoral counseling and have identified a biblical metaphor which I believe can contribute to a definition of pastoral counseling. In this chapter I will illustrate how the metaphor of the kingdom of God can function in the integration of psychological and theological concerns within pastoral counseling activity.

Liberation, Freedom and Creativity

Our dreams and visions reflect our desire for something more than we already have. They are a response to our inner sense that things are not quite the way they ought to be, that something is missing. Deep within there is a desire for something greater. Active imagining moves us beyond the current state of affairs to the realm of unlimited possibility. To experience liberation is to experience the freedom of possibility, the creative dimensions of "not yet" which our dreams open up. The kingdom of God metaphor symbolically expresses for us this psychological and theological reality which already is and which is yet to come.

Pastoral counseling aspires to be a wholistic process of healing and liberation that encourages the healthy integration of all aspects of the human personality. What makes pastoral counseling unique is that it attempts to express within this wholistic process the power of God at work in the world.

Broadly speaking, we can say that the pastoral counselor engages in the activity of pastoral counseling for the sake of the suffering person seeking health and wholeness. In a similarly broad sense, Jesus engaged in the activity of God for the sake of a suffering humanity in need of health and wholeness.

Utilizing the particular skills, techniques, and interventions of the behavioral sciences within a Judeo-Christian context, pastoral counselors respond to individuals, couples, families, groups, and social systems. In helping persons deal with the concrete experiences of their lives, pastoral counselors address the deeper issues that plague humankind. The activity of pastoral counseling can thus be seen as participation in the work of the kingdom of God, and the metaphor of the kingdom of God can express for pastoral counselors what it is they do and why they do it.

Under this broad purpose, pastoral counseling aims specifically to enable persons to become free, responsible, and able to deal with the pain of being human. As a process of liberation, pastoral counseling seeks to help persons to help themselves; to grow

in freedom from the obstacles preventing them from enjoying health and wholeness; to generate options and choices; to take responsible action; and to bring about an increase of health and wholeness not only for themselves but for all of humankind.

Pastoral counseling aims in specific ways to manifest the Good News of the kingdom of God in the lives of individuals, couples, families or groups, or within social systems. By calling to mind the metaphor of the kingdom of God while engaging in the activity of pastoral counseling, pastoral counselors can find the motivation and the inspiration to meet the challenges of closeness with those who come.

Concrete Expressions of the Integration Process

In the therapeutic activity of pastoral counseling we can find concrete examples of psychological and theological elements in dialogue within the framework provided by the biblical metaphor of the kingdom of God.

The Therapeutic Alliance:

Psychological theory holds that the development of trust is of primary importance in the therapeutic alliance. In the therapeutic alliance trust is formed when the client feels accepted and heard.

By demonstrating positive regard for the client, the therapist contributes to the development of trust within the alliance.

Theology holds that each individual by virtue of human personhood is worthy of utmost respect. The integrity and dignity of the human person are to be preserved. Given the psychological and theological position, how might the pastoral counselor think in an integrated way about developing the therapeutic alliance?

Calling to mind the metaphor of the kingdom of God helps one to address the issue. The metaphor serves as a source of motivation to establish the alliance and to persevere beyond any difficulties that may arise. It evokes a deep understanding of our task as pastoral counselors to provide an atmosphere of belonging in which persons experience freedom.

Pastoral counselors are about something greater than what meets the eye. They realize that the seed of the kingdom of God is planted in everyone. Their task is to tend the seed, till the soil, water it with care, love, and accept it. The pastoral counselor tends to the welfare of the kingdom within the client while God tends to the growth of the kingdom.

While building the therapeutic alliance, pastoral counselors are aware of particular issues needing consideration. First, Jesus did not come to "fix" things for those he encountered; similarly, it is not the pastoral counselor's task to achieve growth <u>for</u> the

client. Rather, the pastoral counselor helps clients to help themselves. Therapy is a personal search that demands investment and energy. No one can do it for us.

Second, the kingdom of God metaphor reminds pastoral counselors that they do not have all the answers. The metaphor can generate a continuing awareness which will hold in check certain subtle forms of oppression that can otherwise emerge in the therapeutic relationship: issues of authority, power, control and manipulation. The metaphor challenges notions of perfection by reminding pastoral counselors that we are all in a process of becoming. It warns us to beware of quick fix solutions. Seeds take time to grow.

The kingdom of God metaphor as revealed in the parables reminds pastoral counselors of the need to be open and flexible in the therapeutic process, with themselves and with their clients. The therapeutic relationship allows for surprise and unpredictability. The mystery of the kingdom of God can be manifested in the mystery of the human person. Pastoral counselors cannot afford to reduce themselves or the lives of their clients to the limits of conventional logic. The metaphor of the kingdom of God reminds us that there will be unsettling and disruptive movements in the therapeutic process as well as refreshing surprises.

Psychological theory encourages pastoral counselors to align themselves with the ego of their clients in order to increase self-

esteem. The ultimate ethical commitment of the pastoral counselor is to the integrity of the client's self. By working through the ego; keeping an alliance with the cognitive processes; working toward integration; and honoring the defenses of the client, the pastoral counselor nurtures the soil for clients to cope with the stresses involved in living.[1]

Being shown genuine acceptance is at the deepest level probably quite a contrary experience for persons who are accustomed to being met with reservation or disapproval from others. Genuine acceptance creates a disequilibrium. The effect is startling. Recall the dramatic effect of Jesus' acceptance of the prostitute's personhood in spite of her destructive way of living— she washes his feet with her tears.[2]

Such a turnabout is not uncommon in the therapeutic relationship. When clients realize on the deepest level that nothing is too scandalous; that they are loved and accepted for who they are; that there is relief in sight from the burdening guilt that has plagued them; that they are worthy of empathy, understanding and forgive-

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[1]See Althea J. Horner, Object Relations and the Developing Ego in Therapy, (NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1984); O. Kernberg, Object Relations Theory in Clinical Psychoanalysis, (NY: Jason Aronson, 1976); H. Kohut and P. Seitz "Concepts and Theories of Psychoanalysis," in The Search for the Self: Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut-1950-1978, ed. Paul H. Ornstein (NY: International Universities Press, 1978); and H. Kohut, The Restoration of the Self, (NY: International Universities Press, 1977).

[2]Luke 7:36-40; 44-50.

ness, they experience freedom. When people experience freedom, they are experiencing the power of God at work in their lives, even when they are not consciously aware that this is the case.

The process of liberation enables people to make choices and to take action. Their choices and actions affect the lives of others. If their manner of being and acting has become qualitatively different, their relations with others are positively affected. Thus, they are not only influenced by the power of God at work in their world, but they participate in the power of God, cooperating with the activity of the kingdom.

Treasures and Pearls:

People come to counseling because at some level they want their lives to be better than they are. Unfortunately, they often see only the pain, the elements of their selves that are unfulfilled. They need to recognize and appreciate the constructive elements of their lives: their strengths, the ways they have been graced, the positive, life-giving experiences they have had. With this awareness of strength, they can tackle their areas of conflict and create the possibility of a healthier present and future.

Recall for a moment the parables of the buried treasure and the pearl of great price. Let the buried treasure be those qualities of the client that have gone unrecognized or unaccepted over

time. Let the pearl of great price be the hoped-for future scenario of the client. Seeing the therapeutic relationship in light of these parables of the kingdom illuminates our discussion by offering a window into the world of the client.

It is possible for clients to recognize a "good buy." Pastoral counselors offer back to their clients what they hear them say about their lives. It is critical that they acknowledge the characteristic strengths and gifts demonstrated in the client's life story. How pastoral counselors do this helps clients determine what is worthy of change in their lives.

The parables portray the "delight" in finding a treasure. Uncovering or rediscovering their positive qualities— their pearl— evokes satisfaction in clients. When they come to a point in therapy at which they can define their own areas of conflict and generate their own strategies to deal with them, clients get a sense that they are in control and have discovered promising alternatives to their present situations.

Their motivation to change is not without cost. To possess the newfound treasure or pearl, they must let go of some old possessions. This means selling the familiar, comfortable ways of the past. While their enthusiasm is present; while their engagement in the therapeutic process is voluntary; while they are convinced change is necessary, it is nevertheless hard to sell what was once

grasped as essential. In psychological language, the phenomenon which then appears is called resistance. Personality theory holds that a great percentage of working with clients is learning to work with resistance.

Even when clients decide to change, they do not always choose to take the logical steps toward commitment to ongoing growth. Like the person of the field or the merchant in the parables, clients are free to do what they will with their newfound treasures and pearls. We hope for long-term development. We hope that at some point the treasure or pearl will be seen, not as one's own private discovery, but as a value to be shared. We hope that our clients will realize that treasures and pearls are given that the entire household may benefit, yet we are fully aware of the client's freedom to choose.

The metaphor of the kingdom of God reminds pastoral counselors that they are to help clients confront the power of God at work in their world. By addressing specific symptoms of disturbance: pain, conflict, struggles, obstacles, stresses, and expectations of self and others, pastoral counselors assist clients in addressing the deeper issues. They help them publicly process their pain so that the victim stance can be challenged and met with alternatives and choices. The metaphor of the kingdom reminds pastoral counselors that the in-breaking of God provides an alternate way of making meaning of turmoil, nonsense, poverty, loneliness and depression.

When clients are able to claim responsibility for their own lives they are no longer victims.

Pastoral counselors recognize the kingdom of God's presence when blind spots give way to sight, when sound breaks the barriers of silence set up by deafening pain, and when movement replaces the immobility of the lame. As for the fruits of the therapeutic process, pastoral counselors see God as breaking in and salvation as close at hand.

Strengths and Limits:

Human persons also have the capacity to reject the power of God at work in the world. In The Road Less Traveled, M. Scott Peck defined evil as "the exercise of political power— that is, the imposition of one's will upon others by overt or covert coercion— in order to avoid... growth."[3] Peck firmly believes that:

> the patient who seeks to be understood as wholly as possible would be well advised to seek a therapist capable of approaching the mystery of the human soul from all angles.[4]

Approaching the human soul from all angles includes being able to deal with good and evil. Well aware of the human person's potential to choose evil and concerned that evil is much more a part of our society than we care to acknowledge, Peck reminds us, "Were there no

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[3]M. Scott Peck, The Road Less Traveled, (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p. 279.
[4]Ibid., p. 39.

goodness in the world, we would not even be considering the problem of evil."[5]

How might pastoral counselors think about Sin and Blessing in the lives of their clients? Peck proposes that, "The only valid reason to recognize human evil is to heal it wherever we can... and eventually wipe its ugliness off the face of the earth."[6] The metaphor of the kingdom of God reminds us that faulty, oppressive, and destructive ideologies cannot be tolerated. They must be exposed in order for healing to take place. The method of exposure must be "careful compassion so as to approach... healing."[7] In the process we can expect to be perceived as a source of irritation.

In exposing evil in the world, pastoral counselors invite clients to publicly process their pain and to engage in social imagination. Jesus blessed the lowly, the poor, and the children. The exposure of evil is not without an invitation to grace. Jesus invited those on destructive paths to change their hearts, be forgiven, and walk as children of light.

According to Peck, those who are able to acknowledge their imperfection, at least on some level, are not evil.[8] He asserts that,

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[5]Ibid., p. 41. Further in the chapter Peck asserts that in his own experience, "evil human beings are quite common and usually appear quite ordinary to the superficial observer" (p. 47). He cites a startling experience in the chapter that leads one to wonder and ponder more deeply the presence of evil in our world.
[6]Ibid., p. 44.
[7]Ibid., p. 68.
[8]Ibid., p. 63.

"The poor in spirit do not commit evil. Evil is not committed by people who feel uncertain about their righteousness, who question their own motives, who worry about betraying themselves."[9] Pastoral counselors offer clients a safe environment in which to grapple with their propensities and generate new ways of coping. They offer the option of a life lived more abundantly.

The metaphor of the kingdom of God reminds us that as human persons we have the capacity to recognize both good and evil, in ourselves and in others. We know deep within us when things are not right. We get in touch with our limits and our sinfulness. We get in touch with our poverty. The specific aims of pastoral counseling are based on the assumption that persons come to the process in order to deal with their personal problems and that these problems are intimately connected with the deeper issues of life: the meaning and destiny of humankind.

The Power of Community:

In most cases pastoral counselors hope clients will share their wealth with others and seek the support of others in their ongoing development. Because pastoral counselors deal with the means and end of human destiny and because they understand the necessity and value of community, pastoral counselors should provide an opportunity for clients to express their self-discoveries in the

[9]Ibid., p. 72.

larger social arena of their lives. In this way, among others, clients are reminded that they do not live in isolation; that their lives have a direct impact on the lives of others; and that their wealth when shared can multiply sixty, ninety or hundredfold.[10]

At this point three primary aspects of community merit consideration. First, group therapy, self-help groups and support groups are of benefit.[11] As clients engage in the ongoing process of resolving conflicts in daily living, they benefit from avenues beyond the one-on-one of individual therapy.[12] Personal growth can accelerate within a context of shared pain and shared joy.[13]

Second, family therapy[14] provides the opportunity for healing to expand beyond the individual, potentially isolated world of the

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[10]Mark 4:20.

[11]See, Marvin E. Shaw, Group Dynamics: The Psychology of Small Group Behavior, 3rd ed., (NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971), Chapters 3, 4, and 11.

[12]Perhaps one of the most authoritative texts regarding group therapy is Irvin D. Yalom's, The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy, 3rd ed., (NY: Basic Books, 1985). From a therapeutic stance Yalom identifies the efficacy of group therapy in relation to individual therapy. See in particular, pp. 3-47.

[13]See Mark F. Ettin, "By the Crowd They Have Been Broken, By the Crowd They Shall Be Healed: The Advent of Group Psychotherapy," International Journal of Group Psychotherapy 38 (April 1988): 139-67 and Anne Alonso & J.Scott Rutan, "The Experience of Shame and the Restoration of Self-respect in Group Therapy," International Journal of Group Psychotherapy 38 (January 1988): 3-14.

[14]See in particular: Edwin H. Friedman, Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue, (NY: The Guilford Press, 1985), Section I. Family Theory, pp. 1-66; Carter C. Umbarger, Structural Family Therapy, (NY: Grune and Stratton, 1983), pp. 3-54; and K. McAll, Healing the Family Tree, (London: Sheldon Press, 1982).

client. Much of the work of therapy is ultimately connected with our original experiences of belonging within the environment of our family of origin. Theorists hold that we continually play out our family roles and conflicts in the various arenas of our lives. They hold that what transpires in our current lives is heavily influenced by what transpired across generations. Family therapy can be a source of incredible healing and forgiveness and, thus, liberation.

Third, the faith community can provide ongoing support as well as a means for clients to share their treasures and pearls with others.[15] Providing opportunities for clients to grow within the faith community is a unique contribution pastoral counselors make by virtue of their pastoral position. In sharing their faith and their experience of community, pastoral counselors affirm a similarity of values with their clients.

The metaphor of the kingdom of God reminds pastoral counselors that the public processing of the pain of their clients serves the hope of engaging their social imagination. The metaphor points to the individual and communal nature of the power of God at work in

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[15]See Michael Cowan and Bernard Lee, Dangerous Memories: House Churches and Our American Story, (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1986), Chapter 5, pp. 113-145; Dick Westley, A Theology of Presence: The Search for Meaning in the American Catholic Experience, (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988), Chapter 1 and 5; and James D. and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, Community of Faith: Models and Strategies for Developing Christian Communities, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982).

the world. The restoration of Shalom can only fully occur in community, not in isolation.

The Life Story:

Much work has been done in psychology regarding Psychosocial Theory.[16] As a way of viewing human development it provides a valuable insight into the advancement of health and wholeness toward the ultimate satisfactions of a life well lived. Parallel to the personal life history is the larger story of all of humankind and of God's action in the salvation history of our community.

Ultimately, we hope that our lives will reflect meaning and purpose. The kingdom of God metaphor reminds us that God's inbreaking "dispels all evil, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy, casts out hatred, and humbles earthly pride."[17]

The metaphor of the kingdom of God reminds us to participate creatively in all that is and has been in order to welcome all that is yet to come. It calls us to see "not only the limitations and

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[16]See Erik H. Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1980); The Life Cycle Completed: A Review, (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1982); and Newman and Newman, Development Through Life: A Psychosocial Approach, 4th ed., (Chicago, IL: The Dorsey Press, 1987), pp. 3-48.

[17]International Committee on English in the Liturgy, "The Easter Proclamation (Exsultet)." In The Rites of Holy Week, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1971), p. 84.

sinfulness of the present but also the prophetic and transcendent aspect of the eschatological."[18]

I hope it has become clear how a biblical metaphor can serve as a means of grounding and integrating insights from both psychology and theology. Having worked through an understanding of a biblical metaphor and having allowed it to permeate our thoughts and attitudes, we will find that it begins to shape our assumptions and remind us what we are about. Like Jesus, we are about a very serious enterprise.

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[18]Charles E. Curran, Catholic Moral Theology in Dialogue, (Notre Dame, IN: Fides Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. 195.

CHAPTER V

THE KINGDOM OF GOD METAPHOR IN THE TREATMENT OF ADDICTIVE SYSTEMS

Introduction

Having illuminated the manner in which a biblical metaphor can enlighten and contribute to the dialogue between psychology and theology in the activity of pastoral counseling, in this chapter I will test the process by applying it to a particular area of pastoral counseling, namely, working with addictive systems. "Addictive Systems" refers specifically to the disease of alcohol, drugs, or other forms of addiction as manifested in the dynamics of the family system.[1]

When working with addictive systems, pastoral counselors interact with individual, group, and family recovery programs available through inpatient or outpatient services. Pastoral counselors support and encourage the recovering family system's participation in the A.A. model of working the Twelve Steps; attendance at A.A., Alanon, and A.C.O.A. Meetings (or N.A., O.A., etc.); utilization of a "sponsor"; and contacts with various support groups available to

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[1]See Sharon Wegscheider, "The Shared Disease," in Another Chance: Hope and Health for the Alcoholic Family, (Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, 1981), pp. 58-88; and Anne Wilson Schaef, When Society Becomes an Addict, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987), pp. 18-25.

the family system, e.g., family, friends, significant others; and concurrent individual and/or family therapy.

Much addiction counseling is rooted in a Cognitive-Behavioral Approach that supports the person's change through awareness, insight, education and learned modification of life patterns. Within this model the counselor utilizes problem-solving techniques that assist in fostering personal responsibility, freedom, and decision-making. The process involves the generating of alternatives; the recognition of the implications of one's decisions and of subsequent action; the support and encouragement necessary to turn decision into action; and the ongoing evaluation of the course chosen.

The kingdom of God is the core metaphor for a new social imagination in which every other social construction of power and authority is judged and critiqued.[2] Pastoral counseling can provide a great service to addictive systems by critiquing the system according to this metaphor. Pastoral counselors can envision with members of addictive systems a new way of organizing themselves in order to make a difference in the world of their everyday experience. This is no easy task.

Just as Jesus' announcement of the malkuth of heaven was a source of irritation for the Pharisees, pastoral counselors are a source of irritation for addictive systems. Like Israel which hoped

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[2]Brueggemann, Hope Within History, pp. 22 ff.

for the coming of a Savior, families approach therapy hoping for change in their present dissatisfying ways of life. They believe that the therapist can "fix" things. Often they do not realize that their desire for changed outcomes entails a change in their familiar patterns of living— most of which are organized around a loyalty to the powers of addiction. Challenging the entire system to change, including what they do not wish is truly a source of irritation. Some will walk away sad because the cost is too great. Others will sell everything they have in order to enjoy what awaits them.

As Jesus challenged and exposed the faulty, oppressive ideology of the rabbinical order, so pastoral counselors challenge the faulty beliefs and processes of addictive systems.[3] As Jesus challenged the overly-scrupulous stance toward the Torah and the closed structure of the rabbinical order, so pastoral counselors challenge the rigidity of the rules and roles of closed addictive systems.[4] As Jesus engaged in the activity of God for the sake of a suffering humanity in need of health and wholeness, pastoral counselors contracted to therapeutic work with families, critique the current order, provide avenues for members to publicly process their pain, and involve them in a process of social imagination.[5]

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[3]For a description of faulty beliefs and processes, see Schaef, When Society Becomes an Addict, Section II, pp. 37-95 and Section III, pp. 99-139.

[4]For a description of rules and roles, see Wegscheider, Another Chance, pp. 80-84; 84-88.

[5]Brueggemann, Hope Within History, pp. 7-26.

Preparing for the Ministry:

Sometimes pastoral counselors are tempted to join family members in their search for quick-fix solutions. The need to alleviate pain is so acute in the lives of family members engulfed in the deterioration of addiction that pastoral counselors can respond to the desperation of their need. In wanting "to do something" pastoral counselors can lose sight of the necessity of having one foot in the system and one foot grounded in a deeper reality.[6]

Pastoral counselors must expand their therapeutic knowledge to include an understanding of addictive processes and the specific roles that various members play in addiction. They also must be in touch with their own issues:

> Alcoholism is a disease that stunts, fragments, and erodes the human personality. To try to help one of its victims become a whole and healthy person is a large task; to help a whole family of victims with interlocking pathologies is immeasurably larger. In fact, I know of few challenges any counselor or therapist faces that are more difficult. Treating alcoholic families tests not only what we know but who we are. But even this is not the heart of the challenge. The real hazard is the trap.[7]

Safety from the "trap" of addictive systems "lies in entering the system but not becoming part of it."[8]

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[6]For a summary of this position, see Wegscheider, Another Chance, pp. 220-234.
[7]Ibid., p. 220.
[8]Ibid., p. 221.

The complexities of working with addiction are only beginning to be understood by pastoral counselors. Assessing the presenting problems may not always reveal the addictive systems.[9] Instead, presenting problems or other subsequent issues may be treated while the "real issue" goes unnoticed. Addiction assessment is a very delicate and difficult task. Pastoral counselors need to employ methods of assessment that adequately prepare them to recognize signs of addiction. Otherwise, in a subtle way, pastoral counseling can perpetuate illness rather than contribute to health and wholeness.

Conversely, the more familiar pastoral counselors become with addictive systems, the more care is required not to be too quick to judge addiction as the problem. Assessment must always take into consideration the quality of life within the family system. This requires a careful analysis of the attitudes, behaviors, and dynamics of the family in relation to the use of potentially addictive substances. The metaphor of the kingdom of God challenges pastoral counselors to recognize their own biases and to beware of the subtle forms of oppression that can emerge in a therapeutic relationship.

Critiquing the Current Order:

Addictive systems come to therapy when the pain is so great that they must do something. However, the real source of the pain

[9]Ibid., pp. 158-162.

often goes unrecognized by members. In addictive systems, family members usually place the responsibility and burden of change on one member.

Even when family members cannot articulate the real source of their pain, the system manages to get the message out in one way or another. Often in addictive systems the identified patient is the scapegoat who symbolizes the pain of the whole system. This person is the distress signal sent out to anyone who will listen.

Pastoral counselors must be prepared to hear and address the messages of pain within addictive family systems. They are sometimes called upon to say "harsh" things. Often when the issue of addiction is directly addressed by the pastoral counselor, members will not admit to it. Sometimes they will even terminate therapy. Like the townspeople in Nazareth, they reject the messenger. This cannot discourage or deter the pastoral counselor.

The resistance in addictive systems is so great that members will talk about anything but their addictive behaviors. One Certified Addictions Counselor has said, "They'll talk about anything to avoid the topic of their drinking. Even sexual abuse and incest will be talked about before admitting to problems with alcohol or drugs." Talking about "anything" preserves the addictive behaviors.

When pastoral counselors are able to predict the progression of the disease, they leave an impression on the minds and hearts of

family members. Even should the family leave therapy, members will be reminded of the tragic course of events awaiting them. At the least, predictions sow the seed. At the most, they provide the impetus for potential action toward treatment.

The pastoral counselor is called to expose the faulty ideology of individuals in the addictive system who say: "I can do it alone." "I'm in control." "What I do doesn't hurt anyone." Or conversely: "If she would just stop nagging me." "If he'd only spend more time with me instead of his business." By exposing the faulty ideology, pastoral counselors challenge members to stop looking at surface problems or short term solutions. They are challenged to stop blaming and start doing.

Blaming and rationalizing are based on the assumption that says, "It isn't the right time to do something." A time when things are "perfect" is imagined as an absolute condition for change: "When I get a better paying job, the pressures will be down and I won't need to drink." "When I finish clinching this business deal, I'll be able to relax and lay off the crack." "When he's in a better mood, I'll tell him about the car."

Living only in the future (or only in the past or present), members of addictive systems set themselves up for chronic disappointment and disillusionment. Members know that those perfect conditions will never occur. They also know that the change posited

for those conditions will not materialize. Deep down the reality is so painful that members devise ways to ignore their painful reality. These defenses contribute to the complexities of their dysfunctional living.

Jesus criticized the Pharisees for making perfection the standard. They preserved a faulty ideology in order to keep the people in bondage. By announcing the malkuth of heaven, Jesus freed people from unattainable standards. The new goal was not perfect conformity with the Torah, but participation in the kingdom of God already among us, but not yet fully realized.

The metaphor reminds us that the power of God at work in the world is a present, future, and in-between reality. The human desire for control is an extremely powerful driving force from which no one is exempt. Addictive systems must recognize and confront the power of God at work in the world and learn to rely on that Power.

Publicly Processing Pain:

For addictive systems the in-breaking of the kingdom of God is begun in the intervention process. This beginning movement from bondage to freedom is what will lead the family system to life. Intervention, or "getting help" as it is commonly called, initiates a process of ongoing liberation.

It is so hard for addictive systems to entertain the possibility of health and wholeness because the "good news" of intervention is too good to be true. Recalling that the kingdom of God is a stumbling block for the righteous and a liberating hope for the oppressed, we are reminded once again that the "good news" is very hard to take. Before members in addictive systems are able to accept alternative ways of seeing reality, they must be able to admit that their current ways are troublesome. They must experience a change of heart. It is no accident that the First of the Twelve Steps involves admitting one's powerlessness.

Addictive systems struggle with this admission because enlisting their powerlessness (something so acutely felt but ineffectively understood) to work for them rather than against them is incomprehensible and conflictual. How can the source of so much pain be a source of joy? This seems absurd.

"Loss of control" is often what brings addictive systems to therapy. However, the desire for control is what caused the system trouble in the first place. The addicted person thinks, "I can control this... My addiction is not a problem...I still have my job..." Members think, "If he only put his mind to it, he could stop drinking." "If she only had more will power, she could overcome this."

Members of addictive systems need to learn that powerlessness, not "helplessness", allows them to take control and responsibility

for their lives. It is difficult to let go of the "victim" position which abdicates responsibility to an outside force or set of circumstances and to take responsibility for one's own life. Yet this is the way to initiate change in an addictive system. The system must be encouraged to rely on something Greater; to admit powerlessness and to embrace dependency in order to live as children of the light. A system that has invested in over-compensation to make up for its weaknesses finds it very difficult to understand that those weaknesses can be loved and accepted because they are part and parcel of what it means to be human.

The metaphor of the kingdom of God reminds us that we are to rely on God and the strength of community. In working with addictive systems, pastoral counselors need to encourage a "liberation stance". This is an attitude of life-giving assertiveness that sees "power" as a personal and communal possession enabling one to accept the responsibility to make a difference in the world.

Practicing Social Imagination:

Reliance and responsibility, the liberation stance, creates the space for members and family systems to take ownership rather than put blame or expect others to tell them how to be or do in the world. The message of the kingdom of God is the message for addictive systems: it is possible to take responsibility for our own

lives, to walk in freedom rather than in bondage, to live in love not in fear.

Once the process of intervention occurs, the already and not yet of the kingdom of God metaphor takes on new significance. The pastoral counselor needs to remind members in the system that problems incurred prior to intervention do not disappear. Old, familiar patterns are still in the system's memory. They need to be dealt with.

The power of God at work in the world is concretely manifested in the power of community: the kingdom of God is "among" us. Power resides in the system, as well. Change does not come about from the outside, but it can be supported with outside forces. The kingdom of God metaphor reminds us that the work of pastoral counseling does not rest on the shoulders of a select few. The kingdom of God cannot be identified with the pastoral counselor, the treatment program, the addict, the identified patient, or individual members of the system. The power of God's activity resides in individuals and in community. It is our task to cooperate with God's work individually and collectively.

Pastoral counselors need to assist members of recovering systems to: a) recognize the Higher Power at work in their world; b) learn how to reconcile what appears to be contrary to this; c) determine ways to continue on the journey toward health and wholeness;

d) determine what the system needs to take with it on the journey; and e) determine with whom the system needs to journey.

Just as pastoral counselors are called upon to predict the negative progression of the disease of addiction, they must offer positive predictions regarding the recovering process. The ability to generate alternative ways of knowing reality is critical here as it is in all of therapy. Addictive systems in the process of recovering need to learn new ways of responding to old problems if they are to continue on the journey toward life and wholeness. Otherwise, they will fall back into old ways of coping, sometimes in subtle forms. A few examples help to illustrate this.

Addictive systems normally operate out of crisis. When no crisis is present, they create one. Addictive systems live from day to day because they lack stability. No one knows when dad will come home drunk or when Bobby will get expelled from school or if mom will be "sick" today. Pastoral counselors who work with addictive systems regularly find that it is very difficult for the recovering system to adjust to a change toward health. Instead members create new crises and, potentially, new reasons to backslide.

Addictive systems employ escape and denial as means of coping with problems. Rigidity and myopic vision are other familiar tools. Members in a recovering system need to learn to create and employ options. They need to learn flexibility. The pastoral counselor

must enlist the resources of the system and its members as well as monitor the activity of the system. The metaphor of the kingdom of God reminds pastoral counselors that they cannot afford to grow lax in monitoring the activity of the system. Members need to remember that recovering is work, too. There is always further to go.

Based on observation and interaction with addictive systems, the pastoral counselor perceives these systems as taking a rather traditional stance toward life and toward God. This stance is usually best described as a closed system with archaic categorizations. These categorical positions reflect the system's understanding of sin and its by-products of alienation and shame.

One such rigid belief of addictive systems is "heaven," i.e., perfection, something yet to come, future oriented and out of one's grasp. Life on earth is seen as an arena in which one is tested and destined to fail. Addictive systems view themselves as fated for final damnation because of their inability to meet the expectations of perfection. Members, utilizing what few resources they see as available, struggle to evade any possible exposure to the truth of their condition.

Somehow, God is good, yet belief in the goodness of God relies on God to reach down and lift them from their misery. Though a "savior" is hoped for, members place the expectations of change in the hands of an identified patient, or, punitively, on themselves.

While presenting a united front to the outside world, internally, the family system remains severely divided. Closed communications, system secrets, firmly fixed loyalties and unexplainable dictates foster a rigidity in relationships among members.

The unnamed truth that the system is not perfect and never will be prevents the system from moving beyond self-perpetuating shame to opportunities for growth and health. With the "sins" of the system masked and disguised, boundaries remain rigid. Any attempt to name the truth is quickly dismissed or defended against. The outside world is seen as an enemy or persecutor to be feared.

For the pastoral counselor, God intervenes in history and God dwells in history, present in what has been, what is, and what is yet to come. God recognizes our limits as part of our humanity, and desires us to be free to choose our way in life. Life is messy and imperfect, and we are always in the process of becoming. Our struggle is part of the tension between what is and what is yet to come.

The God of the Old Testament made a radical choice to be known differently in the person of Jesus. The biblical metaphor of the Kingdom of God reminds us of the power of this God at work in the world. As God chose to be known differently, members of addictive systems are invited to be known, not by pre-conceived notions that separate them from the human community, but by their embrace of

flexibility, trust, and the power of community to facilitate healing.

That we exist in relationship is the fundamental conviction necessary for continued growth, health, and wholeness. In relationship, God is present with us. Pastoral counselors invite members of addictive systems to share in the experience of belonging. Thus, heaven and God are no longer "out there", but dynamically present in the here and now. The kingdom of God is not only the hope for good things to come, but already present within and among us (c.f. Luke 17:21).

With this understanding comes freedom. Members of addictive systems become participants— for better and for worse. They experience control of their own lives. Life is no longer just something that happens to them. God's grace can be enough (c.f. II Corinthians 12:9). Like Paul, they know that the hope that comes from the ability to be weak "will not leave us disappointed" (Romans 5:5). They can effect change and growth for themselves and for the world in which they live. They can "work for peace and to strengthen one another" (Romans 14:19). And they can recognize their limits as an aspect of their humanity to be embraced, loved, accepted and, yes, even tolerated.

Occasionally the pastoral counselor is made privy to the resources of the system: its resilience, its members' ability to rely

on each other, to communicate effectively, and to respond with empathy and love. At these moments "community" emerges in what seems to be pathological isolation. The challenge for the pastoral counselor on such occasions is to remain connected with the system, but with one foot grounded in a deeper reality lest he or she be swallowed by the faulty belief that one person can make the entire difference. The pastoral counselor needs to remember that the system, is quite comfortable with the "rescue position"— God is, after all, one who will rescue His People from their self destruction. Members of addictive systems will often attempt to transfer this God role to the pastoral counselor. It must be clearly refused and denied.

The "sins" and "secrets" of the past will continue to surface in the recovering system, demanding attention until their paralyzing effects lose power. At the same time, reconciliation, forgiveness and conversion plant the seeds for further and continued acceptance of the human condition as imperfect and of human beings as radically dependent.

Over the span of the system's therapeutic history, the system and individuals will experience moments of belief and moments of disbelief. At times, the tendency toward isolation and the illusion of self-sufficiency will creep in, bringing a desire to go back to Egypt, as it were, back to slavery and the familiar milieu of a past, which was actually quite painful and humiliating.

Much of what happens once the intervention has taken place is similar to the experience of the apostles in the Upper Room after the events of the "past three days" (John 20:31). The process of recovering is difficult and fears surface. Members of the recovering system need encouragement. They need to hear others say, "Peace be with you" (John 20:19).

As the apostles gathered together, so members of the recovering system need to gather with those outside the system. This social arena will provide the community experience necessary to assist the system in dealing with its tendencies toward isolation and despair. The pastoral counselor and ongoing support from "community" announce that the system is not alone. The pain of a recovering system is similar in fact if not in kind to the pain of many other human beings. Recovering systems benefit when they are able, like Thomas, to take their hands and touch the pain of others who have suffered the infirmities of human living (c.f. John 20:27).

Strength, power, and control have been a constant theme in the addictive system's life. The need to be strong has suffocated and hindered members from being accepted by others in a way that would promote life. The recovering system's challenge is to take to heart the words of St. Paul, "when I am powerless, it is then that I am strong" (II Corn. 12:9-10).

With intervention the recovering family system begins to live deliberately. Rather than masking inner feelings and altering moods with an addictive substance and enfeebling patterns of choice, members begin to meet the "lions" of their emotional world head on. No longer is flight from the emotional world necessary. To risk being vulnerable and open is difficult. To trust another or in this case themselves, challenges members to learn that they can be taken care of and can care for others.

Finally, recovering systems need to learn that in order to espouse a deeper level of living, their boundaries must remain flexible even in the midst of turmoil. The system must learn to keep reality and truth alive and thrive in the tension of the already and not yet of the Kingdom of God.

Concluding Comments

Working with addictive systems illustrates the process of integrating psychological and theological concerns that pastoral counselors use in the activity of pastoral counseling. Furthermore, the example of addictive systems gives concrete reality to the benefits of grounding the integrative therapeutic process in a biblical metaphor. This framework of the metaphor provides a way of organizing, understanding and interpreting the dynamics present in the ongoing therapeutic process of liberation.

Applying the process of integration to working with addictive systems demonstrated the value of having a metaphoric framework available to help organize, interpret, and understand the creative dynamics of the therapeutic process. This metaphoric framework also contributes to the ongoing growth of pastoral counselors by reminding them what they are about and by challenging them to monitor their own way of engaging in the practice of pastoral counseling. In short, both pastoral counselors and those to whom they minister benefit.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A DEFINITION OF PASTORAL COUNSELING

Introduction

Self-definition is important for any discipline. In a young and evolving discipline such as pastoral counseling, however, the attempt to arrive at a final, comprehensive, or overly polished conceptualization can actually be a disservice to the field. The results of well-intentioned efforts might actually be a definition, or set of limits, which future practitioners would regret.

In this conclusion I wish to report briefly on efforts to achieve a definition of pastoral counseling. I will also offer my own preliminary and tentative efforts in that direction.

Formal Organizational Development

As a formally ministerial/professional activity, pastoral counseling had its beginnings in the Clinical Pastoral Education movement whose vision focused on "the objectives, the methods, and the promising benefits to be derived from theological reflection in clinical settings."[1]

As a profession it has been highly influenced by secular psychotherapeutic development. Orlo Strunk states that, as clergy be-

[1]Strunk, "History of Pastoral Counseling," p. 22.

came more enamored with the contributions of psychotherapy to the understanding of the human person and sought to apply its insights to their pastoral contexts, some felt "inadequate in terms of their own pastoral care functions".[2]

Conversely, a lack of structure and ethical standards began to threaten the integrity of the emerging profession. Strunk recalls Van Wagner's summary of the situation:

> In attempting to characterize this period, Van Wagner cites a report from California claiming that "guys were going around with turbans and crystal balls calling themselves pastoral counselors." In a more serious tone, he notes, "...any 'pastoral counselor' could charge whatever the market would bear in terms of fees; and any 'pastoral counseling center' could be responsible only to itself in terms of administrative structure, professional ethics, and its relationship to the institutional church".[3]

Due in part to increasing specialization and the interest of clergy in the area of counseling and therapy, as well as to feelings of therapeutic inadequacy, "by the late 1940's a marked interest in pastoral counseling as a specialized ministry became evident, particularly in the liberal Protestant tradition."[4] In 1947 the American Catholic Psychological Association (ACPA) was founded as, "an ongoing forum for working towards an integration of psychological data and theories with religious thought and practice."[5]

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[2]Estadt, "Pastoral Counseling Today and Tomorrow," p. 43.
[3]C.A. Van Wagner, "The AAPC: The Beginning Years, 1963-1965," in The Journal of Pastoral Care, 37 (1983): 166, cited by Orlo Strunk, Jr., "History of Pastoral Counseling," p. 22.
[4]Strunk, "History of Pastoral Counseling," p. 22.
[5]Estadt, "Pastoral Counseling Today and Tomorrow," p. 42.

As a response to the need for structure and the setting of standards, Strunk reports that, "it was in 1963 that pastoral counseling as a movement in its own right began to take an institutional form, for it was then that the first conference of pastoral counselors was held in New York City."[6]

The American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC), "an organization created to promote the ministry of pastoral counseling and the professional competence of pastoral counselors,"[7] was formally established in 1964 as an offshoot of the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE).

In our present day, "Pastoral counseling is an established clinical art and its institutions are multiplying rapidly."[8] As a discipline it continues to develop a unique identity, based upon increased recognition that it is both a viable ministry and a credible profession. Educational institutions, some located in university settings, offer training and ongoing education for persons in the field. "Most pastoral counselors now receive training in established programs which meet standardized curricular requirements."[9]

Though institutionally accepted as an offshoot of Clinical Pastoral Education, and consequently, highly influenced by this

[6]Strunk, "History of Pastoral Counseling," p. 22.
[7]Estadt, "Pastoral Counseling Today and Tomorrow," p. 43.
[8]Ewing, "Epilogue: Pastoral Counseling Issues," p. 289.
[9]Ibid.

movement, pastoral counseling can be understood as both newly emerging and "age-old"— with firm justification in the Gospel call to ministry and as a "twentieth-century phenomenon"— beginning in the early 1900's, coming of age in the 1960's, and growing toward maturity in our present time.

In summary, a review of the literature reveals that pastoral counseling's identity has begun to emerge as a contemporary, cultural and intellectual response to the dialogue between science and religion and a particular response to the baptismal call of ministry as understood in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

A Framework for Defining Pastoral Counseling

As pastoral counseling continues to differentiate from its family of origin in search of a unique identity, it has begun to test ways of defining itself. Writers and practitioners in the field agree that pastoral counseling is an interdisciplinary process whose focus is on the integration of psychology and theology, but they do not agree on a common definition. In a sense this is indicative of pastoral counseling's early stage of development as a discipline.

When taking steps toward a preliminary definition of the discipline, it is helpful to employ some guiding principles. Since pastoral counseling and pastoral psychotherapy are sister disci-

plines that "can be addressed from an interdisciplinary perspective using both theology and the social sciences,"[10] we can apply the work of Dr. Chris Schlauch, a pastoral psychotherapist, to the discipline of pastoral counseling. Schlauch names some potential hazards when definitions are too narrowly sculpted and suggests important considerations when defining the discipline of pastoral psychotherapy.[11]

Schlauch believes that an attempt to define pastoral psychotherapy is necessary in order to articulate the distinction between pastoral psychotherapy and an "endless list of therapeutic alternatives."[12] Schlauch states that, "to understand what distinguishes pastoral psychotherapy requires that we formulate a definition originatively— on the basis of the activity itself; and not derivatively— from one or several attributes of that activity."[13] He gives some examples of the "derivative approach" and notes the problems that arise when definition rests solely on what he calls, a "definition of attributes".

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[10]Don Browning, "Introduction to Pastoral Counseling," in Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling, eds. Robert J. Wicks, Richard D. Parsons, and Donald E. Capps. (NY: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 5.
[11]Chris Schlauch, "Defining Pastoral Psychotherapy," The Journal of Pastoral Care 39 (1985): 219-28.
[12]Ibid., p. 219. Schlauch gives three reasons for the need to define pastoral psychotherapy as a distinct enterprise: (1) to inform the public; (2) to preserve the integrity of the profession; and (3) to address the problem of integration.
[13]Ibid., p. 221.

For example, "to define pastoral psychotherapy as therapy done with and by a pastor is to derive the nature of the process from the identity of the practitioner..."[14] Historically, the minister engaged in the activity of pastoral counseling has been associated with the "clergy"— the pastor, priest, or rabbi. Since in our own day the practitioner is no longer necessarily an "ordained" minister, pastoral counseling cannot define itself by that criterion.

Furthermore, "to define pastoral psychotherapy as therapy involving religious issues and problems is to derive the nature of the process solely from some of the content of that process..."[15] Reflection on the activity of pastoral counseling reveals that explicitly religious issues and problems are not always the content of therapy. To say that the content of pastoral counseling is explicitly religious would not be true to the actuality of what occurs in the therapeutic process.

"To define pastoral psychotherapy as therapy which the clinician understands in a theologically informed manner fails as a defining criterion because it overlooks the possible chasm between theory and practice..."[16] Schlauch does not wish to define theology's contribution to the discipline as exclusively theoretical. He wants to arrive at a definition of pastoral counseling or pastoral

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[14]Ibid., p. 220.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Ibid.

psychotherapy in which theology informs not only the understanding of clinical ministry, but the practice.

"To define pastoral psychotherapy as therapy done in a religious setting is to derive the nature of the process from the place in which it occurs."[17] Historically, it is true that pastoral counseling originally took place in the local parish, namely the pastor's office. Current practice, however, involves the establishing of pastoral counseling centers in a variety of settings that are not necessarily "religious". To say that pastoral counseling is only pastoral counseling when done in a church or synagogue fails to take into consideration the expansion of the field into other settings and limits the future growth of the discipline.

Having considered Schlauch's cautions, it is helpful to employ the work of Dr. James Ewing. Ewing suggests that, "A framework which provides criteria for the parameters of the discipline is essential in the task of defining the field."[18]

Reflecting on the activity of pastoral counseling, Ewing specifies "five assertions which emerge from the struggles of pastoral counseling practice" and suggests that these assertions provide a suitable frame of reference for any attempt to define the field. The five assertions are summarized as the commitment:

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[17]Ibid., p. 221.
[18]Ewing, "Epilogue: Pastoral Counseling Issues," p. 287.

> ...to the power and efficacy of the 'new psychology' for the practice of ministry.
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> ...to religious institutions, church and synagogue, in a time of ferment and change.
>
> ...to theological method based on the inherent authority of human experience.
>
> ...to participate in the changing political, economic, and social institutions.
>
> ...to nurture the pastoral counselor's internal sense of vocation, call, and imagination.[19]

According to Ewing, any definition of pastoral counseling must account for: (1) the psychological dimension which has provided the "clinical process, the right to claim expertise as a minister and mental health professional, and the basis for pastoral counseling as a clinical discipline;"[20] (2) the ecclesial dimension in which the pastoral counselor is convinced of the power and efficacy of religious process and insight; (3) the theological dimension composed of a mutually corrective and supportive dialogue between biblical authority, experiential authority and the authority of tradition; (4) the social dimension which acknowledges the influence of political, economic and social institutional policies and power; and (5) the vocational dimension of the minister and mental health professional known as the pastoral counselor.

The work of Schlauch and Ewing provides a framework based on three assumptions:

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[19]Ibid., pp. 287-88.
[20]Ibid., p. 288.

The first assumption is that an effort to define pastoral counseling should be formulated on the basis of the activity itself rather than the attributes of the activity. A definition must stand on its own in order to preserve the integrity of the field as a unique and distinct enterprise. Pastoral counseling must be free to develop its own identity; it should not be dismissed as a hybrid of psychology, theology, and morality.

The second assumption is that a definition of pastoral counseling must include an integration of psychology and theology. It must describe an interaction of these constituent disciplines, not merely on a conceptual level, but in terms of the concrete activity of pastoral counseling.

The third assumption is that a definition must set parameters of the discipline. Ewing's five "assertions" helped to set these parameters by citing the psychological, ecclesial, theological, social, and vocational dimensions to which pastoral counseling is committed.

At this point we can review some of the definitions that have surfaced in the literature of pastoral counseling. Such a review points out the limits of trying to define an evolving discipline at this stage of its development. However, a tentative working definition is necessary in order to develop an overall understanding of the identity of pastoral counseling as it is emerging for us today.

Reviewing Current Definitions

Schlauch offers his own working definition of pastoral psychotherapy, stating that:

> Pastoral psychotherapy may be defined as a psychotherapeutic activity in which a pastoral psychotherapist observes, understands, and interprets the psychological, religious, and moral dimensions of the ongoing process through psychological, theological, and ethical frames of reference.[21]

Schlauch's definition addresses the question, "What distinguishes pastoral psychotherapy from alternative therapies?". He distinguishes pastoral psychotherapy from alternative therapies and defines the activity as a unique discipline by citing the interaction of various dimensions and frames of reference. It is important when considering Schlauch's definition that the psychotherapist's task be understood as more than an attempt to sort the client's life out according to neat categories. In reality, the psychological, theological and moral dimensions are not easily separated and, to the extent possible, should be worked with as a cohesive whole. While Schlauch's definition addresses the interactive nature of multiple frames of reference, it does not address the range of ministerial, ecclesial and vocational dimensions which Ewing has described. Thus, Schlauch's definition is incomplete for our purpose of a working definition for pastoral counseling.

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[21]Schlauch, "Defining Pastoral Psychotherapy," p. 222.

Barry Estadt, professor in Loyola of Baltimore's Pastoral Counseling Program, defines pastoral counseling as a

> specific form of individual pastoral care in which ministers utilize the knowledge and skills derived from the contemporary helping professions within a theological and spiritual framework as they work to meet the needs of individuals, couples, families, and groups who seek their help.[22]

When looking at Estadt's definition, we note his assumption that pastoral counseling is most importantly a derivative of pastoral care for the sake of enhancing ministry. Estadt tends to believe that,

> Most candidates entering pastoral counseling programs today do so specifically because they wish to enhance their skills as ministers. They do not want to become psychiatrists, psychologists, or social workers but ministers able to utilize effectively the counseling process within the age-old ministry of individual pastoral care.[23]

While Estadt emphasizes the ministerial dimension of pastoral counseling's family of origin, he seems to do this at the expense of a standard of clinical professionalism. As Schlauch seemed to underemphasize the ministerial dimension of pastoral counseling, Estadt seems to overemphasize it. Recalling Ewing's work reminds us that we must recognize pastoral counseling as both ministerial and professional.[24]

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[22]Estadt, "Pastoral Counseling Today and Tomorrow," p. 40.
[23]Ibid., pp. 43-44.
[24]Ewing, "Epilogue: Pastoral Counseling Issues," p. 288.

Wayne Oates moves toward a healthier balance in his effort to define pastoral counseling:

> Pastoral counseling may be said to be a systematic effort to apply inductive, clinical, and scientific method to the accepted function of the minister as he confers with persons about their personal problems and life destiny.[25]

Though Oates' definition appears to be more balanced, a review of his writings reveals that he believes that pastoral counseling is essentially a source of assistance for the pastor to do the shepherding work of his ministry. This illustrates the problems that Schlauch described as arising when a definition of pastoral counseling rests on the identity of the practitioner.

In his first major work in 1949, Seward Hiltner boldly asserted that pastors should make a choice to engage in pastoral counseling for the sake of enhancing the ministry of the pastorate or should choose to leave the ministry and change professions:

> We see his focus of function as that which brings together both his role as representative of a tradition and his role as guide to human destiny. Much of this knowledge and much of his skill he shares with all other groups which attempt seriously to help people through counseling. He uses both in his role as pastor with a pastoral focus of function. If he becomes so interested in what psychiatry or psychology or social work can do that he wants to do his counseling from the focus of function of one of them, then he may wish to change professions.[26]

Upon first reading, the quotation from Hiltner appears harsh and severe. Nevertheless, Hiltner recognizes the likelihood one day

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[25]Oates, Pastoral Counseling, p. 56.
[26]Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling, pp. 119-120.

of finding a "common ground" in the "sacred" and "secular" world and concludes that both the pastor and the counselor have similar concerns. Given the time of his writing (1949) his views may be seen as enlightened in many particulars.

Hiltner suggests that the secondary focus of attention of the pastor and counselor need to be tended to with as much concern as the primary focus of attention. The pastor ought to give more attention to the means:

> We need to confess that the interest of the pastor in human destiny, in the long view of life's purposes, does not necessarily mean he is best qualified to deal with the specific problems of human destiny as they arise. Yet pastors have been around, have been hard at work, and at least theoretically have what is the true approach to the answer. It may be that we have been so preoccupied with the ends and goals that we have not taken seriously our obligation to learn the means.

At the same time, the counselor ought to give more attention to the end:

> Meanwhile counselors starting from various professional and ideological points of view have reached beneath their field of technical expertness and discovered the rich soil of the dynamics of human personality. As the most thoughtful workers in the various fields have taken all of this seriously, they have expanded their horizons, and are now coming close to dealing with questions of human destiny in their patients or clients.[27]

As an encouraging voice in the wilderness, later to be heard as "prophetic", Hiltner envisioned an evolution of pastoral counseling consonant with actual contemporary developments:

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[27]Ibid., pp. 118-19.

> More power to the pioneering therapists, whatever their professional field, who are discovering problems of human destiny and are not afraid to study them. I could feel happier if more of these persons of insight were committed basically to the Christian view of life.[28]

Today, more "persons of insight committed to the Christian view of life" are attracted to a way of tending to both the means and the end of human destiny. Some of these persons have now accepted the call of pastoral counseling.

What the definitions of Estadt, Oates, and Hiltner share is an emphasis on the ministerial dimension of pastoral counseling. What they lack is a balanced representation of pastoral counseling as both a ministerial and professional counseling activity.

We are learning in our own day that pastoral counseling is more than a means of "enhancing the ministry". Pastoral counseling is emerging as a particular form of ministry that is committed to the Gospel and to competency in the mental health profession. Pastoral counseling cannot afford to lose sight of both dimensions or it will fail to achieve a healthy identity. To perpetuate the myth that pastoral counseling must be either ministry or secular counseling puts the discipline at odds with its origins rather than in their debt.

Instead of prematurely foreclosing its identity, pastoral counseling needs to consider all the sources of influence contribut-

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[28]Ibid., p. 119.

ing to where it finds itself at its present stage of development as a discipline. Recognizing itself as the process of concretely integrating psychology and theology, pastoral counseling needs to continue professionally and ministerially to test out ways of defining itself and how it will continue to be and act in the world.

A Working Definition of Pastoral Counseling

It is important, to reiterate the limitations we face in attempting to arrive at a definition of pastoral counseling. When the focus of pastoral counseling ceases to be understood as the process of integrating behavioral and theological insights and approaches, its unique identity and integrity as a ministry and profession is compromised.

Our look at some of the definitions that have surfaced in the literature of pastoral counseling has revealed a number of aspects which I believe should be included in any formulation of a working definition for pastoral counseling. First, pastoral counseling is both a ministerial and professional activity. Second, this activity is particularly concerned with liberation. Third, the professional person engaged in the activity is the pastoral counselor, which includes, but is not limited to, the "clergy". Fourth, the integrating process of pastoral counseling involves the act of observing, understanding and interpreting psychological, religious and moral dimensions through psychological, theological, and ethical frames of

reference. Fifth, the pastoral counselor is prepared to work with individuals, couples, families, groups, and social systems. Sixth, the activity of pastoral counseling occurs within a broad global context of human community: those gathered and scattered. And, seventh, pastoral counseling aligns itself with the work of the Church, specifically with participation in the work of the kingdom of God, by its concern with the quality of relationship that motivates an increase of love of God and neighbor.

Before presenting a tentative working definition of pastoral counseling, it is important to note that the strategy used in this thesis to ground the integration of psychological and theological perspectives in pastoral counseling has been the use of a fundamental image, in this case a biblical metaphor. In the preceding chapters I have illustrated how the use of a biblical metaphor contributes to the practice of pastoral counseling. The biblical metaphor can provide a context for creative integration of techniques and theory from two seemingly conflicting disciplines.

As a young and evolving discipline, pastoral counseling must ground its efforts toward self-definition in a firm foundation before erecting a conceptual framework. I have argued in this thesis that the fundamental images from our Christian tradition offer a most appropriate source for this foundation.

Further research, reflection, and attention to the actual practice of pastoral counseling are needed in order for pastoral counseling to appropriate the richness of its fundamental metaphors from its theological and psychological heritage. The discipline's growth will be stunted if theorists and practitioners move to conceptual definitions before they have adequately explored the richness of their foundational metaphors.

With a full awareness of the limitations of any current attempt to define the emerging discipline of pastoral counseling, I propose the following tentative working definition:

> Pastoral counseling is a ministerial and professional counseling activity of liberation in which a pastoral counselor observes, understands and interprets the psychological, religious, and moral dimensions of the ongoing process manifested within individuals, couples, families, groups, and social systems through psychological, theological, and ethical frames of reference for the purpose of the fellowship of those gathered and scattered who are known to each other in the increase of love of God and neighbor; that is to say, the kingdom of God.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Cheryl A. Furtak has been read and approved by the following committee.

Dr. Patricia O'Connell Killen, Director
Assistant Professor, Institute of Pastoral Studies, Loyola

Ms. Susan Borrelli, M.P.S., CAC
Lecturer, Institute of Pastoral Studies, Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

April 30, 1979
Date

Patricia O'Connell Killen, Ph.D
Director's Signature