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PASTORAL COUNSELING

**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity**

by

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June 1950

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PASTORAL COUNSELING

INTRODUCTION

"The French physician, Jondan, described the doctor's task in these words: "To cure, sometimes; to relieve, often; to comfort, always."¹ These words may well be used also to describe the clergyman's pastoral task. In every parish there are people who are suffering from physical, mental and spiritual causes. Each one of these presents to the pastor a challenge and an opportunity. Much suffering, whether it be mental or spiritual, or even physical, is relieved as he brings comfort and peace to the soul and mind of the one in need with whom he deals. His primary task as a pastor is to be a soul-companion to those who are in need of such companionship. Whenever someone in need comes to him, he will spiritually walk along with him. It matters not whether the distance be short and all that is needed is a hand-clasp and a few words of encouragement, or whether the road be a long one, the pastor will accompany him and afford companionship as long as that companionship is needed and accepted. He will be careful not to become a permanent crutch for that troubled and needy soul. His purpose is to be a supporting and then strengthening companion, leading to the goal where the needy becomes strong enough to go on alone. Yes, "in sickness and in pain, in birth, in death, in bereavement, in fear, in loneliness, the pastor's task is that of a soul-companion."²

Whenever and wherever a pastor becomes a soul-companion to an individual in need, he has assumed a Pastoral Counseling relationship with that

¹Dick, Russell L., Pastoral Work and Personal Counseling. (New York, The MacMillan Company, 1947), p. 9

²Ibid.

individual. Much has been written during the past decade on this subject of Pastoral Counseling and a veritable avalanche of written material has been produced on the subject of counseling in general. An examination and study of this material on counseling and Pastoral counseling may well leave the inexperienced in a state of confusion. How can it be otherwise when much of this material shows confused thinking in its own development, while on the other hand opposing views on method, approach and technique are expressed by authors of different and opposing schools of thought. Each of these support their propositions with equally successful case history records. While pastoral counseling is as old as the earliest of priest and/or pastoral relationship, statistical research on methods, approaches and techniques, and tabulating of results thereof, is of recent origin. Because such data is very young and immature there still exists a wide range of differences in opinion on the subject. Nevertheless, there are underlying basic principles generally proven and accepted, which if not seen and understood, may leave the inexperienced in a state of confusion.

The purpose and intent of this thesis is not that it be an exhaustive treatise of the subject, which it is not, nor that it be a critical analysis of that which has been written on the subject, but rather that it set forth in clear review certain fundamental and basic definitions and principles of Pastoral Counseling, which when understood, will help to clarify the present seeming confusion. It is the author's fond hope that in some small way this thesis may help to accomplish this result. To this end this thesis is an attempt to define Pastoral Counseling as distinct from counseling in general; to show that the preaching and counseling functions of the ministry are related and supplement each other, and that only one moral code is basic for both; to show why it is important that present-day pastors effect a

sound counseling program in their parishes; to show why some pastors feel that their counseling relationship has been unsuccessful and what can be done to correct this feeling of inadequacy; to show that not one method of counseling by itself is the only correct method, but that rather a combination of the methods, suited to the needs of the counselee is the most effective; and to point out certain developed techniques (tools in the hands of the counselor), which, when mastered, are effective in the counseling relationship.

CHAPTER I

PASTORAL COUNSELING DEFINED

For a definition of pastoral counseling, we must first define counseling. Many definitions of counseling have been written and many of these by eminent counseling scholars; yet not two will entirely agree in all points. One of the best of these definitions is the one by Gilbert Wrenn: "Counseling is a personal dynamic relationship between two people who approach a mutually defined problem with mutual consideration for each other, to the end that the younger or less mature, or more troubled of the two, is aided to a self-determined resolution to his problem".³ Where this definition of counseling is accepted, there counseling is accepted as a function which has been going on for centuries, yes, since the very beginning when the first two people began to converse with each other. When two people consider and discuss a mutual problem, or a problem confronting one of them, that problem, by discussion, is brought into a position from which it can be better viewed, so that a resolution or a decision can the more readily be made. Life consists of an inter-dependent relationship. As long as this inter-dependent relationship is healthy, the process of counseling will be going on between friends, between relatives, between acquaintances. Such normal counseling often relieves the stress and strains of life in their infancy, before they become so severe that the aid of specialists must be sought. Counseling, then, is a relationship between any two people who discuss a problem and through this discussion are aided to a solution of the problem.

³Muss, Emily Hartshorne, Counseling. A Philosophy and Methods, (Pamphlet published by the Marriage Council of Philadelphia), page 2. (F. A. Davis Co. Philadelphia, Pa. 1945)

Pastoral counseling is nothing more or less than that which has already been defined as counseling, except that the adjective, "pastoral," narrows the concept of counseling, not in so far as the activity is concerned, but in so far as the participants in the counseling activity are concerned. Pastoral counseling is counseling in which one of the two people stands in relation to the other or others in the capacity of a religious leader, that is, a pastor, minister, priest, or rabbi. Since the person whose advise and counsel is being sought is a religious leader, the religious aspect is always present. It does not matter whether the problem is a spiritual, or a moral, or a social problem, or even a physical one, and it does not matter whether the religious point of view is brought into evidence or not; nevertheless, the religious aspect is present and religious principles become guiding principles by virtue of the pastoral relationship which exists between the two or more individuals concerned. Pastoral counseling, then, may be defined as a personal and dynamic relationship between two or more people, one of whom, the counselor, is a pastor, who approach a problem to the end that the troubled is aided to a self-determined resolution of his problem on an ethical and morally God-pleasing basis in accordance with the tenets of faith professed and adhered to.

The act of teaching, or the educational process, often becomes a necessary part of the pastoral counseling activity. Where the one who is in trouble does not bring to the counseling room a knowledge upon which he is able to make the correct and God-pleasing resolution, that knowledge must be supplied in the process of counseling. The very purpose of pastoral counseling is to guide and to lead men into the fuller life as it is to be found in Christ Jesus. While the ultimate decision or resolution should, if possible, be one that is self-determined, nevertheless it becomes necessary at times

to supply the basic knowledge of moral and religious principles, without which the correct and God-pleasing resolution cannot be made. While in counseling the purpose is to aid the troubled in resolving his problem, in pastoral counseling the purpose is to aid the troubled in resolving his problem in the morally correct and God-pleasing way. This distinction between counseling in general and pastoral counseling is basic and must be kept in mind in all our discussions of "pastoral counseling".

CHAPTER II

THE RELATIONSHIP OF PREACHING TO PASTORAL COUNSELING

"Skill in counseling is necessary for effective pastoral work".⁴ This was the decision made by a group of laymen in an interview of Murray Leiffer. People all have different skills according to the gifts that have been given them. So it is also in the ministry. There are some ministers who excel in the pulpit and are acclaimed as wonderful preachers, who nevertheless feel ill at ease when ministering at the bedside of the dying. On the other hand, there are those who excel in the bedside ministry to the sick, but are poor preachers in the pulpit. Then there are those whose skill lies in the art of teaching, while still others are very skillful in directing and guiding individuals in the inter-personal relationship of the counseling room. The ideal pastor, of course, is the one (if such a one exists) who exhibits skill in every area of pastoral work.

Much has been written about the methods of effective counseling, about what a counselor can do, and dare not do, in the counseling relationship if his counseling is to be effective, and about the counselor's attitude toward the counselee and his problem. Some of what has been written is good and has its application to the pastor in his pastoral counseling function; but so much of it has been written, and even by people writing on pastoral counseling, without keeping in mind the pastor's primary role, that of leading men into the fuller and richer life as it is to be found in Christ

⁴Ferguson, Carl H., "The Preaching and Counseling Functions of the Ministry", (The Journal of Pastoral Care, Vol. 2, No. 4), 1941, Pg. 11.
Murray Leiffer, The Layman Looks at the Minister (Abingdon) pp. 62-3.

Jesus. Consequently, many a pastor, after examining the volume of material on counseling, believes that he will have to play a double role in life if he is going to be effective both in the pulpit and in the counseling room. But nothing is further from the truth than such a mistaken conclusion. Yet it is understandable that pastors will feel that way, if they accept, without further investigation, the principles of counseling of men who have no convictions of right or wrong about anything.

As a preacher, the pastor must speak from conviction; he must speak the truth boldly; he must denounce evil in its every form and proclaim judgement in an effort to bring sinners to conviction and repentance. In the role of counselor, the pastor's convictions must remain the same as those he has proclaimed from the pulpit. There is no change here, but there should be a difference in approach. In the counseling room, his approach is always positive and never condemnatory. And yet, while he accepts the sinner as he is and refrains from passing judgement on him, and while his entire attention is centered on the person in a positive manner, his sole purpose is to lead, guide and strengthen that individual to overcome his problem in a God-pleasing way and to walk the pathway of God that leads to a richer and a fuller life.

There are those who would have us believe that the counselor should never make an effort to change the individual's outlook on life by giving direction or guidance. If a change comes, it should come only from the individual himself. Wm. Snyder, in his book, *Casebook of Non-Directive Counseling*, says: "The counsellor must genuinely accept the client as an individual who has the right to be the way he is, or to change to any other type of personality he may desire".⁵ God has given to man the free will to

⁵Ferguson, Earl H., The Preaching and Counseling Functions of the Ministry, (The Journal of Pastoral Care, Vol. 2, No. 4, Pg. 13.) William Snyder, Casebook of Non-Directive Counseling (Houghton) p. 3.

ADDENDA to pg. 9, line 1 f.

"God has given to man the free will to be what he will in life". This statement and what follows in the paragraph is not to be understood as being in antithesis to the doctrinal fact that man cannot by his own power and the flick of his own finger come to faith and become a believing child of God. In things spiritual man has no free will, only the will to resist. God and God alone can bring a man to faith and this is by the Spirit of God working on the heart of man through the means of grace, the Word of God, and the Sacraments. Natural man "is dead in trespasses and sins" and a "dead man" has no power at all. In spiritual matters man is "dead" and needs the regenerating power of the "Spirit of God." For this reason we confess "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."¹

Yet man can resist this work of God's Spirit and thus remain unregenerated. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."² These words of Stephen are very applicable to our present civilization and certainly to the present generation of American civilization. The reason for such widespread ungodly, immoral living today, with its resultant heartaches, troubles and problems is because men resist God's Spirit and refuse to let God into their hearts and lives. The Christian pastoral counselor, knowing that the cause for man's problems is his resistance to God, will apply

¹Luther, Dr. Martin, The Small Catechism. (St. Louis, Mo., Concordia Publishing House, 1943) P. 11.

²Acts 7:51

ADDENDA to pg. 9, line 1 f. (Cont'd)

God's Word and make diligent use of prayer in his counseling relationships, as a means of assisting the counselee in breaking down his natural resistance to God, so that the Spirit of God can penetrate him, bring him to faith, enlighten him, and lead and guide him into the right relationship with God, the only right pathway of life. A problem, a difficulty in life, solved through regeneration of the Spirit of God is a problem solved correctly and one that remains solved, for God's Spirit not only enlightens the understanding but also supplies the will, the courage and the strength to carry through to the end.

This is, of course, what occurred in the instance of the adulterous woman. From the moment when she confronted Jesus, accepted Him in faith as her Savior, she was able to "go and sin no more",³ because Jesus, through the Spirit, supplied her with the strength to live a new life. The shackles of sin in her life were broken. Likewise all pastoral counseling today must be aimed at assisting the counselee to receive the Spirit of God and let it become operative in him. When God's Spirit is given entrance, the shackles of sin are broken, a new freedom in the warmth of God's eternal love and mercy is experienced and a new life, free from the old burdens, is begun. The Christian pastor will always be aware of these spiritual forces in all his counseling relationships. His purpose will be to help the troubled in receiving the Spirit of God, as the operating force in their lives.

³John 7:11

be what he will in life, but to say that a man has the right to be what he will in life, is expressing a view to which a clergyman cannot agree. Man has the right only to be perfect, that is, to be the image of the Creator, in which God created man. There may be many reasons why a man is what he is, and these reasons may be understandable, and they may even be outside the area of the individual's own control. We may be able to understand why a person is psychologically immature or morally unconventional or even anti-social. Nevertheless, he is not such by right, but rather by overstepping his right. While pastoral counseling must be done in the spirit of love and of sympathy and of understanding, nevertheless it must be also performed on the basis of definite moral convictions regarding man's life and his relationship to God.

When the woman taken in adultery was brought to Jesus by certain self-righteous religious zealots, Jesus showed a rare degree of love and understanding. He did not condemn her; neither did He defend her by saying she had a right to be what she was and to live as she was living or as she might want to live. What He did say to her was "Go and sin no more".⁶ Jesus understood the underlying causes which contributed to make her as she was, and He extended to her protective sympathy; yet He told her to go and live differently, which could rightly be expected of her.

The difference between the pastor's work in the pulpit and in the counseling room is not one which sets the two functions at odds. The difference is one in method of treatment and not one, which consists of a change in basic moral principles. While in the pulpit, a subject may be treated in a very dogmatic manner; the counseling room is not the place

⁶John 7:11

for a dogmatic treatment. Yet, the same convictions must guide the counseling as guides the preaching. The very fact that a person realizes he has a problem, that he himself has some guilt in that problem, that he is unable to extricate himself from it and that he needs and, therefore, is seeking help, indicates that the guilt involved is recognized and, therefore, needs very little, if any, emphasis. Some pastors make the mistake of building too great a mountain out of the guilt, or sin. In doing so, they cause the sinner to withdraw in horror, to feel that the mountain of sin is too great to be overcome even with God's help, and to feel that he is doomed regardless of any and all conquering help the pastor extends. Once such a barrier has been erected it is extremely difficult to remove it. Therefore the pastor's approach in the counseling room is never one of condemnation, but is one in which he, as it were, takes the sinner by the hand, climbs the mountain of guilt with him and sets him down on the other side, free to travel the pathway of a new life. That is what Jesus did with the adulteress woman who was brought to Him. In love and compassion, He drew her to a more noble life and aroused within her the determination to choose the better way, which, in Him, she was able henceforth to travel. In such an approach the pastor does not condone the guilt or the sin, which he can never do, nor does he wave the sin and guilt aside as though it were not important, or non-existent. In such an approach he accepts the sinner, the counselee, as he is, guilt, sin and all, and gives him the uncensored right to express himself in an atmosphere of sympathetic understanding. In such an atmosphere the sinner, the counselee, is able to unburden himself and through the pastor's directive support, he is able to work through to a higher level of integration.

Sympathy for, understanding of and support for the people in trouble

ADDENDA to pg. 11, line 8 ff.

"Preaching is ethical education, determined at conviction and a self-determination to action". Preaching, of course, is more than "ethical education". There are many purposes in preaching. The primary purpose is to bring men and women to faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, through whom alone the doors of heaven are open to them. Other purposes of preaching are to sustain and deepen faith; to bring solace and comfort to the grief-stricken, the bereaved, the distressed; to arouse to action in the spiritual Kingdom; to disseminate information on the needs in the Lord's vineyard (mission sermons); to instruct in Christian doctrine for an ever-deepening Christian knowledge; to convict and convince of sin and sinfulness; and to instruct in the law of God so man knows what is right and what is wrong before God. Additional purposes of preaching could be listed, and other methods of defining these purposes could be used, yet all preaching, whatever its subsidiary purpose, is primarily for the purpose of bringing men and women to faith in Christ as their personal Savior and sustaining them in that faith.

The mention that "preaching is ethical education" is not intended to indicate that this is the most important function of preaching, or the only function, but that it is the preaching function with which the author is concerned in establishing the principle that counseling is made easier when the counselee has a knowledge of the moral law of God and knows what God's moral pattern for life is.

Many a person comes to the pastor for counseling because he feels his problem or problems in life are due to his own failings in God's sight and because he feels the pastor is the one who is able to give him insight into

ADDENDA to pg. 11, line 8 ff. (Cont'd)

just where these failings exist, and also to direct, guide, and lead him into the right relationship with God. If the counseler has only a hazy idea what God's moral law is and how it applies to him and his life, the pastor will have much initial instruction to give, for a man cannot repent of a sin and feel the radiating warmth of God's love and mercy in forgiveness as long as he does not know that he has sinned and wherein his sin consists. He who has this knowledge and realizes fully the gravity of his sin and comes to the pastor for an expression of forgiveness, for guidance and leadership, is ready to be led to the feet of the Cross for healing through the forgiveness of sins and for incentive, courage, and strength to amend the sinful life through the power of the Holy Spirit. To know one's own sinfulness and to know divine redemption through the Cross of Christ, from which comes redemption, creativeness, incentive and power for change and renewal of living, are indispensable to the total solution of moral problems. Where preaching has supplied this knowledge, the counseling relationship need not first supply it.

must be the characteristic mark of everything that the pastor does, whether it be in the counseling room or the pulpit or any other place in the parish. It is true always that the pastor cannot ever, either actively or passively, deny by word or action moral convictions inherent in God's eternal truth. There are times when these must be expressed positively. Whenever this must be done, it must be done in love, for love is the underlying basic element of sympathy, understanding and support.

Preaching is ethical education, determined at conviction and a self-determination to action. When such preaching is motivated by love, by understanding of and sympathy for the people, then such preaching is an aid to the pastor's counseling, because from such preaching comes an awareness on the part of the listener that here is a man who can be approached with a problem and entrusted with a confession. This kind of preaching will open the door of the counseling room for those who need to enter. Any pastor who preaches "the truth in love" need never worry about how to establish a counseling program, for those in need will be coming to him and will continue to come to him so long as his counseling is performed in that same spirit of love.

Preaching holds up before the hearers in bold relief the moral patterns, God's moral law, to which all life must be adjusted, and thus provides the counselee with that background of moral conviction which is indispensable in the counseling relationship. Where this background of knowledge and conviction exists, there the counselor's task is lessened, for then, without additional instruction, the counselee is able to make, not a decision, but the correct self-determined decision. In this way, the preaching function of the pastor is a direct aid to his counseling, for it prepares people for the counseling room.

Preaching renders counseling another service in this, that it often serves as a prevention. Through the preaching, many a person is made aware of a conflict or a difficulty in his own life, while it is yet in its initial stage, and so he is able to attack and solve the problem before it reaches grave and devastating proportions. Such a service of prevention through preaching was beautifully illustrated on the screen in the picture, "The Power of God", where the banker's son and his wife, on the verge of divorce, listened to The Lutheran Hour, in which the subject of divorce was discussed. Because this sermon brought home to them the awfulness of the tragedy on the brink of which they were standing, and pointed them to the only pathway that would solve their problem and bring them happiness, they came to a self-determined, God-pleasing resolution of their problem without any further counseling aid. Thus, preaching very often prevents the need for counseling service.

Just as preaching aids the counseling function of the ministry, so counseling is an aid also to the preaching function. In the counseling function, the pastor learns more about the thought and life of the parishioners than in any other way. Here is a cross-section of life's habits, troubles and frustrations. Here in the counseling room he faces, with his people, the common, as well as the abnormal, perplexities and problems of life. Thus counseling assists the preaching function in aiding the preacher to make his preaching timely, to the point, and directed to the needs of the people.

To speak of the relative importance of the one pastoral function over against the other would be foolish and avail nothing, for the preaching function and the counseling function are each of vast importance within their own areas, for the complete pastoral ministry. The same convictions

ADDENDA to pg. 13, line 16 ff.

Modern man attempts to explain away all error, all mistakes, and all sins and to justify such actions, thoughts, desires, and drives by excusing the person involved. In our society this has become the fashionable thing to do. Cain sought to vindicate himself of the fault for murder by asking "Am I my brother's keeper?"¹ implying that he is not to blame if his brother was unable to protect himself. Man has always sought to excuse himself by transference of his faults upon something outside himself, the pending economic conditions, the social environment, the class struggle and what have you. Today a new scapegoat has come into being, the unconscious self. Man's mistakes are explained away by blaming the drives suppressed into the unconscious over which the individual is said to have no control and for which it is said he is not responsible. From this follows the deduction that God can't and won't hold one responsible for acts or sins over which the individual has no control. Thus a feeling of faultlessness is developed, and an attitude of "all is well" becomes the predominant active factor. Further suppression is attempted in this that the voice of conscience is submerged, explained away and yet all the while true peace of mind and total happiness is not obtained, for true peace of mind, release from frustration and total happiness can be obtained only through the painful process of recognizing sin, repenting of it, and finding God's eternal and immeasurable love in the forgiveness of sins through the atonement of Christ on Calvary's Cross.

¹Gen. 4-9

ADDENDA to pg. 13, line 16 ff. (Cont'd)

God's moral law, which has not been kept, but which still stands as the measuring stick of justice, cannot be explained away as non-existent. Recognition of the fact that all maladjustments, troubles, frustrations, problems arise as a result of breaking this moral code must be basic in all pastoral counseling relationships. Pastoral counseling does not aim at such recognition of God's moral law only, nor is that the end to be striven for in the pastoral counseling relationship. This recognition is rather only the beginning. Yet it is basic, for no pastor can be an instrument in leading a troubled soul to the Cross of Christ to find peace and rest and strength unless there is first a knowledge and recognition of guilt. Pastoral counseling begins here, but the goal is to lead the troubled to freedom which can only come through a regeneration of the Holy Ghost, made possible by the Redemption wrought by Jesus on the Cross.

and eternal truths are the guiding principles in both functions. No pastor dare permit himself to be led into believing that convictions, based on God's eternal truths, must be left outside the door of the counseling room. It is the opinion of some counselors and psychologists that all counseling must proceed in an atmosphere outside any set standard of morality or moral code. They present seemingly persuasive arguments to show that the only moral code permissible in the counseling relationship is the code of right and wrong as it is recognized, known and interpreted by the counselee. If counseling proceeds on this principle, it will often defeat its own purpose, that of integrating a maladjusted personality on a higher plane of living. A counselor cannot raise a counselee to a higher level of integration, if he lowers himself to the level of the counselee's convictions or lack of any convictions, as the case may be. One analyst wrote: "The amoral, evolutionary psychologists have no absolute or eternal rules of right and wrong about anything".⁷ No minister's counseling can take place within such a narrow, non-ethical, morally neutral frame of reference. His counseling must proceed, against the background of the religious conviction that there is a moral order (God's law) to which the life of a man must be adjusted for complete release from frustration, for peace of mind, and for total happiness. To the extent that his life is out of adjustment with this moral order, his happiness is decreased and his frustrations and perplexities increased.

Prof. Earl M. Furgeson stated: "Ethics, psychology, and theology are congruent and compatible rather than unrelated and contradictory. In any coherent view of life there is no separation or conflict between these areas

⁷Prof. Furgeson, Earl H., The Preaching and Counseling Functions of the Ministry. (The Journal of Pastoral Care, Vol. 2, No. 4, Pg. 16)
 T. Schroeder, Attitude of One Amoral Psychologist. (The Psychoanalytic Review, XXXI, No. 3), pp. 329-35.

of experience. Good psychology is also good theology, and if one is at odds with the other then one or the other needs revision.⁸ Yes, when there is conflict between psychology and perfect theology, then one needs revision and it is certain which one it is that needs revision. God's truths are eternal and no revision can ever be made there. However, it is dangerous to conclude that one's own interpretations of God's eternal truths are absolytely faultless unless or until they have been unblaseedly searched, and re-searched and found to be firmly grounded upon, and in complete harmony with God's eternal truths. These eternal truths are revealed to man in the Scriptures, the Bible, God's Holy and eternally unalterable word.

There are many people, including many pastors, who feel that the moral standards of Scripture are outdated, old-fashioned and are no longer admissible in our so-called highly enlightened scientific age. There are others who believe that acceptable and proper standards are determined by the society in which the individual lives. Therefore they keep their own moral patterns and standards in a flexible state, always ready to harmonize them to the will of the crowd. Against such an unstable position, the pastor must be on his guard. People come to the pastor because they believe he will be able to lead them out of their uncertainty. A pastor, who is not sure of what is the right or wrong way of life, is hardly able to lead and guide another unstable and uncertain personality into a truer pattern of life.

On the other hand, the pastor counselor must guard himself against becoming an extremist in the other direction. There are those who hold to moral patterns of life more restricting than that required by God. Many things of life which are 'adlaphora', neither demanded, nor prohibited by

⁸Same as (7) Vol. 2, No. 4, P. 17.

God, are interpreted by them as God's prohibitions and demands. Such pastors take with them into the counseling room and impose upon the counselee as God's demands, standards which God has not and does not expect. It is these too narrow and too restricted standards which have been the targets of good and sound psychologists, psychiatrists, psychoanalysts and social counselors. The pastor must be sure, then, that he brings into the counseling relationship standards and convictions which are truly Scriptural, which are truly those of God Himself and, therefore, will stand eternally. The same is, of course, true also in the area of the preaching function of the pastor and in all areas of his ministry. The principle that applies is "Speak the truth in Love." Where this is the principle of operation, there is little possibility of error.

CHAPTER III

THE NEED FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING

There are some people who believe that pastoral counseling is not needed and that it is a hindrance in the solution of man's problems. Some of these are hailed as specialists in their fields of activity--that of social service, psychology and psychiatry; but they are also the extremists in their fields. These believe that the guidance and direction given by the pastor-counselor is based, not upon truths that are eternal, but upon outmoded principles of right and wrong. And, of course, their theory of life is in direct antithesis to that of God's revelation. Their theory of life is that man is inherently good, born innocent, pure and holy, and, if afforded the opportunity to grow and develop in the correct environment where frustrations are absent, will always choose that which is morally good and wholesome. They believe that when a person becomes warped in character, it is only to the degree in which he has been unnecessarily frustrated in life. They hold that when a man's actions become socially unacceptable, it is because he has been driven into those actions by unneeded frustrations imposed by outmoded standards and principles. In other words, their theory of life is that every person, by nature, not only has the ability to choose the right pathway, but automatically will choose the right pathway of living, if unencumbered by outside pressure. Therefore, these extremists teach a type of counseling, previously indicated in this paper, which is without any set standards of morality, where the counselor never injects any direction or directive guidance. They teach that the only acceptable method of counseling is one which is entirely non-directive.

AIDENDA Pg. 17, line 3 f.

Man, born in sin, is freed from the bondage of sin only by the redemption of Jesus Christ through the regeneration of the Holy Ghost. The means of grace, The Word and The Sacraments, are the means through which regeneration is effected. It is through the regeneration of the Spirit of God that man receives the inclination, the desire and the power to do God's will. What is God's will he learns from God's Word. An ever clearer understanding and perception of God's will he obtains through a continuing study of God's Word. Christian parents, teachers and pastors are instruments whom God uses for instruction and guidance in His Word and Will. And, therefore, as man grows in the knowledge and understanding of God's Word and Will, he, being reborn and regenerated, will live the Christian life and will make his choice to follow God's Word and Will.

The Biblical, or the Christian, theory of life is the very opposite, namely, that man, born in sin, is inclined to do that which is evil, and only by instruction and guidance is furnished the ability to make the correct choice. Already just because of this amoral, without God approach, which is prevalent in our day and age in the field of counseling, the opportunities for pastoral counseling are multitudinous, and the need for pastors to take seriously their opportunities for pastoral counseling is of such vital importance.

There is such an urgent and vital need for pastoral counseling today, also, because we are living in a period when the world is in confusion, and in a time of tensions and of frictions. There is more general unrest today than there has ever been. Yet our livelihood has become so inter-dependent that the slightest economic upheaval can, and does, upset us terrifically. We have become one world of many nationalities and of many tongues, yet we have been unable to think alike, to speak alike, to act alike, and to live together in harmony. There are constant disputes and clashes among people of different principles, of different nationalities and of different ideas. It is no wonder, then, that there is so much tension, so much anxiety, and so much frustration, even on the level of the individual. Because of this, pastoral counseling is more vitally needed today than ever before, for pastoral counseling, is interested not only in removing the frustration, anxiety or fear for the immediate present, but also concerns itself about the total picture, the hereafter, the welfare of the whole.

Life's needs, when stripped to the bone, are very simple. In past generations, people were much more independent than they are today. Our present standard of industrialization and mechanization has completely changed man's mode of living. His life is one of meeting schedules. He

is a specialist in one chosen field and is devoid of any ability in any other field of activity. For his needs of life, he is dependent upon other specialists in other fields. He is reduced to a machine, and grinds out a set, finished product on a production-line basis. Even his recreation he no longer provides for himself, but purchases it from recreational specialists. He no longer has time to enjoy leisure time leisurely in the company of friends. His friends, likewise, are so occupied and preoccupied that the opportunity for consulting with them on problems and frustrations is no longer possible. Therefore he must now seek the aid of a counselor. In ever increasing numbers people are turning to their pastor for individual and personal counseling help. Consequently pastoral counseling has become one of the most important functions of the pastor's activities. No pastor dare rest and take his ease, but must spend himself in this most urgent and important function to which, once he has opened the door, there is no end.

CHAPTER IV

THE EQUIPMENT FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING

By equipment for pastoral counseling reference is not to any material, man-made items of equipment such as an office or the furniture which is necessary for an adequate and inviting place, designated as a counseling room. What is meant by equipment has to do with the pastor's inward self. Since pastoral counseling is an inter-personal relationship between a pastor and another person who has a problem which he cannot solve alone, the pastor, in relationship to the other person, stands in a trusted position of respect and honor. The person in trouble has come to the pastor because he has complete confidence in the pastor. This confidence must be held throughout and following the counseling relationship. To this end, the pastoral counselors must possess qualities of character that shine out like beacon lights, guiding the way for the troubled, the insecure, and the blind. Two indispensable qualities of the pastor-counselor, as stated by Dr. Samuel McComb, are "fellowship with God and sympathy with man."⁹

Early experiences in the field of pastoral counseling teach that an intimate fellowship with God is an absolute necessity for effective work as a pastor-counselor. In this intimate relationship between counselor and counselee, the much used expression, "Do as I say and not as I do," never works. It is ever true that "what a man does and what he is, speak louder than what a man says." If a pastor hopes to lead another into a fuller and

⁹Bonnell, John S., Psychology for Pastor and People, Pg. 42.

richer life in Christ, his own life, what he does and what he is, must radiate a warmth which manifests a close and an intimate fellowship with God in Christ. Where the pastor's life indicates otherwise than that he enjoys an intimate fellowship with God, he will experience only limited opportunities for counseling, and his limited opportunities for counseling will again be limited in effectiveness.

Through the personal crises of life, people are often drawn into a more intimate fellowship with God. God often uses the way of a cross to draw men to Him. There are pastors who have acquired a wonderful theological training as a foundation for pastoral work and are well qualified for the profession educationally, who, nevertheless, find themselves failing in this interpersonal relationship of pastoral counseling. The reason for this failure may be outside the area of the pastor's control; it may be due to certain personal characteristics, which he is unable to change; it may be due to some characteristic which he recognizes and is able to change and then he will do something about this insufficiency; but very often it is because he has never experienced any severe crisis in his own life and hence cannot radiate that warmth which is fired by personal experiences in life which have drawn him to a close and intimate companionship with God. Many pastors have recognized in themselves certain spiritual insufficiencies. They have not been satisfied with these insufficiencies. Through prayer and other spiritual exercises they have sought and found a closer relationship with God and their successfulness in both the pulpit and the counseling room have been increased and sustained.

Besides walking in close fellowship with God, the pastor-counselor must also have an understanding of himself. "Know thyself"¹⁰ is an old

¹⁰ Bennell, John S., Psychology for Pastor and People, Pg. 205.
Attributed to Thales and to a number of other Greek Philosophers.

exhortation and is a very important one for the pastor-counselor. While this idea, "know thyself," is limited and can never be fully attained because of the impossibility of any man's fully understanding himself in every detail, it is, nevertheless, very important that the pastor know as much about himself as he is capable of discovering. Knowing that he could never obtain complete knowledge of himself, nevertheless desiring as complete a knowledge as possible, the Psalmist prayed for God's help in his self-analysis when he sang, "Search me, O god, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts and see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."¹¹

When a person sincerely endeavors to "know himself," he will discover weaknesses, desires, ambitions, urges and drives which are sinful and which would lead to ultimate destruction if they were not curbed, chained and restrained. This is just as true of the pastor and his life as it is of any person. Understanding these things in his own life will help the pastor to understand these same things in the lives of others. Seeing himself reflected in the mirror of self-examination will keep the pastor sincerely humble. Out of humility flows charity for others. Any pharisaical, self-righteous attitude does not condone charity, love and sympathy for others and will not permit the extension of a helping hand.

To successfully help the person in difficulty, the pastor-counselor must show a sincere, deep and unbounded love for that individual, as well as sympathy and understanding. This love, coupled with sympathy for and an understanding of the counselee's problem, does not mean that the pastor must condone the sin, or speak lightly of it as though it were not a severe thing, or as though it did not even exist, but it does mean that he must not

¹¹Psalm 139:23-24

In leading a counselee "to a higher level of integration and to an intimate fellowship with God in Christ" the pastor counselor must lead that troubled soul to the Cross of Christ, the only source of forgiveness, love and mercy. Here and here alone the troubled soul can find rest and peace and strength. Here alone he will find the power to amend the sinful pathways and to live the "better life", the life with God, of intimate communion with Him. Those who received help and aid from Jesus were made new creatures in Him. From Him they obtained new spiritual strength and power. In all their relationships with their fellow-men, their every act and attitude reflected this renewed spiritual change, this new strength and power. Likewise, the pastor-counselor will lead the counselee to Jesus Christ in whom there is forgiveness and from whom comes renewed spiritual strength and courage. Having found Christ, old things are changed into new, a new creature is born, a creature whose life, (actions, words, thoughts and drives) reflect intimate fellowship with God, problems are solved, and difficulties fade away.

permit himself to give any indication that he is not willing to direct and guide the sinner, or that he is unwilling to take him by the hand, as it were, and go with him along the road that leads upward to a higher level of integration and to an intimate fellowship with God in Christ. To this end the pastor-counselor must be able to listen to the revelation of anything, whatever the nature of it may be, without becoming upset or emotionally disturbed in any way. His deep love for the individual will overcome any disgust for the act itself and will manifest itself in a willingness to help change the situation. Was not this the attitude which the Savior again and again demonstrated? Whosoever came to Him seeking aid and help, regardless of what the situation was, or the acts which had been committed, were received by Him in love and were guided into the pathway of a better life. Even the thief on the cross, when he turned to Jesus with a repentant and yearning heart, was not spurned for what he had done, but was received into the eternal fold with the words: "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise."¹²

Many more things can be said on the subject of the qualifications and the attitudes which the pastor must bring to the counseling room for effective counseling, and yet all of these are summarized in the words of Dr. McComb: "Fellowship with God and sympathy for man."¹³ In short, the pastor-counselor must have a clear knowledge and understanding of God's perfect will in his own life. He should experience a rich and deep fellowship with God, and from this fellowship he will draw personal refreshment, rest and peace

¹²Luke 23:43

¹³Bonnell, John S., Psychology for Pastor and People, (Harper & Bro. N.Y. 1948,) Pg. 42.
 McComb, Samuel, A Book of Modern Prayers (New York, 1926) Pg. 128.

which will be reflected in the love that he will demonstrate for the souls of troubled men all about him.

CHAPTER V

THE DIRECTIVE AND NON-DIRECTIVE METHODS OF COUNSELING

Much effort has been expended during recent years in an attempt to establish paved routes of approach to the problems involved in the counseling relationship. Opinions differ widely as to the best general route to the problem, or the best and most effective method of counseling to use. The terminology used to designate the two opposing schools of thought on counseling methods is that of Directive and Non-directive. There are those who advocate the use of one method to the absolute exclusion of the other, while others believe the other method the only effective one. Most experienced counselors do not hold to the one, or the other exclusively, but in their counseling, use a combination of both methods. While the counselor will never think of applying one method or the other method during the counseling relationship, every counselor ought to clearly understand the meaning, the extent and the limitations of these two methods of counseling.

Directive counseling, in its narrow sense, is counseling in which the counselor gives definite direction as to the resolution or decision of a problem which the counselee must follow, as, for example, when a pastor directs a counselee to perform a certain act or to do a certain thing, even though the counselee himself does not feel that this is necessary. However, directive counseling in its broader meaning includes any and every direction given by the counselor, in and through which the counselee comes to a self-determined decision in the resolution of his problem. This type of directive counseling occurs when the counselor, by the careful use of questions, or by statements of suggestion, or by instruction, enlightens the understanding of the counselee in the field of right and wrong, so that the counselee is directed to make for himself not a decision, but the desired and correct

decision for the solution of his problem.

Non-directive counseling in its narrow meaning is counseling in which the counselor is merely the passive by-stander. In non-directive counseling the counselor listens intently, demonstrates an interest in the counsellee and in his problem and affords the counsellee an opportunity to unburden himself freely, but he gives no hint, no direction and no guidance whatever as to the correct decision or resolution which should be made. In this method of counseling he asks no questions and makes no statements which are even guide lines toward a correct decision.

It is this method of narrow, non-directive counseling that is performed by some counseling agencies which, in recent years, have mushroomed in some of our larger cities and have been highly popularized by articles in current magazines. In these counseling agencies, it is explained, the counselor only listens, adds a shed tear here and there to the relief of the counsellee, rarely if ever speaks and never, in speaking, gives any advice whatsoever. Such counseling can be and often is effective, for after all, there are people who are for the moment emotionally upset and who carry in their bosoms antagonisms, frustrations, and hatreds, but who have the mentality, the education and the background of moral convictions upon which to draw to resolve their problem correctly. They simply need an opportunity to speak to someone to whom they can unburden their feelings. Given the opportunity to talk out their problems they feel relieved and are then able to resolve their problem without further aid or guidance. This type of counseling was common practice in generations past and was successfully effective. People often unburdened themselves, sometimes amid an outburst of tears, to a friend or relative and received from that friend or relative an atmosphere of sympathy and understanding. Through such an unburdening of

oneself, the individual felt relieved, experienced comfort and, seeing his problem in clearer relationship to other values of life, he was able to resolve his problem before it reached a critical stage. Because there is so little opportunity to-day for such interpersonal counseling between friends and relatives, therefore this type of professional counseling agency has been so successful in quickly gaining a financially supporting clientele.

There are many instances in which pastors, too, can aid individuals to resolve their problem by mere passive listening in an atmosphere of sympathetic understanding. Should a pastor permit himself to be imposed upon by people who need only an opportunity to talk their problems out of their system? Should he use his precious time to merely listen to an outburst of emotional release? Every pastor must decide this for himself. However, it is certainly true that in this also he is serving the need to which he has dedicated his life, that of being a soul-shepherd to his people. If he decides his time cannot be spent in merely listening when direction and guidance are not needed and he has others to whom he can refer such people, he will want to make sure that he is prompted to this decision by a better reason than that he feels it beneath his dignity to merely listen sympathetically. The person who comes to him needs help and he needs it desperately. The pastor has dedicated his life to the noble task of extending help where help is needed and accepted. If the unburdening is a confession, then the pastor does not direct it to other channels, for he and he alone, is to the parishoner the representative of God. The greatest honor and the finest respect that anyone can pay his pastor is to have such confidence in him that he is willing to unload to him the secrets of the heart.

Non-directive counseling in the wider meaning includes counseling in which the counselor may make statements or ask questions in which he indicates an understanding of the problem, sustains a sympathetic attitude toward the counselee, and expresses an earnest desire to help him. Such statements or questions, however, do not contain any directions as to the ultimate solution of the problem. Just as soon as they do, the counseling becomes directive. It is the use of this type of statement or question which Seward Hiltner advocates in his recent book, "Pastoral Counseling."¹⁴ In this book he offers many illustrations to show how statements, non-directive in character, are used to bring the problem into clearer view for the counselee where, devoid of emotional reaction, he may gain a better understanding of his problem, and unaided, make a resolution of his problem.

To adhere strictly to the pattern of non-directive counseling, even in the wider meaning, the counselor accepts the counselee's right to be what he is, his right to choose what he is going to be, the right to live as he desires to live, and the right to make his decision and to carry it out regardless of its anti-social consequences or its immoral or sinful implications. In strict non-directive counseling, the counselor remains mute regarding any basic moral convictions of life which he personally may or may not have. There are many counselors, as previously mentioned, who firmly believe that all real effective counseling must be within this non-directive area. However, there are also many other counselors, some outside the religious field of activity, who just as vehemently dispute this view. It is evident that a pastor cannot be limited in all his counseling to this

¹⁴Hiltner, Seward, Pastoral Counseling. (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York,).

non-directive method. If he were, then there would be times when of necessity, he would play a role of due convictions, advocating certain definite principles in the pulpit and giving silent assent to other principles and convictions in the counseling room.

The pastor-counselor will find that his counseling will be carried on mostly in a modified method of counseling, not strictly directive and not strictly non-directive. He will realize that wherever and whenever it is possible, the counselee should be the one to make the decision or resolution of the problem. He will never, except in extreme cases, decide and impose a decision upon the counselee. Yet he will realize that, when necessary, he must give direction and guidance so that the counselee, in making a decision, will make the correct and God-pleasing decision.

Just exactly how to give this direction, just when direction is needed or is not needed, just when additional instruction is imperative, is a phase of counseling judgment for which no individual can lay down a clear-cut pattern. Some pastors never acquire the ability to judge correctly. But the alert pastor will learn by experience and become more accurate in giving the right amount of direction in the right dosages at the right time. I know of no educational short-cut to acquire this ability. Experience alone produces the expert. The goal the pastor strives for in his counseling is to help the counselee to make the correct decision or resolution of his problem. While the pastor is the guiding influence, it is the counselee who should make the decision for then he will be better able to accept support and carry his decision into fruition. Such a decision or resolution of a problem carried into fruition will be to the glory of God, to the welfare of society and to the eternal and temporal welfare of the individual.

CHAPTER VI

CERTAIN DEVELOPED TECHNIQUES OF COUNSELING

A man may have a job to do. He may know what is to be done and he may have lying before him the tools with which to do the job, but if he does not know how to use the tools he will be unable to do a satisfactory job. By experimenting with the tools, he may, through a hit or miss method, eventually complete the job, or he may not be able to complete the job at all. But, oh, how much easier, simpler, quicker and more satisfying it would have been, had he known the purpose and the limits of each tool and how to put it to its most effective usage.

In the field of counseling, there are many techniques of approach. One particular technique of approach may not be the correct one for a specific problem, or it may be an approach which is not suited to the characteristics of the counselor or counselee. It is certainly of value when a pastor has a knowledge of the various techniques of approach and is able to employ them in his counseling, fitting them to the particular cases in which their employment would be most effective. The four most commonly used techniques of approach are: a) The technique of listening, b) The technique of asking questions, c) The technique of statements of understanding, d) The technique of instructional guidance.

A

The Technique of Listening

The technique of listening was referred to in the preceding section dealing with non-directive counseling. Whatever may be restated here is

not with any intention of duplication but of clearly setting forth in differentiation the four techniques of approach to counseling.

Sir Arthur Helps once said, "It takes a great man to make a good listener."¹⁵ Nowadays, most people want to talk, consequently we interrupt each other. We are impatient to break in upon another's remarks. Today this is often done as a matter of course. Listening is rapidly becoming a lost art. It is especially difficult for ministers to listen. This is so because we have been trained to talk and to give public expression to our ideas. We are called upon to speak to every kind of organization and, also, to talk upon every imaginable topic. Consequently, we sometimes find that it is not too easy for us to listen to others. There are many ministers who are indeed impatient listeners, except when they are hearing an address that will give them material for more talking. To be a skillful counselor, the pastor must discipline himself so that listening becomes second nature to him, for listening is an important and basic principle in the technique of approach to counseling.

There are few experiences which will give an individual more reassurance than to find someone who will listen sympathetically and intelligently to a recital of his difficulties. The record expansion in the field of professional counseling is because during recent years the average person has not been willing to listen to the problems of his fellow man. Our twentieth century type of existence keeps us so occupied and preoccupied with things concerning ourselves that we have no time for our neighbor. Because of this

¹⁵Bonnell, John S., Psychology for Pastor and People (Harper & Bro. N.Y. 1948) Pg. 53.

Helps, Sir Arthur, Brevia

we find that people in increasing numbers turn to their pastors for counsel and advise when they are in difficulty, or when they are frustrated with a problem which they are unable to solve by themselves.

Far too often pastors are so preoccupied with the multitudinous secular activities connected with their modern church organization that they fail, in their counseling, to listen sympathetically. Too often, impulsive and superimposed advice is dished out hurriedly and the results are unsatisfactory. Sympathetic listening first, followed by intelligent yet firm guidance, is and remains the first and most important technique of approach in the counseling relationship.

B

The Technique of Asking Questions

Probably the most effective way of giving people insight into their problems is to ask them questions. Such questions must be well thought out and must be directed to the goal of holding the counselee to the main course of his problem and of getting from him answers through which he gains insight. To effectively make use of the technique of asking questions requires diligent attention of the counselor on the problem at hand. There is probably no way in which the counselee's attention can more quickly be diverted from the main course of his problem than by asking a question not pertinent and not directed. Such an at-random question, apart from and directed from the problem, may make the counselee feel that the counselor is not interested in him or in his problem and may establish a barrier which is extremely difficult to remove, once it has been raised. The use of the question technique of counseling is much more difficult than making statements of assertion,

or merely listening, and requires effort in training one's self in this art (for an art it is), but when mastered, its use will prove extremely valuable. Though certain guide-lines may be given as to the type and kind of questions to be asked, yet mastery in the art can only be gained by experience.

Jesus knew the value of using questions in teaching and in counseling with people. Frequently and effectively He used questions, rhetorical or direct, to drive home profound spiritual truths and to give people an insight into their problems. Recognizing the power in the use of rhetorical questions he asked, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"¹⁶ On another occasion He asked, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"¹⁷ Most assuredly these questions brought home to His hearers profound truths about their social difficulties and stirred them to search within themselves to find the answer.

Recognizing that some people make themselves believe that they desire certain benefits when subconsciously they do not want their state of affairs changed, He, through a question, brought home to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda the real source of his difficulty. He asked the man, "Wilt thou be made whole?"¹⁸ The man had faith, but whether he was ready

¹⁶Luke 11, 11-13

¹⁷Matt. 7, 3

¹⁸John 5, 6

to exercise his faith toward his healing was the important thing. The man had to analyze himself, his feelings. Having gained insight he recognized where his failing existed and then for the first time was free to earnestly seek and accept healing.

Jesus often replied to questions, intended to confound him in controversy, with questions of His own. On one occasion He was asked, "By what authority doest Thou these things and who gave Thee this authority?" Jesus answering, asked, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" They knew that if they would say "from heaven", He would then chide them for rejecting John's teaching and if they would say, "of men", they would incur the wrath of the people who believed John to be a prophet sent by God. They were compelled to give the humiliating answer, "we cannot tell".¹⁹

Jesus was a master in the art of asking questions. Every pastor ought to study and restudy His use of questions to give people insight into their own problems.

By asking well-thought-out questions, questions directed to the point, the counselor can often get to the heart of the problem more quickly than in any other way. The questions must be pointed and directed so they do not give the counselee the cause or the opportunity to resort to all manner of rationalizations and evasions. When the counselee by self-analysis, sees his own personal defects and unpleasant characteristics and is able to make his own judgment of them, even though this insight has been brought home to him through a question, he is apt to acknowledge them and proceed to resolve them. The use of questions, when possible and when to the point, is an effective technique of approach in the counseling relationship.

¹⁹Mark 11, 27-32

Technique of Statements of Understanding

If the counselee brings into the counseling room both the basic knowledge and the ability to understand, which are necessary to make the correct solution of his problem, it is probable that the counselor need do nothing more than lend an ear and give assurance of sympathetic understanding. To help guide such a counselee into a clear, unbiased and unemotional position from which to attack his problem, mere statements of understanding may suffice. Such statements must be pertinent, to the point, and must show a real understanding. Just as in the use of questions, so also here, the use of a statement which is not pertinent may divert the counselee's attention away from the main course of his problem and create a situation in which it is difficult to again gain full attention on the problem at hand. Or, the use of a statement by which the counselor indicates a lack of understanding, or an unwillingness to understand or be bothered, may quickly cause the counselee to withdraw from further discussion of his problem in a feeling of fear that he will not be understood, that he has already revealed too much, and that already he stands judged in the eyes of the counselor. Such a barrier, once erected, is most difficult to overcome. In an atmosphere of withdrawal and lack of confidence in the counselor, the counselor has lost his opportunity for extending effective help.

This technique of counseling falls almost entirely within the method of non-directive counseling. It is this technique of counseling which Dr. Seward Hiltner advocates in his book, "Pastoral Counseling," in the chapter, "Discovering Approach and Method." In this chapter, he illustrates with cases, and shows how pertinent statements build confidence in the counselee,

open to him a clearer understanding of his problem and often serve as guides into the channel of correct decision. While this technique of counseling is often very effective, yet Dr. Hiltner seems to convey the impression that nothing more than this technique is required in almost all areas of pastoral counseling. If this is the impression Dr. Hiltner intends to convey, then he is far too restrictive, because in the field of pastoral counseling there will be many cases where the counselee cannot and will not see his own contributing actions in the problem and in which he lacks the basic moral concepts, to say nothing of convictions, to correctly resolve his problem without some very definite instruction and guidance.

Again here, experience alone will teach when this technique of counseling will be effective and should be used exclusive of other techniques, or when a combination of listening, asking questions and making statements of understanding is required. I know of no educational short-cut by which the ability to make this determination can be gained. It is well, though, to be aware of the fact that very often, when the situation warrants it, this technique of counseling is most effective.

D

Technique of Instructional Guidance

By the technique of instructional guidance is meant the giving of instruction, when necessary, so that the counselee is able to make the correct and God-pleasing, self-determined resolution of his problem. There are many instances when far more than sympathetic listening, or mere guidance by the use of questions or statements, is imperative. Though we claim to be the most highly educated generation and the most highly

educated nation the world has ever witnessed, yet we are fast becoming a nation and a generation of religious morons. Instruction in religion, in God's moral laws, Christ's principles of right and wrong, truth, honesty and integrity, is scarcely given any time in our educational processes. Consequently we find coming to us, as pastors, more and more people who have very little and sometimes practically no conception of what God's moral standards are. Even on the membership lists of our own churches the number is rapidly expanding of those who have given very little, and if any, then the barest minimum, of time to religious education. Suddenly they are facing a problem with implications far too deep for them to solve, because they know and feel they are out of harmony with God's moral codes and yet they do not know in what way and to what extent. They come to the pastor, instead of some other professional counselor, because they feel the pastor alone can give them this instruction. In such cases, the pastor must furnish instruction and give definite guidance on the basis of God's moral requirements.

Very often such instruction must begin with religious fundamentals and proceed in scope until the area of the problem has been dealt with and the problem resolved. It is my opinion that far too many eminent scholars and writers in the field of pastoral counseling have lost sight of this fundamental need for religious instruction, have been too readily and easily taken in by the theories, and the statistics supporting these theories, of men in the field of counseling as such, who are unconcerned about moral principles as guiding principles, and, consequently, they omit reference to this unique position in which the pastor finds himself in the counseling field. Many a man with a problem expects the pastor to give him instruction to point out to him the area of life in which he is out of harmony with God.

and the way and the method of getting back to God. Certainly the pastor will be failing the counselee and failing in his function as a pastor, a called and ordained prophet of God, unless he affords that wanted and needed instructional guidance in a positive, uncompromising manner.

It may be well to again call attention to the fact that such instructional guidance should never be negative, condemnatory, but positive in approach. Truth must be spoken, even when truth hurts. It is not the truth itself, but the way, manner, method in which the truth is spoken that usually determines whether or not the individual will hear it. Truth must always be spoken in love, with sympathy and understanding. "speak the truth in love," and you will gain the erring brother.

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CONCLUSION

It is not so much what the pastor says in his sermons as it is how he acts and what he does and says outside of the pulpit, that will either open or close the door to the counseling room for the troubled and heavily laden. It is evident then that in order to have the opportunity of being an attentive listener to the emotional problems of the disturbed and to guide these disturbed personalities, gently but firmly, into a fuller and richer life where they can find peace and rest, the pastor must have shown that he can be approached in confidence with any kind of a problem.

His attitude will never be one that is censorious or vindictive, but one that shows compassion, sympathy, understanding and love. He will not permit himself to be embarrassed, shocked or upset by any confession which is made to him. He will get himself out of the way in the counseling relationship and will center his thoughts and attentions on the counselee's life and problem. Probably the key to successful counseling remains in the art of listening, impersonally but attentively, without embarrassment, sympathetically and not critically. The other techniques of counseling prove their effectiveness on the prerequisite of the pastor's ability first to listen. His own personality will silently echo the words of Jesus, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,"²⁰ and will silently proclaim: "I will lead you to the Fountain Head from which flows the eternal stream of peace and rest."

²⁰Matt: 11:28

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