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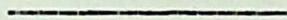
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THE USE OF THE WORD IN THE
COUNSELING PROCESS



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
Master of Sacred Theology



by

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May 1972

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the problem of what is meant by pastoral care and pastoral counseling, and by the counseling process, the techniques used in that process, and the place of the pastoral counseling process in the practical ministry of the pastor; then, to relate these findings to a sound Scriptural approach of the use of the Word in the counseling process.

This study is significant for the author because of a keen desire to be always more proficient in his own pastoral ministry in counseling people with problems in a parish situation, and the desire to use the Word of God legitimately in a sound confessional approach: the whole Word, Law and Gospel. At the same time, the author has felt a need in leaning to minister with the Word more proficiently in a way that the behavioral science of psychology has shown as acceptable and necessary in order to penetrate the psychological processes of man, and to present to him the whole counsel of God in a way that is theologically and psychologically correct. In short, the interest in this study was caused by the desire of the author to become a pastor better prepared to aid troubled persons through the witness of the Word of God to their specific problems.

One assumption that the author held that excited a great amount of interest in the study was the belief that often people come to their pastor for help when actually neither he as counselor, nor they as counselee, realize what is expected of each other in the relationship which each is desirous of entering for the purpose of finding a solution to the problem presented, therefore making a healing function of the ministry nearly impossible because of a lack of basic understanding and direction.

For the purpose of the study, the use of the "Word" referred to is the "Word of God": the written revelation, the written Word, and its proclamation in the ministry of pastoral counseling. Recognizing the validity of the Word in the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the study of the nature of the sacraments and their possible use in the counseling process is beyond the scope of this present study. Nevertheless, it would be a valid study in its own right.

By "counseling process" is meant all that transpires between the pastor as counselor and his parishioner as counselee during that time span in which each recognizes that he has entered a specific relationship with mutual recognition that help has been sought on the part of the counselee, that the counselee recognizes that he has a problem and that part of the basis for his problem lies within himself, that there is a desire for progress toward solution of the problem

presented, and that the counselee understands that the pastor will try to aid him in solving his problem, but that the pastoral counselor will not do his solving for him.

The study is divided into six chapters, with the body of the study found in the four chapters between the introduction and the summary. Chapter I is a general introduction to the study undertaken. Chapter II is a study of the nature of the Word of God, its origin, authority, power, and the distinction between Law and Gospel. Chapter III of the thesis relates the Word of God to man, and studies man from the viewpoint of his separation from God and resulting inadequacy in many areas of his life. Chapter IV is an investigation of the nature of the counseling process, an understanding of pastoral care and pastoral counseling, the ministerial functions of pastoral counseling, the relationship between religion and psychology, and the study of pastoral attitudes in counseling. Chapter V applies the Word of God to the counseling relationship. It is an application of the material found in Chapters II and III of this study to the findings of Chapter IV: relating the theological and psychological aspects of this investigation. The final chapter is a general summary of the investigation, and, while it presents no new material, is a compilation of the entire research.

The author studied the Lutheran Confessions in this research from the point of view of pastoral care, which proved to be an illuminating and extremely helpful approach to the study of the Confessions. This approach served to make them come alive in a pastoral light in which the author of this thesis had never viewed them so thoroughly, and helped to make the Lutheran Confessions very meaningful for the pastoral ministry.

There is a wealth of writing in the area of pastoral care, and an attempt was made to be selective in the bibliographical listings, and yet to be thorough, in order to study the problem exhaustively. Extensive reading was done in the areas of pastoral care, the theology of the Word, the relationship between psychology and theology, and the techniques recommended for good, psychologically acceptable procedures in counseling.

In the area of pastoral care, since there is such a great amount of current literature being published, the names of authors are often more meaningful than book titles. Some of the important men whose writings the author of this thesis studied are: (a) in the area of the doctrine of the Word--Richard R. Caemmerer; Adolf Köberle; Martin Luther, his treatises; Edmund Schlink; C. F. W. Walther, the famous essays on the Law and Gospel; Olav Valen-Sendstad; (b) in the area of the relationship of theology to psychology--Thomas C. Oden, Peder Olsen, and Albert C. Outler;

the graduate study written by a committee, What, Then, Is Man?, was also helpful; (c) in the area of general pastoral care--LeRoy Aden; Don Browning; Howard J. Clinebell, Jr.; Seward Hiltner, certainly outstanding in this area; William E. Hulme, Roy Stuart Lee; Wayne E. Oates; Samuel Southard; Charles R. Stinnette, Jr.; and Paul Tournier. Their titles are found in the detailed bibliographical listings of this thesis, together with the helpful writings of many other men. The complexities of today's society have made it paramount that Christian theologians become well-versed in the pastoral needs of today; the fact that so much is being written in the area of pastoral care speaks well for the church's pastoral ministry.

The conclusion which the author reaches is that certainly the pastoral counselor can validly proclaim both Law and Gospel in his ministry of counseling, and that psychological techniques are not only helpful, but necessary, in order to aid the troubled person. There is nothing between psychology and theology that causes them to be diametrically opposed to each other, although the purposes of each are distinct. Psychological resources can be used in the presentation of the Word. In addition, the Lutheran Confessions have much to offer the pastoral counselor in the light of pastoral care, for they were written in and to practical church situations.

CHAPTER II

THE WORD OF GOD

The Nature of the Word of God

The term "Word of God" carries with it connotations that range widely in interpretation and understanding among Christians. To some it is a very narrow and literalistically interpreted term, while to others the term may be very broad in its understanding and interpretation. The Christian pastor ought to have clearly defined for himself the categories of understanding with which he is dealing in order to make the Word of God something meaningful in his pastoral ministry.

Scripture itself uses the term "Word of God" in various ways. Certainly Scripture presents itself as the Word of God, and this is a correct category. Nevertheless, the term "Word of God" cannot correctly be limited only to the Bible as such. Richard R. Caemmerer points out in his word study on the "Word of God"¹ that several distinct words are used for the term "Word of God" in Scripture itself, and that these words have various meanings. The terms dabar in the Old Testament and rhema and logos in the New Testament

¹Richard R. Caemmerer, "A Concordance Study of 'Word of God,'" Concordia Theological Monthly, XXII (March 1951), 171.

are used for "word," but also for more than that: for "thing" and "fact" as well; they are not merely verbum, but res.² Most often the "Word of the Lord" means an active plan, and the verbal signs for this purpose are simply the surface summary of what God is doing among and for His people.³

In the New Testament, for example, rhema and logos are used to denote God's active working, and these words may or may not signify verbal activity of God. The following references give us some examples of this varying usage: "For he whom God sent utters the words of God" (John 3:34), where John the Baptist speaks ta rhemata tou theou; "I am not myself the source of the words I speak to you: it is the Father who dwells in me doing his own work"⁴ (John 14:10), where the words ta rhemata are related to the Father's activity; "When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was" (John 1:1), where the Word (logos) is the incarnate Christ, carrying out God's designs in creation, redemption and judgment. In all of these cases, the "Word of God" is at work.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., XXII, 172.

⁴This Scripture citation and all further citations are from The New English Bible With the Apocrypha (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

For the purposes of this study, we shall limit the use of the term "Word of God" to the written revelation, the written Word, the revelation that God has left for His people in Christ, and the proclamation of this revelation as it refers especially to the pastoral ministry. This is the living Word that gives life to God's revelation. Olav Valen-Sendstad says:

God's true children live and breathe in the incarnate and inspired Word. We have our foundation for reality in the eternal Word, which "was made flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14). The foundation for our comprehension is located in the Holy Scriptures, inspired by God's Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16). Because God's Spirit persuades and convinces us by means of the inspired Word, therefore we acknowledge and recognize the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, as our Life and as our Source of life. Because we acknowledge and believe the incarnate Word, therefore we understand and appropriate to ourselves the inspired Word.⁵

It is this God-given Word that is authoritative for Christians, for the church today. It is God speaking to them and to all men. It touches their hearts and actually approves itself as the true Word of God. In that sense it is the proclaimed Word of God, the "word" used without the specific designation "of God" or "of Christ," as we find, for example, in the passages: "the Lord worked with them and confirmed their words by the miracles that followed" (Mark 16:20), where ton logon is used; "when heard the

⁵Olav Valen-Sendstad, The Word That Can Never Die, translated from the Norwegian by Norman A. Madson, Sr., and Ahlert H. Strand (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1966), pp. 32-33.

message of the truth, the good news of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13), where ton logon alētheias is linked to saving power. Oral proclamation is the Word of God, therefore, under the condition that its content finds its source and its rule in the inspired Word.

The written Word is the inspired Word, and at least one instance in New Testament Scripture brings this out: John 10:35, where we find ho logos tou theou related to the written Word. There the words of Jesus are recorded: "Those are called gods to whom the word of God was delivered--and Scripture cannot be set aside." There are a number of passages in which Scripture is asserted indirectly to be the "Word of God." Paul's text in 2 Tim. 3:16 is brought to mind: "Every inspired scripture has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, or for reformation of manners and discipline in right living."

Interestingly, "The [Lutheran] Confessions are not interested in fixing the significance of Scripture by means of doctrinal statements about its origin."⁶ The Lutheran Confessions take for granted that Scripture is the Word of God, and, although they have no explicit article regarding the Scripture or Word of God in the Augsburg Confession or the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, for instance, their

⁶ Edmund Schlink, Theology of the Lutheran Confessions, translated from the German by Paul F. Koehneke and Herbert J. A. Bouman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 5.

silence speaks loudly, for it assumes that there was no argument in the sixteenth century concerning the Word of God. Scripture was considered the Word of God without question. This assumption in the earlier writings of the Confessions is brought out when the "Epitome" of the Formula of Concord says clearly:

We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged, as it is written in Ps. 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." And St. Paul says in Gal. 1:8, "Even if an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed."⁷

The same article goes on to say,

Other writings of ancient and modern teachers, whatever their names, should not be put on a par with Holy Scripture. Every single one of them should be subordinated to the Scriptures and should be received in no other way and no further than as witnesses to the fashion in which the doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved in post-apostolic times.⁸

In the usage of the early Lutherans, the Word was central in their proclamation, and Luther, for example, stressed both the historical Word and the present Word in his preaching.

Herman A. Preus points out that the Deus dixit was not thrust

⁷"Formula of Concord," Epitome, Summary, 1, The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert, in collaboration with Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer, and Arthur C. Piepkorn (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 464.

⁸Ibid., 2, pp. 464-465.

aside for the Deus loquens, but that the two were always combined.⁹ The orthodox Lutherans who followed the early Reformers also held Scripture in high esteem as the Word of God. Robert Preus points to Gerhard's definition of Scripture as typical of the day among Lutheran theologians:

Holy Scripture is the Word of God, reduced to writing according to His will by the evangelists and apostles, revealing perfectly and clearly the teaching of God's nature and will, in order that men might be instructed from it unto life everlasting.¹⁰

This is only one of the many references among the orthodox theologians that there was indeed a high regard for the acceptance of Scripture as the Word of God.¹¹

This Word is authoritative for the church, and has been so considered by orthodox theologians through the ages. It takes its authority from the fact that it is God-inspired. "For it was not through any human whim that men prophesied of old; men they were, but, impelled by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). "Prophetic scriptures by eternal God's command" (Rom. 16:26) were given to man to reveal His design. This inspiring of God did not have as its purpose any special type of equipping, and it did not depend on the personal gifts and talents of those whom God chose to use. Valen-Sendstad puts it this way:

⁹Herman A. Preus, "The Written, Spoken, and Signed Word," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVI (September 1955), 650-651.

¹⁰Robert Preus, The Inspiration of Scripture (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), pp. 13-14.

¹¹Ibid., p. 13.

Inspiration consisted in this, that God's eternal Spirit chose and called particular people whom God created . . . in order to place within them, at a fixed time and place, thoughts and words which God willed to speak and reveal regarding His nature and His counsel.¹²

At the time of the writings of the Lutheran Confessions, then, this was sufficient, and even though none of the articles before the Formula of Concord contain any article on Holy Scripture, ultimately all articles "treat the norm of theological thinking, even though they contain few statements about the normative significance of Scripture."¹³ There is an intense concern with the Gospel, and the Gospel is that which is considered the norm of Scripture, just as Scripture is the norm for the Gos'el's sake.¹⁴

Taking this into account, one can understand better the words of the Smalcald Articles, "It will not do to make articles of faith out of the holy Fathers' words or works. . . . the Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel."¹⁵ The confessors were able to say:

we offer and present a confession of our pastors' and preachers' teaching and of our own faith, setting forth how and in what manner, on the basis of

¹²Valen-Sendstad, p. 48.

¹³Schlink, p. 6.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Book of Concord, "Smalcald Articles," II, ii, 15, p. 295.

the Holy Scriptures, these things are preached, taught, communicated, and embraced in our lands, principalities, dominions, cities, and territories.¹⁶

Therefore, also with regard to the doctrine of the church, there was no concession made in opposition to the "consensus of the prophets."¹⁷ Nevertheless, when Christians hold the Word to be a revelation of God to man, they must realize that this is a faith-judgment and not open to non-Christians in the same sense. Non-Christians have nothing that convinces them of this same claim.

The Christian pastor can know that the Word of God is authoritative for him in his pastoral ministry, and authoritative for those with whom he deals, and he can say with Luther:

the first and foremost of all on which everything else depends, is the teaching of the Word of God. For we teach with the Word, we consecrate with the Word, we bind and absolve sins by the Word, we baptize with the Word, we sacrifice with the Word, we judge all things by the Word.¹⁸

The Word of God is not sterile, but rather is powerful in an overwhelming sense. The writer to the Hebrews says,

For the word of God is alive and active. It cuts more keenly than any two edged sword, piercing as

¹⁶ Ibid., "Augsburg Confession," Preface, p. 25.

¹⁷ Ibid., "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," XII, 66, p. 191.

¹⁸ Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," Church and Ministry II, in Luther's Works, American edition, translated and edited by Conrad Bergendoff (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), XL, 21.

far as the place where life and spirit, joints and marrow, divide. It sifts the purposes and thoughts of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

Ps. 33:6 extends this power even to creation: "The Lord's word made the heavens, all the best of heaven was made at his command," speaking here of the power of the spoken Word of God.

Although the Augsburg Confession does not have any article directly dealing with the Word of God, it assumes the power of the Word, for example, in Article XII, speaking of repentance, "repentance consists of these two parts: one is contrition, that is terror smiting the conscience with a knowledge of sin, and the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel" ¹⁹ Again, in Article VIII, the Augsburg Confession says: "the sacraments are efficacious even if the priests who administer them are wicked men, for as Christ himself indicated, 'The Pharisees sit on Moses' seat' (Matt. 23:2)." ²⁰ When God speaks, man's sinfulness does not affect His Word.

Luther felt the power of the Word in his own life, and passed on the conviction that he had regarding its power to others. In the Large Catechism he could say firmly:

On the other hand, when we seriously ponder the Word, hear it, and put it to use, such is its power that it never departs without fruit. It

¹⁹ Book of Concord, "Augsburg Confession," XII, p. 34.

²⁰ Ibid., VIII, p. 35.

always awakens new understanding, new pleasure, and a new spirit of devotion, and it constantly cleanses the heart and its meditations. For these words²¹ are not idle or dead, but effective and living.

Continuing with this same conviction in the Third Article, we read, in Luther's exposition of the Apostles' Creed in the Large Catechism: "Therefore we believe in him who daily brings us into this community through the Word, and imparts, increases, and strengthens faith through the same Word and the forgiveness of sins."²²

This firm conviction was not only Luther's, but was held by those who followed him just as strongly, as Robert Preus points out when he speaks of the orthodox Lutheran theologians:

the orthodox Lutherans held that the Word of God has power in itself (per se). No outside influence must enter the Word before it can exert its power and regenerate man. That the Word of God is powerful means that it is powerful intrinsically. This is what Quenstedt means when he says that power does not enter the Gospel from without before it can act upon man, but power is always in the Gospel.²³

The two sides of the Word of God, Law and Gospel, must be grasped in order to understand correctly its nature. Melanchthon calls these the "two cherubim placed on the Ark,"

²¹Ibid., "Large Catechism," Third Commandment, 101, p. 379.

²²Ibid., Creed, III, 62, p. 419.

²³Robert Preus, p. 175.

and says that "it is impossible to teach correctly or fruitfully either gospel without law or law without gospel."²⁴ The Law and Gospel are opposite each other, as John tells us in the Gospel, "for while the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). The Word of God has double power: to kill and to make alive. C. F. W. Walther distinguishes Law from Gospel in six points: (1) in the manner of their being revealed to man; (2) regarding their content; (3) with respect to the promises they hold out; (4) in the threats that are presented; (5) regarding function and effect; (6) regarding the persons to whom each is presented.²⁵

The Gospel is independent of the Law, and sometimes must be defined by opposition to the Law, sometimes by contrast to it. St. Paul says of Law and Gospel that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6). Philip Melanchthon, in his Loci Communes Theologici of 1521, speaks of the Law and Gospel in detail, saying, "The law shows sin, the gospel grace. The law indicates disease,

²⁴ Philip Melanchthon, "Loci Communes Theologici 1521," Melanchthon and Bucer, in The Library of Christian Classics, translated by Lowell J. Satre and edited by Wilhelm Pauck (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), XIX, 77.

²⁵ C[arl] F[erdinand] W[ilhelm] Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, translated from the German by W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), p. 7.

the gospel points out the remedy."²⁶ He goes on to say, "The law terrifies; the gospel consoles. The law is the voice of wrath and death; the gospel is the voice of peace and life"²⁷

The Lutheran Confessions demand a clear interpretation of Law and Gospel in their distinctiveness, and hold that they ought not be confounded. The Epitome of the Formula of Concord says, Article V:

We believe, teach, and confess that the distinction between law and Gospel is an especially glorious light that is to be maintained with great diligence in the church so that, according to St. Paul's admonition, the Word of God may be divided rightly.²⁸

The same article is quick to point out that the Gospel is not a "proclamation of contrition and reproof but is, strictly speaking, precisely a comforting and joyful message which does not reprove or terrify but comforts consciences. . . ."²⁹

There must be no mingling of Law and Gospel in sound Christian proclamation, and the Lutheran Confessions are firm in this principle of interpretation. The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord is lengthy in its detail:

The distinction between law and Gospel is an especially brilliant light which serves the purpose that the Word of God may be rightly

²⁶Melanchthon, XIX, 70.

²⁷Ibid., XIX, 85.

²⁸Book of Concord, "Formula of Concord," Epitome, V, p. 478.

²⁹Ibid.

divided and the writings of the holy prophets and apostles may be explained and understood correctly. We must therefore observe this distinction with particular diligence lest we confuse the two doctrines and change the Gospel into law. This would darken the merit of Christ and rob disturbed consciences of the comfort which they would otherwise have in the holy Gospel when it is preached purely and without admixture, for by it Christians can support themselves in their greatest temptations against the terrors of the law.³⁰

This distinction must be something that guides a pastor who subscribes to the Lutheran confessional writings in his entire ministry of the Word.

In his series of lectures on the "Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel," Walther shows how profound the Christian religion is in its proclamation of Law and Gospel, and how this varies from other religions which may have a partial proclamation of the Law of God, but have in their teachings no Gospel at all in the Christian sense of its interpretation.³¹

The nature of the Word of God is such that it is a purposeful Word. There is a goal to it. In his book, The Gospel in a Strange, New World, Theodore O. Wedel points out that "the theology of the law and grace of the Bible is not initially one of conceptual abstractions. It is revelation in the form of event and act--a majestic drama

³⁰ Ibid., Solid Declaration, V, i, p. 558.

³¹ Walther, p. 8.

of salvation."³² The final goal of the proclamation of the Word of God in its entirety is the salvation of man. God permits man to see Him in His Word as the God who cares for His people and has made their salvation possible. It is through the administration of the Word and Sacraments that God gives man His offer of salvation, as the Augsburg Confession states in Article XXVIII:

This power [the Office of the Keys] is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and by administering the sacraments either to many or to individuals, depending on one's calling. For it is not bodily things that are thus given, but rather such eternal things as eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life.³³

Scripture is sufficient of itself toward its goal of salvation. The Word shines in darkness to bring men to the goal of salvation, as we hear in 2 Peter 1:19:

All this only confirms for us the message of the prophets, to which you will do well to attend, because it is like a lamp shining in a murky place, until the day breaks and the morning star rises to illuminate your minds.

It is toward the goal of salvation that the power of the Word acts. God indeed does grant His power for a very special purpose.

As the purpose of the Word is the goal of salvation, so the Word has as its goal the change of heart in those to whom the Word comes. The prophet Isaiah brings this out when he says:

³²Theodore O[tto] Wedel, The Gospel in a Strange, New World (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 67-68.

³³Book of Concord, "Augsburg Confession," XXVIII, 8-9, p. 82.

These are the words of the Lord; Heaven is my throne and earth my footstool. Where will you build a house for me, where shall my resting-place be? All these are of my own making and all these are mine. This is the very word of the Lord. The man I look to is a man down-trodden and distressed, one who reveres my words" (Is. 66:1-2).

This same thought is expressed by John, when he says in the Gospel,

Those [signs that Jesus did] here written have been recorded in order that you may hold the faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this faith you may possess life by his name (John 20:31).

There is nothing that can be compared to the Word of God. Luther says emphatically in his treatise "Concerning the Ministry" that there is no other Word of God given Christians to proclaim.³⁴ It is the written Word which God has revealed to man as the unique source, the Word of God as He wanted it recorded. In this respect the written Word of God is different from the spoken Word, where God permits men to express their own words without the compulsion of inspiration. It is exclusively through the Word that the Lord Himself makes known that we come to understand the true communion that we have with God in Christ. Nowhere else does He reveal Himself to man in the same way, using words of men that are not exempt from the limitations

³⁴Luther, XL, 34.

of human speech and the capabilities of those men whom He chose to convey His Word.

John McConnachie says in his article, "The Uniqueness of the Word of God," in the Scottish Journal of Theology:

We arrive . . . at a judgment of the Biblical Word of Revelation as being unique, once-for-all-time, the Word of God, a lamp to the feet and a light to the path of the way-faring sons of men. It is not an emanation from the sphere in which we find ourselves, nor from some subliminal region within us, nor is it a mystical illumination of the soul. It is a word from beyond this world of time, a Word from our Father "in heaven," which breaks in upon us from another dimension, falling . . . vertically, and cutting across our human wills and preferences.³⁵

The Word of God is also unique in that it is an historical Word, God revealing Himself in the history of mankind. It is a "last" word in the sense that it is eschatological: a "once-for-all" event of God's breaking into history, into time.³⁶ The Word of Christ is revealed in the written and proclaimed Word of God. This Word says of itself that it is the sole means of salvation, as Schlink notes in his study of the Confessions.³⁷

The Word of God lacks nothing at all in its sufficiency. There is no other revelation that can compare to it.

³⁵ John McConnachie, "The Uniqueness of the Word of God," Scottish Journal of Theology, I (September 1948), 119.

³⁶ Ibid., I, 133.

³⁷ Schlink, p. 10.

Discussing the sufficiency of Scripture, Robert Preus writes:

The inevitable conclusion which follows . . . is this: that which makes a man wise unto salvation must contain the doctrine necessary for salvation and in that respect be sufficient. In other words, whatever is useful for doctrine and reproof and instruction to the end that we are made wise unto salvation is perfect.³⁸

Here Preus is referring to the orthodox Lutheran theologian Calov, and to his and others' position on the uniqueness of the Word of God.

The Word of God is self-evidencing, contemporaneous, and rational.³⁹ It carries with it the character of event, surprise, the unforeseen--something which the Sovereign God reveals in His activity. Basically, in each of these unique ways, the Word of God is still and always will be Law and Gospel. Considering this, it is Law and Gospel that will be studied to a further extent below.

The Law

The Epitome of the Formula of Concord, Article V, says this about the Law:

We believe, teach, and confess that, strictly speaking, the law is a divine doctrine which teaches what is right and God-pleasing and which condemns everything that is sinful and contrary

³⁸Robert Preus, p. 151.

³⁹McConnachie, I, 128-130.

to God's will. Therefore everything which condemns sin is and belongs to the proclamation of the law.⁴⁰

Quoting Martin Luther's exposition of the Gospel for the fifth Sunday after Trinity, the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord states it this way: "Everything that preaches about our sin and wrath of God, no matter how or when it happens, is the proclamation of the law."⁴¹

The term "Law" is used in a number of ways. The Solid Declaration says that the word "Law" has only the sense of the immutable and holy will of God, when it is used with regard to good works that men do, in accordance with the Word of God.⁴²

The Law of God, then, provides a category in and by which to express the terrible fact of sin and its deserving God's anger in its fullest degree. Law must be preached first before Gospel can be presented. The Law cannot make men godly, and it is not its purpose to do so. For the Law's power is not a saving power, but rather a condemning power. That is why C. F. W. Walther is so strong in teaching, in agreement with the Lutheran Confessions, that Law and Gospel cannot be mingled. He says:

No Gospel element, then, must be mingled with the Law. Any one expounding the Law shamefully perverts it by injecting into it grace, the grace,

⁴⁰ Book of Concord, "Formula of Concord," Epitome, V, 3-4, p. 478.

⁴¹ Ibid., Solid Declaration, V, 2, p. 560.

⁴² Ibid., VI, 5, p. 566.

loving-kindness, and patience of God, who forgives sin A preacher must proclaim the Law in such a manner that there remains in it nothing pleasant to lost and condemned sinners. Every sweet ingredient injected into the Law is poison; it renders this heavenly medicine ineffective, neutralizes its operation.⁴³

The giving of the Law must be regarded as an integral part of the Word of God, of God's revelation to man. It is God demanding of men. Gustaf Wingren points this out when he says in his book, Gospel and Church:

human experience is filled with death death confronts us at every point. . . . human experience is filled with law. Wherever men turn they are confronted by the law of God. They cannot escape the demands to serve others which they meet on every hand.⁴⁴

There is a difference, however, between Law and legalism. The Law shows man what he cannot do, how he is nothing before God at all. Legalism can be described as an abuse of the Law.⁴⁵ For any attempt to turn the preaching of the Law in its correct way into a set of rules-keeping for a godly life is completely alien to the genius of the Law. Kevan says that "legalism enters when obedience to the commandment does not stand in direct relation to faith."⁴⁶

⁴³Walther, p. 80.

⁴⁴Gustaf Wingren, Gospel and Church, translated from the Swedish by Ross Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1964), p. 192.

⁴⁵E. F. Kevan, The Evangelical Doctrine of Law (London: Tyndale Press, 1966), p. 19.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 17.

The Law is proclaimed to non-Christians with a different purpose from that of its proclamation to Christians. For the non-Christian, the Law employs the threat of death and condemnation so that the sinner will be crushed by its harshness. The Epitome of the Formula of Concord, Article V, says:

as long as men hear only the law and hear nothing about Christ, the veil of Moses covers their eyes, as a result they fail to learn the true nature of sin from the law, and thus they become either conceited hypocrites . . . or they despair. . . .⁴⁷

Part II, ii of the Smalcald Articles says in even more detail:

the chief function or power of the law is to make original sin manifest and show man to what utter depths his nature has fallen and how corrupt it has become. So the law must tell him that he neither has nor cares for God or that he worships strange gods--something that he would not have believed before without a knowledge of the law. Thus he is terror-stricken and humbled, becomes despondent and despairing, anxiously desires help but does not know where to find it, and begins to be alienated from God, to murmur, etc. This is what is meant by Rom. 4:15, "The law brings wrath," and Rom. 5:20, "Law came in to increase the trespass."⁴⁸

Man's resistance is an active resistance to God's will, an active rejection of His Word. Richard R. Caemmerer calls this a "collision of purpose" between what God wills and

⁴⁷Book of Concord, "Formula of Concord," Epitome, V, 8, pp. 478-479.

⁴⁸Ibid., "Smalcald Articles," III, ii, 4-5, p. 303.

man does.⁴⁹ For the Law was given to the unregenerate man, according to Article VI of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord, "to maintain external discipline against unruly and disobedient men," and "to lead men to a knowledge of their sin."⁵⁰ St. Paul brings this out clearly when he says, "Is the law identical with sin? Of course not. But except through law I should never have become acquainted with sin" (Rom. 7:7). It must be certainly and surely noted that when this preaching proclaims God's wrath and terrifies man, even when its purpose is to lead man to repentance, that it is not the proclamation of the Gospel, but is and remains a proclamation of the Law.

The Law is not a Law only for the unregenerate, however, but it must be proclaimed also to the believer, since man can never attain his fullest freedom in this life: that always remains one of the objects of his hope. It still is true that "the true function of the law remains, to rebuke sin and to give instruction about good works," as the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord points out.⁵¹ Likewise, the Epitome of the Formula of Concord is strong in stating that the believers also need the constant proclamation of the Law:

⁴⁹Caemmerer, p. 176.

⁵⁰Book of Concord, "Formula of Concord," Epitome, VI, p. 479.

⁵¹Ibid., Solid Declaration, V, 8, p. 561.

We believe, teach, and confess that the preaching of the law is to be diligently applied not only to unbelievers and the impenitent but also to people who are genuinely believing, truly converted, regenerated, and justified through faith.

For although they are indeed reborn and have been renewed in the spirit of their mind, such regeneration and renewal is incomplete in this world. In fact, it has only begun, and in the spirit of their mind the believers are in a constant war against their flesh (that is, their corrupt nature and kind), which clings to them until death.⁵²

The difference that is basic in the proclamation of the Law to the unregenerate and the regenerate man is this, that, while the unregenerate man is completely opposed to the Law and is driven even deeper into sin by its power, the regenerate man delights in the Law of the Lord. Ps. 119:1 says, "Happy are they whose life is blameless, who conform to the law of the Lord." The beautiful imagery of Ps. 1:1-3 is brought to mind especially:

Happy is the man who does not take the wicked for his guide nor walk the road that sinners tread nor take his seat among the scornful; the law of the Lord is his delight, the law his meditation night and day. He is like a tree planted beside a water-course, which yields its fruit in season and its leaf never withers: in all that he does he prospers.

For the regenerate, then, it is love that moves him because he has been moved to faith and believes. He responds by a renewal of his desire to do the Lord's will. For, as the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord says regarding the use of the Law for the regenerate man:

⁵²Ibid., "Formula of Concord," Epitome, VI, 3-4, p. 480.

Though their good works are still imperfect and impure, they are acceptable to God through Christ because according to their inmost self they do what is pleasing to God not by coercion of the law but willingly and spontaneously from the heart by the renewal of the Holy Spirit.⁵³

The Gospel

While the Law is a proclamation of wrath and judgment, the Gospel brings the Good News of God taking over man's situation where man can find himself only incapable. In the Word of God, Scripture, there are two ways in which the term "Gospel" is employed. Both of these are completely legitimate: one is the fullest, broadest sense of the term, the other is the use of the term "Gospel" in what is called the "proper" sense. The Gospel in the wider sense is that proclamation of the entire doctrine of Christ, all that He proclaimed in His ministry on earth and commanded His apostles to preach. This is the sense in which the term is used, for example in Mark 1:1, "Here begins the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God." This is a correct usage of the term and its usage in this way in no way allows a mingling of Law and Gospel in an indistinct way. The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord says:

when the word "Gospel" is used in its broad sense and apart from the strict distinction of law and Gospel, it is correct to define the word as the

⁵³ Ibid., Solid Declaration, VI, 23, p. 568.

proclamation of both repentance and the forgiveness of sins.⁵⁴

The same Solid Declaration, however, is not satisfied with using the term "Gospel" in that way only. It continues:

the word "Gospel" is also used in another (that is, in a strict) sense. Here it does not include the proclamation of repentance but solely the preaching of God's grace. So it appears shortly afterward in the first chapter of St. Mark, where Christ said, "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15).⁵⁵

For the Gospel in the proper or strict sense of the term is the promise of grace and mercy, the proclamation of God's forgiveness of the sins of all men. That is why the Epitome of the Formula of Concord says:

But the Gospel, strictly speaking, is the kind of doctrine that teaches what a man who has not kept the law and is condemned by it should believe, namely, that Christ has satisfied and paid for all guilt and without man's merit has obtained and won for him forgiveness of sins, the "righteousness that avails before God," and eternal life.⁵⁶

It is God who works in man through the Gospel. Where man finds that he can do nothing but fail, God lifts him up. He is the "Help of the helpless" in every way.

The Gospel demands faith, but in demanding faith it also gives faith. The sinner is to come to Jesus just as he is, and in Him he will find his hope. The Gospel does not demand that the sinner come to Christ Jesus with a pure

⁵⁴Ibid., Solid Declaration, V, 5, p. 559.

⁵⁵Ibid., Solid Declaration, V, 6, p. 559.

⁵⁶Ibid., "Formula of Concord," Epitome, V, 5, p. 478.

heart, but with a stricken sense of need. The Gospel strikes all terror from the sinner's heart, and gives him comfort from his anguish, forgiveness for his sins. As Walther says, "It [the Gospel] issues no orders, but it changes man. It plants love into his heart and makes him capable of all good works. It demands nothing, but it gives all."⁵⁷ As soon as any proclamation becomes conditional, as soon as it demands that man present something on his behalf, it ceases to be Gospel and immediately falls into the realm of Law.

Just as the Word of the Law is powerful in its condemnation, so the Word of the Gospel is powerful in its message of salvation. As it proclaims Christ to the hearer, it works Christ in the hearer's heart, and causes him to believe through the work of God the Spirit. It is in this active and powerful sense that the Word, the Gospel, is called the "means of grace." There is, then, only one Gospel: heard, read, seen, and it all points to Christ as Savior from sin. This same Word says, "This letter is to assure you that you have eternal life. It is addressed to those who give their allegiance to the Son of God" (1 John 5:13).

⁵⁷Walther, p. 16.

Just as the Word is the universal means of grace in the Gospel proclamation, so is the Word the fundamental means of grace. Valen-Sendstad says in his book, The Word That Can Never Die:

the Word must be not only the universal but also the fundamental means of grace. Those names and those words of Jesus which constitute the sacraments are nothing else than a summation and condensation of that Word which lives and operates in the genuine Christian proclamation and which we find in Scripture.⁵⁸

The sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper certainly are also means of grace in the fullest sense of the term, but they derive their power from the Word of God alone.⁵⁸

Although in the most proper sense of the term "means of grace" it is Jesus Christ the Word who is truly the Means of Grace, He has given His Word to be the operative and operational means of grace to meet us and work in us in a way that we can understand. This Word that we have in revelation and proclamation relates to Christ the Word. This Word, the means of grace, comes to us, as Valen-Sendstad says:

employed with all physical accessories that are used in all other human speech; clear speaking and clearly written and printed letters. By these devices the Word seeks to penetrate our spirit by way of our two most prominent senses; sight and hearing. As spoken or written human speech activates communion and contact between man and man by virtue

⁵⁸Valen-Sendstad, p. 111.

⁵⁹While the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are indeed means of grace, the study of their relationship to the Word of God is beyond the scope of this present study, and therefore they have not been dealt with herein.

of the special meaningful content which is combined with the words and sentences we speak or write, so also the Word, as a means of grace, activates communion and contact between God and man through the special meaningful content that is combined with the spoken and written sentences in Scripture and the proclamation.⁶⁰

The Word is Christ Himself present, for He says that "where two or three have met together in my name, I am there among them" (Matt. 18:20). Luther sums this up nicely in the Large Catechism, when he says in the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed:

we believe that in this Christian church we have the forgiveness of sins, which is granted through the holy sacraments and absolution as well as through all the comforting words of the entire Gospel.⁶¹

The Word Himself reaches people through people, through the Word that is proclaimed in the community of believers. The Gospel does not work ex opere operato: merely because it is there. It is to be proclaimed, confessed, witnessed. Man simply acquiesces in God's plan of salvation by accepting it for what it is: the message of God reconciling man to Himself in Christ Jesus. This is the love of God come down to grasp man and to take hold of him, not of his own power, but because he will have been taken hold of by God Himself.

The Word of God, then, is God being active in man's surrounding, dipping down into the workaday world and giving

⁶⁰Valen-Sendstad, p. 104.

⁶¹Book of Concord, "Large Catechism," Creed, III, 54, p. 417.

man his power to move and to be. It is God presenting Himself wrathfully to fallen and degenerate man, and showing him forcefully that he can find no hope in himself. Nevertheless, it is God proclaiming His immutable Law in order that He might also proclaim the sweetness of the Gospel which tells man that in the sorry state in which he finds himself, even there God is present with His abundant and gracious love. This love is so powerful that it destroys sin, death, and the devil, and makes man righteous before God, for God in Christ has made him so. This Word is God giving man his only hope. As God proclaims His Word in this way, He holds this Word out to His people through His pastors who are to administer it in its fullest sense of condemnation, in order that the over-abounding proclamation of love, hope, and grace might even more abound.

CHAPTER III

MAN AND THE WORD OF GOD

Man: Addressee of the Word

The nature and power of the Word of God are such that it is the means that God uses to bring to man the revelation of His will and His love, His grace and favor. God works and gives power through His Word when and how He pleases, and there is a purpose to its proclamation. For the Word of God is not a static Word, but is an active Word that has a definite goal in view: the proclamation of the love of God in Jesus Christ to man who needs this proclamation and can find no peace that is meaningful outside of the love of God. The Word of God addresses itself to man. Without man as the goal of the proclamation of the Word, the intrinsic power of the Word would be meaningless. The information concerning God would be valuable in itself, though strictly intellectual knowledge, but there would be no relationship built between God and man through a static type of revelation that would be strictly informational. Herbert Henry Farmer says in his book, The Word of Reconciliation:

The Christian claim for Christ is not that he provides information about God of a kind that can be comprehended and stated in propositions to which further propositions can be added in the same way as the scientist provides information about the

behaviour of, say, atoms. No, the claim is that Christ reconciles men to God and that basically there his finality lies.¹

The Word of God does not give us a report of an extensive religious process of investigation that is shelved for later use. "Preaching and the sacraments come to men, not to trees or to animals," as Gustaf Wingren says.²

The Word of God comes to man through the proclamation of the church. Every Christian pastor should have as his goal the proclaiming of the Gospel to the people that God has given him to shepherd in Christ.³ This Word addresses itself to man "to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12).⁴

Richard R. Caemmerer puts it this way:

The great objective of Christian nurture is that people belong to God, that He and His Spirit and His Son are enthroned as rulers in their hearts, and that these people therefore carry out the purposes for which God has placed them in the world and recaptured them from sin and the devil to fulfill His purposes.⁵

The Word is proclaimed to reveal to men the love of God in the Gospel, so that they might be reconciled to God "under

¹H[erbert] H[enry] Farmer, The Word of Reconciliation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 55.

²Gustaf Wingren, Gospel and Church, translated from the Swedish by Ross Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1964), p. 6.

³Richard R[udolph] Caemmerer, Feeding and Leading (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 31.

⁴This Scripture citation and all further citations are from The New English Bible With the Apocrypha (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

historical conditions amidst the restrictions and relativities, the changes and chances and transciencies, of their terrestrial existence in time and space."⁶

The power and purpose of the Gospel message is completed only in its proclamation to men, for it is in reference to sinners that the mystery of God's grace is accomplished.⁷ It is in proclamation that the Word of God becomes a mirror to man to show him in his real life that God speaks Law and Gospel to him in his place and in a most personal way.

The Word speaks Law, but it does not speak Law to itself. Again, it is man who is the goal of the Law's proclamation, for man has tried to put himself in God's place. Gen. 3:5 tells us that "your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods knowing both good and evil." James Knight, a Christian psychiatrist, refers to the Genesis account of the fall into sin, and says:

By exalting the self beyond the limits God has decreed, man hopes to resolve the tension arising out of the ambiguity of his existence as both a child of nature and a child of the spirit. He

⁵Caemmerer, p. 34.

⁶Farmer, p. 53.

⁷Olav Valen-Sendstad, The Word That Can Never Die, translated from the Norwegian by Norman A. Madson, Sr., and Ahlert H. Strand (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1966), p. 84.

usurps the divine prerogative and claims the right to order his own life and to come the center of his own world.⁸

Following the same thought, Knight goes on to say:

Since man attains humanness only by reaching out beyond himself, he cannot fully succeed because he is human and is inextricably and irrevocably bound to and limited by his nature. In the awareness of human limitation, man contemplates his finiteness and begins to see his life in some kind of perspective. It is here that the sense of sin originates, that he begins to comprehend something of a broken relationship. He then realizes the meaning of sin as estrangement from God and not deviation from rules.⁹

Knight's analysis of man's humanness certainly does not present an entirely adequate picture from a theological point of view. It is the Law of God that shows man his sin and points to a broken relationship, rather than a strictly human attainment. However, when Knight states that sin is truly an estrangement and not just a deviation from a set of legal standards, he is very correct. The inspired Paul tells us "It was through one man that sin entered the world, and through sin death, and thus death pervaded the whole human race, inasmuch as all men have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

⁸James A. Knight, Conscience and Guilt (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), p. 71.

⁹Ibid., p. 67.

This estrangement from God which is passed on from man to man through the ages is generally termed "original" sin.

Philip Melanchthon puts it this way:

Original sin is a native propensity and an innate force and energy by which we are drawn to sinning. It was propagated from Adam to all posterity. Just as there is in fire a natural force by which it is borne upward, and just as there is in a magnet a natural force that draws iron to itself, so there is in man the innate force toward sinning. Scripture does not call one sin "original" and another "actual," for original sin is plainly a kind of actual, depraved desire. But Scripture calls both the actual and the original defect (vitium) simply "sin" (peccatum), although sometimes it calls those sins which we call "actual," the "fruits of sin" Sin is a depraved affection, a depraved activity of the heart against the law of God.¹⁰

The fact that the Word addresses itself to man and shows man his sinful state does not, however, cause God to become a Creator of sin or its cause. The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord emphatically makes its point:

God is not the creator, author, or cause of sin. Through Satan's scheme, "by one man sin (which is the work of the devil) entered into the world" (Rom. 5:12; I John 3:8). And even today, in this corruption, God does not create and make sin in us. Rather, along with the nature which God still creates and makes at the present time, original sin is transmitted through our carnal conception and birth out of sinful seed from our father and mother.¹¹

¹⁰ Philip Melanchthon, "Loci Communes Theologici. 1521," Melanchthon and Bucer, in The Library of Christian Classics, translated by Lowell J. Satre and edited by Wilhelm Pauck (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), XIX, 30-31.

¹¹ "Formula of Concord," Solid Declaration, I, 7, The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 510.

Speaking of the same conviction, the Augsburg Confession states:

Our churches teach that although God creates and preserves nature, the cause of sin is the will of the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly men. If not aided by God, the will of the wicked turns away from God, as Christ says in John 8:44, "When the devil lies, he speaks according to his own nature."¹²

There is no doubt about the conviction of the writers of the Lutheran Confessions that the Word came to man and showed him his sin, but that God was not the cause of such sin.

This sin cannot be taken lightly, for "sin pays a wage, and the wage is death" (Rom. 6:25). Sin totally corrupts, as the Epitome of the Formula of Concord clearly states:

original sin is not a slight corruption of human nature, but . . . it is so deep a corruption that nothing sound or uncorrupted has survived in man's body or soul, in his inward or outward powers.¹³

Everything has been changed in man, who, first created in God's image, now possesses nothing good in himself. The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord speaks of the seriousness of the situation in these words:

Christians must regard and recognize as sin not only the actual transgression of God's commandments but also, and primarily, the abominable and dreadful inherited disease which has corrupted our entire nature. In fact, we must consider this as the chief sin, the root and fountain of all actual sin. Dr. Luther calls this sin "nature-sin"

¹²Ibid., "Augsburg Confession," XIX, pp. 40-41.

¹³Ibid., "Formula of Concord," Epitome, I, 8, p. 467.

or "person-sin" in order to indicate that even though a man were to think no evil, speak no evil, or do no evil . . . nevertheless man's nature and person would still be sinful. This means that in the sight of God original sin, like a spiritual leprosy, has thoroughly and entirely poisoned and corrupted human nature. On account of this corruption and because of the fall of the first man, our nature or person is under the accusation and condemnation of the law of God¹⁴

The Lutheran Confessions speak so emphatically about the seriousness of sin and the depravity of man because Scripture is very clear in its statements. The psalmist says, "In iniquity I was brought to birth and my mother conceived me in sin" (Ps. 51:5), and Isaiah the prophet said in convincing words, "we all became like a man who is unclean and all our righteous deeds like a filthy rag" (Is. 64:6).

The defects that the Apology of the Augsburg Confession describes as being defects of original sin are

lack of ability to trust, fear, or love God; and concupiscence, which pursues carnal ends contrary to the Word of God (that is, not only the desires of the body but also carnal wisdom and righteousness in which it trusts while it despises God).¹⁵

The Word of God addresses man who is sinful by his very nature, and whose sinful deeds are a result of this nature, as the Smalcald Articles say, "The fruits of . . . sin are the subsequent evil deeds which are forbidden in the Ten

¹⁴Ibid., Solid Declaration, I, 5-6, p. 509.

¹⁵Ibid., "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," II, 26, p. 103.

Commandments"16 Man is faced by the Law of God that is direct and stern. He sees himself separated from God by his very nature, and also sees himself separated from others around him, a separation that affects even man's most basic social communities.¹⁷

The state of sinfulness has affected every relationship that man has with his God and with his fellowman. When referring to man's situation, the psychiatrist Knight brings to mind the character in the play "Orpheus Descending," written by the playwright Tennessee Williams, who says, "We are prisoners inside our own skins."¹⁸ This is putting into very human terminology what Scripture has told mankind through the ages. The Word of God has many references to the impossible state-of-affairs of the human race. When speaking about man, Gen. 6:5 says "that his thoughts and inclinations were always evil." Jesus told the inquisitive and concerned Nicodemus that "unless a man has been born over again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3), and says again that "apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Man's will is bound with reference to things spiritual,

¹⁶ Ibid., "Smalcald Articles," III, I, 2, p. 302.

¹⁷ Stanislaus Lyonnet, "Sin," The Theology of Atonement: Readings in Soteriology, edited by John R. Sheets (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 140.

¹⁸ Knight, p. 21.

while God's will is effectual, immutable, and cannot be hindered.¹⁹ The Epitome of the Formula of Concord explains the situation of man's will with these words:

man's unregenerated will is not only turned away from God, but has also become an enemy of God, so that he desires and wills only that which is evil and opposed to God, as it is written, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." [Gen. 8:21] Likewise, "The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot." [Rom. 8:7]²⁰

Neither the Scriptures nor the Lutheran Confessions deprive the will of freedom in things earthly or civil, however. The Augsburg Confession speaks of freedom in choice concerning things that are not in the spiritual realm when it says:

Our churches teach that man's will has some liberty for the attainment of civil righteousness and for the choice of things subject to reason. However, it does not have the power, without the Holy Spirit, to attain the righteousness of God . . . because natural man does not perceive the gifts of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14); but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Spirit is received through the Word.²¹

Going into greater detail than the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession says concerning the human will:

¹⁹ Martin Luther, "On the Bondage of the Will," Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation, in The Library of Christian Classics, translated and edited by Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), XVII, 119.

²⁰ Book of Concord, "Formula of Concord," Epitome, II, 3, p. 470.

²¹ Ibid., "Augsburg Confession," XVIII, 1-3, p. 39.

We are not denying freedom to the human will. The human will has freedom to choose among the works and things which reason by itself can grasp. To some extent it can achieve civil righteousness or the righteousness of works. It can talk about God and express its worship of him in outward works. It can obey rulers and parents. Externally, it can choose to keep the hands from murder, adultery, or theft. Since human nature still has reason and judgment about the things that the senses can grasp, it also retains a choice in these things, as well as the liberty and ability to achieve civil righteousness.²²

The same Apology of the Augsburg Confession, however, limits the will very definitely, and says:

Although we concede to free will the liberty and ability to do the outward works of the law, we do not ascribe to it the spiritual capacity for true fear of God, true faith in God, true knowledge and trust that God considers, hears, and forgives us. These are the real works of the first table, which the human heart cannot perform without the Holy Spirit. As Paul says (1 Cor. 2:14), "The natural man," that is, the man who uses only his natural powers, "does not perceive the things of God."²³

Again, the reason that man's will is bound, that he has no choice in spiritual matters, is that "he stands in revolt against the source of divine freedom--God. The holy will of God, expressed in His Law, puts man under constraint by its demand for perfection which he cannot attain."²⁴ When the Spirit of God works in man so that his will no longer is in

²²Ibid., "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," XVIII, 4, p. 225.

²³Ibid., XVIII, 7, pp. 225-226.

²⁴What, Then, Is Man?: A Symposium of Theology, Psychology, and Psychiatry (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), pp. 58-59.

complete discord with the will of God, then it is to God alone that all credit must be given. The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord says:

Although the regenerated, while still in this life, reach the point where they desire to do the good and delight in it . . . nevertheless . . . we do this not of our own will and power, but the Holy Spirit as St. Paul says, creates such willing and doing

This is what St. Paul means when he says that "it is God who works in you inspiring both the will and the deed, for his own chosen purpose" (Phil. 2:13).

The Word of God comes to man to show him his responsibility toward God. The Word addresses itself to man as the goal of its proclamation, shows him that he is sinful by his deepest nature, and that his will is bound, not free, when it comes to things spiritual. The result of all this is that man must face his responsibility, for he was created perfect and in God's likeness. He was created as the crowning glory of all God's creation, as we read in Gen. 1:26-27:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image and likeness to rule the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all wild animals on earth, and all reptiles that crawl upon the earth." So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him. . . .

God created man with a finite intellect, but within the faculties given to man there was nothing out of order with respect to his perfect state. His relationship with his

²⁵Book of Concord, "Formula of Concord," Solid Declaration, II, 39, p. 528.

Creator was a perfect one.²⁶ This is the way things remained until man's disobedience suggested autonomy to him: moral equality with God.²⁷ At this point man changed, never more to be the same. From that point onward, until today and for so long as the world may stand, when God says, "I am God Almighty. Live always in my presence and be perfect" (Gen. 17:2), man must recognize that his own imperfection has caused separation. Charles R. Stinnette, Jr., says in his book, Grace and the Searching of Our Heart:

Our vocation in God's Grace is one of response to the word of love which has called us into being. "I have called you by name, you are mine." It may be that our first experience of that calling is our recognition that innocence is no longer ours, but guilt before God. To claim one's own responsibility in guilt is an act of freedom and a source of reconciliation which no man can accomplish apart from grace. It opens the way for forgiveness and the healing work of reparation.²⁸

A feeling of guilt and sin cannot be separated from the whole psychological process of personal and social responsibility that faces man.²⁹

To be responsible to God means also to take guilt seriously. God gives grace freely, not cheaply.³⁰ William E.

²⁶What, Then, Is Man?, p. 39.

²⁷Ibid., p. 50.

²⁸Charles R[oy] Stinnette, Jr., Grace and the Searching of Our Heart (New York: Association Press, 1962), p. 31.

²⁹Charles A[rthur] Curran, Religious Values in Counseling and Psychotherapy (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969), p. 129.

³⁰William E[dward] Hulme, Pastoral Care Come of Age (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 68.

Hulme says in his book, Pastoral Care Come of Age, that "to be responsible is to respond to what one perceives as truth,"³¹ and he defines guilt as a "branch in one's relationship with God caused by his conviction that he has violated God's will."³² There is a tension, then, in the predicament of man between what he sees as right in the sight of God and his impossibility of living up to the standard set down before him through the Law of God. Discussing the problem of man's need for faith as a response to God, Charles Arthur Curran says in Religious Values in Counseling and Psychotherapy, that one might be able to argue for the necessity that man feels of having to place his faith in something wholly outside himself, and that the manner in which man might realize this need depends largely on his religious faith commitment.³³ For the Christian man, then, recognizing his responsibility toward God will mean what Luther says in the Large Catechism:

Hence, since everything we possess, and everything in heaven and on earth besides, is daily given and sustained by God, it inevitably follows that we are in duty bound to love, praise, and thank him without ceasing, and, in short, to devote all these things to his service, as he has required and enjoined in the Ten Commandments.³⁴

³¹ Ibid., p. 66.

³² Ibid., p. 65.

³³ Curran, p. 48.

³⁴ Book of Concord, "Large Catechism," Creed, I, 19, p. 412.

It is the Word of God addressing itself to man that brings man to the realization of his responsibility before God, and makes him recognize that in his sin and separation from God the possibility of a mature sense of responsibility exists only through the work of the Holy Spirit. Luther admonishes Christians with these words:

Everything we see, and every blessing that comes our way, should remind us of it [God's sustaining our lives]. When we escape distress or danger, we should recognize that this is God's doing. He gives us all these things so that we may sense and see in them his fatherly heart and his boundless love toward us. Thus our hearts will be warmed and kindled with gratitude to God and a desire to use all these blessings to his glory and praise.³⁵

Man: His Personhood

God created man as a person, and has given man gifts and responsibilities that no other creature has been given. The Word of God addresses itself to man and shows him that he is sinful, and cannot in any way live up to the requisites that God has placed before him in His Law. Man cannot even do so much as to will what is right, much less carry through in action what the divine Law commands. God sets down the principles of the world, and man violates these constantly. However, according to the mental processes with which the Creator has endowed man, "when one challenges and violates

³⁵Ibid., I, 23, p. 413.

the principles of his own value system or the laws of the universe, he does not succeed in breaking these laws. He breaks himself against them."³⁶ For here is where man's conscience enters the picture, and plays an important role. Behavioral scientists and theologians agree that conscience is an important factor in the governing of mankind and the entire universe.³⁷ Reinhold Niebuhr speaks of the role of man's conscience in this way:

The propulsive powers of the self, with its natural survival impulse, do not suffice to fulfill the obligations which the self as a free spirit discerned. But the weakness is not merely one of "nature." It is also spiritual. The self never follows its "natural" self-interest without pretending to be obedient to obligations beyond itself. It transcends its own interests too much to be able to serve them without disguising them in loftier pretensions. This is the covert dishonesty and spiritual confusion which is always involved in the self's undue devotion to itself.³⁸

The functions of conscience are varied. The New Testament uses the concept in a number of ways, and Richard R. Caemmerer points out in a detailed study on "The Nature and Function of Conscience" that in the Word of God

in every instance where the term was used, we have found conscience active with respect to conduct or duty, if not explicitly so, at least indirectly

³⁶ Knight, p. 88.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁸ Reinhold Niebuhr, Human Destiny, in The Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1964), II, 108-109.

. . . . This function is considered so important, that the results of its execution are to be heeded, even when a collision is effected with intrinsic right. . . . And neglect or suppression of its function will lead to loss of salvation.³⁹

In the same study Caemmerer finds that there is no indication that conscience contains a sense of duty that is its own. Rather, that the outstanding function of conscience is to analyze an action of the self or another person with reference to established norms, in order to render sound judgment of the action referred to on the basis of the accepted norm.⁴⁰

Caemmerer finds that the conscience may serve as a motivating process, however, for correct behavior, "through the disagreeableness of a bad conscience and the attendant desire to keep it good."⁴¹ The psychiatrist James Knight agrees, and says that conscience has both negative (the prohibitive) and positive (the constructive) roles, and believes that the healthiest conscience, psychologically speaking, is that in which the negative role is the minor one.⁴² Finally, however, the positive role of conscience, that of the constructive sense, in Christian perspective can only predominate through the redemption of Christ Jesus.⁴³

³⁹Richard Rudolph Caemmerer, "Conscience, Its Nature and Function," (unpublished B. D. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1927), p. 44.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 45.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Knight, pp. 14-15.

⁴³Caemmerer, "Conscience," p. 46.

Conscience is active in reproof, but Richard Caemmerer points out that on Scriptural bases the sources of reproof must be carefully distinguished, for "fear of divine punishment or of social displeasure . . . cannot on Biblical grounds be assigned to the nature of conscience."⁴⁴ These, therefore, are of necessity not the function of conscience, but of the divine Law. Conscience is the set of inner controls that man has to judge the acts that he or others do, and then, in his own case, to bring about certain kind of atonement or restitution through his guilt feelings according to James Knight's analysis.⁴⁵

Guilt is generated when the limitations that conscience sets up for the individual are surpassed.⁴⁶ In that way, the conscience certainly does play a very important role in the behavior of all Christians. For they will be guided according to their norms. When a conscience becomes weakened in the Christian sense of the term, the wrongness of its judgments is the result of a confusion of norms, which is also finally the result of sin entering the entire being and fabric of man and the world.⁴⁷ All of this affects man as

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Knight, p. 3.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 95.

⁴⁷Caemmerer, "Conscience," p. 47.

a person especially in his relationship to God, for there is a conflict of will and act. This has been stated in the following way:

There are several immediate consequences of man's conflict with God that effect basic changes in personality. One such consequence is guilt. Guilt, a feeling that is unique to man, results when he perceives that he has done something that he ought not to have done. Man, not escaping the feeling that he ought to be related to God, finds that actually he is in revolt against God. Scripture attributes this feeling to the natural knowledge of God "written in their hearts" and to the voice of conscience "accusing and excusing them" (Rom. 2:15). Undoubtedly the knowledge of God is reinforced from any number of sources--the testimony of Scriptures, parents, teachers, reasoning from nature, threats to well-being.⁴⁸

This constant state of tension and a certain kind of inner conflict within man has been termed "one of the main forces for therapy,"⁴⁹ because it enables man to make reasonable judgments concerning his conduct. In that way, the Law of God uses man's built-in psychological processes to do its work. Paul Tournier, internationally renowned Swiss physician and psychiatrist, says that one of modern man's biggest problems is not that he has a conscience to guide him, but that this conscience is all too often repressed, rather than allowed to perform its functions.⁵⁰ Conscience does need

⁴⁸ What, Then, Is Man?, p. 247.

⁴⁹ Curran, p. 136.

⁵⁰ Paul Tournier, The Whole Person in a Broken World, translated from the French by John and Helen Doberstein (New York: Harpers and Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 12.

education, however, and must be guided. Here is where Christian perspective and Christian counseling can become very important, for, as Arthur Charles Curran says "Counseling . . . is often required to aid a person to assimilate and absorb the richness of this educational knowledge."⁵¹

Conscience is universal, and by no means exclusively a religious phenomenon, as Gordon Allport shows in his study on The Individual and His Religion.⁵² Richard R. Caemmerer says too that his conclusion, after examining the biblical material with respect to conscience, is that the conscience of natural man is equally as capable ethically as is that of regenerate man.⁵³ This means that man has a conscience in regard to strictly civic sentiment, scientific findings, art--in any situation where man must make judgment of his actions over against the norms that he has set up or that have in some way been established for him and accepted by him. In whatever situation, even in deeds commonly against society, for example, in the underworld, there is a code "whose violation may awaken the still small voice even when transgressions against the larger code of society do not."⁵⁴

⁵¹Curran, p. 139.

⁵²Gordon W[illard] Allport, The Individual and His Religion: A Psychological Interpretation (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 90.

⁵³Caemmerer, "Conscience," p. 47.

⁵⁴Allport, p. 90.

While psychology finds that an over-harsh conscience can lead to psychological problems that can become very deep personality disturbances,⁵⁵ the demands of conscience are very real demands. Hulme says in Pastoral Care Come of Age that the conscience's demands cannot be simply dismissed as neurotic problems.⁵⁶ He says that the demands that conscience makes in functioning in an individual are

demands for a change in behavior that alone can heal the division. Religiously speaking, such behavior is an appeasement of an impersonal "deity." The conscience is no longer informed by the Word of God, it is the Word of God. . . . There is only monologue.⁵⁷

Man has other conflicts besides conscience that affect his personhood, and these must be taken into account when one considers his relationship to the Word of God. For they, as is the conflict of conscience, are conflicts that spring from man's alienation from his Creator. The sinfulness of human nature pervades life at every point, and causes the conflicts that man finds facing him. These are, first of all, conflicts that come from within himself: conflicts of idolatry and self-righteousness that form barriers to man's looking for help outside of himself.⁵⁸ For man is

⁵⁵ Knight, p. 106.

⁵⁶ Hulme, p. 78.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Richard R[udolph] Caemmerer, Preaching for the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p. 181.

an idolator when his trust is in himself or in things other than his true God. When man is self-righteous, he convinces himself blindly and against all odds that he really is capable and sufficient to find his own salvation from whatever situation he faces. This manifests itself as pride.

Man is an individual, but he does not live alone or free from pressures that are outside of himself. He is born into a societal structure that depends to a certain extent on inter-relationships with other people around him. The closest of these groups that are pressuring people all the time, even though they might be unconscious of their influence, are family group structures. Richard R. Caemmerer, in his book, Preaching for the Church, says that "Christian families too are of the 'natural' order: things happen to them. The fact that they are Christian does not make them immune to problems that they must face."⁵⁹ The Judaeo-Christian tradition is marked by the fact that inter-relationships are part of man's situation, and that he is always involved especially as a Christian with a community concept of his being part of God's people.⁶⁰ As the Word of God comes to people through ministry, the problems that they face must always be faced in the light of the unfolding of God's plan for them and the deficiencies that are theirs by nature, that cause God's plan to go awry.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 198.

⁶⁰ Wayne E[dward] Oates, The Religious Dimensions of Personality (New York: The Association Press, 1957), p. 288.

The Word of God comes to men who face their problems and their situations day after day, and react to them according to the responses that have been developed in their personalities. Paul Tournier speaks of the reactions that Christians, as well as others, have:

In reality we all react strongly or weakly, according to circumstances, but in varying degree. Sometimes . . . a weak reaction . . . represents a supreme weapon which is brought into play for want of strong weapons. . . . At the other end of the scale a strong reaction such as anger never quite succeeds in cloaking the weakness it betrays.⁶¹

People become more and more aware of their sin as Law is proclaimed to them. As that happens, the weight of their guilt reaches them and finally reaches a breaking point, when the equilibrium that they might have had is toppled. Some people then shut off the weak side of their personality to let the strong take over, and this is a type of covering-up that actually deprives people of what they most need: God's mercy and grace.⁶² While weak personality reactions usually take the form of inhibitions: depression, despondency, sadness, self-pity, self-reproach, and withdrawal into one's own little "shell,"⁶³ strong reactions are those of giving

⁶¹ Paul Tournier, The Strong and the Weak, translated from the French by Edwin Hudson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 23.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 175-176.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 97.

an outward appearance of assurance and aggressiveness that is unreal, of flaunting virtues to cover up vices.⁶⁴ The strong reactions may therefore take forms such as exhilaration, euphoria, condescension, self-satisfaction, optimism, rashness, glibness of tongue, excitability.⁶⁵

At times inner conflicts cause people to doubt things, and no type of either strong or weak reaction is of value to them in resolving their doubt. Gordon Allport defines doubt as a conflict between belief and disbelief.⁶⁶ He says, "Doubt . . . is technically a secondary condition of mental life. It is an unstable or hesitant reaction, produced by the collision of evidence with prior belief, or of one belief with another."⁶⁷ Allport goes on to point out that doubt assails most strongly the higher levels of interpretation and search for meaningfulness, and that is one reason why people's religious convictions are so strongly assailed by doubt.⁶⁸ Satan uses the techniques of mental processes to try to confound the faith of Christians and to keep the unregenerate from belief.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 22

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 97.

⁶⁶Allport, p. 99.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 100.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 102.

Christian people realize that they live under God, and must consider everything--even their personality development--from a Christian point of view. Specifically Christian dimensions of personality are taken into account when

the conflict in human personality that gives rise to the destructive emotions. . . . is identified by the doctrine as the conflict between the way a man is and the way he was meant to be--between the image of God in which God created him and the corruption of that image in sin.⁶⁹

Although man was created in the image of God, it must be kept in mind at all times that he is not God: he is creature and not Creator.⁷⁰ Wayne Oates says in his book The Religious Dimensions of Personality:

The unique factor in the Christian understanding of personality is that the origin of man has no meaning apart from his redemption in Christ. The development of man is a "wandering" apart from the relationship to Christ which endows that development with both motive and pattern of action, goals for living, and the hope to wait patiently upon their achievement. The structure of personality⁷¹ has no real form unless Christ be formed in man.

It is finally when man encounters Christ that he can better understand himself and make meaningful an understanding of his own nature.⁷² As the symposium committee

⁶⁹William E[dward] Hulme, Counseling and Theology (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), p. 95.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 97.

⁷¹Oates, pp. 300-301.

⁷²Ibid., p. 50.

studying the relationship of theology, psychology, and psychiatry says in the book, What, Then, Is Man?, "The Christian view of man is not anthropocentric but theocentric. Ultimately it never matters what man thinks of himself, but what God thinks of man."⁷³ Then man is no longer conscious only of himself, but an "I-Thou" relationship and encounter with God comes into the entire consideration of personality.⁷⁴ Reinhold Niebuhr says:

when the sinful self is broken and the real self is fulfilled from beyond itself, the consequence is a new life rather than destruction. In the Christian doctrine the self is therefore both more impotent and more valuable, both more dependent and more indestructible than in the alternate doctrines.⁷⁵

A truly Christian view of man takes into account what man is: a creature of God, and sees the Word come to him to show him that he is sinful and that the sinful nature in which he finds himself from birth cannot be eradicated. It finds every non-religious, non-Christian solution to this problem totally inadequate.

⁷³What, Then, Is Man?, p. 76.

⁷⁴Oates, p. 298.

⁷⁵Niebuhr, pp. 113-114.

⁷⁶Adolf Koberle, The Quest for Soliness, translated from the 1st German edition by John C. Mattes (Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, c.1936), p. 76.

The Role of Faith

It is because of the essentially inadequate solution that man finds for his problem in everything outside of a divine-human encounter that faith necessarily plays such an important role in man's life.

The Word of God is powerful to condemn and to save man in his situation of sin. In both cases it is the Word that is powerful as God coming to man. In the consideration of faith too, it is God that is powerful in His working in man, and without God coming to man, man could have no hope. St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Romans, "The Spirit you have received is not a spirit of slavery leading you back into a life of fear, but a Spirit that makes us sons, enabling us to cry 'Abba! Father!'" (8:15); and the same apostle says also, "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord!' except under the influence of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). Eph. 2:8-9 says, "For it is by his grace you are saved, through trusting him; it is not your own doing. It is God's gift, not a reward for work done." Adolf Koberle states it this way in his book, The Quest for Holiness:

The Gospel blocks the way of all self-devised efforts to gain holiness. It deprives man of his self-confidence and of the idea that he has a rightful claim on God. Instead it proclaims through Word and Sacrament a free promise of grace which has been made available by an act of God, and which gives fully and completely . . . what could never be attained by self-devised methods.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Adolf Koberle, The Quest for Holiness, translated from the 3rd German edition by John C. Mattes (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1936), p. 76.

Martin Luther's exposition of the Apostle's Creed in the Small Catechism is a powerful statement of God's work in man:

I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and to all ⁷⁷who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.

The Formula of Concord of the Lutheran Confessions continues in the same firm conviction of God's power alone creating faith in man. The Epitome of the Formula states:

It is God's will that men should hear his Word and not stop their ears. The Holy Spirit is present with this Word and opens hearts so that, like Lydia in Acts 16:14, they heed it and thus are converted solely through the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, ⁷⁸for man's conversion is the Spirit's work alone.

There is no part of conversion or faith that can be left to man's work. It is all God's power, His doing, as the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord says:

Holy Scriptures ascribe conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal, and everything that belongs to its real beginning and completion

⁷⁷Book of Concord, "Small Catechism," Creed, III, 6, p. 345.

⁷⁸Ibid., "Formula of Concord," Epitome, II, 5, p. 470.

in no way to human powers of the natural free will, be it entirely or one-half or the least and tiniest part, but altogether and alone to the divine operation and the Holy Spirit⁷⁹

God is at work in man in the whole process of faith generation. It is impossible for man to believe in God without God actively working His divine power in man. Eduard Thurneysen, who has studied and written extensively in the field of pastoral care, says:

Man remains uncontested as a partner to whom the Word of forgiveness can and ought to be communicated, who can and ought to hear and understand it, and who is led by it to repentance and deliverance. But however natural and real this communication, acceptance, and repentance is, it remains an event which cannot be traced back to the natural faculty of man's hearing and understanding. The hearing of the Word of God is quite certainly a hearing like any other, but where it occurs as the hearing of this particular Word, it is a hearing which has entered into the nature of man, entered from above like no other hearing. It takes place in the natural province of man, perhaps in a sermon, perhaps in pastoral conversation. But when it takes place, it also takes possession. A door opens in man, but man does not open it by himself; indeed, this door is not even present until the Word of forgiveness simultaneously creates and opens it when it reaches man. Forgiveness is not only the speaking mouth of God; ⁸⁰ it is at the same time also the hearing ear of man.

When the Word of God addresses itself to man, it certainly shows man a dark picture of his situation, if it were not for the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ. Man

⁷⁹Ibid., "Formula of Concord," Solid Declaration, II, 25, p. 526.

⁸⁰Eduard Thurneysen, A Theology of Pastoral Care, translated from the German by Jack A. Worthington and Thomas Weiser, et al. (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1962), p. 184.

is a person created by God, and God the Creator, seeing the results of man's sinful disobedience to His perfect will, has become also God the Savior. He empowers man to believe this, and therefore through faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ man does indeed have hope that is valid for his earthly sojourn and the life of eternal blessedness that begins when faith enters the scene of man's desperation and changes the whole situation by giving him hope.

In his book, Insight and Responsibility, Erik H. Erikson defines hope as "the enduring belief in the attainability of fervent wishes, in spite of the dark urges and rages which mark the beginning of existence."⁸¹ The inspired writer to the Hebrews equates hope and faith and says, "Faith gives substance to our hopes, and makes us certain of realities we do not see" (Heb. 11:1). Clinical psychologists know that a person without hope is lifeless for all practical purposes.⁸² This certainly is very true also of man's entire personhood, when one considers man's being from a religious point of view. It is hope through faith that gives the Christian his true life and meaningful existence. The Epitome of the Formula of Concord says:

We believe, teach, and confess that faith is the only means and instrument whereby we accept Christ and in

⁸¹Erik H. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1964), p. 118.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 115-116.

Christ obtain the "righteousness which avails before God," and that for Christ's sake such faith is reckoned for righteousness (Rom. 4:5).⁸³

So also the Apology of the Augsburg Confession is strong in its conviction that man's hope lies in faith in Jesus Christ alone:

to us, oppressed by sin and death, the promise freely offers reconciliation for Christ's sake, which we do not accept by works but by faith alone. This faith brings to God a trust not in our own merits, but only in the promise of mercy in Christ. Therefore, when a man believes that his sins are forgiven because of Christ and that God is reconciled and favorably disposed to him because of Christ, this personal faith obtains the forgiveness of sins and justifies us.⁸⁴

This faith brings peace and rest to the anxious and guilt-laden conscience, as the Augsburg Confession, Article XX, says:

it is a matter of experience that weak and terrified consciences find it most comforting and salutary [justification through faith]. The conscience cannot come to rest and peace through works, but only through faith, that is, when it is assured and knows that for Christ's sake it has a gracious God, as Paul says in Rom. 5:1, "Since we⁸⁵ are justified by faith, we have peace with God."

The role of faith as the hope-giver is not just a role of historical knowledge. Man's hope is not knowledge merely in the sense of intellectual recognition of fact. The Augsburg Confession says:

⁸³ Book of Concord, "Formula of Concord," Epitome, III, 5, p. 473.

⁸⁴ Ibid., "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," IV, 44-45, p. 113.

⁸⁵ Ibid., "Augsburg Confession," XX, 15-16, p. 43.

faith is not merely a knowledge of historical events but is a confidence in God and in the fulfillment of his promises. Augustine also reminds us that we should understand the word "faith" in the Scriptures to mean confidence in God, assurance that God is gracious to us, and not merely such a knowledge⁸⁶ of historical events as the devil also possesses.

The Christian faith is not strictly an assertion, but rather a confession; and this confession is: "I believe in God the Father And in Jesus Christ, His Son I believe in the Holy Ghost" ⁸⁷ When a Christian confesses his faith in those words, he confesses faith in everything that such a confession of faith implies. Among these implications lies the fact that man is brought to realize that there is a remedy for his human situation, and that this remedy lies in Jesus Christ. The Word of God tells this to man in everything that it says to him, and, through faith, gives him hope to live every day with a fresh realization that God makes the world aright, even his workaday world. Philip Melanchthon put it this way in his Loci Communes Theologici of 1521:

hope also is a work of faith. For by faith man believes the Word, and in hope he expects what is promised through the Word. Faith in the Word of God causes us to expect what it promises. Ps. 8:10 expresses it thus: "And those who know thy name put their trust in thee." There is no⁸⁸ reason why we should separate faith from hope.

⁸⁶ Ibid., "Augsburg Confession," XX, 25-26, p. 45.

⁸⁷ What, Then, Is Man?, p. 24.

⁸⁸ Melanchthon, p. 111.

The Word of God is not a static Word in any way. It has as its goal the proclamation of sin and grace to man, God's creature who disobeyed Him. The proclamation of sin and grace is to man who finds himself bound completely by his sinfulness, who has no remedy outside of God's mercy. This is the revelation of God through Jesus Christ and His atoning work, offered to man by God's work in the Spirit. God uses His means of grace to bring this revelation home to man's innermost being.

Man as a person is pierced by the power of the Word. He finds his conscience telling him what is right and wrong, and the pressures of everyday living affect his personhood. Nevertheless, through all of this the Word comes to tell man that God in Christ is and remains his only Hope. The message is strong and full of encouragement: God took over man's bad state and has turned this into the proclamation of love that man by himself cannot comprehend. This is the message which the Christian counselor brings to those who seek him out.

CHAPTER IV

THE COUNSELING PROCESS

The Nature of the Counseling Process

There is a great deal of divergency with regard to the use of terminology and definition in matters that regard counseling. Some authors make little distinction between what can be called "the counseling process" and "counseling" as such, while others define these quite differently. There seems to be validity in making a distinction between "the counseling process" and "counseling," since it will help the counselor in defining his own categories and in understanding his purpose.

The fact that one can call something a "process" of counseling indicates that this is more than merely an occasional contact or specific interview, but is a process that is carried on over a period of time. Seward Hiltner puts it this way in his book, Pastoral Counseling:

Pastoral counseling is a process. It is to be viewed not merely as something we can examine by viewing the relationship between pastor and parishioner at any given moment of time, but as what happens within that relationship over a time span.¹

Not everything that comes into the inter-relationships between pastor and counselee, however, necessarily can be

¹Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1949), p. 80.

included in the concept of fitting into the counseling process. This is true also with regard to any secular counseling process, although the process of pastoral counseling is even greater in this respect, since a pastor generally is in a situation in which he would have an ongoing contact with the counselee that the professional secular counselor could probably not enjoy. However, before what can be called "the counseling process" can be established in the contact that the pastor has with his parishioners, one can say that the following conditions must prevail:^X (1) Help of some type must be sought either directly or indirectly by the counselee; (2) The counselee must realize that there is something about his problem that lies within his own self; (3) There must be a desire to move toward a solution of some type; (4) There must be an understanding that the pastor will try to help the counselee solve his own problems.² Without these conditions prevailing, it is difficult to assume that a counseling process exists between counselor and counselee, since both parties would be moving toward their own goals with little knowledge of the hopes, purposes and assumptions that either holds as he enters into the counseling process. Such a situation would likely preclude the clarification and consolidation of insights that would be necessary for a healthy progression in the process initiated.

²Ibid.

Wayne Oates and co-authors refer to the counseling process as everything that is done, formally or informally, that will aid in counseling: making pastoral contacts, speaking in informal conversations with people, making oneself available to people who would seek one out, building up a reputation for being able to keep confidences divulged by parishioners--even the budgeting of time for counseling in a regular schedule.³ No doubt his purpose in doing this is to assure that the proper conditions exist for counseling to proceed, but it is a definition of the "counseling process" that views the entire process from an administrative rather than from a therapeutic point of view. For therapy in the sense of problem-solving is common to everything in the purpose of the counseling process. Harms and Schrieber say in their Handbook of Counseling Techniques that

The essence of the counseling process as a problem-solving method emerges as a common thread, based on certain fundamental convictions about the individual, the growth and development of his personality, his rights and responsibilities, and on a shared understanding of the dynamics of human interactions, regardless of setting and content or discipline.⁴

³Wayne E[dward] Oates, editor, An Introduction to Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959), passim, pp. 69-107.

⁴Ernest Harms and Paul Schrieber, editors, Handbook of Counseling Techniques, A Pergamon Press Book (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 2.

For the counseling process to be truly a counseling process there must be understanding on the counselor's part of how the counselee feels about his situation, and a real communication of that understanding.⁵ In this kind of setting, "pastoral care" and "pastoral counseling" take place, often within the counseling process itself.

"Pastoral care" is a term generally used in a much broader sense than "pastoral counseling." Pastoral counseling is always within the context of the counseling process, while pastoral care may not necessarily be within that context. Here too, there is a great difference of vocabulary usage, and there are some who use the terms interchangeably. Thornton seems to do this when he says, "Pastoral care and counseling are forms of religious ministry which integrate the findings of behavioral science and theology in the effort to prepare the way for divine-human encounter in the midst of human crises."⁶ Pastoral care is outside the scope of the secular counselor, however, and is a form of ministry that "consists of a work to be done and continually perfected, on the plane of freedom with the enlightenment of grace," as Godin defines the true pastoral relationship.⁷

⁵Hiltner, p. 47.

⁶Edward E. Thornton, Theology and Pastoral Counseling (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 27.

⁷André Godin, The Priest as Counselor, A Divine Word Paperback, translated from the French by Bernard Phillips (Techny, Ill.: Divine Word Publications, 1965), p. 97.

In characterizing pastoral care and pastoral counseling, LeRoy Aden has a definition that seems to be helpful. Concerning pastoral care he says, "Pastoral care is a broader and more generic term referring to the church's entire ministry of helping or healing, of caring or curing individuals or groups."⁸ He defines pastoral counseling as follows: "Pastoral counseling, a specialized activity within pastoral care, is a ministry of helping or healing through intensive attention to the individual and his life situation."⁹ Nevertheless, Roy Stuart Lee says that pastoral care must be part of a whole complex of psychological healing and subject to the same conditions in order to be successful, no matter what the goal of the pastor may be.¹⁰

Peder Olsen uses the term "soul care" rather than "pastoral care" to designate the same ministry, and says that "in true soul care efforts should be made to integrate the healing powers of all biblical means in the administration of pastoral care."¹¹ This is what has been termed cura

⁸LeRoy Aden, "Pastoral Counseling as Christian Perspective," The Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology, edited by Peter Homans (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 164.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰R[oy] S[tuart] Lee, Principles of Pastoral Counseling in The Library of Pastoral Care (London: SPCK, 1968), pp. 25-26.

¹¹Peder Olsen, Pastoral Care and Psychotherapy: A Study in Cooperation between Physician and Pastor, translated from the Norwegian by Herman E. Jorgensen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1961), p. 16.

animarum throughout many centuries of Christian history.

An objective of healing of some type is involved, no matter what methodology may be used, and what the immediate goal of the ministry may be. LeRoy Aden says this about pastoral care:

Pastoral care confronts us with a multitude of methods. At different times and in different circumstances it has used confession (public and private), anointing, saints and relics, charismatic healers, exorcism, prayer, spiritual letters, sacraments, scriptural reading, religious literature, "holy" conversations, discipline, and other activities. In addition, the church functions of teaching, evangelism, worship, and preaching have been used at times to serve the purpose of pastoral care.¹²

The purpose of the ministry of soul care or pastoral care is to bring men back to God. It does not promote human will or intention, but tries to get men to see the will of God in their lives, and create a relationship of man to God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that will engender also a correct relationship between one man and his fellow. The pastor is agent of God in this relationship, as Peder Olsen points out: "It is really God himself who is the transactor in soul care. He is the initiative and acting force in his dealings with souls, meant for all."¹³

Preaching is certainly not to be equated with pastoral care in all its breadth of purpose and form, but Seward Hiltner points out that

¹²Aden, p. 164.

¹³Olsen, p. 12.

in terms of fundamental aims and attitudes there is astonishingly little difference between preaching and pastoral care or pastoral counseling. Both make progress as that which is unpleasant but necessary becomes capable of assimilation because of the context, environment, atmosphere, and conviction that manifests the love within judgment, the grace within or beneath law, the freedom within responsibility. And in preaching and pastoral care alike, apparently these things can appear only in relationship.¹⁴

It is generally conceded that no specialization in counseling is prerequisite to general pastoral care, even though basic psychological techniques may be the same, because pastoral care covers a much wider area of ministry than does pastoral counseling.

Seward Hiltner refers to pastoral counseling as an activity rather than as a profession, and says that pastoral counseling "is a process of relationship between one who seeks and one who gives help, carried out as a more or less prominent, more or less time-consuming, aspect of the professional activities of the helper."¹⁵ Referring to counseling as an activity, Hiltner by no means is implying that specialization and professional technique are not necessary in counseling. It is often considered an integral part of the pastoral ministry, one that also must be carried out with skill, as Curran says in Religious Values in Counseling and Psychotherapy:

¹⁴Seward Hiltner, Ferment in the Ministry (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 68.

¹⁵Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling, p. 95.

In our consideration, then, pastoral counseling would not be separated from the parish or pastoral ministry but would form a basic and essential part of it. It would be called "counseling," however, in the way we have been considering counseling, namely as a skilled, subtle and demanding relationship and so be distinguished but not separated from other pastoral functions. "Pastoral counseling" would in some way relate to a person in those past and present religious affects and cognitions--distorted or adequate--which have influenced his present state of religious growth and maturity.¹⁶

Although there is general consensus in seeing pastoral counseling as a highly specialized ministry, there is much difference of opinion regarding its place in the parish ministry. Roy Stuart Lee, for example, would not agree with Curran's view that it should be part of the parish ministry in general, and says,

These [pastoral counselors] will be specialists who have been given a more thorough training and in most cases will either give most of their time to counselling or will do their counselling in separation from their other duties, in a clinic or counselling centre [sic], for instance.¹⁷

Pastoral counseling is characterized by the method of pastoral conversation that seeks to accomplish its objective by speaking to the life situation of the counselee.

Just as all counseling is done from some given perspective, so pastoral counseling is based on a perspective. Indeed, LeRoy Aden calls pastoral counseling a "Christian

¹⁶Charles A[rthur] Curran, Religious Values in Counseling and Psychotherapy (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969), pp. 268-269.

¹⁷Lee, p. 10.

perspective which seeks to help to heal by attending to the life situation of the troubled person."¹⁸ This means also that defining pastoral counseling by identifying it with religious content is an inadequate way of defining it. There is more to pastoral counseling than a mere religious context. Hulme says in his book, Counseling and Theology, that the challenge is to "incorporate the pastor's own heritage into pastoral counseling--to bolster its psychological framework with a theological foundation."¹⁹ There is a conviction that any loving concern for the individual with a problem immediately presupposes a spiritual dimension to counseling among some religious writers.²⁰ This is an inadequate way to define Christian pastoral counseling, but it does serve to stress the contention that merely interjecting religious jargon does not mean that counseling is Christian or indeed even true counseling.

Hiltner and Colston contend that

[pastoral counseling] is a matter of creating, out of a previous general pastor-parishioner relationship, a special and temporary helping relationship--and with the recognition that, upon conclusion of

¹⁸Aden, p. 167.

¹⁹William E[dward] Hulme, Counseling and Theology (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), p. 11.

²⁰Leslie E. Moser, Counseling: A Modern Emphasis in Religion (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 28.

the special and temporary relationship, the general relationship will be resumed. Some of the other professions that do counseling have something akin to this . . . but none to so marked an extent and so uniformly as the clergy.²¹

John W. Stafford is also very direct in his assertion that

Pastoral counseling today is frankly psychologically oriented. It is the explicit application of the attitudes, insights, theories, and techniques of contemporary counseling psychology to pastoral problems.²²

The Goal of Counseling

Although much of what has been said in defining the nature of the counseling process necessarily speaks also to the aims or goals of counseling, there are some things which ought especially to be mentioned with regard to the objectives of general counseling and pastoral counseling.

Leona E. Tyler, writing about "Theoretical Principles Underlying the Counseling Process," says that

Our job, as counselors, is not to remove physical and mental handicaps or to get rid of limitations, but to find sturdy shoots that can grow and flourish

²¹Seward Hiltner and Lowell G. Colston, The Context of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1961), p. 30.

²²John W. Stafford, "Pastoral Counseling," Contemporary Pastoral Counseling, edited by Eugene J. Weitzel (New York: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1969), p. 6.

even though some of the branches of the plant are defective. Our acceptance of limitations and our respect for strengths go together.²³

The growth of the counselee is finally the aim of all counseling.²⁴ It is often the goal of counseling to provide guidance and support for persons whose lives have in some way radically changed, and who need help in facing new roles and new responsibilities. Joseph Samler has said that the aims of the counseling process are to provide "insight, changing behavior, and the exercise of choice along the lines leading to more adequate functioning and greater comfort in living in terms of specified values."²⁵ Things common to this task in some way are personality appraisal, evaluation of misperception and self-acceptance, and the assumption of independence and responsibility.²⁶ The aim of the counselor is not to solve the counselee's problems but rather his objective is to

help the person understand and explore his world of feelings even when they are distorted. Only when the distortions have been expressed, explored and understood can they be made cognitive, and so reduced to their more normal reality dimension.²⁷

²³Leona E. Tyler, "Theoretical Principles Underlying the Counseling Process," Counseling and Psychotherapy: Classic on Theories and Issues, edited by Ben N. Ard, Jr. (Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1966), p. 40.

²⁴Hulme, p. 36.

²⁵Joseph Samler, "Change in Values: A Goal in Counseling," Counseling and Psychotherapy, p. 201.

²⁶Ibid., p. 199.

²⁷Curran, p. 79.

The approach of counseling is psychological, the application of techniques that are the results of the in-depth studies of man's behavior. Leslie E. Moser, in his book, Counseling: A Modern Emphasis in Religion, is careful to point out that there is no disharmony between the psychological approach to counseling and the goals of religion; nor is the use of religious symbolism and rites opposed to the use of psychological techniques.²⁸ Seward Hiltner and Lowell Colston say this about the approach to counseling of secular and pastoral counselors:

The counseling process may be examined from the point of view of the attitude and understanding of the counselor, from that of movement within the other person, and from the perspective of the changing character of the relationship between them. From any of these points of view, we contend, there is an identity in fundamental principles between counseling by the pastor and counseling by other workers.²⁹

While it is true that the aims of counseling are not in opposition to the goals of religion, referring especially to techniques, there are some functions in counseling that are specifically pastoral in scope. While there would not be basic disagreement in technique, the pastoral scope includes the religious values of the Christian faith that general professional counseling would not include, at least not with the spiritual connotations.

²⁸ Moser, p. 61.

²⁹ Hiltner and Colston, p. 25.

Søren Kierkegaard wrote, "that if real success is to attend the effort to bring man to a definite position, one must first of all take pains to find him where he is and begin there."³⁰ Pastoral counseling too is built on this insight. The plight of the counselee must be thoroughly understood in order to have a specific goal in sight, and the counselor must be careful not to go beyond the spiritual plane of the counselee when he is at first helping him.

André Godin says,

The pastoral concept, we believe, should always involve a reference to the individuals taken care of, and especially to the constant search for improvement in the relations established and developed between men and the sources of salvation. This preoccupation with spiritual growth seems to us to be the distinguishing mark of a specifically pastoral goal.³¹

Eduard Thurneysen, a close friend and associate of Karl Barth, studied the theology of pastoral care very thoroughly. One cannot but feel that he was very suspicious of psychology in general, certainly with regard to pastoral work. Nevertheless, he has provided some deep insight that cannot be overlooked in the pastoral relationship of pastor and parishioner. Thurneysen uses the term "pastoral care" very loosely and broadly, and says,

Whoever engages in pastoral care must know that he occupies a special place. To use a picture, it is the place which lies between the Word of

³⁰Thornton, p. 85.

³¹Godin, pp. 12-13.

God and sinful man. The Word stands on the one side, the sinner on the other; the Word wants to cross over to speak to the sinner. This requires a bearer, a mediator. This bearer and mediator of the Word is the pastoral counselor.³²

The counseling situation gives the pastor the opportunity to help people find themselves by helping them to understand their inner conflicts. In doing this, it becomes a healing process, and the pastoral function in such counseling is a healing function. As the counselee begins to feel free of his burden by being able to release himself emotionally and speak about his problem, the insights that he can gain will help him look at his problem objectively, and in that way begin to find his own solutions. The pastor as Christian shepherd is in a unique position to help the counselee understand that he can be free of himself through the grace that God offers in Jesus Christ, that the counselee does not have to keep unconsciously punishing himself in an attempt at self-atonement, for example. William Hulme speaks about this, when he says,

In its subconscious influence pride may continue to prevent the reception of grace even though the humanity of Christ is a humbling experience consciously. Such an individual . . . is a common experience in the counselor's office. He cannot

³² Eduard Thurneysen, A Theology of Pastoral Care, translated from the German by Jack A. Worthington and Thomas Weiser, et al (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1962), p. 334.

receive because he feels he does not deserve.
 . . . Self-atonements which characterize his
 relationship with himself and his fellow-men
 extend almost automatically to his relationship
 to God.³³

As the Christian pastor counsels, his shepherding
 through counseling always moves toward a healing situation,
 though healing may not necessarily follow immediately. Nor
 can man be dissected in some way to compartmentalize him into
 some sort of "religious" and "non-religious" particles.

Seward Hiltner says in his book, The Christian Shepherd, that

if man is to be healed, all aspects or organs or
 relationships must be touched; whence it follows
 that each of these levels or orders or perspectives
 must somehow affect the others even though it need
 not by any means wholly determine them. It follows
 that our attempts to shepherd and to heal never
 exist in some walled-off compartment labeled
 "religious."³⁴

In counseling, the pastor functions in such a way as to
 help the counselee understand that there is something solid
 on which he can stand, though he finds himself on the edge
 of some emotional abyss, and that he can find a foundation
 on which to build himself up with the help of God. This is
 the healing function of pastoral counseling. William Clebsch
 and Charles Jaekle, who define the four pastoral functions of

³³Hulme, pp. 164-165.

³⁴Seward Hiltner, The Christian Shepherd: Some Aspects
 of Pastoral Care (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 23.

pastoral counseling as healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling, call healing the function in which

a representative Christian person helps a debilitated person to be restored to a condition of wholeness, on the assumption that this restoration achieves also a new level of spiritual insight and welfare.³⁵

One goal of counseling in the healing function of the pastor is to find certain progress, so that through his own new insights the counselee may see himself and his problems in a new light of Christian perspective.

Frank Lake brings a thought-provoking approach to the pastoral function of healing in counseling when he says,

Pastoral care is defective unless it can deal thoroughly with these evils we have suffered as well as with the sins we have committed. At some point in our lives we may need someone who can preside over the healing of our memories of evil, especially the repressed "memories" of personal injury, however early in our life history they came upon us and were imprinted. Within the gathered congregation this is a pastoral task, not a medical one, except perhaps in the severest cases.³⁶

The pastoral aim in counseling is to bring a feeling of peace where trouble and discord reigned before. As there is progression to such intent, the healing function is being carried out. As the pastor helps people find themselves, he helps them realize their own unworthiness in the light of

³⁵ William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective: An Essay with Exhibits (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 8.

³⁶ Frank Lake, "The Christian Service of Listening, Dialogue, Witness and Counseling in Relation to Troubled Persons, Sufferers from the Psychoneuroses and the Disorders of Personality," Clinical Theology (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1966), p. 21.

God's looking down on us, and as they learn to admit their unworthiness before God, they can learn also to trust and build on Him in hope, and see that He has given them the dignity of being His people in the world that gives them light for a new day in their lives.

For healing to take place, the counselee must learn to accept himself for what he is: a person who has limitations. Peter Homans, when he speaks of the psychology of religion, says,

Like the psychology of religion, pastoral psychology attempts to keep a dynamic psychological perspective upon the experiencing of the person at all times, recognizing that the end point of his development is faith, as theological self-understanding.³⁷

This type of approach can involve a ministry of sustaining also, in which the counselee is helped to endure a situation which cannot easily be changed, or can be changed only through a healing process that could be slow and spread out over a period of time. Clebsch and Jaekle characterize this type of ministry as one that helps the person who understands his plight to build "an ongoing life that once more pursues its fulfillment and destiny on a new basis."³⁸ When the counselor,

³⁷Peter Homans, "Toward a Psychology of Religion," The Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology, p. 62.

³⁸Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 48.

specifically pastoral in this ministry, leads people to accept themselves, he is sustaining them also by leading them to accept the love that God gives us in Christ. John F. Crosby, writing From Religion to Grace, says, "the joyous truth is that because God has accepted you, forgiven you, and loved you as you are in spite of your undeservedness, therefore you are now free and able to accept yourself."³⁹ The client is sustained and helped by the pastoral counselor as he realizes that he is accepted by the pastor, by God, and then even by himself.

As this process of acceptance takes place, the pastoral counselor also functions in guiding the counselee. Clebsch and Jaekle define the function of guiding this way:

guiding consists of assisting perplexed persons to make confident choices between alternative courses of thought and action, when such choices are viewed as affecting the present and future state of the soul.⁴⁰

Guiding the counselee pastorally assumes that knowledge that can be useful in the life of the counselee is able to be made available within the framework of the particular ministry in progress. This means that the counselee can be led to accept not only himself, but God also, and can be led to pray, "Thy will be done." Don Browning points out that it is because God's acceptance of us endures unqualifiedly, even

³⁹John F. Crosby, "Accepting our Acceptance," From Religion to Grace (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 106.

⁴⁰Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 9.

though we by nature oppose Him, that we are led to place our trust in Him.⁴¹ As Christians, the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the individual cannot be minimized in this process. The symposium committee that studied the Christian doctrine of man and published the book, What, Then, Is Man?, makes a point of the fact that "to the pastoral counselor self-awareness cannot be considered an adequate goal. . . . The pastoral counselor is responsible for showing him [the counselee] the meaning of his behavior in the light of God's counsel."⁴² In pastoral counseling there is preparation for divine-human encounter in the midst of crises that at times seem insurmountable--often the immediate reason for the counseling relationship to begin. André Godin puts it this way: "The goal of pastoral care is to substitute the work of God for the work of man. . . . The counselee's heart and mind must be infused with the spirit of Christ."⁴³

The fourth pastoral function in counseling is reconciliation: helping people who are alienated regain proper relationships with God and with their fellowmen.⁴⁴ In a sense,

⁴¹Don S. Browning, Atonement and Psychotherapy (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), p. 204.

⁴²What, Then, Is Man?: A Symposium of Theology, Psychology, and Psychiatry (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 279.

⁴³Godin, p. 60.

⁴⁴Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 56.

this is a ministry that is also taking place in the previously discussed functions of pastoral counseling, but it is distinctive in seeking to reestablish broken relationships between man and God and man with his fellowman, and therefore occupies a special category of discussion.⁴⁵ The new self is the aim of this ministry: the reconciled self. Reinhold Niebuhr says,

The Christian experience of the new life is an experience of a new selfhood. The new self is more truly a real self because the vicious circle of self-centredness has been broken. The self lives in and for others, in the general orientation of loyalty to, and love of, God; who alone can do justice to the freedom of the self over all partial interests and values.⁴⁶

In the counseling function of reconciliation the pastor will help people to try to accept God's acceptance of them. He can do this by demonstrating his own acceptance of the counselee first of all. Seward Hiltner says that this acceptance is required, if the counselor wishes to convey the sense of his full acceptance by God to the counselee.⁴⁷ The counselee must be led to realize that he has had nothing to do with God's acceptance of him, that this acceptance is on the basis of something totally outside of him. John F. Crosby has this to say about reconciliation:

Christians want to accept the fact of their acceptance, but in doing so they like to think

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, Human Destiny, II in The Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1964), p. 110.

⁴⁷ Hiltner, Ferment, pp. 65-66.

that they have had at least some small portion of earning power. . . . We like to think we had something to do with it in order to retain at least a measure of our pride and dignity. No man likes to admit that he is totally broke! Yet in accepting our acceptance we are confessing complete and total bankruptcy before God. We are confessing that salvation is one hundred percent the act of a loving and merciful God and zero percent the act of mortal man.⁴⁸

Man by nature does not like to see himself indebted to God. Yet, this is what is necessary for him: to see himself and others as they are, in order to have the kind of relationship with God and his fellowmen that God would have him develop. When we see ourselves as sinners upon whom God has showered His love in Jesus Christ, things change in perspective, also for the counselee who has been led through the phases of pastoral counseling functions in one way or another. We can see others in new perspective, as Crosby points out:

People become for us objects of God's love just as we are an object of God's love. Others become individuals in their own right; they are free, sacred, and dignified, simply because they are created in the image of God. We can accept others as they are only when we can accept ourselves as we are: we can accept ourselves only when first we accept the fact that God has accepted us. Therefore, our acceptance of others is intrinsically related to our own acceptance of God's precious gift.⁴⁹

In his counseling ministry, the pastoral counselor can lead people to peace with themselves because they can see that their impotence in changing aspects of their lives is

⁴⁸Crosby, p. 104.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 110.

cancelled by God's power through the Word, in showing them how God has placed their situation into His own hands and has made that situation livable for them through the atoning work of Christ. This is what will truly make them free from their conflicts.

Common and Divergent Ground in Religion and Psychology

The art of pastoral counseling today involves a great deal of material that is not strictly theological, but includes much that the behavioral sciences have learned in extensive studies and have passed on for the benefit of other behaviorally associated and interested groups and organizations, of which the Christian church certainly plays an important role. The fact that both psychology and Christian ministry are related to man-oriented interests is itself indicative of the interest that the church today has in the findings of the studies of behavioral sciences and their application to theologically oriented programs. Peder Olsen finds a great deal in common in the interests of pastoral care and psychology, and says,

No, soul care and psychotherapy have not only points of contact in common; they have a common field of operation, namely man. Both are designed to help men, our fellow man--not only a part of him, but the whole man, the personality itself. We cannot separate one part of man from the rest

⁵²James A. Kelley, *Consciousness and Faith* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959), p. 57.

⁵³Curtis, p. 189.

of his "organic" totality, for man is not a machine, but a living unity, one being.⁵⁰

Victor White, studying the relationship between psychology and religion, writes in the same train of thought as Olsen, when he says,

If psychological treatment does not issue in the change of man's mentality, his outlook, his manner of conduct, his attitude to the world and his place in the world, it surely fails entirely in its own set purpose. And, however we may choose to define ethics, or for that matter religion, surely we must agree that they are both concerned with these very things.⁵¹

Both psychology and theology are interested in the consequences of the overextension of human beings in their attempts to be little gods, causing basic and deep anxieties.⁵² Likewise, there is an element of personal relationship that is necessarily basic to the relationship of people with either religion or psychology in its practical aspects. Charles Curran goes so far as to say that

Man's human yearnings seem inescapably bound up with a being and becoming not only himself but beyond himself. For in order really to become a fully functioning person, he seems to need to go beyond himself through love to others somewhat like himself--and for the religious man this means to one⁵³ Other, totally and uniquely enigmatic and beyond.

⁵⁰Olsen, p. 26.

⁵¹Victor White, Soul and Psyche: An Enquiry into the Relationship of Psychotherapy and Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), pp. 30-31.

⁵²James A. Knight, Conscience and Guilt (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), p. 87.

⁵³Curran, p. 180.

Religion and psychology also share the concept of the inner weakness of people and their possibility for therapy. Although the forces at work in therapy would be different, with the religious concept of atonement through Christ, the basic ideas and tenets are the same, and therapy is a possibility within the context of each pursuit.

There are differences between religion and psychology, however, that should not be overlooked. These are not differences that place each at opposite poles, but rather differences in purpose and approach. Carlo Weber says in his

Pastoral Psychology:

Theology . . . is concerned with the relationships of the self with God; psychology with the relationships of the self with others and with the self. . . . Theology is normative and concerned with the region of the supernatural; psychology is inductive and concerned with nature alone. Theology is said to be concerned with the "heights" of human experience; psychology with the "depths."⁵⁴

Basically, it is the Word of God that creates the greatest distinction between religion and psychology, specifically related to pastoral counseling. The pastoral counselor sees himself as God's agent through the Word. The power of the Word is the power that the clergyman uses, and he sees this as a power that is not his own, but the power of God in and through him. Religious concepts do not necessarily oppose

⁵⁴Carlo A. Weber, Pastoral Psychology (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1970), pp. 7-8.

psychology, nor is psychology opposed to religion; however, the concept of divine power through the Word of God, for example, is outside the context of the counselor who is secular in his counseling. He just does not take the Word into account in his basic approach. This does not mean that he would deny or oppose its usefulness. In the healing process, the religious aspect provides connotations to the whole concept of therapy which non-religious counseling does not consider. Gordon Allport sees religion as superior to psychotherapy in the "allowance it makes for the affiliative need in human nature."⁵⁵ He feels too, however, that religion has had a difficult time turning doctrine into practice all too often.⁵⁶ Discussing the fact that psychology is a-religious, Leslie E. Moser says,

psychology is a science devoting itself to searching after truth in much the same way as does the science of physics or chemistry. Psychology makes no attempt to disprove any religious concept or to contradict any statement purported to have come from God. . . . Psychology as a science disclaims a primary interest in the spiritual because the spiritual affairs of man, whether real or fancied, simply are not within the scope of psychology except for their motivating influence on behavior. Religious experience is not the specific professional concern of the chemist; religious experience concerns the psychologist as a scientific researcher only because of its impact on behavior.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Gordon W[illard] Allport, The Individual and His Religion: A Psychological Interpretation (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 82.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Moser, p. 38.

While psychology studies the behavior patterns of human beings, it does not draw conclusions as to how people ought to act. Religion does draw its conclusions because it accepts, speaking of the Christian religion, the basic tenets of the Word of God as being normative for man today in every situation. The Ten Commandments have not passed out of sight for the religiously-oriented person, and the psychologist is not necessarily opposed to them. Rather, they are outside his realm of concern. That is why Peder Olsen considers that "the difference between soul care and psychotherapy may perhaps be most plainly and simply expressed by the use of two words: salvation and health."⁵⁸

Religion--speaking here again specifically of the Christian religion--presents the Christian Gospel as God's truth for man, after it presents His Law, whereas psychology presents no such truth. Nevertheless, psychology can serve as a means for serving the Gospel of Christ, when its insights are used in pastoral counseling. André Godin says,

When a religious science, such as pastoral theology, turns to the data supplied by a psychological science, it adapts this data to its own needs by relating it explicitly to pastoral or religious values, thus transforming something that was merely the science of psychic structures into a religious or pastoral psychology.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Olsen, p. 42.

⁵⁹Godin, p. 16.

It is in just such adaptation that value judgments take place, something that is outside the realm of psychology as such. For even the interest in motivation is strictly an interest in motivation that takes into consideration the questions of cause and effect, without having any final interest in ultimate significance. The psychological interest is strictly objective, in order to be true to its purpose.⁶⁰ Charles R. Stinnette, Jr., sums up this point when he says,

We are concerned with psychology as the study of interpersonal dynamics that have their focus in the psyche. Theology, on the other hand, is the methodological interpretation of the meaning and truth of religious faith.⁶¹

Therefore, it can be stated emphatically that religion and psychology do indeed have very much "common ground" in dealing with human beings and the human personality. Nevertheless, when it comes to value judgments, theology takes over from psychology in interest and purpose. The pastoral counselor, to be truly pastoral, must combine theological and psychological aspects of his work, but must know when the science of psychology stops and religious faith takes over on a non-scientific plane.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Charles R[oy] Stinnette, Jr., "Reflection and Transformation: Knowing and Change in Psychotherapy and in Religious Faith," The Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology, p. 84.

Pastoral Attitudes Toward Counseling

It has been stated that pastoral counseling is Christian perspective. Roy Stuart Lee says that counseling requires strength on the part of the counselor more than anything else.⁶² In order for the counselor to be strong, his values must be held in awareness. Joseph Samler has said that

to say that the counselor manifests no values is to require that he have no feelings and whatever great drama this may be it is not counseling. The unreality⁶³ of such a devastating neutrality requires no comment.

LeRoy Aden goes even one step further, saying,

the Christian faith is the dominant concern in the pastor's profession, whereas in most other helping professions it is of secondary concern. We therefore consider it one of the distinctive marks of pastoral counseling.⁶⁴

The faith of the pastoral counselor is considered so important by Paul Halmos in his book, The Faith of the Counsellors, that he says it is requisite to their practice for the even-tempered continuity of counseling and the acceptance of all the adverse aspects that can be brought to bear on the counseling itself.⁶⁵ Samuel Southard says forthrightly:

⁶²Lee, p. 71.

⁶³Samler, p. 200.

⁶⁴Aden, p. 171.

⁶⁵Paul Halmos, The Faith of the Counsellors (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), p. 173.

A . . . controlling attitude is the minister's belief that he is a channel of God's grace among men and that the incarnation of God's grace in his attitudes and actions will help others to find strength and healing through God whom he serves. There is to be active godly power at the center of the pastor's ministry to men.⁶⁶

The Lord Jesus Christ received sinners, spoke with them, ate with them. His own values were never hidden, yet He respected those around Him. Much more so, the Christian pastor, having himself experienced the grace of Christ's love in his life, should receive those with whom he comes into contact and to whom he ministers, and joy to give this love to others as a reflection of what he himself has come to know. Intimate knowledge and "being at home in the Word" is called by Eduard Thurneysen the "most important requisite" for the pastoral counselor.⁶⁷

The pastor's faith plays an important role in his counseling, if the counseling is to be really pastoral. There can be no soundly-based spiritual leading--no true healing for the Word from which his own power is to spring, that Word which the Spirit of God uses as God's means within counselor and counselee alike. This does not mean that the counselor will try to use moral constraint to pressure his

⁶⁶Samuel Southard, "Boldness in Pastoral Counseling," Pastoral Authority in Personal Relationships (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 95.

⁶⁷Thurneysen, p. 337.

counselee, but rather that he will realize deeply that he is God's instrument in a special ministry of healing where God's power can be channeled to help the conflicts that hurt the heart of the counselee and bring him to seek a helpful and understanding pastor. Dayton G. Van Deusen, in his Redemptive Counseling, says,

The conviction is strong among Christian counselors that God is in the counseling situation. The utmost that the counselor can do serves only to facilitate the opportunity for the healing forces of God to work. That which takes place between helper and seeker is possible, for the counselor's point of view, only because he himself has already been seeker and receiver of the realities he represents. God's action has been effective for him and has made him an effective channel for the divine presence and healing in other lives.⁶⁸

Attitudes are so important for the pastoral counselor that they can make possible or impossible an effective counseling situation. The attitudes of the pastoral counselor towards the counselee will be greatly determined by the counselor's own emotional health. Samuel Southard says that a pastor's ministry is severely handicapped by a lack of being able to give of himself to other people, if his own childhood was unhappy and unsatisfying.⁶⁹ Certainly this would affect the counseling of such a pastor in an adverse and negative way.

⁶⁸ Dayton G. Van Deusen, Redemptive Counseling (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1960), p. 143.

⁶⁹ Samuel Southard, "The Emotional Health of the Pastoral Counselor," An Introduction to Pastoral Counseling, p. 44.

Carl R. Rogers, speaking of the importance of sound emotional health of the counselor, says,

the therapist should be . . . a congruent, genuine, integrated person. It means that within the relationship he is freely and deeply himself, with his actual experience accurately represented by his awareness of himself. It is the opposite of presenting⁷⁰ a facade, either knowingly or unknowingly.

The pastor, as well as every other counselor, is placed under great emotional strain in counseling. Since often the pastor has had a rather close relationship with those people whom he counsels in his ministry, he can easily feel that when people come to him with their problems, he is naturally placed in a situation that forces him to try to solve their problems for them. This is not only poor counseling, but places a strain on his entire emotional set-up. It is basically a problem with the pastor's own ego.⁷¹ This will divert his counseling from a client- and God-centered approach to a counselor-centered approach, and the pastoral counselor will find that he can build little relationship to a good counseling encounter because of his own emotional being.

A pastor whose personal life is filled with problems that he cannot solve will also find it difficult to help

⁷⁰Carl R. Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change," Counseling and Psychotherapy, p. 130.

⁷¹Hulme, p. 17.

people understand and solve their own problems, especially if the problems that they bring into the counseling interview are similar to his own, making it nearly impossible for him to be objective.⁷² The counselor's own insecurities are brought out in the counseling that he does with those who seek him out. Nevertheless, Samuel Southard concludes that

the minister's emotional maturity is essential, but it is not the only measure of adequate pastoral counseling. . . . Some stress seems to be essential to give sensitivity to human suffering. But counselors also need the personal assurance that problems can be solved.⁷³

There is place for boldness in pastoral counseling, if it is within a correct context, and emotionally the pastor can be bold in expressing that he has a genuine and godly concern for the individual who is hurting.⁷⁴ Such boldness, however, must not be construed as any kind of personal power, but rather as the power of God working in and through the pastor.

The office of the pastor is not one of personal pride or position. He must remember that he becomes an official or functionary of the church at large, not because of any personal power or magnetism, but because the church has appointed him through various channels to the position that

⁷²What, Then, Is Man?, p. 270.

⁷³Southard, Pastoral Counseling, p. 43.

⁷⁴Southard, Pastoral Authority, p. 86.

he holds. Assuming the pastorate, however, he not only becomes a certain type of symbol for the church, but carries with him into and throughout his office the weight of a long history of the Christian era. This position will affect the pastor's emotional make-up, and it should also make him very conscious of the ethical requirements of the office which he holds, also as a pastoral counselor. Wayne E. Oates says,

the pastor needs both a good memory to remember many things the counselee tells him and good "forgetter" to forget certain things as far as telling them to anyone else is concerned. These are usually things which people literally tell to God in our presence as helpers and encouragers. Therefore, they are not things that really are ours to tell except as we talk with God in prayer in behalf of that person. Then we are not giving information to someone who did not already know it before we ourselves did! This is actually confessional material in the Protestant sense of a voluntarily given and not ecclesiastically required confession.⁷⁵

The Christian pastoral counselor should realize that whatever is told him in counseling must be held in complete confidence. Only in this way will he be able to serve those who come to him by trying to help them solve the particular problems that they bring to him.

In his counseling, the pastoral counselor will strive to use the best methods at his disposal to help heal the hurting person. He will use what psychology has taught him

⁷⁵ Wayne E[dward] Oates, "Keeping Confidences in Pastoral Counseling," An Introduction to Pastoral Counseling, p. 92.

about the behavior of human beings as they react to given life-situations which affect them. There should be no effort at manipulation on the part of the pastoral counselor, whether of a psychological, moral, or religious nature, as Lee points out.⁷⁶ To be successful in counseling, the counselor has to divest himself of authoritarianism or being judgmental in his dealing with those with whom he counsels. André Godin says in The Priest as Counselor:

Every pastoral relationship needs the warmth of a psychological welcome: the pastor appears as the representative of God. It needs the firmness of pedagogical guidance: the pastor asserts himself as the bearer of the tidings of God. It needs the prudence of spiritual mediation: here the pastor reveals himself as a forerunner, anticipating the direct action of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁷

He says further:

pastoral work has no intrinsic need of psychology to ensure the essential sanctification of souls. That is the task of grace. But psychology is necessary if pastoral work is to remain faithful to the outward signs and to the social message of the Word incarnate, drawing all members of the Mystical Body toward that fullness of human and spiritual maturity in their relations to each other and to God.⁷⁸

The pastor must act within the counseling framework in such a way that the deepest expression of a person's beliefs, conflicts, aspirations, joys, and sorrows can find

⁷⁶Lee, p. 121.

⁷⁷Godin, p. 64.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 19.

its release. In order to do this, psychologically-oriented methodology is an absolute necessity. Speaking to this point, Godin says,

the pastor must take care to elucidate and clarify, examining with the counselee the various acceptable solutions, providing him with a greater sense of security, and making him more capable of making his own decisions, using his own free will, the legitimate source of all his actions.⁷⁹

The purpose of the pastoral counselor is not to dictate the course of action which the counselee is to follow. Rather, he will try to direct the counselee to accept as his own solution that course of action which will comply with the moral standards that he accepts freely without the coercion of the pastor. The pastor's faith here will play an important role either directly or indirectly. The counselee must be led to an appropriate understanding of his own problem. Before that takes place, any analysis of it that the counselor gives is considered premature, and the counselee may well reject the analysis given, and cut off virtually any true possible therapy.⁸⁰

The counselee may well urge the pastor to assume responsibility for the problem that he brings to the pastor, rather than have to face up to the fact that the problem is his, and that the pastor cannot and should not attempt to

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 45.

⁸⁰Hulme, p. 75.

solve it for him. In such a case, the counselor should take care that the counseling be a growth process, whereby the counselee is led to see that he must face reality with regard to the problems that he encounters.

There will be certain areas of reserve, where the counselee may not be psychologically ready for some time to divulge matters that hurt. The counselor should be ready to accept such areas of psychic reserve, and realize that these may be very necessary to preserve the entire emotional status of the counselee at least until sufficient growth is evident in order for the counselee to see that the "hidden" things may be the very necessary parts of the whole problem, and that they must be treated openly in order for healing to take place. When the counselee is ready to deal with such deep problems the counselor may proceed, but at the discretion of the counselee.

David E. Roberts says in Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man that

the best way to pass from defensive rationalizations to secure faith is to let doubts, inconsistencies, confusions and rebellions come out into the open instead of using the various forms of spiritual coercion to keep them hidden or to drive them from awareness altogether⁸¹

This means that the pastoral counselor will be very careful in his approach to the counselee not to proceed in any way that

⁸¹David E. Roberts, Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 72.

will hinder the counselee in bringing the problems that he faces out into the open, even though there may be times when psychic reserve is maintained, and the counselee may not be prepared to divulge his deepest concerns. There must be an evident concern on the part of the pastor to comprehend the inner struggles of the counselee as exactly and comprehensively as is possible at the various stages of the counseling process.

Hulme points out that there are several negative psychological factors which can affect the counselor very much in the counseling process. One of these factors is the desire of the counselor to see improvement, which may lead him to see more improvement than is actually present in the counselee's situation; another factor that is negative may be oversimplification of a problem, simply because the pastor may have an inner desire to see things look good.⁸² Hulme says too that the

same insecurity that causes the pastor to be defensive in his role as a counselor can also cause him to pass over things he does not want to hear. The clue to negative feelings which the counselee may drop may incite negative feelings also within the counselor.⁸³

Time may be necessary for the best counseling to be done, and the pastoral counselor, as well as any other counselor,

⁸²Hulme, p. 50.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 48-49.

should be careful not to try to rush his counselee, nor to try to attempt too much in too short a time. Any step toward healing can be considered progress, and perhaps in a given situation only little progress may be possible. Yet, Lee points out that even such little progress may be sufficient to help a counselee grow in his own perception of his situation and problem.⁸⁴

Even though theology does not depend intrinsically on psychology, a pastoral counselor must take great pains to follow psychologically accepted functions in order to try to help the counselee to the greatest possible healing within the given situation. Failure to heed sound psychological principles could mean a complete lack of communication and a wholly negative counseling experience both for the counselee and for the counselor trying to help him.

The pastoral counselor must be a genuine person in every way in his counseling, and cannot expect to be able to be a true counselor if he has no deep concern, love, or understanding of the counselee who comes to him. Roy Stuart Lee has said that the pastor

cannot put on as a professional technique the manner of loving the client, of being interested in his welfare, of desiring to help him, and hope to deceive him. He must be sincere in his concern or the client will sense the insincerity

⁸⁴Lee, p. 3.

and be discouraged, There is nothing so repellent as mere "professional" heartiness.⁸⁵

Godin supports this contention, when he says,

The first duty of pastoral dialogue should be to provide every counselee with a unique opportunity for being welcomed, accepted, and understood as he is, in the fullness of his intellectual, moral, and affective existence.⁸⁶

When people come to a counselor, they come often because they need more than anything else to have someone to talk to who can serve as a good and sincere listener. They can empty themselves and feel very much relieved of some of the weight of their problems simply by being able to talk, and the counselor serves as a sounding board when he serves as listener. Godin says that "an attentive, silent presence is the most precious gift a priest [or other pastoral counselor] can first offer a human being who comes to him for help or advice."⁸⁷ The counselor's silence will serve to tell the counselee that he is interested in trying to help him, because it conveys a concern at getting at the heart of the problem as the counselee--not the counselor--sees it. Listening can be an important step of the counselor in the healing function of his ministry. Peder Olsen points out that listening does not mean lack of interest or passiveness,

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 71.

⁸⁶Godin, p. 28.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 32.

but that by listening one builds a certain empathy with the counselee.⁸⁸ Olsen goes on to say,

In sermonizing the preacher speaks while his hearers listen in silence. In soul care the opposite is often the case. Here the pastor must learn the art of listening in silence and of letting the other person speak--speak out about what is on his mind; for in personal soul care listening is even more important for the pastor than speaking. Many persons are in need of a chance to speak out, to open their hearts completely. This is often a necessary condition for receiving help, bodily, psychic, and spiritual. But they will open up only to one in whom they have confidence, to one taking plenty of time to listen to what they have to say. The counselor must endeavor by all means to understand how to let them talk freely of their distresses, without prejudice on his part.⁸⁹

A thorough understanding of the counselee and his problem is necessary for a therapeutic condition to prevail. This is not merely sympathy for the counselee, but rather empathy with him on the part of the counselor. Lee says,

Empathy is to enter into another person's feelings, to live in them, to understand the other from within rather than from without, and yet while doing this to carry into the identification his own strength and maturity. It is by empathy that the knowledge of love and acceptance, and with them the sense of forgiveness, is conveyed and the strength is given to face the inner fears.⁹⁰

⁸⁸Olsen, p. 108.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 107.

⁹⁰Lee, p. 46.

In a sense, then, empathy can be termed getting "to know what it feels like to be your client."⁹¹

The pastor's task in his ministry, also in his ministry of counseling, is to love in such a deep way that it is truly a reflection of the love of Christ. In accepting the counselee as a person worthy of his fullest and sincerest attention and respect, such Christ-like love has a full opportunity to make itself manifest.

Knowles characterizes the therapeutic personality as that personality that shows empathy, patience, flexibility and spontaneity, and honesty and integrity.⁹² As the pastor shows these qualities in his relationships with those who bring their problems to him, he is showing others that he really cares for them and wants to be God's instrument in helping them face the difficulties that have brought them to him in the first place.

A cold relationship between counselor and counselee will not be conducive to true counseling, then, since it will more likely build barriers rather than try to tear them down. Cold words will not say so much as a warm and genuine acceptance conveying to the counselee that the pastor really cares about him. Paul Halmos is very emphatic about

⁹¹Ibid., p. 67.

⁹²Joseph W. Knowles, Group Counseling (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), pp. 43-44.

the necessity of a loving relationship between counselee and counselor, and says that "after six decades of sophistication, the counsellors have not discovered much more than that loving another in need of help may be the one thing decisively therapeutic to him."⁹³ No doubt this is an oversimplification, but it does make its point clear.

One thing more ought to be stated about the pastoral attitudes in counseling: that the pastor must build such a relationship with his counselee that it will be a truly healthy one, not leading to too great dependence on him as counselor for too long a period of time. Psychological alienation, correctly interpreted, is necessary. There are people who cannot relate to others, even though they may be surrounded by very many people nearly all the time. They fail to be able to love, to reach out to others, or to receive the loving relationship of those even nearest them.⁹⁴ This is psychological alienation that is negative, preventing any kind of healthy relationship between several people.

However, the correct kind of psychological alienation toward which a counselor, especially here a pastoral counselor, ought to strive is that relationship that serves to "cut the

⁹³Halmos, p. 59.

⁹⁴Alexander A. Schneiders, "Psychological Alienation and the Process of Counseling," Contemporary Pastoral Counseling, pp. 44-45.

apron strings" at an appropriate time. André Godin refers to this type of healthy alienation, and says,

care must be taken in prolonged pastoral guidance not to induce in the counselee a sense of dependence or passivity in the making of decisions which would result in total alienation of his moral consciousness and might well stunt his religious growth.⁹⁵

This kind of psychological alienation serves to develop a certain psychological autonomy which the counselee needs in order to proceed in growth and development in solving his own problems. The pastoral counselor will try to lead his counselee in greater dependence on God, the Higher Counselor, and a decreasing dependence on the counselor as such. William Hulme speaks this way about this kind of decreasing dependence:

When this counseling relationship with the Higher Counselor is a satisfying experience for the counselee, he should have little need to continue a counseling relationship with his pastor. He becomes decreasingly dependent upon others because the counseling relationship with God is an activity within his own soul. . . . this resultant independence of others is not an antisocial withdrawal but actually leads to a new and intimate community with others.⁹⁶

Certainly the counseling process is very involved. It takes into account the most basic relationships between one human being and another, and leans heavily on the behavioral sciences to guide in the accepted techniques that become very much a part of this process. When the Christian pastor

⁹⁵Godin, p. 46.

⁹⁶Hulme, pp. 120-121.

uses these techniques sincerely, and remembers that he is acting with the added privilege of being God's servant to his counselee in a special way, conveying to him God's Word by what he says and does, he is performing a most important Christian ministry to those whom he shepherds.

The nature of the Word of God as being law and gospel, God's commands and His promises, has been discussed, as well as the authority and uniqueness of the Word, its power to condemn and its power to save.¹³ The goal of the Word of God is the salvation of mankind, upon whom God in His mercy showed His loving kindness in the person of Jesus Christ.¹⁴ When God speaks His Word, He speaks to man, the addresser of the Word, who finds himself in the eternal bind of sin, longer being able to live up to the standards with which God first created him. He finds himself rebelling at his predicament, as he has found no way of escaping it. No matter what man does, he is still and always will be sinful. He is responsible to his Creator, though he finds himself powerless to do anything to escape it. He has been created in the image of God and is called to follow in obedience the commands that God has placed upon him in all seriousness. His conscience tells him that his ways are not right, and guilt overwhelms him. The law is at work. But the Spirit of God enters the picture to explain love, mercy, and grace, and He gives His

CHAPTER V

THE USE OF THE WORD OF GOD

"God-language" and the Word of God

The nature of the Word of God as being Law and Gospel, God's commands and His promises, has been discussed, as well as the authority and uniqueness of the Word, its power to condemn and its power to save.¹ The goal of the Word of God is the salvation of mankind, upon whom God in His mercy showered His loving kindness in the person of Jesus Christ.² When God speaks His Word, He speaks to man, the addressee of the Word, who finds himself in the eternal bind of no longer being able to live up to the standards with which God first created him. He finds himself rebelling at his predicament, as he can find no way of escaping it. No matter what man does, he is still and always will be sinful. He is responsible to his Creator, though he finds himself powerless of his own accord to follow in obedience the commands that God has placed upon him in all seriousness. His conscience tells him that his ways are not right, and guilt overwhelms him. The Law is at work. But the Spirit of God enters the picture to proclaim love, mercy, and peace, and He gives His

¹Supra, Chapter II, passim.

²Ibid.

power bountifully to believe that Jesus Christ has made man a changed person in the eyes of God; He stands as the Mediator, so that--though man's sins are still as scarlet--God can see man as white as snow.

It is this kind of predicament and situation to which the pastoral counselor speaks, in which he works to bring the power of God to bear on the lives of people everywhere and in all walks of life. To do this he uses the techniques that the behavioral sciences have given him with all the guidelines that the sciences have developed for inter-relationships in dealing with human beings. Into all of this the Christian pastoral counselor must bring the Word, and bring it so meaningfully that it might really be a "lamp" and "light" for the paths of everyone who seeks the help of a pastor because of the hurts that have encompassed him and often driven him to the depths of mental torment.

Nevertheless, the question remains difficult to answer as to how the pastor is to proceed. He must bring the Word in all its power, but he must do this in a way that will find the counselee where he is emotionally and spiritually. In order to do this, he seeks to find language which he can use to meet the counselee on his own spiritual level. The use of "God-language" in doing this is one possibility. Hulme defines "God-language" in the following way: "By God-language is meant the language common to laymen and clergy in which the verbal symbols of religion have their

vernacular place."³ God-language, once popular--and no doubt overused in an incorrect manner--has fallen into certain disrepute with recent pastoral counselors.⁴ It had the earmarks of what Hulme terms "a verbal sublimation of something more basic."⁵ The use of God-language was suspect of substituting for true Christian religious concern, becoming instead some sort of pious platitudes that sank into meaninglessness. No doubt this reaction to the use of God-language was reasonable. However, with nothing either to prove or disprove concerning its use, the Christian pastoral counselor is concerned with meeting people in a language-style that will convey and communicate to the counselee that Word which is healing in the way that he can best understand.

Therefore, instead of opposing any use of God-language, the counselor can well be rather concerned for its effective use: a significant use of God-language that recognizes the difference between the word as symbol and its conceptualization in the mind of the counselee.⁶ The pastor finds this hard to do, as all too often he finds himself with a great

³William E[dward] Hulme, Pastoral Care Come of Age (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 25.

⁴Ibid., p. 27.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., pp. 41-42.

deal of pressure to conform to the authority role which he feels obligated to assume, whenever anything that reminds him of God-language is brought into a conversation with a parishioner or counselee. Hulme says, "Should a suffering parishioner say something nice about God or prayer, the pastoral visitor may feel constrained to say even nicer things about God or prayer."⁷ So, trying to justify a role which he feels mistakenly obliged to play, the pastor's utilization of God-language may be just as stereotyped and meaningless as that of the parishioner who had put the pastor on the defensive in the first place.

When God-language is used correctly there is still good contention for its being a positive force of communication. Hulme points out that the wise use of God-language may be

to stimulate insight in the counselee. It may also be used as an incentive to action. When God-language is injected by the counselor, he responds to whatever comes forth from the counselee as a consequence. In the dialogical approach confrontation is to provoke a response and not to coerce a consensus. Since insight comes out of the dialogical medium, the pastor's aggressiveness may serve the purpose of bringing forth . . . the person of the counselee.⁸

Therefore, the mere fact that God-language may have fallen into disrepute in certain counseling circles should not mean that it cannot be used, if there is actually communication

⁷Ibid., p. 37.

⁸Ibid., p. 64.

going on: the communication of the Word, the purpose of the pastoral counselor in bringing the Word's power to the immediate situation of the counselee in the most psychologically and theologically accepted techniques at his disposal. It is the purpose of the counselor that the Word of God reach his counselee; if God-language opens up clear avenues of communication, its use should not be discarded, for the Christian pastor is the instrument of the Spirit of God in his counseling, and he prays that God would use him in whatever way possible to allow the Word to reach the heart of him who hurts.

Relationship between Kerygma and Therapy

Where the Word of God is communicated, there is no proclamation, there is kerygma: the heralding of the message of God for man. The pastoral counselor finds himself asking over and over again what this proclamation can and should be in the counseling process. The Word of God does not change: it is a "Law-Gospel Word, a threat-promise Word, a judgment-mercy Word" always.⁹ The pastor who brings the atonement of Jesus Christ to mean something in the total life of the counselee is a feeding pastor.¹⁰ Richard R. Caemmerer says,

⁹Harry G[ordon] Coiner, "Living Toward One Another with the Word of God," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXVI (October 1965), 619.

¹⁰Richard R[udolph] Caemmerer, Feeding and Leading (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 14.

As the pastor trudges from case to case and bedside to bedside, as he counsels in home and at the desk, as he intervenes in the multifarious problems of family and marriage, as he explores human nature in endless profusion, he is practicing the same skill which gives penetration to the Word from the pulpit.¹¹

This means that the pastor probably proclaims the Word even when he himself is least suspecting that that is what is really happening. When this proclamation enters a conversation between the pastor and a parishioner who has a problem, with explicit or implicit purpose of alleviating the problem, then therapy becomes immediately involved. There is healing, or at least initiation into the possibility for healing to occur. Caemmerer says that

pastoral care involves more than speaking to people, and sometimes less; yet its true help ultimately reaches the client as the pastor speaks the Word of God, and all the other elements of care contribute simply to the channeling of the Word to the heart. Pastoral care . . . illuminates the paradox that is the dismay and the challenge of the pulpit preacher: human need is infinitely varied; yet human need is strangely similar under the surface.¹²

Thomas C. Oden, theologian and psychiatrist, also relates proclamation and therapy, as he says,

¹¹Richard R[udolph] Caemmerer, Preaching for the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p. 278.

¹²Ibid.

When the pastor performs his function as a counselor, his faith is becoming active in love. Here proclamation and therapy support one another in a total ministry of witness and mission. The love of God to which he witnesses in preaching is recapitulated in an analogous fashion in the empathy of counseling.¹³

Though there is relationship between therapy and proclamation, Oden points out that the two cannot be equated. Proclaiming God's love in Christ, also in the counseling process, calls man to a renewed self-understanding, where by the power of the proclaimed Word the Spirit of God can work in the heart of man so that his own insights are led--again by the Spirit's power--to respond in a therapeutic way.¹⁴ He is led to accept new insights by the power of the Spirit, insights which will set him in a relationship of renewal with God.

While there cannot be equation between proclamation as such and therapy, nevertheless Oden, writing in Contemporary Theology and Psychotherapy, says this:

we have reason to believe that good therapy itself has something crucial at stake in forceful, clear Christian proclamation, and that it wants nothing more than for preaching to mature, to maintain its own identity, and to fulfill its authentic function by pointing explicitly to the event of divine acceptance which therapy can only quietly and anticipatively presuppose. Pastoral

¹³Thomas C. Oden, Kerygma and Counseling: Toward a Covenant Ontology for Secular Psychotherapy (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 26.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 19.

care therefore has little to gain and much to lose in the tendency¹⁵ to reduce preaching to a form of counseling.

While Oden refers specifically to proclamation here as preaching, his point is clear that the proclamation of the Christian message is therapeutic in content.

The Christian Message and Mental Health

The Christian kerygma is not therapy, but its goals are therapeutic: spiritual healing and the healing of personality problems are both valid goals. Oden points out that

The Christian kerygma seeks to state clearly and decisively that God has made himself known as one who accepts us unconditionally, that the One who gives us life is for us. This Word is declared not in an idea but in an event. The ministry of Jesus of Nazareth is the originative event that calls forth the witness of the church to this Word from on high.¹⁶

Proclamation of the Christian message, then, is geared also to those who are mentally disturbed by situations with which they cannot cope. The proclamation to disturbed people is the proclamation of Jesus: of Him who accepts them, and in whom they can--indeed, are invited to--put their trust. But the Word must get out! There can be neither proclamation nor therapy if there is no witnessing church! As a member of the Body of Christ, the pastoral

¹⁵Thomas C. Oden, Contemporary Theology and Psychotherapy (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p. 86.

¹⁶Oden, Kerygma, p. 23.

counselor is called to witness, just as those whom he shepherds are called to witness to Christ. Speaking of the purpose of a Christian's life on earth, Richard R. Caemmerer says,

The Christian lives in the world for a purpose. That he is saved for everlasting life is not this purpose, but rather a step in the direction of this purpose. The purpose is that he bear witness of God, display Him to others, confess Him before men, make His name and praise glorious, be His image, and love others as God first loved him.¹⁷

Christians are in the church as the bearers of the Good News that God has given His church. The pastoral counselor bears that same News, and has the added privilege of study-in-depth in the Word and in its presentation to make the Word of God fit the situation which his counselee finds burdensome. Here he has at his disposal the witnessing power of the Word that is valid for his ministry to those fellow-Christians who seek him out. The witnessing pastoral counselor, as well as all Christians, has the responsibility to witness also to those who are around him as fellow-members of Christ's body, the church. There is good precedent for this, as Frank Lake reminds us:

The Spirit of Christ, in spite of flinching, did bear all the extremities of persecution

¹⁷Caemmerer, Feeding, p. 71.

and affliction. That is what His Cross and Passion assure us of. He carried this unique experience of patient endurance of human suffering, through death, into the risen life God gave Him. The very same Spirit of Christ "descended" on the Church at Pentecost and has been with us and in us as Christians ever since. It is this Spirit of God, able to endure all things with the fortitude of the Son, who has sustained the martyrs and upheld the afflicted. He is our first and final resource, when, in clinical pastoral care, we encourage Christians who seriously "want to get to the bottom of their trouble," to turn and face the emergence of whatever threatens the self from within.¹⁸

The Word is proclaimed with the purpose of bringing people into a therapeutic fellowship: likemindedness in Christ Jesus with all the saints of the church. Here the ego can be endowed by the power of God with the supernatural strength necessary to endure the mental pain and anguish which is present in the counselee.¹⁹ The Christian is not immune from mental disintegration which can be attributed to his sinful nature, as Victor White states, but his resources within the fellowship are unique to reach "a greater God-likeness, and . . . a greater maturity and integration."²⁰

¹⁸ Frank Lake, "The Christian Service of Listening, Dialogue, Witness and Counseling in Relation to Troubled Persons, Sufferers from the Psychoneuroses and the Disorders of Personality," Clinical Theology (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1966), p. 28.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

²⁰ Victor White, Soul and Psyche: An Enquiry into the Relationship of Psychotherapy and Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 189.

Religious faith, here specifically Christian in viewpoint, should be a virtue, since it benefits those whom it reaches.²¹

The Gospel of Jesus Christ offers hope to those who are without hope and heals where there is hurt. This is not a whitewash of all trouble, but helps people see themselves in a new perspective--also through the Christian perspective of pastoral counseling. The Christian counselor's task in proclamation is a replenishing of power to meet the difficulties that the counselee faces through his own acceptance of their solutions and of the causes behind his problems.

Edward Thurneysen says,

Pastoral care based on the Word is concerned with bringing about the real encounter--initiated and ever again granted by God Himself--of the total man with his God, apart from any personal guidance in which man remains alone.²²

As the counselor "feeds" the Word, directly or indirectly, through listening even more than through speaking, he realizes that he must be fed by the same Word, and this empathic confrontation with the counselee then becomes even more meaningful. There can be communion with each other as there is communication between them of the power and meaningfulness of the Word.

²¹Ibid., p. 194.

²²Eduard Thurneysen, A Theology of Pastoral Care, translated from the German by Jack A. Worthington and Thomas Weiser, et al. (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1962), p. 91.

Frank Lake, a psychiatrist and practicing Christian, speaks of his experiences with troubled people,

Among those who have remained open to the three-fold resources of Word and Sacrament and Fellowship, I have never yet found that the faithful and effective use of the Bible, in public and in private, has been set aside as useless, even though the patient was passing through severe affliction and personality disturbance. On the contrary, it is precisely in such turmoil as the spirit is thrown into in the dark nights of flesh and spirit (whether actively or passively endured) that the Word of God is the most effective guide and counsellor to the Christian. It measures up to all the extremities to which the soul is driven.²³

Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., reiterates this feeling:

a particular form of religious belief and practice enhances mental health when it builds bridges between people, strengthens the sense of trust, stimulates inner freedom, encourages the acceptance of reality, builds respect for both the emotional and intellectual levels of life, increases the enjoyment of life, handles sex and aggressiveness constructively, is concerned for the health of personality (rather than surface symptoms), provides effective means of handling guilt, emphasizes growth and love, provides an adequate frame of reference and object of devotion, relates persons with their unconscious minds, endeavors to change the neurotic patterns of society, and enhances self-esteem.²⁴

While the Scripture does possess therapeutic power and authority, it may be necessary for the counselor to deal with

²³Lake, p. 50.

²⁴Howard J[ohn] Clinebell, Jr., Mental Health Through Christian Community: The Local Church's Ministry of Growth and Healing (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 54.

the counselee for some time before he can make use of the Word in the counseling process, in order to be able to allow the counselee sufficient time for his emotional structure to be rebuilt before anything therapeutic can be successful.²⁵

Disturbed people can be helped by the Word of God as it gives them something sound on which to stand. Hulme says,

The doctrine of Christ's righteousness is highly relevant to the struggles we encounter in life. If there is anything we need in these struggles, it is the assurance that we are loved unconditionally--that this love does not depend upon the outcome of the struggle. The bestowal of Christ's righteousness is the evidence, not only that God takes sin seriously, but that he loves us unconditionally.²⁶

The Word places God and Christ before the hurting person as King in his personal life, the One who cares for him no matter who else might not care, and to people disturbed in their emotional or personality make-up, this can be most assuring. In this way the Christian message is a "high faith for hard times."²⁷ Outler says of Christianity that it "brought to the world a new kind of courage, linked to

²⁵D. Allen Brabham, "Pastoral Counseling and the Interpretation of Scripture," An Introduction to Pastoral Counseling, edited by Wayne E. Oates (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959), p. 223.

²⁶William E. Hulme, The Dynamics of Sanctification (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), p. 52.

²⁷Albert C[ook] Outler, Psychotherapy and the Christian Message (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, c.1966), p. 189.

its hope and confidence in God's action in history, His breaking of sin's power and His promises of fulfillment and consummation."²⁸

Scripture can be used for instructive and inspirational purposes in the counseling process, to give a sense of security and confidence to those in need of this kind of support.²⁹ It must be a guided use of texts, however, if it is to serve its purpose with people who are troubled. The Christian pastoral counselor may guide people with specific problems to texts that speak directly to their problem supportively when he finds that their emotional and spiritual condition is such that this can be helpful.³⁰ However, there should be no coercion used in this guiding through Scripture texts.

Using Scripture texts or portions in counseling can be effective "homework" for the counselee, if he is prepared for this. Hulme says,

By explaining the practical application of the doctrine to his problem, the pastor may create within the counselee the desire to engage in this homework. Using the Word in this manner actually exposes an individual's mind to a divine influence which in turn will have its effect on his thought processes in the future. The counselee will see that getting power and wisdom from on

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹William E[dward] Hulme, Counseling and Theology (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), p. 206.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 224-225.

high means an obligation on his part of a practical investment of his time and interests with the means of grace.³¹

One use of the Word in the counseling process which is probably often disregarded, at least in Protestant circles in general, is the Word in pastoral blessing. The pastoral blessing can indeed communicate the Lord's protecting care to people who are in need of this support, and a meaningful blessing ought not be overlooked as a means of the Word to the personal needs of the counselee.³²

The Use of the Word in Repentance-Counseling

Sin is basic to the problems that people bring into the counseling situation. Perhaps it is a deep feeling of unworthiness because of a sense of original sin which cannot accept the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ, or perhaps because of a lapse in their Christian faith which has caused a great deal of pain and guilt-feelings. Hulme speaks about this kind of reaction,

When in addition to man's helplessness in his sin, the concept of original sin also asserts that man is responsible for his sin, it appears at best to be non-rational. The principles of counseling, however, rest on both of these conditions. It is because his inner conflict

³¹ Ibid.

³² Paul W. Pruyser, "The Master Hand: Psychological Notes on Pastoral Blessing," The New Shape of Pastoral Theology: Essays in Honor of Seward Hiltner, edited by William S. Oglesby, Jr. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), pp. 353-358.

becomes too much for him that the counselee needs help. He is a slave of his destructive emotions. Yet except he retain the responsibility for his problem, he cannot be helped.³³

Guilt is a very real thing, and it cannot and should not be overlooked.

The Christian pastoral counselor especially should be cognizant of the fact that he must deal with the problem of sin and guilt squarely, although using his techniques that will be helpful rather than to provoke negative reactions in his counselee. The Law of God shows the sinner that he is sinful, that he lacks the power within him to self-atone for his bad condition. This is often where the counselee finds himself when he comes to the pastor: seeing his sin, hurting bitterly because of it, but not knowing where to turn. He is truly sorry, and is seeking the pastor's help for whatever the immediate problem might be. This attitude on the part of the counselee is contrition: sorrow for what he has done or for what he is. Luther uses the term "penance," and says,

Formerly it has been taught that penance consists of three parts: contrition, confession, and satisfaction. We have said of the first part that contrition and sorrow shall always be preached and that contrition and sorrow imply the acknowledgment of sin and mortification

³³Hulme, Counseling, p. 106.

of the flesh. It is well we use these words, contrition and sorrow, for they are clear and easily understood.³⁴

Law-proclamation must precede the proclamation of the Gospel when the Law has not yet worked in the heart of the counselee, and he has not yet reached a point where he is contrite. However, in the counseling situation the pastor can best preach the Law effectively by a patient working with the counselee to get him to sense the Law himself, rather than through some sort of legalistic proclamation. This is the approach suggested, and seemingly very sound, by the symposium committee that published the scholarly study, What, Then, Is Man? This is how the committee states it:

there is no question in the mind of the theologian about the necessity or desirability of bringing God's Law to bear on the problem raised during the counseling. How to do this most effectively is an open question. The theories of secular counseling, supported in part by empirical confirmation, suggest that often the Law can be effectively applied within the framework of permissive counseling. Here the counselee in effect preaches the Law to himself--finding in the warmth and strength of the counseling relationship that he can look at his problem--at himself--more objectively and more helpfully.³⁵

³⁴ Martin Luther, "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony 1528," Church and Ministry II, Vol. XL in Luther's Works, American edition, translated and edited by Conrad Bergendoff (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 296.

³⁵ What, Then, Is Man?: A Symposium of Theology, Psychology, and Psychiatry (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 276.

The Christian pastoral counselor must use the Law of God to evaluate his counselee, and to help him evaluate himself. The counselee must see the implications of his behavior for everything that is his whole life, if these implications are to help spiritually and therapeutically.³⁶ That does not mean, however, that the pastor is to run roughshod over those who come to him without any sign of contrition. Nor should he continue a proclamation of Law when the work of the Law is finished; when the counselee sees his situation as being caused from some kind of break with the Law of God, and recognizes his sin.

The repentant Christian is he who feels contrite for his sin, acknowledges it before God, and believes firmly in the hope that God gives us through the Word proclaimed. Samuel Martin Miller says, "Repentance is hard on the self-life, but it is glorious when the barriers are down and faith in Jesus fills the broken and penitent heart."³⁷ Repentance is hard on the self since it means that the Christian counselee sheds himself of every cover-up; he has nothing to offer himself. He acknowledges sin in the face of the Almighty, sometimes represented by the pastoral counselor--in the counseling process--who may hear the first

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 273-274.

³⁷ Samuel Martin Miller, The Word of Truth: The Gospel for your Salvation (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1952), p. 83.

confession that his counselee might have made even before the throne of God Himself, much less to another person. Joseph Knowles speaks of the Christian community in general and says,

Historically, the people of God are a confessing people. They confess not only their faith but their departure from their faith--union with their God. We are a people created in the image of God and called to sonship. We are a people made holy by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. But we are also a sinful people whose lives and relationships become broken, alienated, and guilt-laden. We hurt one another. We become punitive toward ourselves in attempts to expiate our guilt and to recover the love relationship lost.³⁸

Although Educard Thurneysen calls for a proclamation of a mingled Law and Gospel that is totally unacceptable,³⁹ he is direct about his statements concerning the need for true repentance when he says,

If pastoral conversation is to lead to such concrete repentance, it must very plainly deal with the concrete sin in which the individual [sic] to whom we speak is enmeshed and which is to become the occasion for him to grasp forgiveness. We must therefore insist on actual acknowledgement of sin.⁴⁰

True confession is acknowledgment without self-justification; it is a result of the proclamation of the

³⁸Joseph W. Knowles, Group Counseling (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 32.

³⁹Thurneysen, passim.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 280.

wrath of God, the Law. It is laying the heart bare before God as David did in Psalm 51:3-5:⁴¹

For well I know my misdeeds, and my sins confront me all the day long. Against thee, thee only, I have sinned and done what displeases thee, so that thou mayest be proved right in thy charge and just in passing sentence. In iniquity I was brought to birth and my mother conceived me in sin

Confession releases the tensions, as it did in David's case; that is why Luther, for example, advised continuation of the practice of private confession in the churches of the Reformation, saying,

As to the current practice of private confession, I am heartily in favor of it, even though it cannot be proved from the Scriptures. It is useful, even necessary, and I would not have it abolished. Indeed, I rejoice that it exists in the church of Christ, for it is a cure without equal for distressed consciences. For when we have laid bare our conscience to our brother and privately made known to him the evil that lurked within, we receive from our brother's lips word of comfort spoken by God himself. And, if we accept this in faith, we find peace in the mercy of God speaking to us through our brother.⁴²

If the pastoral counselor uses the Law of God wisely to accomplish a confessional experience with his counselee he will have accomplished much that is therapeutic. The

⁴¹This Scripture citation and all further citations are from The New English Bible With the Apocrypha (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

⁴²Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," 1520, Word and Sacrament II, Vol. XXXVI in Luther's Works, American edition, translated by A. T. W. Steinhauser, revised by Frederick C. Ahrens and Abdel Ross Wentz, and edited by Abdel Ross Wentz (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 86.

confessional experiences of Christians throughout the centuries have served as a psychological as well as spiritual catharsis that breaks open the isolation due to hidden guilt.⁴³ The counselee is actually releasing the destructive emotions within himself in confession.⁴⁴ It is after such an experience that the counselor can comfort the sinner with the message of the Gospel: hope, health, salvation through Jesus Christ. In doing this he must lead the confessing Christian to place his trust in Christ, not in the fact of his confession.⁴⁵

Faith--and ultimately salvation--of the counselee is the goal toward which the pastoral counselor strives. He tries to heal the hurting person by helping him accept the fact that God's Law speaks to him, and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is always for him, even after he has "touched bottom" with his life, as he may well feel has been the case. The Gospel message is the Christian pastor's power to heal, and he should use it firmly but wisely.

⁴³ John W. Drakeford, "Religion and Mental Health," Psychology in Search of a Soul (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), p. 160.

⁴⁴ Hulme, Counseling, p. 40.

⁴⁵ Martin Luther, "A Discussion on How Confession Should be Made, 1520," Church and Ministry I, Vol. XXXIX in Luther's Works, American edition, translated by Eric W. and Ruth C. Gritsch and edited by Eric W. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p. 28.

Faith is the power that will help people endure their struggles and to face their difficulties here on earth without faltering. Hulme says,

one must accept himself before he can overcome his enslavement to evil. As a reaction to the division within, such self-acceptance is the opposite of repression, and is preceded by the courage to face the shadow, in contrast to the fear that seeks only an escape. The basis for this courage is faith. By means of this faith, one is able to counteract the defensive impulse to repress his ambivalence, because he is able to recognize the uncontrollable without anxiety and to face the inner evil without depression.⁴⁶

Luther spoke beautifully about this in his "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony":

When the contrite and fearful conscience experiences peace, comfort, and joy on hearing that his sins are forgiven because of Christ, then faith is present—⁴⁷the faith that makes him righteous before God.

The Office of the Keys and Counseling

Christ has given to His church on earth the power of forgiving the sins of those who are contrite for their sins and believe that in Jesus Christ they are forgiven. This same power is given also to bind the sins of those who, hardened in their impenitence, are not sorry for their sins and

⁴⁶Hulme, Counseling, p. 140.

⁴⁷Luther, "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony 1528," Church and Ministry II, Vol. XL in Luther's Works, American edition, p. 276.

disregard faith in Christ as their only salvation. This has been called the "office of the keys." It opens heaven to the penitent and closes it to the impenitent, and is a power that Christ gave to the church through Peter and the apostles when He said to them, "whatever you forbid on earth shall be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth shall be allowed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18). It is important to know that this is a responsibility that Christ gave to His church on earth, and is not power given only to individuals within the church.

The pastoral counselor administers this power in the name of Christ and in the stead of the church. His purpose is to make heaven--salvation--attainable for the counselee through faith in Christ. As the counselee's relationship with his God is put into a correct focus, often the relationships that he carries on horizontally, with his fellow-men, will also become acceptable. The Law must be proclaimed forcefully also in counseling, but with all the kindness, understanding, and love that the Christian pastor can bring to his counselee. But the Law is never an end unto itself. The goal of all witnessing in a Christian context is salvation of the hearer; and, although the context of the counseling may place this into a different psychological setting with methodologies that are not the same as a pulpit proclamation, true therapy of the soul is the pastor's greatest concern. Therefore he accepts the counselee with

true love for him and tries to understand and guide him in seeing the problems which he brings. So also he comforts with the Gospel and the assurance of God's mercy, when the anxious counselee, repentant and disturbed, comes to the pastor. This is a ministry of hope, about which Wayne E. Oates says,

The ministry of hope-giving comfort is almost always necessary as the pastor becomes related to individuals who are going through the typical crises of life or who are having to adjust to inevitable life situations such as bereavement, chronic illness, or physical handicaps. Especially is the ministry of comfort indicated when the pastor is called upon to help to reclaim personalities that have grown bitter and hardened after a sharp disappointment such as a broken courtship or after a social and/or moral failure such as a divorce.⁴⁸

The Lutheran Confessions speak very pastorally for the benefit of the pastoral counselor and his counselee. The tenderness and feeling for the counselee, certainly set in different situations in the sixteenth century, is evident in the Augsburg Confession:

We teach with great diligence about this command and power of keys and how comforting and necessary it is for terrified consciences. We also teach that God requires us to believe this absolution as much as if we heard God's voice from heaven, that we should joyfully comfort ourselves with

⁴⁸ Wayne E[dward] Oates, The Bible in Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), pp. 93-94.

absolution, and that we should know that through such faith we obtain forgiveness of sins.⁴⁹

Sherrill speaks about the need for and desirability of speaking to the anxious to give them hope in these words:

The statements which the minister is entitled to make regarding God's acceptance and forgiveness are unmistakably designed to get at the deeper anxieties of any person who feels insecure and helpless in a vast universe. The assertions legitimately drawn from Christian theology are as sweeping as it is possible to make them. The great credal terms express a relatively small number of salient ideas, which are capable of unlimited variety, expansion, and depth of sincere feeling.⁵⁰

The Gospel is hope-giving because it places man in the right perspective over against his Lord. It shows man that there is no hope in himself, but that there is hope in Jesus Christ, and that in Him is all healing for the anxieties that perplex people in so many situations. This is the hope that the counselor can give his counselee.

There cannot be disregard of any kind for the problems which the counselee has experienced, the cause of his anxieties. If there are moral problems involved, where guilt feeling is present, they cannot be overlooked. Eduard Thurneysen says that the pastoral counselor in his regard

⁴⁹"Augsburg Confession," XXV, 4, The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 62.

⁵⁰Lewis Joseph Sherrill, Guilt and Redemption, revised edition (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, c.1957), p. 226.

for the Word of God "must know and remember throughout the whole conversation that moral conflicts cannot be worked out morally."⁵¹ It is only by acceptance of Christ's forgiveness that there is true hope. With this peace there is comfort for the anxious in his assurance of being accepted by God and the pastor, then also hopefully by his fellows.

Forgiveness is central to the pastoral counselor's activity. Roy Stuart Lee says that "there is a basic difference between liturgical or ministerial forgiveness, as practised, and the forgiveness which is involved in pastoral counseling."⁵² He describes this difference in the following way:

The confessor gives overt assurance of forgiveness to the penitent for his misdeeds and sinful attitudes. The counsellor gives no such assurance on behalf of God or the Church, but he lives forgiveness by the way he accepts his client as he is and passes no moral judgment on him.⁵³

It is true that there is a difference in methodology in the way the Gospel of Christ is communicated. Nevertheless, it does not seem that the difference is so basic as Lee suggests. When the counselor leads the counselee in seeing his problems so that the counselee accepts the fact of sin

⁵¹Thurneysen, p. 142.

⁵²R[oy] S[tuart] Lee, Principles of Pastoral Counselling, in The Library of Pastoral Care (London: SPCK, 1968), p. 111.

⁵³Ibid., p. 119.

and the need for forgiveness and expresses his desire for Christ's forgiveness, the counselor can give him direct assurance of being forgiven. Whether or not there is a liturgical setting to this announcement does not change the content or fact of therapy in Jesus Christ that affects the counselee in his entire being.

Luther speaks beautifully of the power of forgiveness in the life of people in his treatise on "The Keys":

Here we have the true significance of the keys. They are an office, a power or command given by God through Christ to all of Christendom for the retaining and remitting of the sins of men. For so Christ says in Matt. 9[:6], "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins," and he says to the paralytic, "arise," etc. . . . Rely on the words of Christ and be assured that God has no other way to forgive sins than through the spoken Word, as he has commanded us. If you do not look for forgiveness through the Word, you will gape toward heaven in vain for grace, or . . . for a sense of inner forgiveness.⁵⁴

When Luther spoke these words, he spoke from his own painfully disturbing experience. It was only when he learned of and felt the redeeming power of Christ's redemption in his own life that he could finally find peace. The same burden-lifting peace awaits the counselee who comes to his pastor for help.

The fact of forgiveness means for the penitent sinner, counselee and counselor, that he accepts the fact that

⁵⁴Martin Luther, "The Keys 1530," Church and Ministry II, Vol. XL in Luther's Works, American edition, p. 366.

Christ's atonement on the cross is valid for him, that he no longer needs to attack or condemn himself inwardly, that true freedom is really his. Luther put it this way:

this is what true forgiveness of sins really means, that a person's sins no longer bite him or make him uneasy, but rather that the joyful confidence overcomes him that God has forgiven him his sins forever.⁵⁵

Since this is the case, the Word of absolution is important also in the counseling situation. The Augsburg Confession speaks to this:

the people are carefully instructed concerning the consolation of the Word of absolution so that they may esteem absolution as a great and precious thing. It is not the voice or word of the man who speaks it, but it is the Word of God, who forgives sin, for it is spoken in God's stead and by God's command.⁵⁶

This is the key that looses the sinner and grants him peace and rest, and when the pastoral counselor gives his counselee this assurance, he is certainly acting in God's place. Here he is the instrument of God, bringing to the penitent disturbed person in an accepting and understanding way the blessing that God has for each and every one.

Absolution is the alleviating assurance of God's accepting man, the concluding assurance for the penitent sinner.

⁵⁵ Martin Luther, "The Sacrament of Penance 1519," Word and Sacrament I, Vol. XXXV in Luther's Works, American edition, translated and edited by E. Theodore Bachmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. 9.

⁵⁶ Book of Concord, "Augsburg Confession," XXV, 2-3, pp. 61-62.

Here is where there is a difference between psychological catharsis and confession. Confession is not an end in itself, as catharsis may be, but is directed toward absolution, made meaningful by faith.⁵⁷

The pastoral counselor should use the Word of forgiveness in his relationship with the counselee, but he should not be too quick at pronouncing it. He must be sure that the process of penitential contrition allows for time for the sinner to be cognizant of the full impact of his sin, that he really needs this forgiveness. Otherwise there is a partial catharsis, and the full meaning of forgiveness and need for it may not be felt.⁵⁸ This does not mean, however, that a lengthy time span is necessarily involved. It means that the counselor must allow his counselee to realize and accept his full guilt and need for forgiveness before he can lead him to accept Christ's atonement for him.

There are times when the assurance of forgiveness cannot be given so readily. When the counselee refuses to confess his sins, he cannot be assured of Christ's forgiveness. Hulme points out that there may be not only spiritual but also psychological reasons that keep the counselee from a true confession, when he says,

⁵⁷What, Then, Is Man?, p. 283.

⁵⁸Hulme, Counseling, p. 56.

Because guilt is painful, it can function also as punishment. This is another reason why it may be frightening to be relieved of it. The same may be true of confession. Rather than initiating reconciliation, confession may also be a form of punishment because of its tendency to be humiliating. So the retention of guilt for its pain and the compulsion to confess for its humiliation, may be ways one devises to administer the punishment his low self-image demands.⁵⁹

When the church refuses to grant forgiveness or when the Christian pastoral counselor must refuse this, always because there is no repentance evident in his counselee, it must be remembered that this is done with a therapeutic, not a condemning, view in mind. Harry G. Coiner says, "The church exercises the ban . . . as medicine, not poison, as a discipline, not a destructive uprooting insofar as the one subjected to it does not despise it,"⁶⁰ and goes on to point out that excommunication is not a mark of the church.⁶¹ When the church retains the sins of an impenitent sinner, it does so always with the purpose of healing, salvation, in mind.

Luther speaks of the purpose of excommunication in "The Keys" in this way:

⁵⁹Hulme, Pastoral Care, p. 70.

⁶⁰Coiner, XXXVI, 643.

⁶¹Ibid., XXXVI, 645.

The key which binds is the power or office to punish the sinner who refuses to repent by means of a public condemnation to eternal death and separation from the rest of Christendom. And when such a judgment is pronounced, it is as a judgment of Christ himself. And if the sinner perseveres in his sin, he is certainly eternally damned. . . . For the key which binds carries forward the work of the law. It is profitable to the sinner inasmuch as it reveals to him his sins, admonishes him to fear God, causes him to tremble, and moves him to repentance, and not to destruction.⁶²

The pastor in counseling will not be too quick either to forgive or ban the sinner. He will work with the counselee, using the psychological techniques available to him, to get him to accept his responsibility and guilt, and to accept the forgiveness of Christ Himself. When this does happen, he will rejoice with his counselee in the Gospel's work. When finally there is no penitence after the firm but loving proclamation of God's Law, the counselor will ban the sinner lovingly, probably in a private manner at first, and will continue to work with him to try to get him to accept his need for forgiveness and the healing power of Christ.

The Word and Good Works in Counseling

The place of good works in their relationship to the Christian's life and his forgiveness has been one of the points of contention especially between the churches of

⁶²Luther, "The Keys 1530," Church and Ministry II, Vol. XL in Luther's Works, American edition, pp. 372-373.

the Reformation and Roman Catholicism through the centuries. Good works play a vital role in the spiritual and psychological processes of man, Christian or non-Christian. Although there is a difference in motivation which causes the Christian church to distinguish between good works motivated by Christian love and those works motivated by a desire for human betterment, often called "civil righteousness," there is something common to the psychological processes involved in them.

James A. Knight points out that

Conscience plays a major role in hypochondriacal symptoms. Involved in a hypochondriacal system are deprecation, guilt, unworthiness, and usually satisfaction in self-punishment. Such patients have a strong sense of right and wrong and may seek punishment in handling their guilt.⁶³

John F. Crosby relates this tendency to the churchly practice of penance, making satisfaction for sins. He says,

Some people inflict self-punishment by prescribing church chores for themselves. Others prescribe certain kinds of abstinence. There is no limit to the kinds of penance man prescribes for himself. The human mind is extremely imaginative and rationalistic in this regard. Nevertheless, the basic purpose is at root the same: to justify oneself before God, if not completely, at least partially.⁶⁴

⁶³James A. Knight, Conscience and Guilt (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), p. 97.

⁶⁴John F. Crosby, "Accepting our Acceptance," From Religion to Grace (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 105.

When the confessor or counselor imposes obligations on his counselee, he does this to mark condemnation of his sins, to serve as reparation for the damage that may have been done to others, to help the penitent strengthen his personal life, and to serve as a kind of confirmation of his penitence.⁶⁵ All of this drives the sinner back to self-atonement. Although it may serve the purpose of up-building the ego, it does not place man in a position where he realizes that his help cannot come from himself, and that true therapy is outside of himself. The Christian pastoral counselor's purpose and goal in counseling is a healing goal: getting the counselee to realize that his help must come from outside himself, from the atoning work of Christ for him. He has nothing within him that can begin to atone for his sinful being, his nature or his deeds. That is why Luther could write in "The Sacrament of Penance":

Concerning satisfaction let this now suffice: the best kind of satisfaction is to sin no more and to do all possible good toward your fellow-man, be he enemy or friend. This kind of satisfaction is rarely mentioned; we think to pay for everything simply through assigned prayers.⁶⁶

Furthermore, Luther complains about the misunderstanding of the nature of satisfaction on the part of so many, when he says,

⁶⁵Lee, p. 118.

⁶⁶Luther, "The Sacrament of Penance 1519," Word and Sacrament I, Vol. XXXV in Luther's Works, American edition, p. 21.

the people have never had the slightest understanding what satisfaction really is, namely, the renewal of a man's life. Then, they [the Romanists] so continually harp on it and emphasize its necessity, that they leave no room for faith in Christ. With these scruples they torture poor consciences to death⁶⁷

Luther knew what it meant not to have the assurance of his salvation, and when he found peace in Christ alone, this was a great release for him. The same thing is true for the life of the counselee today who comes burdened to his pastor.

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession teaches that

canonical satisfactions are not necessary by divine law for the forgiveness of sins, just as those ancient exhibitions of satisfaction in public penitence were not necessary by divine law for the forgiveness of sins. We must keep the doctrine that by faith we obtain the forgiveness of sins because of Christ, not because of our works, either preceding or following.⁶⁸

In pastoral counseling there is no place for the imposition of obligations on the counselee. The pastor's task is to help try to bring the counselee to the realization of his sin and a complete acceptance of the love and redemption offered in Christ. However, the pastor may use the Word in assigning or suggesting the reading of textual passages for

⁶⁷Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church 1520," Word and Sacrament II, Vol. XXXVI in Luther's Works, American edition, p. 89.

⁶⁸Book of Concord, "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," XII, 116, p. 199.

the instilling of confidence and trust. This is with a therapeutic goal in mind, but must not be construed as an imposition of satisfactions.⁶⁹ The pastoral counselor should be sure to be clear in this matter when using the Word with his counselee. Otherwise, instead of instilling trust and confidence, he will be instilling the same sense of doubt that Luther felt so very strongly.

When faith is generated in a person through the work of the Holy Spirit, sanctifying grace is also present. The Christian is empowered to love God and his fellowman in recognition of the love of God in him through Christ Jesus. The justified sinner stands before God in a new light: he is embued with power from on High to place himself at God's disposal, and will want to do His will. This does not mean that he can do this perfectly, but it does mean that the Christian is a changed man: a God-changed man, who now views his entire life in the light of Jesus. The pastoral counselor will use the Word to bring this understanding also to his counselee. Hulme writes:

Though sanctification is dependent upon the justification experience, the two must remain separated. To confuse in any way the sanctification process with justification would change salvation by grace into salvation by merit. . . . When a person's justification is dependent upon his sanctification it is not only justification that is jeopardized but sanctification as well.

⁶⁹Supra, p. 123.

Since both the meaning of and the power for sanctification reside in the motive of love and this motive is created in the justification experience, it follows that if my sanctification is motivated also by the desire to earn or deserve, I have undercut sanctification at its incipency because I have corrupted the love motive.⁷⁰

Luther stated the position of the forgiven sinner with his memorable words in the exposition of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed:

I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith.⁷¹

It is this same firm conviction toward which the pastoral counselor will try to lead his counselee in an understanding of what the true Christian life really means. This is the same conviction of the Augsburg Confession regarding the sanctified life:

It is also taught among us that good works should and must be done, not that we are to rely on them to earn grace but that we may do God's will and glorify him. It is always faith alone that apprehends grace and forgiveness of sin. When through faith the Holy Spirit is given, the heart is moved to do good works.⁷²

Köberle places the sanctified life in the perspective of Pauline theology, when he says, "As faith seeks refuge

⁷⁰Hulme, Counseling, p. 180.

⁷¹Book of Concord, "Small Catechism," Creed, III, 6, p. 345.

⁷²Ibid., "Augsburg Confession," XX, 27-29, p. 45.

in the nudum factum and trusts alone in its imputation, its possessor is placed at once in the spiritual work of Easter-tide, where he is made fruitful unto good works."⁷³ In these words he has stated concisely what the Apostle Paul says,

We know that the man we once were has been crucified with Christ, for the destruction of the sinful self, so that we may no longer be the slaves of sin, since a dead man is no longer answerable for his sin. But if we thus died with Christ, we believe that we shall also come to life with him. We know that Christ, once raised from the dead, is never to die again; he is no longer under the dominion of death. For in dying as he died, he died to sin, once for all, and in living as he lives, he lives to God. In the same way you must regard yourselves as dead to sin and alive to God, in union with Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:6-11).

Prayer and Christian Counseling

The use of prayer in the counseling process can be a significant use of the Word when its purpose is clear and the conditions prevail that can make prayer a meaningful act of worship on the part of the counselee. Hulme calls prayer "the ultimate in the use of God-language."⁷⁴ The forms that prayer may take are varied. To those who have become very familiar with the traditional prayer forms of the church, these may be a very effective way of bringing to personal meaning what the prayer's objective is, while

⁷³ Adolf Köberle, The Quest for Holiness, translated from the 3rd German Edition by John C. Mattes (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1936), p. 94.

⁷⁴ Hulme, Pastoral Care, p. 155.

others may find them cold and meaningless. The pastoral counselor must always be aware of this in his counseling, and make the prayer a meaningful experience, an act of worship whereby the counselee bares himself before God, pleads for His mercy, and worships Him in thankfulness for deliverance from his burden in such a way that the problem or pleasure or peace of the moment is brought out in the expression of faith.⁷⁵

The use of the Word in prayer in the counseling process can give the counselee the sense of trust and confidence that he desires, if he is spiritually prepared for this act of faithful worship. Speaking of the Lord's Prayer, Luther explains the "Our Father" this way:

Here God would encourage us to believe that he is truly our Father and we are truly his children in order that we may approach him boldly and confidently in prayer, even as beloved children approach their dear father.⁷⁶

It is this attitude that the counselor will want to instill in the counselee in order to make prayer an experience that will be beneficial to him.

Pastoral counselors may use prayer for the purpose of stimulating a sense of support in the counselee. Praying may help the counselee see his responsibility before God, and help him feel that the counselor is empathic toward him.

Richard E. Casmerer says,

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 153.

⁷⁶ Book of Concord, "Small Catechism," Lord's Prayer, p. 346.

There can be a communion of their common faith through the prayer experience, and the pastor may use the Word in prayer for this purpose. However, the counselor should be careful not to instill in the counselee the incorrect belief that prayer is any kind of means of grace, which it is not.

Prayer does not give us grace, nor does it serve in some mysterious fashion to change God's mind or "twist His arm" by our manipulation. Prayer is an act of worship on the part of the faithful who is being bent to God's will, not his own, and the power of this bending to the will of God lies in the Word of God that comes from God to man. Such power can never be found in prayer, which is sacrificial in the sense that it is the believer's approach to God.

Prayer-usage in the counseling encounter must be consistent with the purpose and intent of that situation. The pastoral counselor must develop sufficient freedom to be able to decide when and where prayer should or should not be used, on the basis of judging when it will be beneficial and when it would not be beneficial.⁷⁷ The pastoral counselor should never use the Word in prayer as a crutch to his counseling process, either to avoid certain issues at stake or to force them, or as a whitewash of the counselee's problems. Richard R. Caemmerer says,

⁷⁷Hulme, Pastoral Care, pp. 157-158.

At bottom the real thrust for the search and demand of prayer is the Holy Spirit Himself (Luke 11:13); hence the first plea of prayer must be for the Spirit's presence and guidance even in the most physical or elementary prayer (Rom. 8:11-17, 26-28). It is hard for Christians to realize that when they want shoes, they must pray first for the Holy Spirit to shape their want and purpose.⁷⁸

This same attitude must be instilled in the mind of the counselee before the counselor proceeds with the use of prayer. It is God's will, not His magic, that the counselee is seeking.

It may well be that the counselee is not prepared for the use of prayer, and, even though he requests it, the pastoral counselor may want to proceed more slowly. This is especially true if an "easy way out" is being sought for the counselee's bad situation. In such a case, the counselor may even want the counselee to do his own praying, to bring out his own feelings and requests before God.

Many times counselees will come to their pastor with a true desire to pray about some problem, and the pastor can use prayer effectively without hesitation. It can be a most therapeutic and beneficial experience for the counselee, even when he understands perfectly that prayer is not a means of grace. Walter Houston Clark speaks of this type of counseling situation:

⁷⁸Caemmerer, Preaching, p. 211.

Many of those who come to their pastors for counseling are people of piety for whom prayer may be a comforting or strengthening experience. Consequently all theorists in the field of pastoral counseling devote some attention to the use of this resource. While its most appropriate use may be with the sick and bereaved, there is always danger that it may be overdone. The judicious counselor will sense when and with whom it will be effective.⁷⁹

As the pastoral counselor will make his decision regarding the use or disuse of prayer in the counseling process, so he will take into account the timing of it in the process of counseling. In long-term counseling, Oates advises the judicious use of the counselor's telling the counselee that he will be praying for him rather than to pray with him, at least until the heart of the counselee and a prayer that is appropriate can be related meaningfully to the problem. In a single-interview counseling encounter Oates feels that a prayer at the end of the session can be helpful in summing up the needs of the counselee and imploring God's mercy.⁸⁰ Whenever prayer is used, it should be used with purpose and with sincerity, and is never to become a stereotyped way of ending any type of pastoral conversation.

⁷⁹Walter Houston Clark, "The Protestant Point of View in Counseling Techniques," Handbook of Counseling Techniques, edited by Ernest Harms and Paul Schrieber, A Pergamon Press Book (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 326.

⁸⁰Wayne E[dward] Oates, "Pastoral Counseling and the Experience of Prayer," An Introduction to Pastoral Counseling, p. 215.

Counseling Through Christian Community

God did not create man to be an isolated creature. Seeing the loneliness of the first man, God made for him a helpmeet to be his companion, comfort, and strength in sharing the blessings of creation. This formed the first community on earth, and this community-relationship has continued ever more complexly than it was in that small family social unit of the creation. Albert Outler speaks of man's community, saying,

Man is neither alone nor supreme in his universe. The universe is not indifferent to his fate. He is not endowed with freedom-infiniteness. His selfhood is neither an accident nor an episode. He stands, in the depths of his being, before God and over against God His existence, therefore, is complex and precarious. He is involved in the drama of life and death, aware of the unique role in which he is cast. God purposed to create a community of finite, free and rational creatures who could react to Him and to one another, in a mode of responsibility, which is distinctive in the order of creation. God stands round the parenthesis of existence in which man lives, as Creator, Sustainer, Consummator. Man is made for sharing in such a creative and redemptive process, for he is made for faith, for commitment, for community, for love.⁸¹

As man is united by community, the concerns of the community override his self-concern, and his ambitions and values take on broader scope and meaning. This is true also within the Christian community, the church. The sense of unity is best conveyed to the Christian through the church,

⁸¹Outler, p. 129.

as he shares the oneness in the body of Christ with his fellow-believers, with whom he shares the privilege of being a member of that body. He is needed in the proper functioning of the body, just as he is in need of those fellow-members of the body around him.

The Christian congregation is a group. Within this group other groups form for various purposes, some of which can be for the purpose of work and service, for study, for inspiration, or for modified therapy.⁸² It is to this community that the pastor brings the Word to bear, Law and Gospel in its fullest meaning. Richard R. Caemmerer says of the pastor's relation to this community that

The pastor should see to it that his service to groups is really ministry of the Word. As he associates with groups, he has a chance to confirm his relation to their members as individuals, to discern their needs and strengthen acquaintance, and to observe their Christian gifts and abilities at work for one another.⁸³

Church groups are not therapy groups in the strictest sense of the term, since that is said to be an instrument effective in the hands of a well-trained therapist. Nevertheless, the groups within the church--the various types of organizations within the congregation and other interest

⁸²Clinebell, pp. 157,162.

⁸³Caemmerer, Preaching, p. 285.

⁸⁴Clinebell, p. 161.

⁸⁵Knowles, p. 29.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 14-15.

groups there may happen to be--are to have therapeutic effectiveness as they strive to be healing in the Lord and growth stimulating to their members.⁸⁴

Every group within the church must realize the task for which it exists. The task of therapeutic groups is the healing of conflicts that are overwhelming to people and the broken relationships that they cause, even the broken relationship with God.⁸⁵ As the groups within the church strive toward their goals, the therapeutic effects of their inter-relationships can be seen insofar as they meet the purposes of their existence.

There must be a good "climate" for group work: an atmosphere where each member of the group is accepted, where his ideas and feelings can find their release within the limitations of purpose that the groups have set for themselves. This is true for church groups as well as any other group. Within this group the interlocking nature of relationships between people is taken into account, as the address of one member calls forth response in another member.⁸⁶ Christian counseling can take place in this kind of setting, since often a sense of estrangement or rejection on the part of the counselee may well have caused him to become disturbed.

⁸⁴Clinebell, p. 161.

⁸⁵Knowles, p. 20.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 14-15.

Walter Houston Clark says that through participation in church activities the individual may find acceptance that will consolidate inner psychological growth.⁸⁷ This is therapeutic, because it gives the individual a sense of belonging that he did not previously experience, and within the group context often a counselee can begin better to discover himself through the give-and-take procedure that is necessary for the group to function.⁸⁸ As the group listens, accepts, supports, clarifies, and interprets the interactions of its members, it is functioning in the capacity of counselor.⁸⁹

Some principles which should guide group leaders, whether they be the pastoral counselor or other members of the Christian community, have been listed by Clyde Reid as the following: (1) To communicate love and acceptance to the group; (2) To provide the firm limits within the group's functioning; (3) To affirm the worth of individuals within the group by words and action; (4) To help members of the group assume increasing responsibility and leadership; (5) To develop honest and authentic fellowship within the group; (6) To create the climate within the group where

⁸⁷Clark, p. 326.

⁸⁸Drakeford, p. 162.

⁸⁹Knowles, p. 23.

effective ministration between its members is a possibility; and (7) To help the group evaluate its own behavior.⁹⁰

As the counselor or group leader moves towards these goals, the group can grow in loving attitude toward one another. They will learn to share each other's joys and afflictions, and can give the kind of support that can be an effective aid to the person in need. Even when the shepherding functions of the group are indirect, they can still serve as effective means of serving each other in Christ-likeness. Christians are bound together by Christ. As they are members one-of-another in their daily life, they can be messengers of Christ's love and His Word. Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., has this to say about the group's effectiveness:

Groups, large and small, are the fabric from which a church's program is shaped. . . . The spiritual vitality of a local church is directly correlated with the health of its groups--particularly its small groups where heart-hungers are most apt to be satisfied. Here a sense of Christian community can flourish.⁹¹

⁹⁰Clyde Reid, Groups Alive--Church Alive: The Effective Use of Small Groups in the Local Church (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), pp. 85-87.

⁹¹Clinebell, p. 149.

The pastor as counselor labors within such group structures to maintain the service and helpfulness that one member of the group shares with another.⁹² Here is where the person who needs a sense of self-confidence and worth is able to grow, as those around him support him with the Christian love that the Word evokes. Coiner has said that the church "bears within it the hope that the flax, if it is still smoking, will not be quenched and that the reed, if it merely be bruised, will not be broken."⁹³

The counselee can find the strongest sense of fulness in Christian community, and it is the responsibility of pastor as counselor to bring to bear the power of the Word on this community, so that its effectiveness can be felt. He helps others minister in the process, as Caemmerer says,

He gave pastors and teachers for perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry which the saints are to do! The saints are the ministers, the servants! Their service is that they edify, build up, the body of Christ. They lead one another into an ever stronger unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.⁹⁴

As this takes place, the pastor as counselor is empowering people with the Gospel of Christ to be filled with the Spirit in their mutual ministrations. Coiner says that the Word

⁹²Caemmerer, Feeding, p. 41.

⁹³Coiner, XXXVI, 633.

⁹⁴Caemmerer, Feeding, p. 38.

of God is central to this activity:

Mutual care in the church is primarily the speaking of the Word of God, person to person, and discipline in the church is really the discipline of the Word of God. Both proclamation and application of the Word are involved as Christians grapple together with the Law and Gospel and what it means in terms of living it out under the gracious activity of God.⁹⁵

In this kind of activity the Spirit of God ministers!

As the Christian pastoral counselor deals with those who come to him for ministration, he has the power of God behind him; the Word that consoles and forgives and assures, just as it shows man that he is in need of God for his daily life. The techniques of psychology aid the Christian pastor in applying the Word of God to the situation of the counselee in a way that he can be therapeutic and effective. As he does this, the counselee can in turn become minister to another Christian within the community of the sharing life in Christ.

⁹⁵Coiner, XXXVI, 619.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

The author has used the term "Word of God" in this study specifically with reference to the written revelation, the written Word, and the proclamation of this revelation as it refers to the pastoral ministry of counseling. The Word is authoritative and speaks of itself in that way. The churches of the Lutheran Reformation traditionally held that it was an authoritative Word, and at the time of the writing of the Lutheran Confessions there was little said regarding the origins of the Word. There was no point in arguing a position that was taken for granted by the contenders at the time of the Reformation.

The doctrine of the Word of God is a faith-judgment, so that Christians will hold to this doctrine because through the power of this same Word they have been led to believe its divine origin and saving power. It must be recognized that this same judgment has not been given to non-Christians.

The power of the Word is intrinsic to it. It is a Law-Gospel Word, a Word that must be separated in its proclamation also into Law and Gospel elements in order to use it with its full power, force, and beauty. Differences between the Law and Gospel are in their manner of being revealed to man, their content, the promises held in them, the threats

presented, their function and effect, and with respect to the people to whom each, Law and Gospel, is addressed.

The Law is preached to condemn sin and to show men their sin, and to show them God's will for their lives. The Law teaches what is right and God-pleasing, and condemns whatever is not right and God-pleasing. The Law must be preached to the sinner without mingling any Gospel into its proclamation. To the Christian the Law is proclaimed to show him God's will day by day, with the difference that the Christian delights in God's Law, and by the power of the Spirit tries to live his life in accord with it.

The power of the Word acts toward the goal of salvation. The Law is preached finally to show men that they need help, that they cannot save themselves. The Word of the Gospel shows man who sees and realizes that he cannot make himself right before God that Christ has done this for him. In the wider sense, the Gospel is the entire doctrine of Christ, but in its strict sense it is the preaching of grace: God's love for man in sending Jesus Christ to die for him, bearing the sins of all mankind on the cross of Calvary. The Gospel demands faith and gives faith. It is a Word that God proclaims through people in His church to give hope, comfort and peace.

The Word is addressed to man, the goal of its proclamation. The Word is proclaimed to flesh-and-blood people who are to be set aside for God, people who are born into sin

as something that is their inheritance in such a way that they have no escaping it. The Word comes to man who is totally depraved before God, and, although he enjoys freedom of choice in earthly things, he has no such freedom in spiritual things; his natural inclination is to evil.

The Word addresses itself to man to make him face up to his responsibility before God. To do this, man must take guilt and its consequences seriously. Man's conscience plays its role at this point. Conscience has no sense of Law of its own, but rather has as its outstanding function to analyze the actions of the self or another person with reference to established and accepted norms that the person holds, and then to render judgment on the basis of those norms. Guilt is generated when the limitations of conscience are surpassed. The Law of God uses man's inner psychological processes to do its work. Problems with personality disturbances arise when the functions of conscience are repressed, since inner conflicts are formed. Doubt is just such conflict, since it is an unstable reaction caused by a collision of differing beliefs.

The Christian view of man takes into account that man is a creature of God who can find no solution to his problem of sin outside of faith in Christ, the solution that God offers through His Word. As the Spirit of God works faith in man through the power of the Word, he makes man a renewed creature, and gives him power to live a life in

new perspective, of being a creature dead to sin and alive to and in Christ. Although the sinful nature is not eradicated and man remains sinful, yet God works hope and salvation in man through faith in Jesus.

Through the Word, God gives man the assurance that He has reached down into history with His Son, Jesus Christ, and that in Him we live in love. The Christian pastor ministers this love and is ministered to by his fellow Christians. He ministers the love of Christ to hurting people in a counseling process that is possible as a special relationship between pastor and parishioner is formed for a given time and for a specific purpose, after the conditions such as the following are evident; that help has been sought by the counselee; that the counselee realizes that he has a problem and that at least part of the reason for it lies within himself; that the counselee desires to move toward solution of the problem; and, that he understands that the pastor will try to help him find a solution himself.

Pastoral counseling is within the realm of pastoral care. Pastoral care can be defined as a broad and general ministry of the Word, the whole cura animarum, the whole ministry of helping and healing. Psychological techniques may well be used in this ministry, but it is generally conceded that no specialized training beyond basic seminary education is a prerequisite to pastoral care. Pastoral

counseling is a more specialized activity within a seeking-helping relationship for a specific time and related to a specific need; when the need has been taken care of, the relationship stops. To this ministry the Christian pastor brings to bear his background of the Word. The pastoral counselor aims at the growth of the counselor in doing so, spiritual as well as psychological, in order to provide for insights, changing behavior, the exercise of choice that will lead to more adequate functioning and greater comfort in living in terms of values that are accepted by the counselee.

The pastoral counselor can well use the techniques developed by the behavioral sciences in this ministry, and it is important that he does use them, if he wants to lead the counselee to see his problem and to move toward a solution of it. When the Christian pastoral counselor uses psychological techniques, he is not opposing himself. Psychology has no basic opposition to religion. They are different perspectives, but not necessarily at opposite poles. Psychology studies behavior, but does not pass value-judgments on behavior. The Christian counselor will know that he stands on a Christian perspective, and must follow the proclamation of the Word in accord with this perspective in his pastoral ministry.

In dealing with the counselee, the pastoral counselor will begin where the counselee is, both spiritually and

psychologically. Doing this, he maintains the distinguishing mark of his counseling activity from a Christian perspective; the preoccupation with the salvation of the counselee through the Word. Pastoral counseling is a healing function of the ministry. The counselor leads the counselee to see for himself that no self-atonement is possible, that he can find a "firm foundation" on which to stand in Jesus Christ alone. He will build new perspectives for the counselee as he leads the counselee to find these insights himself: to see that he is finite and sinful, and to accept this condition. He will lead him gently to see God's counsel for his life, to substitute God's work of salvation for his own work, to place himself at Jesus' feet to be prepared by the Spirit through the Word to do God's will.

The counseling ministry is a reconciling ministry, a ministry in which the pastoral counselor leads the counselee toward healing of the breaches that have occurred: the broken relationships with God and his fellowmen. As the counselee realizes that he himself cannot heal his own wounds, the pastoral counselor can lead him to understand that the power of the Word cancels out the impotence of the counselee in changing his life. He is led to build new horizons for himself.

As the Christian pastoral counselor ministers, he finds that there are things common to psychology and religion:

they both deal with man and his inner processes, with man's overextensions of himself that cause the deep anxieties that beset him at times. There are elements of inter-personal relationships that are common to both psychology and religion. There is a recognition of weakness and strength, although the basic concepts of strength through Christ alone that are within the context of Christian counseling are foreign to psychology.

Where religion and psychology differ, they do not differ because they are diametrically opposed to each other. Rather, they differ in purpose and approach. The Word of God is the greatest difference between them, because the pastoral counselor sees himself as God's agent through the Word, also when he uses psychological techniques. This is completely outside the context of the science of psychology. Religion draws conclusions based on value-judgments, while psychology does not. Salvation and health are in the context of the pastoral counselor's counseling processes, but they are not within the context of psychology with the same religious connotations.

As the pastor deals with his people, attitudes are extremely important. Basically, the pastoral counselor brings his own faith to bear directly or indirectly on the counseling process in which he is engaged. He has an attitude of love, helpfulness, understanding, empathy, a true feeling of what the counselee is going through in his

inner conflict. The pastoral counselor needs to be of sound emotional health and to approach his counselee from a God-and counselee-centered approach, rather than from a counselor-centered approach. He must be able to keep confidences that his counselee divulges, and ought not to be authoritarian or judgmental in approaching his client. He will not try to manipulate the counselee in any way: psychologically, morally, or religiously. Instead, he will by his comportment invite a full release of the counselee's deepest beliefs, conflicts, aspirations, joys, and sorrows-- when the counselee has progressed to the point of being able to speak about these things comfortably. He will not coerce the counselee, but will try to get him to feel free in speaking about his problem.

In his counseling the pastor will try to lead the counselee to assume responsibility for his own problems. He will not pass over a bad situation just because he, as pastor, either wants to see progress that is not evident, or because he does not want to face up to the situation that the counselee presents. The pastor will be patient, understanding, loving, flexible: he will use all of the love he has to keep a live communication and empathy with his counselee. Above all, the pastor will listen, and will allow his counselee to empty himself of all the burdens and hurt that may be penned up inside of him.

The counseling relationship is a process that has its own limitations. When the specific problem has been solved, the relationship between the persons of pastor and parishioner as counselor-counselee comes to a halt. The former relationship within the congregation of believers will continue. The pastor will take care not to build up an unhealthy relationship with the counselee, whereby the counselee will depend so much upon the counselor that he may never easily become the independent, self-possessed person that the Spirit can make him be as he faces his problems squarely and sees his final help in Christ.

The Christian pastor will have no problem in using the Word of God in counseling. The use of God-language, language common to clergy and laymen alike in which religious words have a vernacular place, will be an aid at times in communicating the Law and Gospel to people. It is a Law-Gospel Word, a threat-promise Word, a judgment-mercy Word that is proclaimed in the counseling process just as much as in any other ministry.

The pastor is a witness to the Gospel of Christ Jesus in counseling. He will use the Word to lead people to faith in Christ; the Word that will help create the correct vertical relationship of the counselee and his God and the correct horizontal relationships of the counselee with those who are around him. The pastoral task in counseling is a replenishing of power for the counselee himself to be able to meet the difficulties that he faces.

When an appropriate point has been reached in counseling, Scripture texts can be used effectively as a source of strength and hope. They can be assigned by the pastoral counselor as a type of homework for the edification of the counselee, but they are not to be construed as any type of satisfaction for wrong-doing. There is no place in pastoral counseling for the assignment of work which may be construed as self-atoning; besides being anti-Scriptural basically, it will leave the counselee with the same insecurity with which he began the counseling relationship. There is room for Scripture texts to be used in a guided way for inspiration and for support.

The pastor has the power of God with him as he blesses his people, and the Word in pastoral blessing, either within a liturgical setting or outside such a setting, can be an immense source of comfort and strength.

The Christian pastor will proclaim the Law of God when there is evident need for it in counseling. He will proclaim God's will in a loving way, with all patience and understanding, but with all firmness. If possible, he will try to lead the counselee in proclaiming the Law to himself, as he begins to see the reasons behind his problem, and to feel contrite. A recognition of such sin must precede any therapy, for without getting at the source of the problem there can be no healing. When the counselee is filled with sorrow over the cause of a problem, the Law has done its

work, and the pastor is not to proceed by a further proclamation that is condemning. Then the pastor ought to lead the counselee to see himself as God sees him: a sinner redeemed by Christ Himself.

The Word of God can be used to this end in confession in the counseling process, and, when the counselee is contrite and believing, the pastor should proceed to forgive: to pronounce absolution either directly or indirectly, to tell the counselee the news of Christ's atonement that is fresh for every day of his life.

The goal of using the Word in counseling, both the Law and the Gospel, is always a salvation-goal. When the pastor speaks the Law to the counselee, here too it must be with a salvation-goal in mind: to get the counselee to realize that he has erred, and that he needs to find his hope in Christ's atoning work. Above all, the counselor must realize that he speaks this Word also to himself when he speaks it to the counselee, and this can help create a true empathy between counselor and counselee.

If repentance does not follow in a counseling situation, finally there has to be a ban of the counselee from the Christian congregation. But here too it ought to be done in such a way that it will prove constructive: that it might lead the counselee to recognize his sin and to repent. When repentance occurs, the counselor will rejoice with the counselee as he is led to accept the fact that Christ died

for him and accepts him every day of his life. The Spirit fills the counselee when this this faith is present, and gives him the power to live the life in Christ.

The pastor may use the Word in certain counseling situations in the form of prayer. This is legitimate when there is true understanding of what prayer is: that it is an act of worship on the part of the counselee in which he places himself within God's will for his whole life, begs for mercy, thanks God for His care, protection, and salvation, and praises His holy name. It should be clearly understood by the counselee that prayer is not a means of grace, nor is it an escape mechanism whereby the counselee can avoid his problem or try to manipulate God to do what the counselee would like to see.

There are times when prayer-usage is appropriate in building a sense of support in the counselee and for intercession in order to help build a sense of trust and confidence in God in the counselee by his laying himself bare before God. It should be used with caution, sincerity, and purpose: prayer that is clear in its content to the point of the counseling encounter. Prayer should never be used by the pastoral counselor as a crutch for him to be able to escape facing a problem or dealing with it, to whitewash it away by some form of ritualistic pronouncement. The pastoral counselor should feel free to decide when he will and when he will not use prayer in the counseling process.

The Word is effective as it speaks through people. The groups in a Christian congregation are potential counselors as they give support, room for expression, the feeling of acceptance, and in general allow for the give-and-take relationships that go on in a group setting. For the Word to be effective in this situation, it is the responsibility of the pastor to minister with the Word to the group as such, and for him to use that Word in leading the group-leaders to a true ministry of acceptance of others in the group, and to instill the leadership qualities necessary for the group to develop an authentic Christian fellowship.

If this is done, the Christian groups within the church can be a true source of therapy for the person in need, since the love that they in the group show him by their sincere sharing will help him realize also the love of Christ in an even more real way in his life. Here the pastor is leading others to counsel and to minister; and this is, after all, one of the basic purposes in his entire ministry.

The Word of God has a very definite place in the process of pastoral counseling, and the pastor, using all the power of the Word at his disposal and all the psychological techniques that can help him minister to his counselee, will find the Word still the source of healing and all strength in his pastoral ministry--for himself and for his parishioners. The Word is God's unique power for ministry.

There is room for further study of the relationship of the Word to pastoral counseling, especially with regard to the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper. This did not relate to the scope of the present study, but ought not be overlooked in the whole relationship of the Word in its broadest sense to the pastoral ministry to believers.

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