

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

6-1-1955

The Care of Souls as it Relates to Marriage Counseling

David H. Brammer

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_brammerd@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brammer, David H., "The Care of Souls as it Relates to Marriage Counseling" (1955). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 674.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/674>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	THE CARE OF SOULS AS IT RELATES TO MARRIAGE COUNSELING	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	IDENTIFYING AREAS IN WHICH MARRIAGE COUNSELING CULTIVATES ARTISANRY	13
	Problems associated with the historical background	13
	Difficulties connected with a widespread	14
	Problems due to conditions of work	14
	Difficulties arising from economic circumstances	15
	A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Department of Practical Theology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity	16
	The question of in-law	21
	Different cultural patterns	25
	The make-up and personalities of marriage	26
	Problems related to a degree of activity or inactivity	28
	Problems arising from ambivalence of emotion	31
	Negative emotional attitudes of persons	34
	Problems which arise out of a persistent non-woman center	37
	Problems arising from other misfortune	39
	by David H. Brammer	
III.	FUNCTIONS OF MARRIAGE COUNSELING	41
	Listening	41
	Informational element	42
	Reinforcing	43
	Interpretation	44
	A steady influence	45
	Offering techniques and resources	46
	Aid in re-organization of life	47
	Assurance of Christ's love	48
	Approved by: <u>K. H. Breininger</u> Adviser	
IV.	SUGGESTED PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE COUNSELING	50
	Create a counseling atmosphere	50
	Let the approach be to the client	51
	Respect the experiences of the client	52
	Take an objective point of view	53
	<u>Orin E. John</u> Reader	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION 1
II.	IDENTIFYING AREAS IN WHICH DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES ARISE. 12
	Problems connected with the habitation itself 13
	Difficulties connected with a neighborhood 14
	Pressures due to conditions of work. 15
	Difficulties arising from economic circumstances. 15
	Conflicts regarding the sharing and spending of money 17
	Problems arising from health factors 18
	Sexual ignorance and maladjustment (See also III, 2 and V, 7). 20
	Difficulties arising from alcoholism 22
	The question of in-laws. 23
	Different cultural patterns. 25
	The make-up and personalities of individuals 26
	Problems related to a degree of maturity or immaturity. 28
	Problems arising from ambivalence of emotion. 31
	Negative emotional attitudes of persons. 34
	Problems which arise out of a particular man-woman combination. 37
	Problems arising from sheer misfortune 39
III.	FUNCTIONS OF PASTORAL COUNSELING 41
	Listening. 41
	Informational element. 42
	Reminding. 43
	Interpretation 44
	A steadying influence. 45
	Offering techniques and resources. 46
	Aid in re-organization of life 47
	Assurance of forgiveness 48
IV.	SUGGESTED PROCEDURES IN COUNSELING 50
	Create a counseling atmosphere 50
	Let the approach be to the counselor 52
	Respect the sacredness of confidence 52
	Take an objective point of view. 53

Be a good listener (See also III, 1) . . .	54
Hear both sides whenever possible. . . .	56
Get the person or persons to tell enough but not too much	57
Look for the deeper problem beneath the apparent ones.	58
Help the counselee to solve his own prob- lem.	59
Use the resources of the community	60
Get individuals and families adjusted to life and to God through Christ and His Church	61
Some necessary cautions.	63

V. **HELPING MARRIED PEOPLE MEET EACH OTHER'S
NEEDS.** 65

The maturing and completion of love. . . .	69
Companionship.	71
Status	72
Security	74
Comfort.	75
Fulfilment	76
Sexual harmony (See also II, 7).	76
Children	78
Economic cooperation	78
Finding the real assets in "forced" mar- riages	79
Conclusion	80

BIBLIOGRAPHY 82

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Christianity differs sharply from the naturalistic romanticism which thinks of marriage primarily in terms of release of physical tension and the satisfaction of erotic feelings. Christian marriage means the acceptance of specific responsibilities. These have both a natural and a supernatural foundation.¹ The natural motivation, based on the fact that marriage is an order of creation, is self-love. "He that loveth his wife loveth himself, for no man ever yet hateth his own flesh." The supernatural motivation is Christ's own self-sacrificing agape--"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it."² Paul has, therefore, much to say about the attitude of mutual love, respect for personality, considerateness, and fidelity, upon which marital happiness is grounded. To achieve its God-appointed purpose, marriage must be entered into and continued in the Lord. This living in the Lord is beautifully described by Paul in the opening verses of the second chapter of Philip-
pians, thus translated by Moffatt--"Living in harmony, with same feelings of love, with one heart, one soul, never acting for

¹T. A. Kantonen, The Family Under God (New York: Board of Social Missions ULCA, 1951), p. 28.

²Eph. 5:25, 28, 33; Col. 3:19.

private ends or for vanity, but each with an eye to the interests of others." But the final apostolic word in which the atmosphere and the motive power of the Christian home find their perfect expression must be this--"Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; is not irritable or resentful; does not rejoice in wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things; believes all things; hopes all things; endures all things. Love never ends."³

Jesus and Paul made the language of the home the language of the Kingdom not simply to bring the meaning of His teachings within the understanding of His followers, but to convey the idea that family relationships in the Christian sense are spiritual relationships. The love that enables family members to achieve domestic virtue is suggestive of, and in its essence is, preparatory to the achievement of the higher type of love that insures loyalty, unity, and service to a loving God. In the intimacy of the Christian home there is the sacred opportunity to learn through personal experiences the real meaning of Christian love as a life of devoted service and to develop those qualities of character required of free men in a free society. When homes fail to provide the opportunities and disciplines from which can come emotionally mature men and women who know the meaning of right and wrong and who are

³I Cor. 13.

sensitive to sin and to the greater power of God's love, both church and state, whose members are recruited from the families, lack the means with which to perform their proper functions.⁴

Current conditions provide ample evidence of the difficulty the family has in adequately performing any one of its basic functions. In fact, the family has increasing difficulty in maintaining the permanency of the family group. At least a fifth of all marriages now end in divorce. The trend for some time has been upward. Around 1900 the rate, based on the average for the previous five years, was only about one in twelve; in 1922 it was one in eight; and now about one in five marriages ends in divorce proceedings. A dramatic picture of the extent of the custom of divorce in America is secured by equating population increases with the increase in the marriage and divorce rate. From 1867 to 1948 the population of the U. S. increased about 300 per cent, marriages slightly over 400 per cent and divorces about 4,000 per cent. The divorce rate has increased in every successive decade from the time of the Civil War to the present, reaching an all time high of 18 divorces per thousand married people in 1946. Since then it has dropped back to pre-war levels of 12 per thousand married people. Moreover, children are at present involved in about one-third of all divorce cases, and the number of divorces involving

⁴M. S. Greth, The Family and Social Change (New York: Board of Social Missions ULCA, 1951), p. 4.

children is increasing more rapidly than the divorce rate itself. During the decade from 1940 to 1950, roughly two and a half million children in the U. S. were affected by divorces.

It is clear from these facts that the permanency of the family group formed by marriage has become a serious problem. While the permanent family is still widely held as an ideal and people, when they marry, still promise to live together "so long as ye both shall live," the fact is that an increasing number of American people are quite willing to break their marriage vows when family relationships become unpleasant, and they can do so in many communities without seriously offending the consciences of their neighbors. Concerning this, Dr. M. S. Greth says:

Certainly, one of the main factors in our high divorce rate is the fact that the social conscience of the American people is more willing to accept such behavior. This condition is reflected in the failure of public opinion to force people to conform to the pattern of family stability. Family life of previous generations may not have been more harmonious than family life is today but divorce was not so readily used as a solution for its frictions. It may be that our generation is less qualified or more unwilling to sacrifice as much to make marriage and family life a success as people in the past were able to do.⁵

Divorce rates do not tell the whole story of the difficulty the American family has in maintaining itself as a permanent group. Such rates do not include annulments, separations, and

⁵Ibid., p. 9.

desertions for which no reliable figures are available. We do know that in five counties of New York the annulments now exceed the number of divorces. From the 1940 Census, we learn that in that year, all told, there were three and a half million married persons not living with their spouses, which is more than three times the number of divorced persons. The exact number of permanent separations or desertions is not known. According to a study of the 1940 data made by W. F. Ogburn, at least four-fifths of the total number of couples separated by reasons other than divorce and death, were temporarily employed elsewhere or permanently separated. The evidence suggests that most marital separation is permanent. Whether permanent or not, homes broken by separation and desertion cannot perform their proper social functions and, like divorces, reflect a condition within the American family which makes it difficult for this basic institution to maintain itself.

The one indispensable social responsibility of the family is reproduction, for without it the family will cease to exist. The data show a decided decline of this important function. The first census taken a hundred fifty years ago showed the five-member family to be the most common type in America. A hundred years later, in 1890, the predominating type was a family of four members. By 1900 there were more three-member families than any other kind, and now the two-member families are the most common. Another way to observe the change in the

reproductive function of the American family is to consider the mean or average size of the family. In 1790 the average number of persons per family in the U. S. was 5.7 and in 1940, 3.8. There has been a loss of two persons per family in the last one hundred and fifty years. This trend is expected to continue and, according to population experts, by 1980 the average size of the family will be 3.1 persons, cut almost in half in about eight generations.⁶

An understanding of what is happening to the reproductive function of the family cannot leave illegitimacy and abortion out of the picture. Illegitimacy reflects a failure on the part of the family in society to regulate sex behavior. According to Christian and legal norms only the married may bear children, not merely to regulate sex behavior, but to guarantee to every child a home in which he can have the care of both parents. The exact extent of illegitimacy is not known because of inaccurate and incomplete returns. The reported rate is four per cent of the total number of live births. The estimated total for the country is more than 100,000 children who are at present born annually to unmarried mothers. The care of these children who are denied the privileges ordinarily accorded to those born in a socially approved manner poses a major problem in child care for both church and state. We are gradually coming to realize that the accident of birth is no reason for stigmatizing

⁶Ibid., p. 10.

a child and denying him the opportunity of loving parental care which should be the birthright of everyone. Our illegitimacy rate would no doubt be still higher were it not for abortion. This is clear even though the extent of abortion cannot be definitely stated. It is estimated that a minimum of 70,000 pregnancies in unmarried women are terminated in this way every year in the U. S., and the number may be much higher. Conservative estimates report a total of 700,000 abortions annually, about 60 per cent illegal, nine-tenths of them in married women. The number of deaths due to abortion have been estimated as between three thousand and four thousand, or about 30 to 35 per cent of all maternal deaths. While the causes are varied, the high rate indicates a serious problem in the regulation of the reproductive function of the American family.⁷

It is not strange that many married people should need counsel. Marriage is a difficult and exacting relationship. When things go wrong they are very wrong indeed. One of the greatest threats to the success of marriage in this period is a naive idea that if people are truly in love they will always be happy together. People need to realize that marriage is a process of unifying two lives and that many adjustments must be made, some of them difficult. Those who enter marriage need continued education and growth, most of which they can get from books, lectures, study courses, and particularly from an educational

⁷Ibid., p. 12.

use of their experiences. The inspiration and the sustaining fellowship of the Church and also the educational helps which it can provide can be of the greatest value in helping people to make much of their marriages. Courses and discussion groups perform the function of group counseling. Often in a group dealing with principles of adjustment an individual can get a clue to the meeting of his own particular difficulty. The value of group counseling is increasingly evident. Only in cases of necessity does one desire to sit down with individuals and consider in detail their perplexities, their frustrations and their agonies. When this is necessary one wants to help, but he knows that good educational measures both before and after marriage can prevent many of these maladjustments, and that growing understanding on the part of married people will prevent more wounds than all the counselors can heal. The counseling function can best be carried on against the background of an educational program.⁸

The minister's field in counseling is related to the pastoral office, and it is the scope of this paper to endeavor to show just why the function of marriage counseling fits into a pastor's total care of souls. Indeed, this thesis intends to show how necessary it is for the pastor to recognize the needs for his

⁸L. F. Wood, Pastoral Counseling in Family Relationships (New York: The Commission on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1948), p. 20.

services in this field and, in an overview, how he can approach them in his counseling.

The minister has some real advantages as a counselor and also some handicaps. In the past ministers have not been trained for this function. At the present however, increasing numbers of theological schools offer courses and some provide clinical experience in counseling. The minister's lack of training in this field is comparable to a similar lack in the training of other professional people. Several of the professions are now making progress simultaneously. Some of the difficulty of this problem is indicated by the Brief on Marriage and the Family and the Responsibility of the State submitted to the Governor of the State of New York in 1944 by the New York State Conference on Marriage and the Family as a result of its study and experience in that State:

The churches of the State, it must also be admitted, have made little progress in this important field of service. Many ministers appreciate that they are in a strategic position to serve family life; but the truth is that only a limited number of ministers are properly equipped to deal with these problems adequately. The result is that only a very few churches and synagogues offer courses on the subject of marriage and family life and arrange for a consultation service for the members of the congregation and the community. It is also evident that the churches and synagogues reach only a small part of the population. Nearly one-half of the marriages that take place in the State are performed not by ministers but by civil servants.⁹

⁹S. E. Goldstein, Marriage and Family Counseling (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1945), p. 432.

Another disadvantage of the minister is that the praise and blame approach is traditional. Church legislation speaks of "the innocent party" and "the guilty party" in divorce. There is, of course, guilt and there is innocence in family disasters, yet the counseling approach is that of the healer rather than the judge. The minister cooperates with God in his present work of restoring lives and homes. It is not enough to decide who did what, but rather what can be done to heal wounds and set people on their feet again. Such an attitude was clearly that of Christ himself.

The praise and blame attitude is still the legal approach also. Cases are tried in court where a judgment is rendered in favor of one and against the other. A more merciful and helpful way of dealing with the legal aspect of marital difficulties is needed. Usually it is not a judge who is required for a sick marriage so much as an expert or a panel of experts able to diagnose the difficulty and to guide toward rehabilitation. Without such a basic change of approach, the substitution of national and uniform laws for state laws would be likely to prove disappointing in its results.

The minister has some great advantage in counseling.

(1) He is accessible. People can go to him freely without any implication that they are queer or that they need material aid.

(2) The minister has the entrée to the homes of the people. His pastoral function makes it natural for him to call in homes

and he is received as a valued friend.

(3) The minister's field is life itself with its meanings and values. Marriage, like life itself, profits from spiritual growth or suffers from the lack of it. Although many questions of adjustment are also of a technical character involving specialized understandings, many or all of them are helped by right spiritual attitudes. People need faith in God and in life. They need wholesome attitudes toward others, and new hope in the face of what is often a deep sense of failure in marriage to date. And they need to realize that in marriage and parenthood God's help is available according to our needs.

(4) The fact that ministers marry the majority of people in most communities gives them a good start in relation to new homes.¹⁰ If the minister has done a workmanlike job of pre-marital counseling, he has established himself as friend and counselor to his families and has created in their minds the consciousness that he is a potential helper greatly concerned for their success.

¹⁰Wood, op. cit., p. 21.

CHAPTER II

IDENTIFYING AREAS IN WHICH DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES ARISE

The question is not whether ministers shall counsel, but how well. They have a wide range of marital difficulties presented to them. While there are many points in common in the problems which come to various types of counselors the cases which come to any given professional group are sure to differ in some ways from those which come to other professions. Moreover, within any given profession there are individual differences among counselors and one may become known for special helpfulness in certain types of cases. In spite of impossibility of sharp differentiation we may notice some types of cases that are being brought to ministers by identifying areas in which domestic difficulties arise. Some problems are easily described. Others are difficult to analyze and define. All personal relationships exist against backgrounds of life experience which differ from one individual to another. As every human life is shaped by innumerable factors and the combination of factors is unique for every individual, every person is unique and problems are not just the same from one to another. The pastor should beware of hastily classifying or defining a problem and should be on the look-out for new factors which will throw light at some particular point or on the situation as a whole. He knows that human maladjustments can arise in almost any area of

interaction. Difficulties are normal and problems are sure to arise.

Problems Connected with the Habitation Itself

A husband and wife may be constantly quarreling and unhappy because the habitation in which they live is ill-suited to the requirements of their family life. There may be crowding and lack of privacy, inconveniences rather than conveniences, and poor equipment in general. The set-up may be such that a woman is unnecessarily annoyed and unduly fatigued in doing her housework, thus making all domestic adjustments more difficult. Locating the irritating elements in her situation is at least one step toward correction.

Sometimes there are possible improvements that have not been thought of before. Even if major factors must remain as they are, the minor ones can often be so improved as to help the situation. If both husband and wife recognize that the house itself is the initial cause of her irritability rather than husband and children, that will help to clarify her whole position. For the husband, it will lift a weight if he can get the problem out of the realm of the baffling and intangible into that of concrete improvement in the pattern of his wife's daily experience. After that, such conditions as cannot be changed may be reduced to more manageable proportions.

Many a husband and wife are finding their homemaking purposes frustrated in whole or in part from lack of suitable

housing. Meanwhile, their personal relationships often deteriorate. For a man and woman who are not finding the happiness in marriage which they have expected, it will provide some relief for them to realize that the trouble is not in themselves but in conditions that are only temporary. They can the more successfully put up with trying conditions without danger to their marriage. They can live not merely in the cramped quarters of the moment but also in their plans for a more adequate set-up which will come later. It is not wholly impossible for a couple under such circumstances to be drawn even closer together because they understand, they sympathize and they are such good sports that their attitudes make something good out of a bad situation.

Difficulties Connected with a Neighborhood

Difficulties may arise because a whole neighborhood is unfavorable to the life of man, woman and children. The husband and wife may see it in the same way or they may see it differently. The wife may feel that she is deprived of the benefits of living among wholesome and friendly neighbors. Both parents may be under the difficulty of not having good play or school opportunities for their children. While a family should attempt to improve any neighborhood in which it may live for however short a time and to create some conditions of good living even in a poor neighborhood, yet a change of neighborhood is often indispensable to their best good. These are but illustrative

of the many types of cases in which the environment must receive careful attention in connection with any plans for the improvement of family relationships. A family is not changed merely by moving, yet new surroundings may become aids to a better plan of living.¹

Pressures Due to Conditions of Work

Some men and women are abnormally difficult to live with because of strains connected with their work. A man who all day long must put up with frustrations and hurts about which he dare not speak may come home at the breaking point, and on any provocation, or without any, lash out at the nearest person. Wives and children have often been hurt by behavior seemingly directed at them but with which they had only the most accidental connection. Certainly a wife should understand such factors in her husband's life. And it should be explained to children that father is tired and nervous because of things he has to stand at his place of work. Equally a wife may find it impossible to be her best owing to conditions with which she has to struggle.

Difficulties Arising from Economic Circumstances

Family life may be thrown out of joint because there is not enough to live on. When there is more income producing capacity in the family than is being utilized, there may be

¹L. F. Wood, Pastoral Counseling in Family Relationships (New York: The Commission on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1948), p. 24.

need of better vocational planning for one or more members. Counseling with an expert in that field may be a great advantage. If a breadwinner is badly placed, it may be that someone in church or community could put him into a better position. Many a minister has been a key person in opening doors of opportunity to persons who were thoroughly worthy but who could not have opened such new doors for themselves.

When there is a relief angle, the minister must proceed carefully. We are not thinking here of the proper relief that is carried on by the churches themselves. Almost all churches have some relief funds. Usually these are used primarily for a few aged or unfortunate members whose cases are known only to the small committee which administers the funds. These cases are not likely to be complicated by domestic maladjustments, although the lack of the small assistance which they receive might throw their family life into confusion or despair. Usually the cases with an economic angle will be those which normally belong to the social agencies. In case of a family seeking material assistance, it should be known first of all what other aid they have sought or received. In occasional instances church funds have been used, without adequate investigation, to help families already receiving aid from one or more social agencies. This is bad for all concerned.

A first step is to learn, from the community's central index, where there is one, or in whatever way is available, whether a family seeking aid is already known to any of the relief agencies. Sometimes a minister's most valuable service

is to put a family in touch with the agency best equipped to meet its needs. He will then let the agency take over entirely so far as all material aspects of the case are concerned. Yet he will not forget that when material needs have been cared for, the family will still need encouragement, friendship and spiritual help which are precisely the services which the minister and the Church can bring to them. When there is proper understanding there may be splendid teamwork between the minister and the social worker.²

Conflicts Regarding the Sharing and Spending of Money

At any income level there may be conflict and unhappiness arising out of the way in which money is used. Research studies show that how money is shared and spent and how the plans are worked out for its use are more important for domestic happiness than the income level itself. People can be selfish and unhappy with any income, and they can be happy with modest means if they use what they have in the spirit of love and consideration, and with resourceful planning.

Planning the budget and learning to buy as well as possible; learning to make the best use of what we buy, to take good care of clothing, tools and equipment so that they will not need to be too soon replaced and to eat our food rather than to throw

²E. M. Duvall and R. Hill, When You Marry (New York: Association Press, 1953), p. 279-280.

it away are important helps. Yet the main principle is to use whatever money we have in a partnership spirit so that we make our spending habits express love and mutual consideration.³

Problems Arising from Health Factors

There are cases in which the health need is so obvious that no minister would think of trying to help the family without referring the health aspect to a physician. But there are also many cases in which health factors at the root of some difficulty are not clearly discerned. It is well to be assured that a person who is beginning to fail in domestic adjustments and responsibilities is not suffering from some infection, glandular malfunctioning or other form of illness. If so, the clearing up of this would be the first step in meeting his problem.

Every minister should be in close touch with physicians in his church or community so that he can make wise referrals to those who can treat the physical handicaps to marital adjustments. Often the physician himself will have a personal influence beyond his specific medical contribution. Of one physician it was said that he patched up innumerable marriages in addition to healing people's bodies. However, as physicians have not been trained in the past to understand the psychological

³Ibid., p. 280.

and spiritual factors in the sex relationship in marriage, the pastor must seek a physician who has prepared himself to give medical information with psychological insight and Christian application. The need of having medical help from the outset of some cases applies not only to general health and physical functioning but also to a variety of conditions which affect the sexual functioning or acceptability of a man or woman. In such cases any counseling or advice which does not get at the root of the difficulty is not only wasted but is likely to be detrimental in that it induces the person to look in the wrong direction for the help he needs.

While it is normal for persons in the best mental health to have problems, yet many difficulties have an inescapable connection with mental and emotional ill-health. Occasionally counseling is discussed as if it were identical with psychiatry. There is, however, a clear function of counseling which is not psychiatric and which deals with the every-day problems of normal people. There are other cases in which psychiatric help is indispensable. The minister should avoid trying to be an amateur psychiatrist. And he should if possible be in touch with a psychiatrist, or more than one, so that he can have prompt guidance in referring cases in which psychiatric help is the first requirement. Often, moreover, a suggestion from a psychiatrist will help him in his dealing with cases that belong in his own field.⁴

⁴Wood, op. cit., p. 28.

Sexual Ignorance and Maladjustment

A few years ago it was common to exaggerate the place of sexual factors in marital maladjustments. Not that it was thought the sexual factor was ever of small importance in the marriage relationship, but that we now see marriage more clearly as a relation of persons with all that they have and all that they are. Its meaning as a relationship of two organisms takes second place to personality factors. However, the lack of sound understanding of the place of sex with which great numbers of persons enter marriage does indeed account for many marital difficulties and failures. And this ignorance may affect the lives both of those who are prudish and extremely uninformed and those who know much about sex on a crude level but nothing about it on a high level. Certainly a counselor will be aware of the need of sound information and of a wholesome philosophy of married living.

While the understanding and appreciation of sex in its excellence, as a vital factor in Christian marriage, belongs in the realm of pastoral counseling, ministers are not likely to be specialists in this field to the extent of not needing to refer some cases to physicians for examination and advice. In many cases, however, young married people will need the kind of help or clarification of thinking which a minister can give them. This can be given objectively and with reverence because religion holds that the sexual nature is a part of man and

woman as God has made us, and that right use of sex in marriage is a part of the excellence of complete companionship of husband and wife.

More definite reading about the various problems of marriage, and especially enlightenment on the sex problem for those whose thinking has been faulty either on the side of prudishness or of crass gratification-mindedness, is a means of help that could with profit be much more widely used. Well chosen books and pamphlets for persons of various ages and types of need can bring material whose value will be equal to hours with a counselor.

Counseling on sexual problems is based on the frank recognition of religion that "male and female made He them." The sexual gifts of man and woman are God-given, and married lovers may reverently thank God for this gift of sexual love. The full meaning of the sexual nature as a part of the completeness of the human personality must be recognized and guided for the enrichment of marriage. But we cannot stop there or naively assume that if there is a desirable sexual adjustment between husband and wife other problems will take care of themselves. Other problems must be met in their own right. They do not take care of themselves. A good adjustment, however, in the sex relationship is a great aid to the total adjustment while acute sexual unhappiness may sometimes ruin the harmony of a husband and wife otherwise well suited to each other. Even so, we must recognize that in some cases, in spite of the im-

possibility of a good sex adjustment, other factors in the marriage as a relationship of persons may be so built up that the union as a whole is a splendid success.⁵ The counselor will want to be acquainted with the best books on this matter.

Difficulties Arising from Alcoholism

As the amount of money spent for alcohol mounts to staggering and hitherto undreamed-of proportions family life is sure to be burdened down by the weight of these expenditures and by the worse effects of addiction. Alcohol takes the roles both of cause and effect of domestic unhappiness. Many a man takes to drink or slips further into the clutches of this habit because his wife is cold, unloving, or perhaps unfaithful. So he seeks solace in a world of escape and illusion. George Thorman says concerning this problem:

Alcoholism also seems to be closely related to desertion. But here again, it must be remembered that while alcoholism may be the direct cause of the disorganization and desertion, it is the result of some more basic personality maladjustment. The alcoholic is usually a person who is overwhelmed by his problems, unable to cope with difficulties, and finds release in his drinking. It is no wonder, then, that the responsibilities of marriage and caring for a family are often too much for him, and that he chooses desertion to escape from them.⁶

⁵G. McHugh, Sex Knowledge Inventory with Marriage Counselor's Manual (Durham: Family Life Publications, Inc., 1950), his whole manner of approach based upon sexual adjustment.

⁶George Thorman, Broken Homes (New York: Public Affairs Committee, 1947), p. 21.

The Question of In-Laws

Trouble with in-laws ranks high in all estimates of recognized reasons for marital difficulty. One loves his mate; it does not follow that he loves his in-laws. Two persons bound together can compose their differences if they love each other, but the case of in-law relationships is often one of being bound together without love on either side. However, love for in-laws can be learned and some important considerations are in its favor. First, one's mate loves them all and they are a part of his or her life. Secondly, they are likely to have many resemblances and traits in common with the loved one. Thirdly, they are sure to represent common interests and ties. Beyond these factors there is also great value in having a new set of relatives adding to the number of those to whom one is allied and increasing one's circle of persons from whom good will, solicitude and a cooperative spirit are to be expected. The difficulties are minor and incidental as compared with the advantages of having in-laws.

Trouble with in-laws is likely to arise mainly from other factors which do not belong primarily to the in-law situation. Dominance of parents who forget that a son or daughter is grown up is a natural error. Yet it is a very exasperating one. Often parents approach the marriage of a son or daughter with a frantic feeling beneath the surface that they are losing this person. Inevitably it takes a big hole out of the structure of their living to have a son or daughter leave them and hence-

forth belong primarily to someone else. So almost inevitably some parents resent the new person who seems to displace them.

The counselor may well caution a young man or woman to be patient with the parents of his companion, as they, on their part, must be patient too. Parents need also to make an effort to grow up into their new situation of not having lost a son or daughter but gained another. Often the minister can help them. For one thing he can promote a philosophy of adjustment and appreciation between in-laws. When a family, unconsciously feeling that a member is being drawn away, seems to be trying to draw him back, the strategy of adjustment is not for the married mate to resist his in-laws in this process but rather to enter into it and allow himself, with the other, to be kept in this circle of warmth and interest. Concerning this problem, Dr. Duvall says:

Parents who have been wise in bringing up their children to make their own decisions do not have to rely upon their grown children for their own satisfactions. They know enough to keep out of their children's marriage adjustments, and they are the kind of people whose children are mature enough to avoid over-dependency even when living nearby. So the question is not so much one of physical distance as it is of emotional maturity. Building a marriage is no child's play. It requires the attention of two mature people. The more grown-up the husband and wife are, the less danger they run from the intrusion of their in-laws, because they themselves have the competence and the courage to live their own lives. Similarly, in-laws who have interests outside their children can enjoy the companionship of their grown children's families without becoming meddlesome.⁷

⁷E. M. Duvall, Building Your Marriage (New York: Public Affairs Committee, 1946), p. 16-18.

Problems Arising from Different Cultural Patterns

Sometimes a difference in training, the significance of which has not been wholly understood by a husband and wife, will make all their adjustments more difficult. The points of view, the behavior patterns, the conception of their respective roles, the ways of thinking about people and about life are factors in which differences in training deeply affect the relationships of a man and woman. Conflicts in thinking and feeling about freedom or authority, about discipline, about earning and saving, or wide differences on the great questions of national or world politics may aggravate the difficulties of husband and wife in understanding each other. Differences of religious conviction are also extremely serious here.

Sociologists say that studies of the factors which add to or subtract from a successful marriage reveal that a common cultural background is one of the most important considerations. The studies testify also that the one element in this background which is hardest to uproot is religion. That is why marriage counselors, both religious and secular, are raising warning signals against "mixed" marriages. The evidence is strongly against their success. One significant result of "mixed" marriages is that one or both parties, instead of adhering to the church of their childhood, become indifferent to all religion. This indifference is reflected in the failure to give children any, not to say adequate, religious instruction.

Furthermore, even in those cases where husband and wife remain faithful to their respective churches, there is the danger of family discord when some of the children are reared in one faith and some in the other. Thus not one generation, but several, suffer spiritually from "mixed" marriages. Studies reveal that couples having church connections have more stable marriages than those who have none.⁸

Problems Arising out of the Make-Up and the Personalities of Individuals

Every individual is a product of his hereditary nature, and the way in which environmental conditioning and life history have worked on this original make-up. People take themselves into their marriages. On occasion, Mr. Radical is married to Miss Conservative, Mr. Cautious to Miss Plunger, Mr. Pinch-Penny to Miss Spend-Easy, Mr. Modest to Miss Tell-the-World, Mr. Stay-at-home to Miss Let's go, Mr. Cooperative to Miss Bossemall. These are rule-of-thumb characterizations, yet they fit many people who come to us for counsel. Awareness of such facts help us to understand the situations which are presented to us. The temperamental reaction to life, which is a part of the make-up of man or woman must be given its full weight. Problems look different and are different; answers seem different and are different to persons of such widely different temperamental reactions.⁹

Wide differences do not in themselves indicate that either one is inferior or unwholesome. Unwholesomeness, or indication of emotional sickness, enters when a person holds to his own type of reaction in an extreme way and is unable to recognize value in a different type of approach. Mental health like

⁸ Ibid., p. 25-26.

⁹ Wood, op. cit., p. 36.

physical is a matter of degree. It is not a question of all or nothing. People who are mentally and emotionally healthy have their problems and they approach them in different ways. This is one of the interesting features in working with people. One is not abnormal because he is different. It is normal that he should be different.

When it comes to such deep differences as those between extroverted and introverted persons, the relationships of marriage are sure to have their complications. And if we expect the extrovert and the introvert to have their problems it may be even more difficult for two extroverts to get along with each other. While few persons are extremely extroverted or introverted, these differences do exist in significant measure. Any married person who tends toward one of the extremes and whose spouse tends toward the other should be helped to realize that along with the splendid resources for sharing and supplementing involved in their differences, there is also absolute necessity for taking account of the fact that they do not and cannot react in the same way. They must therefore live by something like a philosophy of mutual superiority, each recognizing that the point of view and life reaction of the other has certain advantages and that in any particular instance it needs to be asked whether the reaction of the other does not promise more for the solution of the matter at hand than does one's own. And, in effect, they must combine the best resources of both in their marriage partnership.

Different temperaments involve different types of moods and differing degrees of warmth and adjustability. One spouse may have a mood swing which is narrow, seldom departing from a settled type of reaction, while the other has a mood swing so wide that he alternates between cheerfulness and affection on the one hand and despondency or seeming coldness on the other. Such a person will often need to be interpreted to his partner in marriage. The total personality must be set over against any particular moment in the swing of moods; and the individual, who, if taken at the extreme of his difficult period would be hard to live with, must be taken in terms of his total score including the times when he is lovable, considerate and interesting.

In counseling the minister must also make allowance for the rigidity and flexibility patterns of persons. Is this particular person rigid in his reactions, with only a slight range of adjustability, or is he on the other hand skilled and flexible in give and take? Or, yet again, is he docile, unable to take much initiative but able to follow the leadership of another? The amount of initiative we can expect depends upon the kind of persons we are dealing with.¹⁰

Problems Related to a Degree of Maturity or Immaturity

Marriage calls for maturity. Persons who rush into it hastily are likely to find many difficult problems of which they had not been aware. It is true that chronological age is not a dependable index of maturity. At any age emotional

¹⁰Ibid., p. 38.

immaturity may show up. Some of the bitter things that people say to each other in uncontrolled outbursts of temper can be put down as due to emotional immaturity. Failure to take due responsibility for one's part in the homemaking venture also may be due to delay in the growing up process. Difficulties which a man and woman have along these lines need not be regarded as final if the persons are willing and able to grow. Incidentally we must never allow our maturity to become too grave. There is always something appealing in a degree of youthfulness. If some man, however, in his immaturity has not adjusted himself to the seriousness of steady work; if a woman has a nostalgia for the easier and more protected status of girlhood; if either man or woman is obsessed with his or her attractiveness to the other sex in general, and not sufficiently dedicated to the building of a splendid marriage relationship with the chosen one, these immaturities must be recognized and the person must be counseled and helped to outgrow them. Sometimes emotional immaturity takes the form of seeking alibis for things that go wrong as well as rejecting responsibility for keeping things going right.

A form of emotional immaturity often met in marital difficulties is one in which a person has been in love with an image or "ideal" of the other sex. Temporarily he has identified the chosen person with that love image. After marriage he has found many discrepancies between the image and the person. This problem belongs more or less to many marriages.

The greatest danger is with those who hold fast to the image and become more and more alienated from the person. They are "married" to an imaginary person and are moving toward a break with the real one. The counselor needs to help them make the transition from the dream person to the real individual else the dream will mislead them into permanent disappointment and frustration.

The counselor can let such persons know that to have a dream image of the ideal person of the other sex is a natural part of youthful developing, but that danger enters in if one tries to make the real person fit the dream image and becomes blind to the good points of the real person. One must be married to a person. It is perilous to try to be married to a dream. Some persons never learn this and their lives are a wistful search to find a person who will fit their dream rather than to make their dream an aid to the appreciation of a real person. Landis says concerning this:

One of the most important criteria of emotional maturity is objectivity, the ability to get outside ourselves and see ourselves and our interests realistically, to view circumstances as they are without our subjective coloring of them. Small children view most of the circumstances of their lives subjectively. They are self-centered. But with increased maturity comes the ability to see things in their proper relationships, the ability to stand aside, as it were, and judge events more impartially. The extent to which we are able to do this is a measure of our objectivity. Without objectivity an individual will have distorted ideas of himself and his needs and "rights." He will constantly misjudge others and fail to evaluate his own motives. Few people can be completely objective, but it is an attribute worth cultivating.¹¹

¹¹ J. T. and Mary Landis, Building a Successful Marriage (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), p. 115.

Problems Arising from Ambivalence of Emotion

Ambivalence of emotion means that one's feeling may alternate between love and hatred with something of a pendulum-like quality. No two persons perfectly adapt, or adjust to, each other. Even toward a person who is loved sincerely there may be occasional reactions of antagonism. At some points even the best adjusted thwart and frustrate each other. Some persons, when the first reaction of antagonism comes to the surface after weeks or months of happy marriage, are panic stricken. They think that their feelings have changed disastrously. They should realize that a touch of ambivalence is showing up in their marriage and that this does not imply any permanent change.

In some marriages the unity is so splendid as to be fairly or completely free from reactions of antagonism. These are not likely to come to the counselor. They are marriages in which the two partners, especially if they are faithful Christians, recognize the differences of temperament and make-up and resolve them with Christian love and understanding. In others love and antagonism both exist. This aspect of experience is illustrated in the sort of union in which the two cannot get along together and yet cannot get along without each other. These are people who are likely to need a counselor to interpret their situation to them. To such persons it should be pointed out that by taking hold of their own lives they can create a pattern of living together which will build up their love reactions into

a more substantial part of their experience. At the same time by better understanding and by caution about treading on each other's toes they can reduce their antagonisms to more manageable proportions. They should study every means of bringing satisfactions and pleasures to each other, and should learn also to avoid the danger points in each other's personalities. Even if their love and hate reactions are both strong they can build up the love experiences toward a more perfect score by resourceful development of the pleasing elements in their fellowship and careful avoidance of things which frustrate or enrage each other. Thus the love reactions will grow and the hate reactions will recede. A good rule for any one who wants to be loved is to be lovable. In such a statement the word love is used in an inclusive sense. Love is not merely an emotion; it is an attitude and type of behavior. Acting more loving is one step toward becoming more loving. It certainly is only a half truth to say that a person has no control over his emotions. The other half of the truth is that many desirable emotional outcomes can be cultivated in behavior. Otherwise courtship would be meaningless. Experience shows that many splendid marriages have enough potentialities of antagonism to wreck them and many marriages which for a time are burdened by too much hatred can be aided to release the intrinsic potentialities of love.

Too much self-love is one of the greatest handicaps to marriage. The person who is immature in this regard considers

all events and circumstances from the point of view of how they affect him, while the person who is socially and ethically more mature thinks in terms of the pleasure and good of others. Love normally helps people to grow toward a greater ethical maturity. Love and selfishness are incongruous, yet a person may have an intense emotional love along with a difficult self-centeredness. In such a case he is likely to try to make the other an adjunct of his own personality. When the other objects to such a role he is likely to be hurt and puzzled. The cure for too much self-love is not blame and criticism but to give the person enough patient and resourceful love to bring to life whatever kernel and seed of larger growth he may possess. What love he has is the natural starting point. Merely to call him selfish is, at best, classification, and at worst it is a way of hardening and discouraging him. It cannot be a cure although with some it might serve as a warning.

To raise with a person the question whether he is not too much in love with himself and to show him that if this is true, it will be hard for him to give a fully satisfactory love to anyone else, and it will at least clarify the situation for him. Much better, however, is to help the spouse of such a person to continue to give him a love that is mature and unselfish and which at the same time does not cater to him in such a way as to confirm his selfishness. To guide the immature person in a series of experiences in doing and thinking for others, as rapidly as he can move out in that direction,

is one of the best means of giving him the "feel" of shared living and bringing him to a more mature development.¹²

Problems Arising from Negative Emotional Attitudes of Persons

In the original make-up of all persons are capacities for two opposite types of emotional organization of personality. We may describe emotional attitudes as positive or negative. Positive emotional attitudes are love and trust. From these comes a third which is joy. Negative emotional attitudes are fear and anger. From these bitterness arises.

Every person has some sort of combination of all these emotions. Preponderance of some and lesser development of others may be related in some degree to organic structure and glandular functioning but it is also in large part an outcome of the experiences through which the individual has come. Sooner or later if his experiences have been hard and frustrating he is likely to have developed more of fear and antagonism. If he has been loved, understood and well cared for he has had a better chance to develop love and trust. It is therefore important when people have much of fear, antagonism or meanness in them to ask what has made them that way. The next question is, "How can more constructive factors be brought into their lives?" As a person is in large measure a product of what life has done to him in his early years so also he

¹²Wood, op. cit., p. 41.

continues to be shaped somewhat by the experiences which he has. And in maturity he has a part in making his experiences what they are to become. Consequently he has responsibility for taking a hand in directing his own further development. This is no simple matter, but it is at least one which the counselor can help him to understand. An interpretation of personalities in terms of differences in emotional organization of which we are now speaking can give the counselor a clue to the better understanding of many problems.¹³

We recognize, therefore, the positive type of personality with its emotional organization largely in terms of love and trust, and the negative type existing and functioning characteristically in terms of antipathies and fears. These factors operate not only on the observable levels of behavior but also at deeper levels. Hasty analyses are therefore to be avoided. It is commonly true that persons of the first type who have love and trust have also happiness and joy. Moreover they tend to bring out love and trust in those around them, thus to help other persons to create happiness and joy. However, one who is usually loving and trustful may on occasion have an outburst of anger or an element of distrust. Every person has the continuing problem of using the creative emotional factors of love and trust for the building up of life and keeping the

¹³R. E. Baber, Marriage and the Family (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1953), p. 176-189.

destructive emotions under control. Persons of the second type, characterized by antipathies and fears have as a result much unhappiness and bitterness. They are in danger of bringing out antipathies and fears in others and creating unhappiness for those around them. Each class can be further divided. Among positive personalities are those which have more of love and less of trust. They may be loving and yet fearful persons. Or there may be more of confidence and less of love, as in the coldly self-sufficient type. Among negative personalities the fear reaction may be strong while the antipathies are weak. Or the antagonism may be strong while the person is comparatively free from fear. While a person may be very loving and at the same time timid and fearful, yet Christianity holds to a principle that "love casts out fear" and this principle can be discovered in common experience.

Any one of these emotional attitudes may be the dominant factor in a personality and many and diverse combinations are found. Many persons could be classified as the loving type or confident type; others are fear-ridden or hate-ridden personalities. Yet the positive emotions tend to reinforce each other and each negative emotional attitude makes some contribution to the development of the other. It is easier to hate those whom one fears and to fear those whom one hates. At the same time it is easier to trust those whom one loves, and to love those whom one trusts. These emotional reaction patterns cut across all differences in mind and temperament

and enter into practical living at every point. They have significance for social life in general, for marriage, and for religion. Christian living and personal development are closely involved in the ways in which these emotions are developed and used. When a person gets a better understanding of the forces that have played upon his life he is in a better position to deal with present factors. Talking out freely the meaning of the factors which have shaped people often brings a more kindly understanding on the part of another and for the person himself healing and readjustment.¹⁴

Problems Which Arise out of a Particular Man-Woman Combination

Every marriage is a man-woman combination, and in a sense all marital problems arise out of this combination. Every marriage is specific. The woman must adjust not to man in general but to this man, and vice versa. No two cases are alike. This infinite personal variability makes the study of marriage endlessly interesting. There are cases in which this man and this woman have unusual problems, or more problems than the "average" couple, because they are they. Many and diverse combinations can succeed in marriage if the meaning and requirements of the particular combination are understood.

Age differences come in. A woman married to a man much older than she is has certain adjustments to make which count-

¹⁴Wood, op. cit., p. 43.

less women have made happily. Such a match is ideal for an occasional woman because she is of a psychological type which can fall in love only with an older man. Similarly there are occasional cases in which a young man married to a much older woman is well matched because of his need for a "mother" type in marriage more than for a companion of his own age. However, he will still have many adjustments to make.

Wide differences in temperament or culture, which would usually be exceedingly disadvantageous to marriage may be bridged by that something in these individuals which originally drew them together and which may continue to hold them together if they will build on it. In such cases there is all the more need of the principle which applies to all marriages that they must live by their assets and not focus attention on their liabilities. They must build a companionship on the things that enable them to please each other and on common interests and ideals. They must continue to build up their marriage and must avoid all things which tear it down. They must keep it in repair and not allow it to deteriorate at any point. They must and they can continue to be lovers as they were when they joined their lives together. Toward this end, however, there must be dedicated and resourceful cooperation of both. Neither can accomplish it alone, although either can afford to do more than half. If either does his part with a demanding or critical eye he is not doing his part. If both are willing to go more than half way and to give themselves unstintingly, marriage

can succeed in spite of wide differences.

Sound rules are that a man and wife do some things together as they did before marriage, that they learn to do and to appreciate new things together after marriage, and that each be sympathetic toward those interests of the other which are not shared. The wife can afford to do some things with her husband just because he likes them. She will often learn valuable new interests in that way. And he should join sometimes with her in doing things she likes to do and going places she likes to go. He also will gain new activities, new interests and new friends in that way. And all the time the two will be building comradeship which is of the essence of married living. Not all of her activities need to be shared by him, nor his by her, but toward the unshared activities, provided they are wholesome, there should be appreciation and tolerance.¹⁵

Problems Arising from Sheer Misfortune

Marriage is for better or worse. Sometimes it is the worse that comes. Accidents, illnesses, disasters entirely outside the control of these persons may lay a heavy hand on their lives. Almost always there is something left on which life can be built. And faith that there is a large and indestructible good which God the Holy Spirit Himself preserves for his children will enable them to keep up their morale and to find some splendid possibilities where all seemed to have

¹⁵Duvall, When You Marry, p. 282.

been swept away. It is, after all, the growing of souls, not an unruffled life that is more important.

Adjustments in marriage have a cumulative value. Happy experiences in one area create favorable prospects for happiness in other relationships. Marriage is, after all, vastly more than a set of adjustments. It is a creative, on-going union of growing persons in a changing world. Its attitudes interpenetrate. Its joys help one another. Sometimes also the echoes of its failures carry over into its subsequent experiences.

CHAPTER III

FUNCTIONS OF PASTORAL COUNSELING

Marriage is not static. It has momentum, and counseling takes account of the momentum of life. The nature of counseling is related to the nature of marriage. Therefore, the range of counseling must be broad, as life is broad; its reach must be deep, as life is deep, and its perspective must be developmental because living persons always have possibilities for further development. For the minister these all are related to his pastoral task. They are to be seen also in relation to Christ's own statement of the meaning of Christianity in his words, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." This can be realized both for individuals and for marriages, so we note some of the varied functions of ministerial counseling.

Listening

There is a ministry of sympathetic and creative listening. In the presence of a listener who understands his situation a person in trouble can gain relief and often new insight. By getting his problem "off his chest" through talking it out in the presence of one who sympathizes and does not condemn, the individual goes through an experience of catharsis which frees his mind and emotions from many tangles. Often by asking pertinent questions the counselor can help his client

to see his problem more completely and to explore aspects of it which he had not thought of before. The great value of a non-directive element in counseling which is rightly emphasized at the present time is that solutions or new insights arrived at become the person's own. He is able to go to work with more resourcefulness because he himself has been at the heart of the creative process.¹

An Informational Element

Much counseling has an informational element. Part of the need arises from sheer ignorance and perplexity. It is inevitable that there should be perplexities in marriage as in other important matters. That people meet issues for which their previous experience has not prepared them does not warrant the assumption that they are of sub-normal adequacy in any way. Sometimes what the person needs most is to come in contact with an experience wider and more objective than his own, from which the counselor can make clear to him that his problems are not unique, that, in fact, they are the sort that normal people often have to deal with, and that the difficulties which seem to him to threaten shipwreck have been met successfully by many people. The need of instruction may lie in such questions as the proportion of income that may safely be allocated to rent, food, or clothing. Or it may involve the question how

¹Russell L. Dicks, Pastoral Work and Personal Counseling (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949), p. 43.

and where to find certain services which the family needs. In almost any area of family experience there are persons who need information. The counselor has a broader knowledge of the needs of marriage and resources for meeting them than do his clients. Often also he knows what they ought to expect in marriage better than they do.

A minister's role with a childless couple might be to encourage them by the reports that modern medical science can help many couples who would otherwise be childless. He might also help them to contact the right medical help. In other cases he would encourage them or guide them in the adopting of children, particularly by putting them in touch with some good child-placing service.²

Reminding

Counseling has a reminding function. Married people know that they should build a life pattern in which there are joys and good times together as well as duties and burdens. But sometimes they forget. Sometimes two people whose life has become ingrown need to be reminded that they can live more fully by being interested in things outside themselves. New interests and concerns help them create a new wealth of zestful companionship. A marriage takes into itself something from

²E. H. Mudd, The Practice of Marriage Counseling (New York: Association Press, 1951), p. 190.

the content of the interests which the man and woman share. Sometimes a listless marriage can have nothing better done for it than to get this man and woman to do more things together, giving them new recreational, aesthetic, social and spiritual interests in common. By building the structure of a shared life, they create substance for their marriage.³

Interpretation

Interpreting is sometimes the greatest need. A husband and wife are two different people with different experiences, temperaments, and evaluations. A counselor is often moved to say to a man or woman, deeply offended by something which the other has said or done, "After all, are you sure that the words or behavior which hurt you so much meant to your spouse what you have made them mean?" It would seem that a man and woman who have gone through the experience of courtship, marriage and perhaps years of living together should be beyond the need of having anyone interpret the one to the other, but often it is not so. It is not enough merely to explain their behavior to them, correct as such explanation may be, as Rogers maintains:

As clinical counselors learned to understand more adequately the factors which underlie behavior and the causes of specific behavior patterns, they tended to

³L. F. Wood, Pastoral Counseling in Family Relationships (New York: The Commission on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1948), p. 52.

make more and more adequate diagnoses of individual situations. Then came the natural mistake of assuming that treatment was merely diagnosis in reverse, that all that was needed to help the individual was to explain to him the causes of his behavior. There was a naive faith that this intellectual explanation of the difficulty would result in changed attitudes and feelings. . . . However, interpretation, no matter how accurate, has value only to the extent that it is accepted and assimilated by the client. It has come to be recognized that we do not change the client's behavior very effectively simply by giving him an intellectual picture of his patterning, no matter how accurate.⁴

Counseling is more than that. It is the process to aid the human being in his soul distresses, to enable him to get an insight himself into what he is doing, to see and accept this, and then to bring about enough major or minor alterations in his personality make-up that things that have been a problem to a person begin to be solved at the very root.

A Steadying Influence

Counseling has a steadying function in many cases. The counselor helps the person to find his true sources of inward strength, to meet his difficulties courageously and to march face forward into life when it is most difficult. Counseling may help the counselee to overcome fear and panic. On occasion it induces a person to delay harsh and hasty action which would cause incalculable damage. Often it brings a marriage past the reefs until it can sail like a ship in deep waters.

⁴Carl R. Rogers, Counseling and Psychotherapy (Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1942), p. 25.

In any or all of these ways a married couple may work out difficulties with their pastor if they are really determined to do so. The pastor cannot decide for them what to do or how to love each other. Yet if they are willing to learn and ready to do their best to work out difficulties with him, there is much to accomplish. When one of them is unwilling to change or co-operate, the going is rough and the prospect of a solution remote. Yet if the other is adaptable and resourceful, willing to grow and devoted in love, there is much to be hoped for in the long run, if they can stay together and be open to mutual influence from the new attitudes. In such a situation the growth which one may achieve in accepting what was unacceptable and appreciating what was once overlooked will reveal that there are productive forces already at work that may lead to long-range progress. In the face of difficulties if the pastor can have the patience that growth requires, there is reason not to despair; and so long as he does not despair, there is opportunity for spiritual resources to flow through him that will bring them courage to grow in their love.⁵

Offering Techniques and Resources

Counseling often has to do with techniques and resources for readjustment which can be used by a client if they are brought to his attention. Sometimes what is needed is a better understanding of the delicate ways in which one can be an acceptable lover sexually, or it may be more knowledge of how to be a good manager of the practical side of the home partnership. Sometimes a study course for a group of couples dealing with the various adjustments of marriage is needed, or it may be a course in which husband and wife can come to a better understanding of the problems of child training and of their respective roles in this responsibility. As there is a know-

⁵P. E. Johnson, Psychology of Pastoral Care (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953), p. 156.

how of everything else there is certainly a know-how of marriage although the latter is infinitely more delicate, varied and personal than almost any other undertaking into which people enter. The counselor never forgets the highly individual character of marital adjustments.

Aid in Reorganization of Life

Sometimes the counseling process points to nothing less than the need of a reorganization of life. A person who has been selfish must become less so if he is to be worth living with; a person who has been emotionally immature must become more mature; a person who has been unfaithful must be true. Many marriages are not what they ought to be because they never had much in them that was God-like. The man and woman have never thought about receiving God into their personal lives and their home. They live in a small and cramping set of relationships. They need to tie up everything which they have and are to the large, the uplifting, the enriching and transforming purposes of God in Christ.

Life is a growing process, a maturing experience, a stabilizing force - never finished, never complete. The purpose of living is to develop spiritually mature human beings; maturity to the place of accepting and carrying through responsibility in the creative process of the universe of which we are a part; maturity to the place that we may feel comfortable without forcing our wills upon others; maturity to the place that we are willing to let others be free, thus gaining freedom for ourselves. We gain maturity of soul so that we may come into fellowship with God which is to gain eternity, or the immortal life.⁶

⁶Dicks, op. cit., p. 13.

Assurance of Forgiveness

The priestly function of the minister enables him, when conditions call for it, to give assurance of forgiveness. That God forgives is a tremendous fact at the foundation of human forgiveness. To know that one's past is forgiven and that his sins are blotted out is indispensably necessary for the restoration of morale with many persons. Long years ago William James defined conversion as a process sudden or gradual by which a person consciously wrong, consciously inferior and consciously unhappy becomes consciously right, consciously superior and consciously happy as a result of religious faith. The assurance of forgiveness is one of the rewards of turning away from paths of failure and unhappiness and setting one's feet in paths which promise the best for marriage and for life.⁷

The office of the ministry presupposes an adaptation of method and practical means of approach to the needs of the hour. But it also presupposes an unvarying adherence to the commission entrusted to us. An ambassador of Jesus Christ has been given a very definite objective by his King. In the attainment of this objective he is to use all the means of wisdom and expediency at his disposal; but never for a moment is the objective to be lost sight of, and that objective is the salvation of human souls through the proclamation of the saving Gospel of Christ. There never is a time when the clear note of conviction sounded by the ambassadors of Jesus Christ was more needed, telling men of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and without whom no one can come to the Father. In spite of all the vaunted advancement made by the human race in our day and time, in spite of all the tremendous accomplishments in the

⁷Wood, op. cit., p. 55.

scientific field, in spite of all inventions and discoveries, in spite of the speed with which we live, the problems of the soul remain the same. The fundamental need of man is still the question as to how he may attain the grace of God, how the barrier of sin may be removed, and how the problem of his eternity may be solved.

CHAPTER IV

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES IN COUNSELING

While no two counselors can function in identical ways, nor are any two cases alike, it is well to follow principles which have been found to apply broadly. The following suggestions, therefore, are offered.

Create a Counseling Atmosphere

This is brought to pass in a variety of ways, particularly by being approachable and interested in people. At the same time one must have taken pains through special study and experience to gain such competence as to win confidence. If a counselor has helped some persons, this creates confidence which makes it easier for others to come to him. Furthermore, a helpful treatment of family relationships in sermons, organizations and various kinds of group discussions makes it clear that the minister is concerned about the problems of his people. At times the emphasis will be on general personal factors underlying human relationships. At other times emphasis will be on specific attitudes which contribute to the growth and success of marriage. This will familiarize individuals with the idea that marriage is dynamic, that success in it does not occur ready made but is literally created and that light is valuable on relationships which have been baffling to many. It will be

easier for people to take their more personal difficulties to a man who has already been helpful in group treatment of such matters. They will feel that he is a person who is sympathetic, understanding and helpful. A man whose public ministry is family-minded will find that members of families turn to him in their times of need.

The kind of contacts a minister makes in his pastoral calling also have much to do with the creation of an atmosphere in which it is easy for people to open up their problems. This does not mean that a minister's calls are conducted as a scouting expedition in search of domestic difficulties. But if he proves himself a real friend interested in having the church help families as much as he is in getting families to help the church, he will find the hearts of his people open. One thing that is most valuable in the relation of pastoral calling to personal counseling is that a minister comes to know where and how his people live in more ways than one. He is likely to be alert to problems before they become serious and in some cases to prevent them entirely by wise leadership and group counseling. Then when a problem does arise on which the persons need special help he does not need to win their confidence; he already has it. He does not need to get acquainted with them and to build up a background for the problem; he already knows them and is acquainted with their background.¹

¹H. L. Lieske, "Principles of Counseling," Concordia Theological Monthly XXIV (October, 1953), 725-729.

Let the Approach Be to the Counselor

Often a minister, knowing that a certain family is in domestic difficulty, may be tempted to go to them and offer his services. He will be incomparably more likely to render a real service if he has created such an atmosphere and point of view that they come to him. Until this approach is made, any advance made by him may be premature. They are probably not ready for his counsel. On the other hand, this means that in the public mind the idea should be cultivated that people in domestic difficulties should not hesitate to go to a counselor. The minister, more than any other, can create situations favorable to counseling.²

Respect the Sacredness of Confidence

It is absolutely necessary that the counselee should feel fully safe in entrusting the pastor with his confidential story. This confidence is his right. Without it he would not give him any intimate knowledge of his life. The minister may be so eager to help that he asks advice from others to check his own point of view. In no case is it allowable for him to do this in such a way as to give away, without definite permission, a secret that has been entrusted to him. Better ask no outside council, however valuable, than to do it in such a manner as to give the case away. Then also the minister, being at the

²Ibid., p. 718.

same time a preacher, may be tempted to use something slightly disguised from the confidential lives of his counselees as sermon material. It is necessary to keep it back lest the disguise wear thin at some spot and a confidence be betrayed.³

Take an Objective Point of View

The purpose of counseling is to help the patient, not to judge him. Therefore, the counselor must try to see the whole situation in terms of background, causes and motives of behavior. He must also see it in terms of resources for rebuilding lives. In this connection the words of Jesus are pertinent. "I came not to judge . . . but to save." The point of view is that of a case worker seeing the problem as a whole and treating it on its merits, or of a physician making a diagnosis, but not stopping there. The purpose is healing and restoration of wholesome living.

Being objective, however, does not mean that we drop our values and accept those of the counselee. Something bordering on this is often suggested in reference to counseling. Assuming that whatever the counselee wants is right is not objective. Neither is the removal of ethical considerations objective. The individual must live in his world. He must solve his problems not merely within himself but in a set of social and moral relationships. His own desires and points of view,

³P. E. Johnson, Psychology of Pastoral Care (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953), p. 112.

therefore, cannot be taken out of the context of social living. Being fully objective means that we take all the factors into consideration, turn away from a mere praise and blame evaluation, make a diagnosis in terms of causes of difficulty which may be removed and means of help that may be drawn upon, and then set in operation new forces which make for a solution of the problem. In fact we must get beyond the idea merely of solving some particular problem, important as that may be, and build the foundations and the superstructure of a life that is within the possibility of the individual and at the same time acceptable to others.⁴

Be a Good Listener

The counselor who listens much and speaks little is more likely to help. To listen sympathetically is itself a service to the person in trouble. To show the respect of listening as if it were really important to hear what this person has to say and be a witness and helper in the solving of his problem strengthens his morale. Moreover, it helps the person to be objective about himself if he can tell his story frankly, realizing that someone else is hearing it. The counselor can be a helper in this process by a word, a nod, an encouragement or a well placed question. These apparently slight forms of participation may help direct the working of the person's own

⁴Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1939), p. 175.

mind, so that he sees new light on this problem.

A counselor who has listened carefully and who has sought to understand all factors in the situation is, himself, in a better position to give counsel, when that is needed, than one who passes quick judgments or comes to hasty conclusions. At the same time, when the counselor has listened carefully and has given his best resources of understanding and experience, it is reasonable to assume that he will have some counsel to give. As there is danger in hasty solutions, there is also danger in the idea that the counselor ought not to have any definite suggestions to make. In many instances the non-directive technique may be best. In others it may be assumed that the counselee really does not have within his own insights and experiences the solution to his problem. In such a case one might hope that the counselor may have what the counselee lacks and may be able to make suggestions which will transform the situation. Counseling in family relations is not entirely different from counseling in other types of problems. The assumption of professional service is that the professional person has taken advantage of a body of insights and techniques which have been gradually developed and handed down by the total group of workers in his field. Then when an individual comes to him the professional person is expected to have an expert opinion which is more valuable than the opinion of the untrained person. Without such an assumption the professions could not function, nor is it likely that the counseling

function could continue long. The person who has studied the problems of marriage and family life broadly and objectively, who has taken advantage of the studies and insights of the whole group of students and workers in this field, and who then has personally come to grips through his own experience with large numbers of people who have had problems to solve is certain to bring to the counseling situation something which the counselee lacks. Otherwise he would not be worthy of the confidence of people who come to him with their problems.⁵

Hear Both Sides Whenever Possible

Some persons come to the counselor to comfort themselves and make a case against the other person. If such is the approach it would be fatal to accept the one point of view however earnestly or persuasively presented. A statement by the other person often throws an entirely different light upon some of the facts or upon the situation as a whole. Ministers, however, will be approached by many sincere and fair-minded people who will see their own faults and mistakes clearly and will take their full share of blame.

An approach to the other party should be with the consent and approval of the one who comes first. Often the best procedure is to get that person to arrange with the other to have him come to the counselor. In some cases the person who comes

⁵Johnson, op. cit., p. 157.

first will not want his spouse to know that he has discussed the problem with a third person. Such a wish must be respected. In some instances one person is the key to the solution of the problem. Where we cannot talk with both, or with all concerned, it is well to do our best with the one who comes to us. Sometimes this is the person who cares most. Or it may be the one who has more insight and who wants to increase his insight.⁶

Get the Person or Persons to Tell Enough But Not Too Much

The counselor wants to know whatever is necessary to point the way to a solution. More than this is superfluous. There is such a thing as asking or telling too much. Any curiosity is out of place. A person had better approach his counseling responsibilities on his knees. In cases in which it is inevitable that revelations deeply damaging to self-respect of one or both persons should come out, it is necessary to take special care to let them know that they still have the respect and, so far as necessary, the affections of the counselor. In some such cases it might be better, if some other counselor is available, to get him to deal with matters which might ever subsequently make a couple ashamed in the presence of such a continuing friend as a minister. Yet just at this point a major function of religious faith appears in that forgiveness, divine and human, erases any ugly features of the past and fully

⁶ E. H. Mudd, The Practice of Marriage Counseling (New York: Association Press, 1951), p. 189.

assures people of their restored standing which accompanies the restoration of their love. The assurance with which a couple can come back from sorrow and humiliation to joy and confidence is not to be based on the perfectness of their record, nor need it be dependent upon keeping their failures from the knowledge of their minister. The minister as a counselor will have taken to himself the meaning of Jesus' words, "Blessed are the merciful." (Matt. 5).

Look for the Deeper Problem Beneath the Apparent Ones

Every aspect of a problem is worthy of the counselor's interest and every point at which help can be given is worthy of careful thought. But often the difficulties which smart most are things on the surface, while beneath them lies a deeper wound. Or it may be that a person is sincerely seeking help on a lesser problem while working towards greater clearness of mind as to a major one. Or he may be struggling with himself to get up the courage to reveal the one which is really more serious. A very troubled person may use a minor problem as a means of testing the counselor to find out whether his response in understanding and in friendliness promises well for his treatment of the more serious difficulty. A person may hesitate all the more to bring up the deepest trouble just because of the seriousness of it. The sympathetic counselor recognizes the difficulty which many of his counselees experience. In any case the counselor should be alert to any indications or symptoms of problems beneath the surface. These may be

medical, needing the attention of a physician. They may be of a mental nature, requiring the attention of a psychiatrist. They may be financial, calling for a better handling of the budget or more productive use of the abilities of the family. Or a particular case will often show the need for a better social order with fair economic opportunity for all families. Sometimes the deeper problem is a moral or spiritual one. There is no doubt that some of the troubles which people experience reveal that their selfishness, their follies and their sins are catching up with them. It is unrealistic to side-step this possibility, for after all there are moral and social aspects of all questions. Each person has to live in society and in a moral universe.⁷

Help the Counselee to Solve His Own Problem

Our desire as counselors is to help troubled people to feel that they have been able to meet their difficulties and solve their problems. The real aim of counseling is to help the person to meet life as successfully as he can, and, indeed, to create a pattern of living for himself and others will be best for all concerned. As counselors, the wish is to see the person solve his problem and go on his way a more adequate person. We do not wish him to feel that we have solved his

⁷L. F. Wood, Pastoral Counseling in Family Relationships (New York: The Commission on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1948), p. 64.

problems for him even when without a counselor he could not have met them at all. The relationship in which we are most interested is his relationship with those to whom he belongs and who belong to him. The paramount aim of counseling is to help people to grow in themselves, to handle their problems more effectively and to create for themselves and for others a wholesome pattern of living. The central aim of pastoral counseling is found in persons and their handling of their lives in Christ. While there may be inevitably a certain feeling of dependence upon a counselor, he wants this to be as slight as possible and quickly outgrown.⁸

Use the Resources of the Community

In the community it is almost certain that there will be other resources for counseling upon which the minister can draw for some of the cases which come to him. He will need to develop great practical wisdom in knowing when cases need to be sent to a physician, a psychiatrist, or some other specialist. It is well for a minister to be in close touch with such persons. Then, furthermore, while one of these specialists is being consulted for the adjustment of parents, some new educational or recreational program may need to be found for their children whose lives are being disrupted.

Whether in the church or in other groups which the

⁸Lieske, op. cit., p. 721.

community offers, the counselor will need to scrutinize the available resources of his community for giving social reinforcement to his counseling work. Helping a man and woman to find deeper understanding and more appreciative attitudes toward each other is of vital importance but it is incomplete without a wholesome set of social relationships for the family. A problem family may need friends as much as they need anything in the world. And a minister can be a manipulator of forces which fit needy individuals into groups which supply just what they lack, namely a sustaining fellowship and human comradeship. These constitute an important part of every life. The minister has a position almost unique in the professional world in that he is a creator and a manipulator of such groups. The power of group influence to aid the work of a counselor or any other well-wisher of human life has been no more than glimpsed at up to the present. In the future it is to be hoped that much more resourcefulness may be developed in the creation and use of such groups.⁹

Get Individuals and Families Adjusted to Life
and to God Through Christ and His Church

From the standpoint of religion, or from any standpoint, the counseling task cannot be complete unless the adjustment of individuals to one another is a part of a larger adjustment of their lives. In the marvelous experience of salvation through

⁹Wood, op. cit., p. 68.

Christ, marriage partners can hope to attain true harmony in spiritual, mental, and emotional relationships. Until spiritual growth is manifest, the most sensitive part of human personality still remains neglected. Families need Christ. They need Christ because they need His salvation. They need to be saved from the sins of selfishness, faithlessness, ignorance, pessimism, and hate. They need the love of God for service to each other, for joyous, creative living. Spiritual growth insures continuous growth of personality. Repentance and forgiveness will lead to surrender and dedication, for, briefly put, we now grow in grace and knowledge as individuals. Families can grow in grace and knowledge as they, through the love of Christ, exercise themselves, each and all, in love and foster ever new growth through the use of the means of grace. These families can triumphantly meet a world of hate and greed with love and unselfishness. Such spiritual growth also acts as a tonic to physical and mental health. The believing individual is invigorated by true faith in Christ. He is mentally and emotionally set free to live purposefully through the absence of fear and through the release of tension. The ability to forgive through the forgiveness of Christ makes possible an emotional stability which can withstand criticism and misfortune. The result is peace of mind. Socially, too, the Christian is benefited. His love for others gives him a sense of responsibility for their welfare and happiness. Here, then, are the

components of the well-adjusted and confident personality.

Such personalities make possible a Christian family.¹⁰

Some Necessary Cautions

Having emphasized the necessity that the minister safeguard and promote the interests of the persons who come to him, we now mention the need that the minister also protect himself. The counseling relationship involves certain dangers. Through sheer need of help or through hunger for a minister's interest and sympathy some persons would take more of a minister's time than their cases justify. When such a counselee is a woman, there is the possibility not only of wasted time but of comment and of gossip. Interviews with such persons should be so staged that the minister's reputation is not jeopardized.

One must also be aware of a type, either man or woman, who will blame his counselor if he still continues to fail in marriage. It is particularly necessary that a person should guard against saying anything that will involve legal complications, as in separation and divorce. Moreover, the counselor needs to know the laws of his state with regard to confidences. Some states do not protect the confidential character of counseling interviews, and may even require the minister to divulge in court confidential material which neither he nor the counselee

¹⁰The Christian Family in the Modern World, Fifth Yearbook (River Forest: Lutheran Education Association, 1948), p. 48.

ever intended to have repeated. If in general it is wise to be sparing in giving advice, this applies all the more to cases in which a divorce seems indicated. In such a situation the minister is not the one to make the decision. He should exhaust all possibilities of reconciliation and healing in the spirit of Christ.

The counselor should not expect the full cooperation of people or immediate success of plans. He must depend upon people who have already been in difficulty and may be again. Yet the couple who fail at first may ultimately succeed. The best that can be done with some problems is to reduce them to manageable proportions. While there is life, there will be problems, and these will often be symptoms of the need of new and more creative adjustments. Problems should not, therefore, be regarded as deplorable interruptions of the smooth flow of marital success but as stimuli to newer levers of adjustment and to a more creative unity.¹¹

¹¹Wood, op. cit., p. 71.

CHAPTER V

HELPING MARRIED PEOPLE MEET EACH OTHER'S NEEDS

Paths toward solutions of marital difficulties lie in the direction of what particular persons want in marriage. As a matter of fact, people want different things and they want them in different ways. They want what they want with different degrees of intensity and adjustability. Persons may be equally serious in different directions. Those equally gifted with humor may laugh about different things. Persons parsimonious to the same degree may want to save in different ways and spenders want to spend for different things. Husbands and wives equally fond of pleasures may be pleasure loving in different directions. Persons differ also in principles by which they decide what things they shall seek and in techniques for getting what they want. For example, a man and woman both of whom are equally sure that it is a good thing to have a generous income may differ so widely about how to get it, both in principle and in determining upon ways of earning, as to be incompatible as married partners. Marriage is a venture in 1) getting what the individual wants from his association with another; 2) giving what the other wants, and better still; 3) creating and sharing together what they both want and 4) finding a fulfilment of the will of God in a shared life of love and loyalty. The third and fourth points furnish the best ways of

gaining what people really want or of learning what is best to have.¹

If two people cannot meet each other's minimum needs counseling may be defeated from the start. One purpose of counseling, however, is to find out whether persons who are failing may be helped to succeed. Genuine inability of two people to meet each other's needs is rightly called incompatibility. Sometimes people do not make their marriage agreeable to each other, yet could learn to do so. They may be persons who have not taken enough pains to find what marriage is all about and to learn how to supplement and complete each other. They may be frustrating, hurting and alienating each other in ways which could be corrected. Much incompatibility is made up of ignorance, selfishness and emotional immaturity. As these are changed the incompatibility lessens and tends to disappear.

The self which one brings to marriage is not only the immediate physical, emotional, mental and spiritual make-up of the individual but is also what has well been called one's "expanded personality". This "expanded personality" is made up of the habits, skills, possessions, equipment, dreams, longings, memories, friendships, family ties, and, in a word, of one's whole inner world plus that part of the outer world which one uses in being and expressing himself. In marriage

¹L. F. Wood, Pastoral Counseling in Family Relationships (New York: The Commission on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1948), p. 72.

not only two individuals come together but two "worlds". There must be an adjustment in the expanded personalities of the two as well as in the hand to hand, face to face and body to body contacts. From this standpoint there is what is called the "economics" of marriage, in a wholly psychological sense. For example, a person enters marriage with a set of habits. These are not merely a part of the history of the individual but are dynamic factors in the direction of future behavior. The person can do, is likely to do, and is inwardly impelled to do what his habits have prepared him to do. At various points, as time goes by, there can be modifications of habits, but the mass of them comes down with great weight affecting the person's present and creating pressure for situations in which the further carrying on of these habits will be possible. In a word, habits create inward impulsions toward their own fulfilment. If, therefore, the habits of a man and woman are displeasing to each other, or if those of one gets in the way of the self-expression or fulfilment of the other, the counselor and the persons must work toward adjustability between the habits of the two.²

In a sense one marries not only the form and image but also the personal history of the other. When people do not get along together it is well to know if they have dreamed in the same direction, else the dreams may get in each other's way.

²Ibid., p. 73.

The longings and wishes are dynamic factors to be reckoned with, because they help to define the kind of satisfactions which these particular persons desire. A marriage partner also brings along a bundle of social attitudes. These are not necessarily worked out clearly, and there may be inconsistencies within any person's set of attitudes. But they imply a philosophy of social living.

At the heart of personality and at the apex of one's scheme of values are the values of religion.

Union on the religious and spiritual level is totally unknown to many married people, inasmuch as they have no particular religious and spiritual life. This does not mean that they derive no enjoyment from their marriage. Marriage is a universal estate, intended for all men and not only for Christians. Non-Christians and irreligious people who achieve a very satisfactory union on the physical and intellectual levels may get along very well with each other and derive a considerable amount of happiness and satisfaction from their married life. If your union with your spouse is to be complete, however, if it is to yield to you and yours the full measure of happiness which God intended for you, then union on the religious and spiritual level will also be essential.³

Marriage when seen in terms of all these adjustments is a complex thing. But amid all the complexities there can run the great harmonizing influence of love which draws people together and enables them to use their varying gifts and experiences for the best development of both. Each person has within him several persons. In some cases a spouse can adjust to one of them. He can find all the variations of a personality in-

³O. A. Geiseman, Make Yours a Happy Marriage (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), p. 43.

triguing and endearing. However, the ability to adjust to what one is when a particular side of him is being expressed does not guarantee that a mate shall be able to adjust to a different kind of self which is in that same person. The counselor helps individuals to adjust to the variabilities in their mates. The person that one is and the person that one is becoming are related, but not identical. The "becoming", or trend of development, may be favorable or unfavorable to a marriage. The counselor takes this into account and tries to keep people growing in the same direction, or to get them growing in such ways that each will find more in the other and in their life together.⁴

The pastor must keep in mind certain goals of marriage which often need to be brought to the attention of the couples he is called upon to counsel. In a general way we may group them according to the following headings.

The Maturing and Completion of Love

In marriage one needs to receive love according to his own requirements and to give it according to another's need. To give our love with the knowledge that it is appreciated by another is also a part of our need. There is as much happiness in meeting the emotional needs of a beloved person as in seeking love for one's self. We need not only to have things done

⁴Wood, op. cit., p. 75.

for us but each of us needs someone to do things for. Love is kept alive in marriage when the two continue to stimulate each other and to build up each other so that each feels most himself when with the other and each knows that he is important to the other. Love reinforces the emotional security of the person who receives it. At the same time two persons who stimulate each other's emotions need to supplement this by reinforcing each other's values and making them more secure. Counseling must reveal to those who have entered marriage with great ability to stimulate love, but little skill in reinforcing each other, that the latter is as necessary as the former. The love of each married person must go onward to be expressed in a way of life that sustains the ego of the other, reinforces his emotional security and protects his values. People need to see that married love is a plan of living and a way of acting based on appreciation by each of what the other is, upon a championing of the well-being of that other, and upon the creation of a shared happiness.

The earliest and most fundamental description of the purpose of marriage in the Bible, the basic Hebrew-Christian approach, is that in marriage a man and woman shall become one. So marriage has its primary significance as a union under God of man and woman in each other. This is prior to its function in procreation. When, therefore, it is said that man and woman marry because of love, that reason is commanding in its own right. This means that when people come to us, who for any reason cannot have children, we can still encourage them

to prize their marriage without any discounting of its value.⁵

The need of helping people to grow from the excitements of romantic love to the greater fulfilment and more adequate understanding of conjugal love and shared parental love is one of those most often met by the counselor. Hatred in marriage grows out of persistent abuse of love relationships. People need to realize that a strong favorable emotion can be crushed until a strong antagonism arises. When personal proximity regularly leads to pain and suffering rather than delight, love is not likely to last. When attitudes are such that one personality denies the values of the other, it is an attack upon a person. To build up love and marriage we engage in reciprocal acts of building up persons. When one attacks the values of the other it is an attack upon the marriage also.⁶

Companionship

Companionship is the social aspect of love. It is the fulfilment of each in a relationship with the other. It is natural that a man or woman should most desire the company, day and night, summer and winter, of that one who appreciates his company most of all.

⁵Otto A. Piper, The Christian Interpretation of Sex (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p. 40.

⁶E. M. Duvall and Reuben Hill, When You Marry (New York: Association Press, 1953), p. 305.

That marriages of comradeship turn out better than marriages of mere romantic infatuation has its implications for counseling, because the purpose of the counselor is to stimulate, guide or restore the companionship functions of marriage, as well as, on occasion, to give needed help in the adjustment of the two as physical partners. At any rate the time has passed when marital counseling could be thought of chiefly as counseling in regard to sex relationships. In the period ahead of us much more will be made of the splendid comradeship functions of the married state.⁷

The counselor who can help people to remove factors which mar their comradeship will be doing fundamental work in strengthening marriages. And at the same time he will use every resource on the positive side to build up comradeship experiences. He will help each one to think, speak and act more kindly and appreciatively in regard to the interests, activities, friends, family, thoughts, dreams, ideals, values and even the limitations of his marriage partner. And the counselor will help people in the discovery and carrying out of new developments in comradeship which will bind them more firmly together.

Status

People marry for the more mature and socially complete standing which marriage will bring to them. There is no doubt that marriage has a value in terms of status for those who have definitely reached a marrying age. Each should understand the need of giving this to the other. A good marriage brings self-

⁷Wood, op. cit., p. 78.

assurance and personal reinforcement. A married person is one who has to his credit the mature accomplishment of having won the love and self-giving of another. This brings a status which neither could have had as a single person. Any married person should be sensitive to the fact that the life companion wants to feel pride in husband or wife in the presence of friends, family, and the world in general. A counselor can help many an individual better to analyze the factors which rightly give him prestige in the eyes of his mate and to use those factors for their full value. He can also show persons who are letting their mates down somewhat, that it is the function of each to make more of the other and to help the other to make more of himself. As married people try to keep alive the pride of each in the other, so also they must realize that if either has caused shame to the other there is need for ceasing to do things which bring such a feeling. Marriage glows with healthy pride when it is a mutual admiration society.

Not infrequently will a counselor encounter marriages which persons have entered as an escape from some bad premarital situation. Do not count the escape marriage as a second-class marriage necessarily, but look into the possibility of rebuilding it on motives that are intrinsically sound. A person who married for money or for social prestige can outgrow the littleness of his previous motives and come to value persons as persons, for beneath the surface each person is a human being with needs, longings and possibilities for growth. The person

who married for selfish motives must in some way learn to live by unselfish ones. Real love can be built up between the husband and wife. Love of children itself is a powerful force to draw people out of their selfishness, and shared love of children and of home, along with other common interests, can draw such a man and woman together.⁸

Security

One function of marriage is to create that emotional security which a man and woman can give each other through love and confidence. This is the value that is most held in mind when a person says that he marries partly to have a home. Home is psychological and spiritual creation. The outward structure that is called a home is a shelter for love and fellowship and an aid to the protection and care of children. The security of one's emotional values is more important in marriage than other kinds of security. People can be brought to see that the major form of their security is in their own care and keeping and that marriage can stand a measure of financial or other types of insecurity if the security of the man and woman in each other's love is absolutely dependable.

Persons who have been doing things which have destroyed security can be guided toward doing more things which build it up. The guiding of marriage away from actions that create

⁸Duvall-Hill, op. cit., p. 304.

Insecurity and put members on the defensive can assure safety of many marriages which would otherwise fail. This brings us to the question how far the minister can go in recognizing with his counselees what is called "the art of quarreling constructively". While he should help them to realize that it is natural that there should be some quarreling, it is better for them to learn the art of living together in such a way that they do not need to quarrel. How to quarrel constructively is to be outgrown in favor of learning to use differences constructively and attacking the problems together, not attacking each other.

Comfort

Home comforts permitting rest from our labor and enjoyment of its fruits are among the things which people seek in marriage. We need a place which stands for rest - physical and emotional. A man and woman can create in their home an atmosphere which will give a bright and warm background to their entire emotional life, and a person can work harder when he is assured of real rest at home. The home represents a combination of comfort, status and facilitation. It is a background for what a person wants to do in the world; at the same time that what he does in the world is a means of serving his home and other homes.⁹

⁹E. W. Burgess and P. Wallin, Engagement and Marriage (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1953), p. 445.

Fulfilment

Counselors can help marriages by helping people toward larger social and spiritual growth. There is added strength in a marriage when man and woman recognize that they are not only homemakers but citizens, producers and builders of the world that is to be. Some persons seek forms of satisfaction in such a way that they produce the opposite and experience frustration instead. Counselors can often help such persons to reverse the process and get started again in the direction of fulfilment for the self and the other. The fundamental principle is that the persons should review their way of living together so that they reduce the causes of irritation and build up every possible experience of satisfaction, comradeship and joy in each other. The counselor asks whether a marriage which is failing may not be falling short because too many allowances are allowed to creep in and many possible sources of fulfilment and comradeship remain undeveloped. A counselor often finds that people are cramped in themselves because they are trying to live in too small a world psychologically and spiritually.¹⁰

Sexual Harmony

Each person enters marriage with a certain conditioning of emotions with regard to sex. This conditioning enters as a factor into the sexual experiences of marriage. Overtones,

¹⁰Ibid., p. 466.

undertones and echoes from the thoughts, longings, fears, aversions, shame, confidence and all that one has thought and felt in regard to the sexual nature come with the individual into his marriage. We have given some attention to the sex factor at other points in this thesis. Here we recognize the desire for sex fulfillment as one of the impulses which draw people toward marriage. Many a person needs help in making his transition from a premarital status in which sexual fulfillment was postponed to a marital status in which the sexual relationship can be accepted with wholehearted eagerness and mutual esteem. The counselor can help people to realize that a healthy married life will be aided and strengthened by constructive attitudes toward sex. Sometimes the sexual satisfactions of marriage have been over stressed so that there has been expectation of perfect happiness and no preparation for possible difficulty, pain or disappointment, which may be perfectly natural, in the early sex relationships of marriage. People who have had such frustrating experiences come to a counselor with the feeling that their marriage is a failure. They need to realize that it usually requires time, patience, perseverance and increased understanding of each other to release the finest sexual possibilities of the marriage.¹¹

¹¹J. T. Landis and Mary Landis, Building a Successful Marriage (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), p. 265.

Children

It is often said that the first and chief purpose of marriage is to have children. The need of having them and of having a good marriage back of each one of them is obvious.

Thus the nature of man includes the desire both for sexual union and for children, just as our individual existence as well as the race to which we belong are part of our being. From the fact that as a living creature I am alone, there arises the desire for fellowship, a desire which comes to its strongest expression in the sex instinct; from the fact that I, as an individual, am a link in the chain of the successive generations, arises the will and purpose which issue in fatherhood and motherhood. Because both of these features are rooted in the depths of our being, both instincts may appear at the same time; but because their roots are different, they frequently appear separately. The Bible takes account of both; a full understanding of the nature of sex includes the possibility of reproduction, but the Bible does not equate the sex instinct with the desire for descendants.¹²

Counseling will help people who otherwise would be childless to benefit by the medical aids to fertility, or, if that fails, to be rightly guided in the process of adopting children. All that pastors as counselors can do to help parents to achieve better teamwork in training their children and better understanding of the needs of growing children and youth will be among the significant contributions which they can make.

Economic Cooperation

As old as marriage itself are economic factors drawing man and woman together. They need not be analyzed here. Suffice it to say that economic factors can handicap all other efforts

¹²Piper, op. cit., p. 49.

to build a marriage. On the other hand, the economic cooperation of two persons may be such as to enhance their love, trust, and admiration for each other. When a couple have failed to see that their ways of spending can either help or handicap their marriage the counselor will have to help them to realize this. He will help them to do their practical part as an expression of their love for each other, and to share and spend money in such a way that their habits will continually be saying to each other, "My use of money expresses my love for you." Earning and planning get their finest meaning in the support of homes.¹³

Finding the Real Assets in "Forced" Marriages

Our concern here is more definitely with the question how a counselor can help persons already married whose marriages have been forced. One danger is that these persons will continually blame each other so that neither will have full confidence in the other. Starting with some impairment of confidence in each other, a man and woman easily move on to lack of regard for each other's judgment and so their capacity for cooperativeness is affected. Moreover their sexual life in marriage is likely to be beset by hang-overs of the anxieties which accompanied their entrance into this relationship prematurely. The counselor's function with persons whose marriage

¹³Landis and Landis, op. cit., p. 313.

is hampered by feelings of guilt either individually or shared, is to get them to rise to a new spiritual level through the love and forgiveness of Christ so that the guilt feelings are dissipated by faith in Him, and the persons are living on such a level that their shared life is right, satisfying and mutually reassuring.

Conclusion

As we think of the great variety of motivations operative in marriage and the variability of the needs which it must meet, it is evident that the counselor must try to estimate what are the paramount needs of each situation. He must work to remove obstacles to the meeting of these, and at the same time, he must help the married person to know how to reward each other's expectations with a rich and colorful life suited to each one in particular.

Marriage is not so much a status as a growth in unity. Counseling therefore is not merely getting people back where they were, although that is often involved, but more essentially it is a matter of getting both on a forward march toward a common goal which is great enough to command their finest loyalties and to inspire their united efforts. Marriage counseling for the pastor then, is not merely mending a relationship but aiding a process of two people in growing together toward the largest life in Christ, in His Church, and toward one another.

Eternal love has height, depth, and breadth as well as length when the whole perspective is changed from self-centered to God-centered love as human love aspires to be divine. Divine love as disclosed by Jesus in the New Testament revelation of the heavenly Father is faithful and forgiving. In marriage counseling the pastor seeks to unfold the possibilities of faithful and forgiving love in the relationships of the family. Faithful love makes possible forgiveness, and forgiving love makes possible faithfulness. Growth in such love is not what a counselor gives but something he shares, not what he defines but something they discover together. For growth is new life, not to be won short of new adventures in living. The pastor knows that he is not the life so desperately needed in the course of loving, yet he aspires to be a channel for that life and prays that they may be one in the life eternal.¹⁴

¹⁴p. E. Johnson, Psychology of Pastoral Care (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953), p. 159.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baber, Ray E. Marriage and The Family. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1953.
- Bailey, D. S. The Mystery of Love and Marriage. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952.
- The Bible, King James Version.
- Brooks, Chas. F. "Some Linking Factors in Pastoral Counseling," Pastoral Psychology, V.2, 12 (March, 1951), 26-31.
- Burgess, E. W., and H. J. Locke. The Family. New York: American Book Co., 1950.
- , and P. Wallin. Engagement and Marriage. New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1953.
- Burkhart, R. A. "Full Guidance Counseling," Pastoral Psychology, V.2, 23 (April, 1952), 23-31.
- , "The Church Program of Education in Marriage and the Family," Pastoral Psychology, V.2, 12 (March, 1951), 39-46.
- Davis, D. S. "Religion and Psychology," American Lutheran, V.27, 11 (November, 1954), 10.
- Dicks, Russell L. Pastoral Work and Personal Counseling. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1944.
- Duvall, E. M. Building Your Marriage. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 113. New York: n.p., 1946.
- , and Reuben Hill. When You Marry. New York: Association Press, 1953.
- Ernst, M. L., and D. Loth. "For Better or Worse," Pastoral Psychology, V.2, 20 (January, 1952), 36-41.
- Fishbein, Morris, and Ernest W. Burgess. Successful Marriage. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1948.
- Foerster, F. W. Marriage and the Sex Problem. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1936.
- General Family Packet on Christian Marriage and the Family. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.

- Goldstein, S. E. Marriage and Family Counseling. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1945.
- Goulooze, Wm. Pastoral Psychology. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1950.
- . The Christian Worker's Handbook. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1953.
- Greth, M. S. The Family and Social Change. New York: Board of Social Missions ULCA, 1951.
- Groves, G. H. Marriage and Family Life. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1942.
- Haas, H. I. "Techniques from the Secular Fields of Counseling and Psychotherapy Pertinent to Pastoral Care." Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1949.
- Hiltner, Seward. Pastoral Counseling. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949.
- . The Counselor in Counseling. Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950.
- Howe, R. L. "A Pastoral Theology of Sex and Marriage," Pastoral Psychology, V.3, 26 (September, 1952), 35-41.
- Johnson, Paul E. Psychology of Pastoral Care. Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953.
- Kantonen, T. A. The Family Under God. New York: Board of Social Missions ULCA, 1951.
- Karpf, M. J. "Some Guiding Principles in Marriage Counseling," Marriage and Family Living, V.13, 2 (Spring, 1951), 49-55.
- Knubel, Fred R. Pastoral Counseling. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1952.
- Landis, J. T., and Mary Landis. The Marriage Handbook. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948.
- . Readings in Marriage and the Family. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952.
- . Building a Successful Marriage. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948.

- Lewin, S. A., and John Gilmore. Sex Without Fear. New York: Lear Publishers, Inc., 1950.
- , Sex After Forty. New York: Lear Publishers, Inc., 1953.
- Lieske, Henry L. "Principles of Counseling," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXIV (October, 1953), 715-739.
- Lindemann, Erich. "The Stresses and Strains of Marriage," Journal of Pastoral Care, V.4, 12 (Spring-Summer, 1950), 24-31.
- Mahnke, E. H. "Ministering to Those in Stress." Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1949.
- Marriage: 1949 Model Vs. Christian Marriage. New York: Family Study Program of the National Council, Protestant Episcopal Church, 1949.
- May, Rollo. The Art of Counseling. Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1939.
- McHugh, Galolo. Sex Knowledge Inventory with Marriage Counselor's Manual. Durham, North Carolina: Family Life Publications, Inc., 1950.
- Mudd, E. H. The Practice of Marriage Counseling. New York: Association Press, 1951.
- Oats, Wayne E. The Christian Pastor. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951.
- Piper, Otto. The Christian Interpretation of Sex. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1941.
- Popence, Paul B. Marriage is What You Make It. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950.
- Pratt, D., and Jack Neher. Mental Health is a Family Affair. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 155. New York: n.p., 1949.
- Reu, J. M., and P. H. Buehring. Christian Ethics. Columbus, Ohio: The Lutheran Book Concern, 1935.
- Rogers, Carl R. Counseling and Psychotherapy. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1942.
- , and John L. Wallen. Counseling with Returned Servicemen. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1946.

- Sapirstein, M. R. Emotional Security. New York: Crown Publishers, 1948.
- Schindler, G. J. The Pastor as a Personal Counselor. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1942.
- Sohn, O. E. "The Essentials of Effective Pastoral Counseling," Concordia Theological Monthly, V.22, 8 (August, 1951), 567.
- Steiner, Lee R. Where do People Take Their Troubles. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945.
- Stokes, Walter R. Modern Pattern for Marriage. New York: Rinehardt & Co., Inc., 1948.
- Study Packet on Marriage and the Family. New York: Board of Social Missions ULCA, n.d.
- The Christian Family in the Modern World. Fifth Yearbook. River Forest: Lutheran Education Association, 1948.
- Thorman, George. Broken Homes. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 135. New York: n.p., 1947.
- Van de Velde, Th. H. Ideal Marriage. New York: Random House, 1926.
- Wood, L. F. Pastoral Counseling in Family Relationships. New York: The Commission on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1948.
- "The Training of Ministers for Marriage and Family Counseling," Marriage and Family Living, XII (May, 1950), 46-47.
- Zerfoss, K. P., editor. Readings in Counseling. New York: Association Press, 1952.