

Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling

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Human Images and Life-Stories in a Multicultural World

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Introduction

Purpose and theme of this documentation

The documentation follows a double purpose: Firstly we want to offer some insight into the structure, the content, the atmosphere and the many ways of communication applied at the 9th Intercultural Seminar for Pastoral Care and Counselling, which was held in Mülheim a.d. Ruhr from October 15th to 20th, 1995. Secondly we would like to give account for the general intercultural learning process, to which this seminar was only a stepping stone. For it stands in the Tradition of a whole series of International Pastoral Care Seminars. Initiated by the centre of CPE in Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth, they have been conducted on an annual basis since 1986. Since the first seminars, not only have there been some changes with regard to the organising groups, more importantly, the international encounter gradually led to a more conscious awareness of the importance of the cultural dimension of Pastoral Care and Counselling (see the report *K. Temme / H. Weiß*). The active exchange with colleagues from abroad led to an understanding of the content and importance of one's own pastoral actions, as well as of one's own spiritual and biographical ramifications. Any kind of Pastoral Care and Counselling takes place in a specific setting and at a specific point of time. Often it is not easy to "export" its value into another, international setting. We, as Western Europeans, more than once had the distinct feeling that we could benefit greatly from our Asian and African colleagues for whom the intercultural dialogue has long been a vital part of their pastoral actions.

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Pastoral Care and Counselling in 'Postmodern Times': Human Images and Life-Stories in Various Cultures and Religions - was the topic of the 1995 seminar. With "postmodern time" a key word was thrown into the discussion which more than once led to controversies, since its meaning is often arguable. We would like to stress that as the seminar's working title the expression "postmodern" was meant to be less analytical than guiding. Thus, the expression "postmodern" should signify that today Pastoral Care and Counselling takes place predominantly within a specific context. A context, which is marked by an increasing degree of cultural variety - a plurality which implies possibilities and chances, as well as the possibility of a loss of identity (see *R. Sathler-Rosa*).

Towards a definition of "Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling"

Since this documentation repeatedly deals with the expression "Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling", the attempt of a definition is required. It is our wish that the expression is not to be understood in a rigid way, rather it should reflect a certain approach within the pastoral work, i.e. a hermeneutics, marked by the specific love and interest for another culture. To define Intercultural Care and Counselling *via negationis*, that is to simply separate it from the common kerygmatic, clinical or therapeutic ways of Pastoral Care would be all too easy and oversimplifying the issue. Indeed, there are modes within the movement of Intercultural Pastoral Care that readily apply to one or more of the more traditional ways of Pastoral Care and Counselling. Thus, the intercultural form of Pastoral Care refers to a sort of inquisitive approach. Its hermeneutics is marked by the main desire to consciously reflect on all cultural as-

pects, which might emerge in any given pastoral encounter. This reflection is not mainly fostered by theory, but rather through the actual practical experience which each and every encounter provides.

In doing so, the Intercultural Pastoral Care approach goes beyond the traditional concentration on the individual and his or her unique biography. Rather - as all of the contributions to this documentation prove - a multitude of aspects, such as the political, the societal, or the religious, are fostered and dealt with in the pastoral encounter.

For several years already, there exists an ongoing discussion about the meaning and the importance of the cultural aspects of the pastoral relationship. In the English speaking context this issue has been summarized under the expressions "cross-cultural counselling" and "multicultural counselling", and primarily deals with the counsellor's and the counsellee's differing social, cultural, or ethnic background. However, when we refer to the "Intercultural" aspect of Pastoral Care and Counselling it is our desire to enlighten not only one's cultural background in such a professional situation, but to become aware of the general, lifelong and progressing contextuality of all of one's action. To a great extent this demands a willingness to freely deal with the "Other", with his/her possibilities or limitations, and his/her choices and actions. Furthermore, it implies a readiness to incorporate this new frame of reference into my *own* pastoral work, so that there might be an increased awareness of the cultural rifts - the different "cultural dialects" within one's own culture.

Our 'postmodern times' are marked by plurality and a fragmentation of life styles - a fact which implies that new cultures emerge *within* the existing cultural framework of any given country. Similar to the different dialects of a country's language, various "cultural

dialects” emerge along the lines of age, education and gender. It is the people who have to begin translating, interpreting and practising the new “dialects”, the new modes of meaning and action. This might lead to an enhancement of the individual’s frame of reference - and perhaps to a conscious change in his/her actions.

Methodological perspectives

As we described above, the concept of Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling should not be understood as a new model of counselling. Nevertheless, it might lead to new approaches and open windows of opportunity within the more traditional movements of Pastoral Care and Counselling. Here are some suggestions:

- Any pastoral encounter dominated by an empathic approach, traditionally aims to overcome feelings of distance and estrangement. Intercultural Pastoral Care on the other hand, stresses the continuous difference to the other, and looks for ways how to authentically encounter it. The basis hereby being the ongoing attempt to carefully listen to the language and the “stories” of the other person.

The problems arising from the different languages spoken at the seminars, the difficult work of the interpreters, and the angry impatience which more than once erupted in the plenary sessions, signify how difficult it is to really listen to another person’s story. All too often this can only be done fragmentarily.

- “Therapeutic” Pastoral Care concerns itself with the healing progress of the client, with his/her emotional integrity and the maturity of the personality. Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling reminds us how problematic this allegedly clear distinction between sickness and health really is (see articles on *Buddhism*). As individuals of any given society we forever live in a state of cultural constraints, in demanding emotional and societal relations - literally with a baggage full of “burdens” (see *E. Decenteceo*). Pastoral Care and Counselling therefore should not attempt to try and radically eliminate these “burdens”, but rather to make them more bearable for the “burden bearer”, through gaining new insights and lending more meaning to life in general.

- Although the modern movements of Pastoral Care and Counselling have long since been concerned with changing the image of the traditionally more patriarchal relationship between counsellor and counsellee, there remains an incline between the role of the professionally trained counsellor or pastor and the client, seeking help. Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling aims to enlighten the counsellor’s own limitations, his/her particular, cultural way of understanding (see e.g. *B. Lemmer’s report on the study group*). At the same time the intercultural dimension aims at investigating in and acknowledging the genuine, vital resources of the other’s personality and culture. Pastoral Care and Counselling thus advances into a dialogue, marked by solidarity and mutuality, which if successful, bears the chance of positively affecting *both* partners. In other words, from the start, Intercultural Pastoral Care is a correlative endeavour to bear the “burdens of life” together and, by doing so, discovering the manifestation of the life-giving God in our lives.

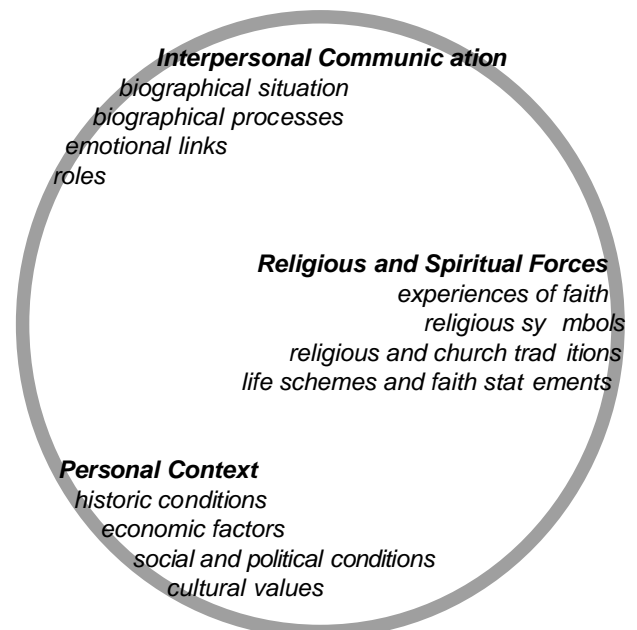
**The intercultural way of communication:
A circle movement**

At this point we have to ask ourselves whether Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling involves a new way of communication. Generally speaking one might say that each story telling process sets off a circular movement: In the story telling-process the story teller gradually moves away from his/her individual experience, while at the same time opening him/ herself and approaching the listener. A new, original relationship emerges. Through the encounter with the other, through participating, and through relating to a new context, a new form of believing, and a new history, the listener learns something essential about the other person; and what is far more important here, he/she learns something about him/herself, his/her limitations and possibilities. Through

encountering another culture, one learns more about one’s perception of one’s own culture. At the same time the exchange of practical, cultural experiences steadily enlarges the circular movement of story telling and listening. The circles become bigger, link into each other and may gradually build a chain of understanding. What remains is a linear movement between the original experience of the story teller and the process of understanding.

It is important to point out that intercultural communication, probably more than any other way of communication is determined by its setting, time, context and its chosen language. And it has been our experience at the seminars that language difficulties do not only represent an obstacle in the line of communication, rather they bear the potential to reveal new ways to fully relate with one another. New modes of listening arise, and old structures outlive themselves. While this insight bears great potential for the pastoral crosscultural encounter, it also proves to be helpful when dealing with a new, “other” culture within the context of the old, well known one.

In preparing the structure of the seminar’s study groups it has been our intention to work also with a kind of circle. That is, the abundance of issues which arise in and around any kind of communication were structured into the three realms of the *interpersonal communication*, the *personal context*, and the *religious and spiritual forces* (for an example, see the case study presented by Hilary Johnson).




It was our intention to introduce these areas of reflection not only through the various case studies, but also within the work of the study groups, i.e. to observe the relationship among the group members, as well as their individual relation to the presented case.

At this point we are aware of the fact that it will be a future task to further develop a concept and a methodology of intercultural communication. However, it remains a fact that Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling does and should not depend on a rigid methodological structure. Rather, it thrives on movement and on change. It is for this reason that the definition of Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling has to retain a certain extend of vagueness. Its tradition needs movement and continuation.

Working structure of the seminar and the papers of this documentation

Lectures, study groups, and intercultural plenary sessions are the key elements of the seminars. Most of the lectures have been included in this documentation (*see part 2 and 3*). The study groups were structured according to a certain theme. A specific case study represented the working frame of any study group (*see part 4*). However, it proved to be difficult to give a full account of the seminar's group processes and individual learning processes. Some impressions are being included in part 4 and 5 and reveal a personal insight into the seminar's work.

Some of this documentation's contributions had to be shortened. In doing so we tried to withstand subjective assessment. We think, that each contribution reveals its own character, and speaks in its own "dialect". But all the dialects put together, created a new "language", if not a new "mother tongue", which best describes what Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling is all about: The interceding of one individual for another, across all cultural borders. ■



1
steps
towards
an intercultural
hermeneutics

Klaus Temme / Helmut Weiß

Reviewing the Journey

The “Intercultural Seminars” 1986 to 1995 A dialogue between Klaus Temme and Helmut Weiß

Klaus Temme: *The first seminar in the year 1986 which was held in Kaiserswerth is still vividly in my mind. How did you get the idea of starting this type of seminar? What was your motive?*

Helmut Weiß: In 1978, when I was called to take over the ‘Zentrum für Klinische Seelsorgeausbildung’ (Centre for Clinical Pastoral Education) in Kaiserswerth I intended to try and make contacts abroad right from the start. My aim was for the work done in Germany to receive some critical feedback “from outside”. In 1983, I made it a point to have our Dutch neighbours invited to the meeting of the section Clinical Pastoral Care Training of the German Society for Pastoral Psychology, among others Wiebe Zijlstra and Heije Faber.

But right from the beginning, there was also another thought in my mind: Everybody engaged in teaching has the possibility to participate in international conferences. But how about those engaged in pastoral care? Where do they have the possibility to exchange their views of and experience in pastoral care with others working in the same field? Wouldn’t an international seminar held now and then offer such possibilities? While preparing the 150th anniversary of the ‘Diakonissenanstalt Kaiserswerth’ (Deaconesses Home Kaiserswerth), its then director, Ferdinand Schlingensiepen, suggested that every field of work should organise an event focusing on a particular subject. It was quite clear: If I was going to do anything special, it was going to be something international.

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So I invited Howard Clinebell from California. At the back of my mind, I had the idea that he would attract many people to come to Kaiserswerth because his books were widely read across Germany and Europe. I spread the news of his impending visit especially in Germany and the Netherlands, but I invited colleagues from Eastern Europe, too. The seminar was successful to some extent. There was an international crowd. There happened exchange between people from different countries, there was mutual learning.

But right from the start, there were also difficulties, for instance with regard to language and understanding. There had been an agreement with Clinebell: He would send us his papers so that we could have them translated. While he was giving his lectures everybody who did not know English should be able to follow the translated version of it. But Clinebell sent only short summaries. During his lectures he frequently improvised. We were not prepared for the amount of interpreting that was required. It was only under great difficulties and with little effect that we could change this by the end of the seminar.

Another difficulty came up during the seminar: Tension arose because there were various incidents of the audience and the lecturer not understanding what the other person wanted to say. Understanding was a problem, both on a contextual and on an interpersonal level. For instance, the lecturer did not pay much attention to the worries among his listeners relating to the Chernobyl disaster. This was hardly of interest to him. But this incident had occurred only a few weeks back and was a matter of great concern for the participants. They had hoped that this issue would be worked on, especially since the theme of the seminar was “Hope and Wholeness in a Threatened World”!

Tension reached a peak when participants declared that this could not continue. A steering committee was set up - ad hoc. There were violent quarrels which showed the different expectations and backgrounds.

Then and there, already during the first days, ‘intercultural tension’ emerged, without us being able to name it or even being conscious of it as such. But it was expressed in the words of some of the participants who repeatedly said “What he is doing is very American!”, while Clinebell considered himself very ‘un-American’ in the US spectrum.

Further tension developed when he started out on a discourse on the theme ‘Peace’. He made some suggestions for peace work which were long outdated in Europe. Obviously, he had not bothered to get himself informed on the status of peace work in Europe, and the audience was not able to attune itself to him.

Once again: Already at the initial stage, the question of different cultural backgrounds and how to deal with it emerged, but none of us was ready to address it in the right way. Our aim was to be international, but intercultural exchange had not yet come into focus.

K. T.: *Looking at the list of participants and lecturers of the seminar in 1988 which was held in Kaiserswerth under the theme “Pastoral Care and Liberation”, it is obvious that we had become much more international than at the first seminar. But even then, we had not started to address the intercultural aspect consciously.*

H. W.: The focus at this seminar anyhow was not really on the question of being international or of gaining intercultural awareness, but to come to terms with the changed situation after the closure of the Training Centre for Clinical Pastoral Care. I felt as if all energy for any future seminar had been withdrawn. Some of my roots had been cut off and at first it looked as though the seminar had lost its roots, too, because it had been deprived of its place.

If you are so intensely involved with the survival of your work, you don’t have the energy to look around at what others might need and what you might be able to learn from them. On the other hand, at that very moment it was extremely important for me to receive international encouragement. People told me: “Your work is very important. There is no such international opportunity anywhere else!” It wasn’t just a few friends who said this. It became evident how

important it was that pastoral care was further developed on a world-wide scale. And the seminars were necessary to ensure that this particular type of exchange could continue. On account of this wide support, I was able to plan further seminars even if they could not be held at the place where it all began, but had to be held at a different place, the Protestant Academy in Mülheim (Ruhr).

For me personally, the result of that seminar was: The contacts and relationships between us made it possible to share energies and encouragement. I will never forget how we formed a circle at the end of the closing worship, holding each other by our hands and sang. At that particular moment, I felt power and courage.

K. T.: *It is becoming very clear that 'encouragement' has been a general feature throughout the seminars, and it is necessary that this remains so! George Euling comes to my mind, our friend from Papua New-Guinea. During the seminar in 1993, he had presented his situation and he had received much encouragement from the group. The following year, 1994, he reported how he had meanwhile launched many projects. May be, this sharing of energies was also one of the motives to move East?*

H. W.: Well, when we held our seminars in Eastern Germany, in Groß-Dölln, and in Prague, in the Czech Republic, later on, our motive was to familiarise ourselves with the situation there and to see for ourselves how the people lived there and what their concerns were. The other motive was to offer encouragement through our being there, through our reflections, through our collaboration.

K. T.: *Especially the participants from the East and the South have repeatedly and in more than one way expressed, even demanded that 'give and take' was exercised more widely. During our seminar in Prague, it was Biul from Papua New-Guinea who presented this point when he requested us to support him in his struggle against the destruction of his people and the destruction of their natural life resources!*

H. W.: That means that intercultural argument both questions you and at the same time gives you enormous support. And I also believe: If we hadn't experienced both in our seminars, to be chal-

lenged and to be encouraged, we would have long given up!

K. T.: *In our last seminar, the same point was made again, when Edwin Decenteceo from the Philippines spoke of the sharing of burdens.*

Regarding the seminar in 1988, I would like to mention one further point, i.e. the concept of "intercultural and ecumenical pastoral care" which was brought forward by Peter Hawkins from England in one of the workshops. When he spoke of "intercultural pastoral care" he was thinking of pastoral care administered to people from a different cultural background, i.e. the Pakistani people in England.

H. W.: With hindsight, you could make some critical comments on this: We invite an English pastor to Germany to talk about the work with foreigners in his congregation. He was prepared and qualified for this work through his long stay in the country where these people came from. That means: We invite a foreigner to talk about this issue and neglect our own intercultural and multicultural situation in Germany! This proves how ill-prepared we were to tackle the intercultural conditions in our own society, instead we externalised this issue! We have people fly in so that they tell us something about this issue while we fail to visit the people who come from abroad and live in our own country.

It was to take another couple of years before we became aware of this and began to integrate into our seminars foreigners who lived and worked in Germany and in Europe.

Intercultural pastoral care in our own country definitely is an important challenge. Much more reflection is necessary. We would need to find a good combination of working more intensely than before with people from different cultural backgrounds living in Germany and Europe on the one hand, and on the other hand to offer pastoral care to people who have just arrived here from foreign countries.

Certain difficulties arise at this point, since the aspect of pastoral care does not really find consideration in the work with foreigners. Church-related as well as public groups put a strong emphasis on political work, also charitable help is given. But pastoral care and psychological assistance has had little room so far. By now, the psychological needs of these people are seen, but in my view

they are not being acknowledged enough.

Meanwhile some beginnings have been made in this respect: Counselling offices attend to the needs of foreigners and refugees. I do hope that church congregations will offer more pastoral care in future, too.

K. T.: *I think what further aggravates this situation is the fact that after these people have finally arrived here, they fight for their survival and are incapable of verbalising their difficulties. They are not in a position to express the psychological needs they have. For us, it may be easier to do something, to act 'charitably', than to face the abyss of their inner selves.*

H. W.: A prerequisite of intercultural pastoral care - like any other pastoral care - is that you get involved. Schemes can be carried out, you can do something for others. In pastoral care, this is impossible.

K. T.: *The move from Kaiserswerth to the Protestant Academy in Mülheim (Ruhr) took place In 1989. The atmosphere there was very different. You could clearly feel that the place, that is to say the rooms of a villa which had been built at the beginning of this century to serve the representation purposes of a dynasty of industrialists influenced the atmosphere and communication. Can you tell us something about how you see this?*

H. W.: Kaiserswerth was more provisional and open at the same time. Compared to other places, the Academy villa has an adverse effect on communication, a more stunting effect. When we reflected on this at that time, I realised the strong effect places can have on communication. What is the influence then on a group, especially if this is made up of representatives from very different cultures? Which places intimidate people, which encourage them to be open? The buildings of the Academy were just not build to promote communal life.

K. T.: *To me, that seems to be only one factor among others, the original function of the villa vis-à-vis its present function. The second factor, as I see it, is the following: The villa is so very distinctly and strongly an expression of a very different culture, i.e. that of the top-level Prussian elite towards the end of the German empire that no other*

culture can bring itself to bear in its presence.

H. W.: In Groß-Dölln, in that holiday camp of the former State Security Police, and in Prague, in that typical hotel of Socialist times, there were much more 'open' possibilities. We never allowed those places to have such a grip on us as has the 'villa'. With regard to Prague, what came to bear is that it is a great metropolitan city which fascinated all of us.

The situation in Mülheim is that the atmosphere as we described it is 'built-in', this is true for the architecture, the administration, the whole style. From my point of view, the Academy's main intention is to *pass on information* and to *engage in matter-of-fact, political communication* and not to *promote inter-personal communication or interaction on a personal level* as in pastoral care.

Isn't it surprising that the issue of the extent to which place and communication are inter-related came to the fore just when we met under the theme "Healing and Healing Community".

K. T.: *Soon after the seminar in autumn 1989, the Wall fell in Germany. There had been visitors from the GDR and Eastern European countries right from the start. There had been many contacts. So it was natural that these issues were made the topics of the seminar in the following year. Was this the reason to link pastoral care and the conciliar process? The team then - Brigitte Hiddemann of the Academy, Klaus Cyranke from Halle (Saale), and you - formulated the theme as follows "Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation - A Challenge for Pastoral Care".*

H. W.: The conciliar process had received a lot of stimulation from the churches in the GDR and the experience there of living under an authoritarian regime. We wanted to draw from this experience. But there was another reason. The World Council of Churches had held a meeting in Seoul in Korea in March 1990 on the conciliar process. We wanted to show those engaged in pastoral care that it was also important for them to get involved with this process - to address the political and social questions of our time still more intensely. But we also wanted to show that the conciliar process is a movement of the people, i.e. if you ask what is justice, peace or integrity of creation you have to start off from the people. It is here

that pastoral care can make a major contribution.

K. T.: *Through the theme as such and particularly through the introduction in the afternoon of the first day, a further issue came to the fore: the question of political events and their 'conveyance'!*

H. W.: I remember this afternoon very well: There were six people from the GDR, women and men, sitting in the centre of the plenum who recalled their experiences before and after the 'Turn' - among them, by the way, Joachim Gauck who was to become the director of the agency to deal with the State Security Police files later on. They conveyed political processes and spoke of their very personal experiences - but they were only partly understood. So the question was unavoidable: What is it like to have a part in political events, and how can such experiences be conveyed to other people who are little involved or not involved at all? Who has got the right understanding of what is being said? Which attitude is needed to understand? How do individuals come to terms with political events, radical changes, upheavals? From that time onwards, we have put our minds to such questions and will continue to do so in future. To this day, understanding between East and West is still a difficult matter in many ways.

K. T.: *This is not only a problem of East and West, but also a difficulty between North and South. This became repeatedly obvious in later seminars, for instance in summer 1991 when a participant from Zaïre heard about riots back home and was deeply alarmed - while we looked on, helpless. And again, during the last seminar with regard to the situation in the Philippines!*

H. W.: The question comes up here, how does the person concerned react when the others *fail* to understand? People come to us and talk about their situation. They do this in a very committed way because they are personally involved. Then there may be some who *will not understand*, some who put questions, some who are sceptical about the story. This will evoke a lot of different reactions in the narrator! Sometimes we could see how those who had told their story and were put back by others' reactions had difficulties to make a fresh start or to ask clarifying questions themselves.

What is needed is a two-way motion: getting involved in order to understand, and, at the same time, keeping some distance in order not to get too engrossed, not to get submerged. Without involvement on the one hand, and a certain amount of disassociation on the other, no exchange, no dialogue is possible. Fortunately, however, exchange does take place - and if it does, it is experienced as encouraging and strengthening.

K. T.: *I would like to go back to 1990 again. At that seminar, the issue of interpretation stood out again clearly. One of the lecturers, bilingual himself, used interpretation as a sort of a power struggle. He continually corrected the woman interpreter. It seemed he didn't really want to be interpreted!*

H. W.: Just looking at the language side, interpreting already is extremely complicated. But what is really difficult is to find the right interpretation of what is *meant* by what is said. In intercultural dialogue, many things cannot be conveyed using the words of a different language. Sometimes there is a lack of words, sometimes a lack of information about the background which would make the words at all comprehensible. We often experienced that the act of doing interpretation is an excessive demand which could lead to physical exhaustion.

K. T.: *There is another aspect of this seminar, I would like to just mention. Involving the Düsseldorf artist Hubert Begasse and arranging an exhibition of some of his paintings as well as a creative workshop with him, we tried to introduce another kind of 'culture' alongside the cultural medium of language.*

H. W.: Both, the workshop and the exhibition of paintings, were an experiment whether exchange was possible through other media since we had experienced how difficult language can and could be. But what we found was that exchange through paintings, through art is still more difficult! It had also been an experiment of being creative beyond the limitation of words. The workshop, however, was not attended by any 'foreigners', there were only creativity-obsessed Germans in it!

We had hoped that the paintings and looking at them might turn out as a new medium of intercultural exchange, but we had to concede that this was not the

case. Our culture of painting is not on a level with other cultures of painting! The offered activity of painting did not hold the least bit of attraction for the participants from Africa or Asia. May be we should be on the lookout for other media, music for instance.

K. T.: *I am not sure at all! Just imagine, you are confronted with paintings or music from another culture without any 'mediation'. Would that get any exchange underway?*

H. W.: We haven't yet tried it all out! Most probably, in the case of other media, understanding would be limited or difficult, too! To me this means, that in the context of our seminars, concentration on the word, on using language is the appropriate thing.

K. T.: *In 1991, the seminar was held in the small village Groß-Dölln, about 80 km north east of Berlin on the territory of the former GDR. Meanwhile, the organising team had decided to express the intercultural aspect by naming the plenary assembly "intercultural forum" and by giving each workshop a team of two leaders from different cultures. In doing so, you had made steps in the right direction which were to prove very important for the future.*

H. W.: The plenary sessions have always been a great problem with lots of tension. We constantly discussed how we could handle the open situation in the plenum so that processes of understanding would happen at different levels, the cognitive, the emotional and the communal levels.

We had started out from the model of clinical pastoral care training with its open group sessions! We thought that in a plenum of 100 people similar processes would take place as in a small group and that the group as a whole would develop its own structures. But we were quite mistaken. It was only after some time that we realised that large groups needed other structures than small groups. And we had not realised either that such an 'open' kind of communication is something we are a little accustomed to in our particular cultural context, but which others could not handle, would even be frightened. So we reflected on the purpose of the plenary assemblies and how we could make good use of them. Finally, we decided that we wanted the plenum to be the place where people moved in public! Which was the way to make

The Pastoral Care and Counselling Seminars 1986-1995: Themes, Places and Main-Speakers

1986 (Kaiserswerth): *Hope and Wholeness in a Threatened World*

Prof. Dr. Howard Clinebell, USA

1988 (Kaiserswerth): *Pastoral Care and Liberation*

Dr. Masamba ma Mpolo, Zaire; Dr. Lothar Hoch, Brazil; Dr. Salim Sharif, India; Reinhard Miethner, Germany

1989 (Mülheim/R.): *Healing and Healing Community*

Dr. Emmanuel Lartey, Ghana; Dr. Flora Wuellner, USA; Prof. Genadios Limouris, Switzerland; Prof. Dr. Walter Hollenweger, Great Britain

1990 (Mülheim/R.): *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation - A Challenge for Pastoral Care*

Dr. Matthew Fox, USA; Mary Thomas, India; Joseph Walk, Israel

1991 (Groß-Dölln): *The Individual and the Community - The Process of Adjustment and Change*

Christel Hanewinkel, Germany; Dr. Jürgen Ziemer, Germany; Dr. Daisy Nwachuku, Nigeria; Dr. Karel Schwarz, CSR; Prof. Dr. Liesel-Lotte Herkenrath-Püschel, Germany

1992 (Mülheim/R.): *"...A Time to Love and a Time to Hate." An Intercultural Dialogue on Marriage, Gender Issues and Sexuality*

Prof. Dr. Ronaldo Sathler-Rosa, Brazil; Dr. Wilhelmina Kalu, Nigeria; Dr. Gnana Robinson, India; Susanna Schmotz, Germany

1993 (Mülheim/R.): *Economy and Violence - A Challenge for Pastoral Care*

Dr. Michael Chang, Malaysia; Prof. Dr. Archie Smith, USA; Olgierd Benedyktowicz, Poland; George Euling, Papua New Guinea

1994 (Prague): *"Everything is Breaking Down - Can You Help Me?" Pastoral Care and Counselling as Response to Valuechanges of Society and Culture*

Jan Urban, Czech Rep.; Dr. Karel Schwarz, Czech Rep.; Dr. Dick Tieleman, Netherlands; Tomas Jezek, Czech Rep.

1995 (Mülheim/R.): *Pastoral Care and Counselling in "Post-modern Time". Human Images and Life-Stories in Various Cultures and Religions*

Dr. Nalini Arles, India; Prof. Dr. Edwin Decenteceo, Philippines; Charles Konadu, Ghana; Dr. Robert Solomon, Singapore; Phra Prachan Somniuk Natho, Thailand; Lee Sung-Soo, Korea

public what concerned people deeply personally?

In Groß-Dölln, the following idea emerged for the first time: We came to realise that there was no reason why the organising team for the whole seminar should also preside over the plenary sessions. This could be done with the help of an extended team. So we selected a few people and with them we discussed what was to be 'the order of the day'.

K. T.: *What did you call that group at that time, 'observation group'?*

H. W.: It was called 'process observation group'. Their task was to observe processes that were underway in the plenum and in the seminar as a whole

and to report them back to the organising team. It proved to be painful sometimes to identify and agree on what was going on and how to continue any given process. Then we had the idea whether it would not be better if members of the observation group would chair the plenary sessions shortly, for instance Emmanuel Lartey, a distinguished and clear-headed African. The approach was good basically, but we had not yet developed enough tools to make the whole thing meaningful. It was especially after Groß-Dölln that we extensively discussed the question of what it needed to chair a plenary assembly in the context of a large multi-cultural group.

One major aspect that we understood was that of *vulnerability* in such a public situation. The plenum feels hurt and

so does the organising team. In 1991, vulnerability was discussed more frequently than at any other seminar. We then agreed: In intercultural dialogue, especially if it takes on a public character, people will be hurt and hurt others. This is inevitable, but the question arises of how to deal with it.

At that time, there were massive reproaches, for instance that the organising team had degraded people to mere objects, that in certain situations it had showed lack of sensitivity. We were said to have humiliated people from overseas. There were reproaches that we failed to see our own situation in Germany. Reproaches were whizzing back and forth.

Many must have left the seminar frustrated on account of these occurrences. We as the organising team neither had nor saw any means of avoiding these frustrations. That was not easy for us.

K. T.: *This is something that will occur again and again: You endeavour on something new - and that very moment you realise that you are entering virgin territory! This cannot be avoided through careful planning. You cannot tread on sure ground when you decide to plan the next seminar. There will always be new situations which could neither be foreseen nor planned ahead!*

H. W.: What has to be said about Groß-Dölln is that at that seminar, the idea of meeting with people from different backgrounds, cultures and attitudes and of expecting that this meeting would go off without a hitch, without a 'lame hip', was proved an illusion.

K. T.: *When you were looking for the themes for the 1992 seminar, you adopted a new procedure.*

H. W.: Liesel-Lotte Herkenrath-Püschel suggested to ask the overseas participants for *their* ideas of which topics to choose. This was a further experiment of intercultural exchange. At the occasion of the international conference on pastoral care in Amsterdam, a small group of interested people from Africa, Asia and America got together with Liesel-Lotte and myself. There, the suggestion was made to hold a seminar on marriage. From the point of view of the members of the above group, this topic was a 'necessity' and it was presented in a very committed way. Back in Germany, however, while proceeding with the necessary preparations, we realised that although this topic hit a

problematic area it did not arouse our inspiration. So there was stress formulating a suitable theme. We also felt we should incorporate some other aspects which would appeal to us. Finally we agreed on the theme "...A Time to Love and a Time to Hate" - Intercultural Dialogue on Marriage, Gender Issues and Sexuality."

We had embarked on something new and we landed ourselves in a fine 'mess'. Not only were there problems during the preparation of the seminar, they really started when the seminar was underway. In my eyes, this was the most difficult seminar of all. There was so much tension as never before or afterwards.

The number of participants was small, the disparity between the groups wide due to the eventual mixture of sub-themes.

The missionary concern our African friends had had while accentuating the theme with a view to our Western and Westernised world, i.e. to acknowledge marriage as a Christian life-form, was 'countered'.

The people from the 'West' had difficulties showing esteem for others. This could be experienced in several workshops and individual encounters and went to the extreme of women being jeered at for defining their role as a married woman differently from some other participants. In some of the workshops, some extreme forms of 'deposal' of the group leadership through German participants occurred.

Our quest for dignity and esteem that has been running through all our seminars was abandoned at quite a few instances.

K. T.: *I would like to shortly mention the closing worship which ended in a debacle.*

H. W.: After the rather 'explosive' seminar, we intended the closing worship to be a sort of a conciliatory ending hoping that it would bring together again the women and men who had participated in the seminar. Symbols were chosen as a means to come together again. We hoped that processes of the seminar might be picked up again and fresh contacts made. A certain group had prepared a liturgy centring round four elements which Jeremias, a marriage counsellor from Bethlehem, had brought with him: soil from Bethlehem, water from the Jordan river, oil and rose petals from the Holy Land.

During the service, people were given the chance to take from these symbols and hand them over to others with a word of blessing. Most of the people were familiar with such a ritual and had no difficulty accepting it. But to our great surprise, a young couple from England, both pastors, the wife having Caribbean ancestors, and a woman from Africa found the situation extremely difficult, panicked and left the chapel. When talking to them later we were told that some of these elements are attributed a totally different effect. In tears, the young woman told us, deeply shocked: "In the Caribbean, if we get involved with soil, we get involved with the evil - if someone puts soil into our hand, the evil is present!"

No solution of this conflict was possible. But it was apparent that these three people - and most probably quite a few others who did not show it openly - understood service as a time to preach the 'word of God' and not a time of appropriation of symbols. Faiths of people were worlds apart and the gulf could not be bridged.

K. T.: *Often, such unpleasant surprises occur when you don't not 'know' enough about the others.*

H. W.: Right now, I have no idea of how to go about such surprises and eruptive situations.

May be, we should explain things beforehand so that people know what to expect, especially if rituals are used that some people might not be familiar with. It may not be a question of gathering more 'knowledge', but of saying and making more transparent what we are intending to do. This would give people a chance to react, even to stay away. Transparency is a demand which has been repeatedly made from out of the plenum and which is very important - it is a must for all sectors of intercultural dialogue.

In intercultural exchange, you cannot rely on anything - you cannot rely on anything being clear! So we will have to try again and again and explain what is to be expected next, so that we may not overrun others or get them caught in a situation in which they can only react with fear. It is important that we try to avoid anybody feeling compromised - it may still happen any time.

K. T.: *What I would also like to go into is the question of 'mother tongues'. Mother tongues in their original voices have found a place in our worships and*

prayers even if the official languages at the seminars remained German and English. Somehow it appeared to me as if mother tongues had found their little extra 'place' here in the framework of the seminars.

H. W.: Well, I think, this topic would have better be dealt with in the discussion about 'language and communication', a subject that has been mentioned at various stages already.

At the same time, your question is important: Where is 'room' for mother tongues in intercultural dialogue? Does it have a place? Is it not that you always speak a foreign language when you meet people on an intercultural level? I mean, in practical terms. It is simply not possible to communicate in your mother tongue when people from different cultural backgrounds meet. As Germans, we may not have any idea what it means to have to talk to other people in your own country in another language which is not your mother tongue - like, for instance, in Ghana or in India. Leaving your mother tongue behind means leaving a certain security behind. You are confronted with something strange. Your mother tongue is an integral part of your own culture - this element has to be left behind when meeting others.

Perhaps we ought to look at the interplay of language and culture more closely. Moreover, we might also have to explore more thoroughly which aspects constitute 'culture'.

More than language, I think, it is history which is part of what moulds people culturally. We can again take the above mentioned service as an example. Part of the culture of this woman whose ancestors came to England from the Caribbean is a certain history, not a particular language! She does no longer know the language of her ancestors. But history which was handed down by her family and which she had not even experienced herself became immediately effective! History had immense power in that situation!

K. T.: *At this stage, you could even make a comparison between you and me. In your life, your 'history', your ancestors from Transylvania, the war and your flight, is always by your side. One can feel how German history has left its impression on you. With me, there are other aspects of 'war' that left an impression. This personal moulding determines our 'existence' in the seminars in many situations!*

H. W.: Our history accompanies us - we cannot leave it behind. Each single year, our violent German history, especially the two world wars, played its part in the seminars. When the Wall had fallen in 1990 and we listened to the reports of our colleagues from the East, we knew the war and its consequences manifested in the divided Germany had once again caught up with us. While we met in Groß-Dölln, right-wing extremists set fire to a home of asylum seekers - again the past became present. In 1993, when we met under the theme "Economy and Violence - A Challenge for Pastoral Care", one participant from Papua New-Guinea told us that also German firms were among those who were mining ore and gold in his country and destroying the environment. As a matter of fact, New Guinea had been a German colony before the first world war!

I am also much concerned about the question of how to meet others with a history of ours as it is. This will certainly become a focal issue when we visit Auschwitz in 1996.

I am sure, other cultures and other nations have their own ways of knowing and dealing with their own history and that of others. It would be good to explore this further.

K. T.: *With regard to the theme of the seminar in 1993 "Economy and Violence", mention should also be made of the excursions which were part of the programme.*

H. W.: Excursions as contextual and methodical new arrivals! The idea was to take participants out into a 'different' world, a different culture *in situ*, to give them an opportunity to have a common experience in a group of very different people and to reflect upon this from the different background of each individual person. This was an important step to achieve another level of contact between people. It was also important that we entered into realms that were no common ground in pastoral care: factories, mines, jobless initiatives, etc. We confronted ourselves with such places and that set forth a lot.

The question remains why we began to do this so late. Perhaps it was not possible earlier. We had confronted ourselves with the intercultural issue earlier on, in direct confrontation, so to say, - and only after we had made certain experiences, had become more assured, could we embark on something new. This was a constructive step after the previous

difficult seminar. The attempted discussion of "economy" from a theological or pastoral-care point of view, however, was achieved in a very rudimentary way only. But it was meaningful that we attempted to consider economy and integrate economic conditions as part of pastoral care.

This is typical: As long as we dealt with methods of doing our work or with ourselves (for instance "my gender-determined role in the church") we could remain among ourselves. If we wanted to address economy issues we had to look around. A second seminar on economy would certainly be a good idea.

K. T.: *The seminar in 1994 near Prague definitely was a very impressive one. I could go on talking about it. I would like to underline but one aspect of it, i.e. being in a country where 'my own' language was not spoken! To a certain extent, this is what we discussed earlier on, that you had to expose yourself in another new way.*

H. W.: I could support what you are saying by what went on during the period of preparation. What we experienced then was to feel exposed over and over again. All those concerned repeatedly asked themselves whether this seminar could be a success. Would we succeed in exposing ourselves to the new and strange and still survive? Was it right to endeavour on moving into a foreign country with a different language and history? Would the seminar be a success with the limited funds that were available? Would the collaboration with the Prague friends be a good one? Never before had we entered into collaboration at such a distance. All these were open questions. During the months before Prague, we sometimes were under such pressure that it was doubtful whether we would be able to continue. That was a very, very critical stage.

K. T.: *And what was it that helped?*

H. W.: I would rather choose a different word: what 'solved' things? What solved our problems and 'dissolved' the pressure? And the answer is easy: To experience this city and the people in it, the people who had helped prepare the seminar. These people had been through much bigger and more serious problems - they managed their situation after the oppressive communist times with admirable energy. What eventually made the burden lighter was the experience that

when one works through difficulties there will be survival at the end - not just as a promise, but as a matter of fact! There was a second discovery we made. We had chosen the right theme together with Karel Schwarz and Jindra Schwarzova: Change of Values. So people who had registered for the seminar, came in order to get to know the Czech friends and the situation in that country, they wanted so see the golden city of Prague and they wanted to reflect on the change of values. After the seminar in Prague and the many experiences we were blessed with there, I was sure: Now, nothing can stop the seminars and the intercultural work in pastoral care any more!

K. T.: *'Survival' and 'support' - these two have always been crucial issues at many seminars and in our intercultural contacts, not only below the surface but addressed openly, as for instance in a role play during the plenary session in 1995.*

H. W.: In the first years, I started off having the naïve idea that international encounter was simple and nice, just like travelling as a tourist and discovering new things. Meanwhile, there has been the painful, but blessed experience that intercultural encounter means 'exposure'. The person as a whole is exposed to very high demands. The person as a whole is questioned - and that is beneficial. Nothing can be taken for granted any longer. But this opens new avenues. The other side of the experience is just as important: If I expose myself, I will receive support. The more I open up, the more open others meet me. The more I accept others and the strange, the lesser need my worries be about myself. In intercultural pastoral care we are in the centre of pastoral care as such - in the centre of what pastoral means!

K. T.: *Questioning and giving support: That is what pastoral care is about!*

H. W.: In working on an intercultural level what we also learn is: faith. Here we can experience what faith means: To leave behind what is familiar and start off into a 'land that God will show us'. God created many variations of human-kind. He suggested many different cultural possibilities - in our intercultural work we can witness variations of his creativity and experience the challenge to look for him and get to know him in new forms.

K. T.: *The seminar in Prague offered many stimuli. Was one of the impulses to establish a society or has this idea lain dormant already earlier on?*

H. W.: Prague had given the impetus to continue and to re-concentrate on what we were doing. But the decision to establish the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling had gradually taken shape since after the seminar in 1994. The work we were doing was to have its own structures - a 'tent'. Finally, in October 1995, we carried it out.

During the founding assembly there was much consent from various sides and much readiness to participate. I was quite overwhelmed. When I went to bed late that night, I thought I was one of the most blessed people on earth.

When I think back to our intercultural activities I remember many women and men I feel greatly attached to through our encounters. To me they seem like a cloud of witnesses as is mentioned in the epistle to the Hebrews. To be able to live in community with them and to have them as my companions on my way is a great encouragement and gives me hope in good days and difficult ones.

K. T.: *By now, we have mentioned several stages of the journey of the international seminars and touched some contextual questions. In my opinion, we should also discuss how we arrived at certain structures and methods, for instance how the "Intercultural Circle", the place to discuss life stories, or the "Intercultural Plenum" came into existence. I am sure it would be important to describe 'Intercultural Pastoral Care' and intercultural communication in a more detailed way.*

H. W.: You are right, there are many more issues that would need to be discussed.

K. T.: *But I think this will have to do for today. Our dialogue as a documentary of the 1995 seminar will certainly help us in our further discussions. What is more, the future theory conferences and consultations can take up some of the issues. Since the 'Society' exists, there is a platform for these things.*

H. W.: At the last seminar, Roy Woodruff, our colleague and friend from the USA, said that at certain stages he had felt like being in the "Orient Express". May be, intercultural pastoral care and counselling is like building a new rail-

way line extending into not so well explored territory. But one thing is certain: There are many who wish to join in.

K. T.: *Let us see where the future will lead us and what course the journey will take.*

Thank you very much for this journey into to the past.

H. W.: Well, you have been the engine driver and I have been the one to shovel the coal. ■

Ursula Pfäfflin / Archie Smith, Jr.

Death and the Maiden

**The complexity of trauma and ways of healing.
A challenge for pastoral care and counselling**

*“Who are my mother and my brother?
Whoever does the will of God is my
brother, and sister, and mother”*
(Mark 3:33,35)

The field of pastoral care and counselling is undergoing a shift in emphasis. It is moving from a focus on the private lives of individuals and the ego to a focus on the social, political and the ecological systems that determine individual and corporate life.¹ The shift from the person to broader challenges brings up the question of how does the teacher of pastoral care prepare the student to address complex issues without losing sight of the individual, or self? What resources do teachers of pastoral care use to help illuminate the interplay between the personal, social-political, economic and ecological contexts? Feminist and liberation theologians have emphasized in their work that the personal is embedded in political contexts, hence, the political is personal and the personal is political. The question of the case study becomes important because the case study helps to determine what is to be explored, what are the relevant questions, and how we think about pastoral care issues. In this article we select as our case study, the drama, *Death and the Maiden*.² We reflect upon the interpersonal issues of trauma and healing within a political context. We derive from this focus implications for teaching systemic think-

ing in pastoral care. Systemic thinking is a way of looking at the contexts in which behaviour occurs and tracking the reciprocal connections between individuals as well as noting the changes that occur within individuals. We believe that the drama, *Death and The Maiden* provides an opportunity to demonstrate systemic thinking in pastoral care by focusing on systemic violence. It also provides a challenge to pastoral care especially where it (pastoral care) has been defined primarily in individual terms and as a professional relationship between a help seeker and a help giver. We pursue the question of how to create relationships of safety, holding, trust and connections while acknowledging and finding value in differences.

In order to address this question we look at *Death and the Maiden*, a drama written by the Chilean author, Ariel Dorfmann. The context is the unstable political situation in Chile after fall of the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. There are three characters in the play, Paulina Salas, her husband Gerardo Escobar, and Dr. Roberto Miranda. The drama unfolds in the main room of Paulina and Gerardo's home. There the history of violence which permeates every aspect of Chilean society now determines the interaction between the three characters and meaning in their personal lives. The drama shows how long standing patterns of injustice and violation create long-term trauma and irreparable hurt which can become an integral part of everyday life.

Paulina Salas, around forty years old, had worked with her husband, Gerardo Escobar, around forty-five years old, for political change. One

evening she is informed by TV that he was announced head of a committee commissioned to investigate the events of torture during the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. Contingency wills it that he is hindered to return home by a thundershower and then finds help by a doctor who accompanies him back home. His way of talking, quoting Nietzsche, and his manner of behaving makes Paulina suspicious. Then she remembers the trauma situation. In her home is the man, Dr. Roberto Miranda, around fifty years old, whom she believes is the one who betrayed and violated her in the worst possible way. She was abducted and tortured because the Pinochet regime wanted the name of her husband. She was made naked, violated and tortured with electroshocks. After the torture, Dr. Roberto Miranda came to attend to her. He promised to help. Instead, he raped her repeatedly, using her as an object of his own will. She was humiliated and hurt even more than by the electroshocks. Dr. Roberto Miranda played the famous string quartet by Schubert, one of her favourite pieces of music: *Death and the Maiden*.

Paulina did not confess. When she returned to her husband, she found him in bed with another woman. She is now faced with her torturer and the husband who betrayed her, all in one room. She is absolutely clear and decided on what she needs in order to begin healing. To be healed is her sense of self-respect, self-agency, and spiritual wholeness. She needed a confession about the truth of what had happened. She needed an acknowledgement of her perception and her suffering by those who inflicted it on her. This is exactly what both men in the drama are not willing to give. By using all her wits, strengths, determination, and a gun, she attempts to get what is crucial to restore her inner and outer sense of identity. The confession she receives from Dr. Miranda contains some of the following statements:

“I raped you many times. Fourteen times. I played music. I wanted to soothe you. I was good at first. I fought it hard. No one was so good at fighting as I. I was the last one to have a taste. No one died. I made it easier on them. That's how it started. They needed a doctor. My brother was in the Secret Service. He told me: Make sure nobody dies. You saw it yourself. You told me you are dirty and I washed you clean. The others said: You are going to refuse fresh meat, are you? And I was starting

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to like it. They laid people out on the table. They flashed on the light. People lying totally helpless, and I didn't have to be nice and I didn't have to seduce them. I didn't even have to take care of them. I had all the power. I could make them do or say whatever I wanted. I was lost in morbid curiosity. How much can this woman take? More than the other one? Howls her sex? Does her sex dry up when you put the current through her? Can she have an orgasm under those circumstances? O God, I liked being naked. I liked to let my pants down. I liked you knowing what I was going to do. There was bright light. You could not see me. I owned you I owned all of you. I could hurt you and I could fuck you and you could not tell me not to. I loved it. I was sorry that it ended. Very sorry that it ended."

Paulina was the maiden who died. True, she survived physically. But her soul, mind, hopes, trust, and the meaning of her life were killed. Even so, she was not broken by the torture. What Pauline needed was the truth from Dr. Miranda, her suspected torturer.

The drama leaves open the question of whether or not Dr. Miranda's confession is real or contrived. *Death and the Maiden* is about systemic violence and its consequences for everyday life. It deals with the long-term effects of torture and violence on human beings. The drama is mythical and historical in that the themes it deals with are timeless and actual. The fact that violence surrounds us, trauma is complex and the need for healing is everywhere makes this drama systemic, mythical and immediately relevant.

We remember that Paulina sacrificed herself in order to protect her husband, and that her husband, Geraldo betrayed her. How can healing occur in the relationship between Paulina and Geraldo - that is to say, how can trust be restored? The way Gerardo Escobar can become the real partner of Paulina Salas is to bond with and trust her as she pursues her suspicion about her torturer. Trust becomes a first step to hearing her. He must hold, help and protect her as she did him during the time of her interrogation. He must not be afraid to hear and face the truth of her story which is also a part of his own. Once, Paulina experiences his courage to chose her side and acknowledge her pain, she can let go of her murderous rage. Both Paulina and Gerardo can begin a new phase

of grieving and of working through their pain. The same possibility exists for Dr. Roberto Miranda, to the degree that he can confess his complicity in the collective and personal violence, acknowledge his responsibility, repent, and make restoration.

Death and the Maiden is a symbolic story. It is one of the key narratives of the present situation in many countries of the world. In October of 1994, we participated in the leadership of an International conference for pastoral counsellors, held for the first time in the capital of the Czech Republic, Prague.³ The theme of the conference, Changing Values, indicated the struggles which post-conflict societies are facing, especially the post socialist countries of Eastern Europe.

We listened to the report of two participants from Papua New Guinea, Biul Kirokim and his interpreter, George Euling. Their village was recently 'discovered' by international mining companies. Their natural resources of trees and land were razed. Their air and water ways polluted, their customs and traditional way of life irreparably destroyed. New diseases and forms of illness occurred for which they had no remedy. They had to learn to rely on western medicines, which they could not afford. People became depressed, developed psychological illnesses that were unknown. Their culture was humiliated. An entire people were violated, their land raped, their food source poisoned. There is a trauma of unknown magnitude, and they search for ways to heal. What needs to be confronted? Who must do the work? Who needs to tell this story? Who needs to hear it? How can relationships of safety, holding, trust and connections be made in order for victims and perpetrators to be healed? And, how do we enable our students to make these connections in ways that empower them to be effective pastoral care givers and learners in situations such as these?

One of the presenters, Dr. Jan Urban, a former Czech dissident offered an answer to these questions. A culture of humiliation and shaming develops where there is personal and systemic violation of the dignity of persons and the effects of trauma are widespread. A culture of humiliation and shaming develops when people are not given space to openly process their experience of trauma after the acute stages of conflict have passed. A culture of humiliation and shaming develops further when

public policy promotes amnesia rather than remembering. Public and private amnesia can be as dangerous as the traumatization itself. Jan Urban mentioned *Death and the Maiden* as one of the most important plays which addresses severe trauma and processes of recovery. This drama was not admitted to be staged in The Czech Theatre even though its content deals exactly with the experiences that thousands of people have had in the past forty years during and after the war. In this way, public policy promotes amnesia when people are not allowed to publicly acknowledge the violence done to them and find appropriate ways to transform their lives. If people do not want to hear or be reminded, then how can they be prepared for the consequences?

The challenge for pastoral care here is in the whole movement of hearing the painful story of victims, and moving perpetrators through the processes of recognition, confession, repentance and restoration. The events of the drama could happen anywhere. They occur everywhere. But efforts to acknowledge such events may be resisted. Herein lies a partial challenge for pastoral care and counselling, namely to make known the subtle connections between personal suffering and public events, especially when people do not want to hear or know. Pastoral counsellors may be in an uncommon position to do systemic thinking and reveal the connections between public events, psychic trauma, interpersonal relations and spiritual direction. From these ideas we draw the following implications for teaching systemic thinking. The drama, *Death and the Maiden* will serve as guide.

First, the teacher or trainer may invite the students to read the drama and reflect upon its meaning for them.

Then teacher may lead the students in a discussion by asking, 'what is the problem?' Rather than to assume that the definition of the problem at hand is known or shared, it is important to ask 'what is the problem?' Just as there are different ways of seeing and knowing, there will be different understandings and conflicting definitions of the problem. The different ways of seeing and knowing may later provide alternative approaches to the problematic situation. Hence, it is important to ask what is the problem and uncover the different ways of seeing, and entering the problematic situation.

Next, the teacher can invite the students to do some background reading about the Chilean situation. Students are encouraged to identify new questions stimulated by the reading of historical documents and gain perspective on the political context and the authors point of view.

Students can link these new questions with their previous questions about the definition of the problem.

Given what they now know, the students may work in small groups to develop a scenario of the situation which they will role play. Class members are invited to think about the definition of the situation implied in the particular scenario and how the definition of the situation determines the motives and interaction between the characters and possibilities for healing.

Role play this situation and think about it from the perspective of each of the individuals in it.

After several role play situations are presented, the students are invited to think about the context as a whole. The overall purpose is to enable students to see multiple levels of interaction and meaning, and thereby identify alternative approaches and resources for healing. Some resources may already be available in the interaction system and wider society. Other resources need to be created in order to help transform painful situations.

During this process, another challenge for the teacher and trainer of pastoral care and counselling is to create space and time safe enough to address the pain, shame, anxiety, rage or denial connected to life stories of traumatization. There may be students or trainees who have been abused themselves and need protection for their own deep emotions, memories or present experiences. Also, the teacher and trainer need a place where they can take care of their own well being. Therefore, teaching and training which address violence and traumatization need special care given to the process in order to deal with the emotional involvement of all participants. The development of ritual elements may be helpful because ritualized beginnings and endings help to establish safe boundaries for the time and space need to process the emotions raised by the role play. Rituals can consist of small sentences like "I hear you, sister, or brother" by the whole group after a woman or man has shared her or his feelings. Rituals can include symbols like a bowl of water for cleansing and refreshing. A stone can be circled in

order to contain pain or rage which then may be washed away by water. Rituals are most helpful when they are developed and agreed upon by the participants themselves. This is especially important in intercultural⁴ settings where symbols have a different meaning for participants from diverse ethnic and spiritual traditions.

We draw further implications of this drama for systemic thinking and as challenge for pastoral care. Where justice has been long denied and the effects of traumas remain hidden, there will surface a need to deal openly with the trauma and right the wrongs. There will also be strenuous efforts on the part of perpetrators to deny wrong doings, and to disavow any knowledge of it. New identities may be created to cover up the violence.⁵ Others may unwittingly become an accomplice in the cover-up. Death and the Maiden revealed how a dictatorship created complex public relationships, determined the quality of private lives, and effected an inner sense of self. These interwoven issues (complex external event, private lives, and inner sense of self), in various ways, are manifest through all three of the characters in the drama. Death and the Maiden is about a real life everyday situation, in that it deals with the long-term effects of betrayal torture and violence on human beings. This drama was written in a world marked by differences, unilateral use of power, changing gender roles, and increased violence. It forces the questions of how do we relate to those who have hurt us irreparably or whom we hurt? What knowledges need to be unmasked? What information needs to surface? Who is to do this work? Faced with such questions, and in such a context, can we create relationships of safety, holding, trust while such work is done? Can connections be made and sustained while acknowledging differences in ways of seeing and knowing?

Another important challenge was named by Jan Urban: the churches have access to social and political power by being able to speak up publicly. Traumatized persons, as the drama of Paulina's life demonstrates, need the naming of the atrocity that happened. One of the main problems for Paulina is that even in her own perception she is not certain if her identification of the perpetrator is right. Is Roberto Miranda the one who did the torturing? Not being reinforced in her perception by her

husband and facing the denial of the perpetrator are among the most difficult experiences for her. Not being listened to and believed in telling the truth, is one of the worst experiences for girls or boys when they give signs to adults of being abused. For the speakers of the people in Papua New Guinea, one of the problems they face is the disavowal of the impact of Western economy's destruction done to their ecological and social-spiritual system. Companies have produced films which are meant to demonstrate the environmental care of these Western companies based on scientific research whereas the knowledge of the inhabitants is neither heard nor acknowledged in the world's public.

To invite women and men as speakers and representatives of communities that continue to be exploited and traumatized is one step the intercultural pastoral counselling movement has provided. But even here questions such as, 'How did you learn English' and 'What kind of food do you eat' were addressed to Biul Kirokim of Papua New Guinea. Trainers and teachers of counselling from Europe demonstrated a profound lack of knowledge and empathy because their questions failed to respond to his life threatening situation.⁶ There was disappointment and anger about our own limitations amongst some participants of the conference. We became aware of how much we have yet to learn in order to develop models of intercultural counselling in which mutuality of learning and teaching are developed, hurt and anger can be worked through.

Pastoral counsellors work between and within the realm of the personal and the political. We listen to personal and political stories like Paulina's when we work with refugees and victims of violence from all parts of the world, including the stranger from afar or the neighbour next door. It is a demanding challenge for a pastoral counsellor to listen to stories of torture and respond appropriately to the counsellee's or trainee's experiences of violation, dreams and flashbacks. We are challenged to help them to express their rage and ambivalence, and struggle with shame and isolation. Given this challenge, it is easy for the counsellor to feel overwhelmed by this complex reality, to feel helpless, discouraged, incompetent and burned out. We might identify strongly with the victim and condemn the perpetrator so that hopelessness or anger seem overwhelming. We might

also recognize that there are many issues that we have not yet addressed adequately in our own lives. For example, our response to the amount of abuse of especially women and children, our own racism, our participation in the structural violence of exploitation of non-white societies by white western culture and economy may escape our awareness.

In the work with traumatized women, children and men it is important, not only to establish safety and reliable connections but also to make transparent the counsellors support of the victim. Counsellors may show support of a traumatized victim and increase their understanding of the victim's situation by acting as an advocate. The counsellor may do this by helping a rape victim, for example, to gather a support network and by being present at a court hearing. In that way counsellors not only show support for the counsellee, but can enlarge their understanding of the legal process, and the counsellee's personal and political situation. As the problem of traumatization is mainly one of losing the power of decision, the basic sense of self-agency and trust in self, other and world, it is crucial to address the meaning of life in the process of healing.⁷ For example, once the counsellor gains an enlarged picture of the counsellee's situation, there is greater opportunity to help the counsellee find new ways of understanding what happened and enable new connections.

It is here that we meet a further special challenge for pastoral counselling. Contemporary models of pastoral care and counselling continues to be under the influence of Western psychology at the expense of engaging in critical reflection on ethical traditions as a source of meaning making. Traditional pastoral care used ethical traditions, Bible, theology, reason and experience as its basis. But with few exceptions, these sources have been neglected. Some of the questions that arise as theological challenges are: How do we use our traditions to address the confrontation with present day evil, violence and the traumatization of thousands of women, children and men. How do we do this theologically and spiritually? Where do we locate our own sources of meaning in our lives in the midst of such violence? What do biblical symbols like "the freedom to which Christ has liberated us" and "do the will of God", "brothers and sisters" mean to us? How do we listen to the voices expressed by

women and men of diverse religious traditions? They question the androcentric metaphors and paradigms in which the Christian message of healing and restoration has been cast. Those who suffer point to the need for new interpretations that make sense of their experiences and offer hope for everyone. How do we communicate our own moral resources and committed actions in ways that respect the otherness of the other and at the same time, create safe space for steps towards healing and creativity? How can we teach others in a way that makes it a learning experience empowering for all participants?

Death and the Maiden, moved both of us deeply. We identified with the victim's rage and uncompromising desire for revenge, to balance the scale of justice; to make the perpetrators pay-in-full. Why should they be let off? It brought up memories of our own pains, wishes to be acknowledged in our experience of abandonment, rejection and devaluation. But the drama must also permit us to identify with those situations where we have oppressed, violated or figured into the trauma of others. To recognize this more complex level of trauma can lead to denial or to healing. It can release energies of hope when emerging narratives are enlarged and incorporate both our idealized selves as well as our shameful self. A more complex understanding of trauma can offer metaphors of transformation that enable us to connect the violence that is within with the brutal, systemic violence that comes from without. Both may be denied. Both possibilities present us with opportunities to re-envision the meaning of care in a world of increased violence, where political change and upheaval are creating new forms of trauma and affiliations. Ours is a changing world, pushed by global developments, technological innovations, and uneven growth with deeper divisions between the wealthy and the poor. We are challenged to raise anew the question: Who is my mother, my sister and my brother? We have much to learn from the question and the answers, especially in contexts of world wide economic and social change. Pastoral caregivers are further challenged to fashion creative responses to violence; to see and make the connections between personal suffering and political activity - especially where long standing patterns of injustice and violation contribute to long-term trauma and irreparable hurt.

There is a prophetic dimension to this challenge. It is to make known the subtle connections between personal suffering and public events, especially where people do not want to hear or be reminded of their past. Pastoral caregivers are challenged to find or create a role in situations where people who refuse to heed warning signs, will nevertheless, be unable to escape the consequences of their refusals. This is analogous to the young smoker who ignores the warning signs and refuses to stop. Such a person may soon be faced with the consequences of lung cancer and early death. She and he may never acknowledge their contribution to all the others affected by their behaviour. We are challenged to find courage and skill to confront the perpetrators denial of violations, and find compassion sufficient to enable them to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. This means that pastoral caregivers will be challenged to hear painful stories and learn to move perpetrators through the processes of recognition, confession, repentance, and restoration. And what about forgiveness? How do we deal with the perpetrators confession and repentance? Are there deeds so horrendous that forgiveness is impossible? In the process we too must learn to recognize our limitations, and the complex levels of trauma that incorporate both our idealized and shameful selves.

Notes

¹ A few book titles signal this emphasis: Larry Kent Graham, *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds: A Psychosystems Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992); George Furniss, *The Social Context of Pastoral Care: Defining the Life Situation* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster: John Knox Press, 1994).

² Ariel Dorfmann, *Death and the Maiden* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991). Citations from page 59.

³ 8th Seminar on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling, 18-23. Sept. 1994, Prague.

⁴ By "intercultural" we mean a setting in which a member of one ethnic group facilitates a process or therapeutic intervention that empowers a member of another ethnic group to make beneficial decisions. See: Jafar Kareem and Roland Littlewood (eds.), *Intercultural Therapy: Themes, Interpretations and*

Practice (Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1992), p. 11.

⁵ The North American Theologian James Poling has addressed the strong tendency of male perpetrators very well in his book *The Abuse of Power* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991) in which he portrays two of his cases in his own work with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. He also discusses the theological impact of the abuse of power in regard to the image of God and concepts of Christology.

⁶ David Augsburger has defined a difference between sympathy, empathy and interpathy: "In interpathy, the process of knowing and 'feeling with' requires that one temporarily believe what the other believes, see as the other sees, value what the other values." See David W. Augsburger, *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1986) p. 31.

⁷ Stuart Turner in his article on "Therapeutic Approaches Survivors of Torture" states: "Only if the therapist or group has developed some coherent understanding of the social and political context in which they are working, can they really start to address the ideological needs of their clients" (in: J. Kareem and R. Littlewood (eds.), op. cit., p. 167.

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2

**"post-modern
time" -**

a new context?

Ronaldo Sathler-Rosa

Pastoral Action in Post-Modern Time

A Brazilian perspective

First of all I would like to consider with you that post modern time is a vague and ill-defined word, idea or area of thought. I wonder if it is much more an *état d'esprit* than a scientifically established concept.

According to a Brazilian author (J. Santos, 1986) post-modernism is a name that applies to the changes in sciences, arts and the advanced societies since approximately 1950. The rather vague concept of post-modernism had its metaphorical birth with radical changes in architecture and the introduction of computers beginning in the 1950's. Changes in architecture expressed changing visions of space, beauty and utility while the "birth" of the computer changed not only the way we work and play but many of our images and metaphors. Before the computer, the human brain was imaged as an incredibly complex machine. After the computer, the human brain was, and continues to be, imagined as a computer. Pop art may have also shaped the concept of post-modernism as this new trend in art expressed our changing visions of colour, space, beauty and the necessity to go beyond the "status quo".

Some of the features of this so-called time are

- 1) The electronic technology that overwhelms daily life with information, entertainment and a variety of services. In this transitional stage of history we deal more with signs and symbols than with reality itself;
- 2) In economics the post-modern atmosphere seduces individuals to the new "value" of consumerism. Shopping malls are the post-modern altars at which we worship.
- 3) The post-modern threatens to incar-

nate life styles and philosophies that lead to nihilism, and a consequent lack of values and meaning in life. Personal isolation or individualism, consumerism and hedonism are the symptoms of this pathology. In this context, some people may choose to be either a radiant child, extroverted and well adapted to technology or a melancholy android, an individual, without history, enslaved by technoscience.

Is pastoral action relevant in post-modern time? In order to attempt to answer this question I would like to raise another question: What is Meaningless Pastoral Action? I would submit some traits of what I consider Irrelevant Pastoral Action:

- 1) One that does not meet legitimate human aspirations;
- 2) One that conveys a "transcendental" spirituality without existential consequences;
- 3) One that lacks synergy with current trends in history.

On the contrary, a Pertinent Pastoral Action, either in its modes of Care, Counselling, Preaching and so forth, is the one that meets human aspirations for freedom, self respect and respect for others. Pertinent Pastoral Action is Pastoral Action that recognizes and supports the needs for work, housing, education and all of the many ways that different people seek meaning and value in life.

On the other hand, sound Pastoral Work has to remind us of "down-to-earth" reality, it has to ground the perspectives, the hopes and the commitments of those who fight for a world of justice and hope. This is not an alienated spirituality but an historically incarnated expression of faith.

greatly influenced by their faith or religious heritage. Both, faith and historical conditions, are blended together in life and should be fused in order to form and inform a pastoral response to historical reality. A Relevant Pastoral Action takes into account these two poles.

These two axes (faith and history or tradition and situation) show that "theology moves behind and ahead" of us. Pastoral Action has to consider, in practice and in theory, the human surrender to the mysteries of the Divine - to faith, and to the power, constraints and uncertainties of life as it is lived day to day.

Pastoral Action has to scrutinize not only materials from Scripture, and tradition, but also the conditionings of existential response to the Divine, or "the Creative interpretation of existence" (P. Tillich). According to Tillich, the "situation" or the context is an existential conditioning of faith experience. 'Situation', in Tillich's thought, means the great references of interpretation and expression as far as scientific, political, and ethical levels are concerned (R. Josgrilberg).

Thus the unchangeable mission of Pastoral Caregivers is to fit the Christian message into the changeable conditions of history. Or, in other words, the perennial task of Pastoral Action is to facilitate the continual human process of searching for meaning in the journey of life amidst its changes, despairs, anguishes, lack of justice and illnesses.

I would like to outline some cutting edges which I consider to be critical issues for our field of specialisation and for practitioners in our "post-modern" time:

- 1) The old tension between the "Event" and the "Institution" (L'institution et l'événement, J. Leuba). This tension is at the roots of rejections and critiques of the institutional church in our troubled times. Pastoral Actions will, to my understanding, continue to be confronted by the cry of many for "faith without the institutional church";
- 2) The Critique of the tendency of many cultures to stumble or jump into the "Web of Technological Arrest". Or the dictatorship of the computer and the computer industry, or should I say Industries? It is obvious that it we cannot demean the importance of technology. However, we can never forget that HUMAN well being (Shalom) is the target of Pastoral Action.
- 3) A Dialogue with the field, or the various fields, of Economics in order to

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We must always remember that much of human personality is shaped by its circumstances. Still, men and women are

grasp the undergirdings of our “post-modern” times is essential.

Technology aids our daily life with a wide variety of gadgets and services - gadgets and services which run the gamut from the absurd and silly to the life saving and efficient. However, these technological gadgets and services, of whatever quality provide no inherent ethical value, morality or spirituality beyond that of an implied consumerist hedonism. Perhaps, though, this lack of inherent value, this hedonism, has brought to life the nuclear threat, ecological disaster, terrorism, economic crises, political corruption, vast military expenditures, urban neuroses and psychological and spiritual insecurity. This technology to which I refer in general or metaphorical terms, has rational means, but only pursues irrational goals: profit and power (J. Santos). ■

Ursula Pfäfflin

The Concept of Knowledge in Modern and Post-modern Times

A discussion paper

What is ‘Post-Modern’?

Originally, the term was used in architecture to describe the style which superseded the modern style represented by schools like the *Bauhaus* focusing on functionalism, technology, etc. In American sociology, the post-industrial or post-modern age is an era at the beginning of the second half of this century characterized by its challenging the faith in the principles of the enlightenment (faith in the general human reflexive reason - a substance of continuous and progressive growth that finds its expression in continuous increase and development of knowledge, of technical control over nature and its intricacies, in economic prosperity and contractually regulated cohabitation of individuals and of whole nations). Enlightened modern thinking for instance draws on the phenomenology of the spirit (Hegel) which describes the history of all of humanity as a history of the growing mind, or on the philosophy of the practical reason (Kant) by which principles are developed for the reasonable behaviour of all human beings. The term post-modern suggests that in the wake of two world wars and ensuing incongruity of the basic assumptions of the modern era, scepticism arises vis à vis any attempt to explain the diversity of being, of knowing, of acting by one single system or by one grand story; and that more and more an understanding emerges that any interpretation of reality must be viewed as a construction and thus only one story among many others, none of which can claim the right to be exclusively true.

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Basic assumptions of the Enlightened Tradition¹

1. The existence of a coherent, stable self. “The most distinctive valued property of this enlightenment self is a form of reason capable of privileged insight into its own processes and into the ‘laws of nature’ ”.

2. Reason, and its ‘science’ philosophy, can provide an objective, reliable, and universalizable ‘foundation’ for knowledge and for judging all truth claims.

3. “True knowledge represents something ‘real’ and unchanging (universal) about our minds or destructure of the natural world. The ‘real’ is that which has an existence independent of the knower.”

4. Reason itself has transcendent and universal qualities. It exists independently of the contingency of the existence of self (for example bodily, historical or social experience does not influence the structure of reason or its capacity to produce timeless knowledge).

5. There are complex relationships between reason, autonomy and freedom. All claims to truth or authority are to be judged by reason. Freedom exists in obeying the laws which coincide with the necessary results of using reason adequately (If I follow the laws, I follow the best transhistorical part of myself, reason and spirit, and therefore I am autonomous and evade a concrete, only contingent existence.).

6. If claims to authority are based on reason conflicts between truth, knowledge and power can be overcome. Truth can serve power without distortion. On the other hand, freedom and progress can be ensured if knowledge is used in service of power.

7. Thus science becomes the paradigm for all true knowledge because

science is a model of the right use of reason.

8. Language is but a medium in which and through which reality is represented. There is a correspondence of word and object.

Altogether, Jane Flax thinks of this tradition of thought as linear, teleological, hierarchical, holistical and cause-effect-oriented.²

Post-modern ways of thinking

Post-modern ways of thinking are de-constructive in so far as they are sceptical vis-à-vis the above mentioned enlightened assumptions and start out from the idea that no perception whatsoever is a depiction of reality, but a construction and thus does not contain any objective truth, i.e. is to be taken as only one narrative among others. Social criticism does no longer seek to be corroborated by philosophy, but it tends to be more pragmatic, context-oriented, local. The French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard offers one example of post-modern philosophy.³ It is he who introduced this term as a concept in present-day debates of philosophy, politics, society, and social theories.

According to Lyotard, the more we arrive at post-modern forms of transfer of knowledge through the media, i.e. enter the information age, the question arises: Who decides what knowledge is and who knows what has to be decided? Thus, in the information age, the question of knowledge becomes more than ever a question of government (or rather one of power).

If universal criteria no longer exist for everybody, but only different voices in a mix-up of discourses, naturally the question arises which voices will succeed and claim to be the most important? Of course, language is an important factor in this, for it is by means of "language games" that different voices find their expression and power is obtained.

According to Lyotard, there have been two models of society:

1. Society as a functional entity,
2. Society divided into two antagonistic powers.

Model 1 encompasses all ideas, which see society as an organic entity, e.g. today's model of a system: society can be compared with a self-regulating system, according to the model of cy-

bernetics or that of biology/chemistry. The objective of any system is to optimize the global relationship of its inputs and outputs, i.e. its efficiency. Here, knowledge is seen in its function. (This does not correspond with the conception of a system represented by N. Luhmann who says that society as an entity is a state that can no longer be achieved.) Model 2 comprises such models that base on the assumption of a permanent struggle within society as does Marxism with its analysis of class warfare. Here, knowledge is attributed a critical function, so long as the dualistic model is not itself incorporated into a totalitarian system.

The major philosophical systems confer their authentication to the methods of knowledge and the practices of politics.

The post-modern era features different characteristics. Social communities seem to disintegrate into an amassment of individual atoms. However, there are no completely isolated 'selves'. They are caught in a network of relationships, which indeed have never been as complex and mobile as today.⁴ Those are the features of the post-modern era: complexity, mobility, innumerable communication circuits. The aspect of language in society is gaining ever more importance. Another feature of life experience in the post-modern era also is that things happen unexpectedly (events being incidental, experience of contingency).

Relating to knowledge, this means that knowledge cannot any longer be reduced to scientific evidence, not even cognition. Knowledge may be extended to 'being able to' do, live, hear. The decision about what *is* knowledge and what is 'good' depends on the consent of those who constitute the culture of a people. The form of such knowledge par excellence is the tale/story, the narrative.

1. The narrative form allows to define the criteria for the competence of the society to which it is being told and also to thus assess the value of its achievements, present or future. This way, knowledge and values belong together.

2. In itself, the narrative form allows for a plurality of 'language games' (descriptions, questions, evaluations, etc.)

3. Usually, the style of the narrative complies with rules determining its pragmatism. The acts of speaking are carried out not only by the narrator her/himself, but also by the listener and by the third person, the person in ques-

tion (the centre of the activity is mutual relationship, not a one-sided / single-ended, hierarchical pattern. Such type of knowledge means a social tie.

4. The narrative form complies with a rhythm, it is swinging and musical. The act of the recitation itself is also important, it is momentary. Oblivion is a part of this culture. What is more, stories do not need any particular procedures of authentication.

What is interesting, says Lyotard, is the fact that the major systems of knowledge themselves ultimately fall back upon the narrative since they present themselves as the story about the growth of the mind (Hegel), or antagonism, or class warfare (Marx), etc. In post-modern thinking, knowledge and its authentication become plural, local and immanent. Authentication of knowledge and politics can only develop pragmatically. It is the 'social ties' that keep society together, many threads of relatedness, that are interwoven, pass above and below each other.

But even Lyotard cannot do without social criticism of the development of society. He criticizes a development in which everything is subjected to pragmatism and efficiency (the focus is on succeeding and impact).

Feminist criticism

Feminist criticism of the approach of post-modern philosophers addresses the following point: criticism of meta-stories or philosophical systems excludes any possibility of a coherent criticism of society. In contrast to this, feminist philosophers argue why this should happen just at that time in history when women and other marginalized groups and peoples develop their own form of criticism. Sexism, racism, classicism are in need of extensive analysis and criticism. Women from various fields of science and from various continents have been searching for new paradigms of social criticism and have pointed out that what has so far been claimed as 'truths' has been contingent and conditioned by historical and local factors. They were challenged to do this by the demands of political practice. There is a risk, of course, that feminist theories will themselves develop into a 'meta-theory', e.g. a big social theory of history, society, culture, and psychology or theology, and will in turn disclose causes in a universal manner without consideration of cultural,

religious, social conditions in other countries, of other women. (In this context, some exciting argument is under way at the moment between white Western women and women of other ethnic origin, between women from the East and from the West, between women from the North and from the South.) Even among feminists, conceptions exist that women and men are of basically the same nature, i.e. there is one common essence (the major difference for instance between French and North American feminists). Criticism of society is there also in the case of post-modern feminism, but it can never be universalistic. Its approach is rather intercultural, taking into account different contexts, the complexity of social identity. The objective is not, just to analyse and to transform sexism, but also to demonstrate the connection with gender relations, class, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

Theology

Theology is the talking of God or the thinking about God. What then is the meaning of the above deliberations with regard to the history of theology? We can find similar developments even here.

There have been narrative beginnings. The bible is a compilation of stories which are taken as such in the biblical context (the writers of the gospels for instance refer to the stories in the Hebrew scriptures and extend those). The more established christianity became, the more sophisticated were its stories, they developed into philosophical systems trying to provide 'faith' with a framework, a system. As a consequence, theological history often is history of great male theologians: Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Rudolf Bultmann, Eugen Drewermann etc. And no attention is paid to innumerable other traditions such as the mystic, the monastic, the traditions of women and underprivileged people. An approach to rewrite theological history is made today also from other directions: South American and North American liberation theology, feminist theology, womanist theology, the theology of Min-Jung, African theology, ecological theology etc.; post-holocaust theology.

What would post-modern theology be like, then?

Notes

¹ According to Jane Flax, *Thinking Fragments, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West* (University of California Press, 1990). Citations from p. 30.

Also cf. Jane Flax, "Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory", in Linda J. Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism* (NY and London: Routledge, 1990).

² Flax in Nicholson (*op.cit.*), p. 41-42.

³ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Das Postmoderne Wissen*, Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 1994

⁴ Lyotard, *op.cit.*, p. 55. ■

3

pastoral care and counselling in a plurality of cultures

Robert Solomon

Pastoral Counselling in Asian Contexts

I thank the organizers of this Conference for inviting me to present this paper. Some introductory comments are called for.

Asian context or contexts?

One has to think of the plurality of contexts in Asia. Asia is a large continent stretching from Afghanistan (if one excludes the Middle-east) to the far reaches of the Siberian region in eastern Russia. There are at least 26 countries in this region. If the Middle-east is included, the number increases to some 45 countries. More than 60% of the world's population live in Asia. The continent expresses a rich diversity of cultures, languages, lands, religions, lifestyles, and economies. In this sense, I cannot adequately represent Asia. What I present cannot fully capture the diversity and vastness of the Asian contexts. Nevertheless, I am an Asian, living and working in Asia, and therefore my paper, though limited by my particular context, will attempt to discuss some aspects of my own as well as other Asian contexts to the best of my knowledge and experience.

My own context

I live in Singapore which is one of the smallest nations in Asia. It is an Island state measuring some 25 miles in length and 15 miles across, with a population of 2.7 million people. The island is part of the Southeast Asian region, comprising countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. This part of the world is a rapidly growing region economically though there are also many serious problems.

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Singapore is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious nation. It has four official languages and has Chinese, Malay and Indian, and Eurasian communities in addition to other minority groups. It is thus an interesting "melting pot" of different cultures and peoples. In that sense, I am happy to be staying here as I am exposed to some aspects of the rich diversity in Asia.

I teach in a theological college as well as serving as an associate pastor in a Tamil Methodist - church which has both English and Tamil services. My teaching ministry extends to several churches and Christian organisations in Singapore as well as some in the region. I also have opportunities to do pastoral counselling with church members, seminary students, pastors, and others referred to me.

In the rest of the paper, I will raise some issues which I have found to be important. They represent my own experience and reflection.

Culture and religion

When Asia is mentioned, culture is one major consideration that immediately comes to mind. I use the phrase "culture and religion" because in the Asian contexts, culture and religion are generally closely related. The ancient religions of Asia have shaped Asian cultures for centuries. The pastoral care-giver and the pastoral counsellor (who generally is trained with western models and methods since the modern pastoral counselling movement has largely developed in the west) thus have to be particularly aware of cultural realities and issues when working in the Asian contexts.

Culture has to do with beliefs, values, customs, and institutions¹. While we recognize certain aspects of culture which seem universal across cultures, there are also particularities regarding

the above dimensions in any given culture which affect the way pastoral counselling is conceived and practised.

Beliefs have to do with how reality is perceived. They help to shape world views which are hermeneutic sieves through which experiences are interpreted and assessed. If in a culture there is a strong belief in spirits, then that becomes an important part of the world view which therefore has to be taken into consideration by the pastoral counsellor.

Values have to do with what we value. Cultures may have different values though there may also be similarities across cultures. Our values affect the way we pursue certain things or goals, and determine how we react when we are unable to fulfil our goals or when we lose what we value. Pastoral counselling cannot be done effectively without due recognition of cultural values.

Customs have to do with how we do things. Cultures develop ways of doing things both at individual as well as communal levels. In a sense, customs determine what is normal or abnormal. What is customary is normal. What is customary in the west may not be so in the east. How then do we determine whether a particular act or experience is healthy or not? What norms do we use? These are questions which a pastoral care giver struggles in the Asian contexts as many of the texts on pastoral counselling come from the West and may need to be re-interpreted and modified in the light of Asian cultures.

Institutions represent how a particular culture has organized itself. Cultures may vary in terms of the presence or absence, strength and weakness, relative importance and other aspects of institutions. Examples of institutions are family, courts, churches, schools, village councils etc.

The best way to look at culture and pastoral counselling is to consider some issues which I have found to be relevant in the region I come from.

The supernatural

In Indonesia, "belief in God" is the first of five national values (pancasila). Several Asian countries have state religions, especially Islam. Religion is thus important in the Asian contexts. Sociologists such as John Clammer have noted that in Singapore and other Asian countries, with modernisation one has not seen a parallel secularisation proc-

ess as has been seen in western countries². In fact, with modernisation has come a resurgence of Asian religions. In Singapore, for example, the fastest growing religion is Buddhism³.

What is of particular importance in the Asian contexts in terms of counselling is what Paul Hiebert has called the “excluded middle zone”⁴. This “middle zone” represents beliefs in the existence of spirits, demons, ghosts, and how they influence or affect us. It exists between beliefs concerning heaven and our experience of empirical earthly life. In many Asian contexts, including the developed countries such as Japan, the “middle zone” is alive and well⁵.

In my own experience, I repeatedly encounter counselees who believe in spirits and demons, and wonder whether their problems are due to these entities. This motivated me to write my doctoral dissertation on pastoral responses to demon possession in Singapore⁶. How should I respond as a pastoral care giver? I should not dismiss the “middle zone” lest I create, in my case, a split level Christianity with people seeking help from pastors as well as from *bo-mohs*⁷. On the other hand, I have the benefit of being exposed to a multiplicity of perspectives and I can reframe problems for people. Reality and truth become important issues in counselling.

Family and filial piety

The family remains a resilient institution in Asia though in many places it is experiencing serious challenges arising from the modernisation, urbanisation, and economisation of life. The family unit (whether extended or nuclear) is an important consideration for pastoral counsellors in Asia. On one hand, the family is an important aspect of well-being and pathology in people. On the other hand, the Asian family is generally wary of seeking professional counselling which uses models of family therapy developed in the west. Family counselling has been traditionally done by the larger extended family though in many urban places in Asia, the extended family is threatened. In these places, the church, for example, can be the new extended family and pastoral care can be done using more traditional paradigms.

One related issue is filial piety, especially in Chinese cultures. It is an important virtue and is expressed in various forms of ancestor worship (or veneration, as some would say). In my own ecclesial context, this has remained a

big issue. Should Christians continue the practice of ancestor worship? Is this a cultural custom or is it a religious rite?⁸ From a more psychological perspective, is filial piety a way of retaining the power structures of traditional society? Parents, especially the father, are to be honoured. What has filial piety got to do with the common experience of the “distant father” and sometimes the abusive father?

Recently, there was a seminar in Singapore in which some retired people shared from their experiences under Japanese occupation during the Second World War. One historian, a friend of mine, suggested that one of the reasons why the Japanese seem to be having great difficulty in apologising for the atrocities during the war was possibly filial piety.

Besides the above issues, the family in Asia is going through rapid changes, much faster than those in the west. Ten major changes in the Asian family have been noted in a well-known work on the family in Asia. These include egalitarian family relations, greater individualism and independence, marital disruption, urbanisation, and so on⁹. Pastoral counselling has to note these stresses and challenges to family life. In Singapore, the government as well as major institutions are taking an active role in developing family values and life.

Shame

David Augsburger has noted that Asian cultures are shame oriented cultures¹⁰. While that may be too much of a generalisation, I think it is still true to say that shame plays an important role in Asian cultures. Shame has tended to be seen in a negative way, and often as inferior to guilt. I like to see shame in a more positive light. Healthy shame is discretionary shame. It does allow for the well being of individuals and societies through the process of shared goals and values.

At the same time, however, shame can also cripple someone by preventing him or her to move on in life. A deep sense of shame can be motivation enough for a suicide attempt. This is especially the case in Japanese society. The pastoral counsellor must approach facts with a sensitivity to the counselees’ shame. “Losing face” is a disaster in Asian cultures. In counselling I have found the need to be sensitive to the importance of “keeping face” and “losing face” while helping people to find solutions to their problems. In the process I am also

aware of my own “face” and have found avenues of personal growth through the experience of cultural relevance as well as countercultural stances. I am also exploring my experience as a pastoral care giver in a region which has many cultural practices involving masks and shadow-play, through the concepts of a “demonology of masks” and a “theology of the face”¹¹.

Smooth interpersonal relationships (SIR)

When I was studying in the Philippines, I was introduced to the concept of SIR which is a key value in Filipino culture. Facts and justice are secondary to the primary value of interpersonal harmony. In Chinese culture too, social harmony, group consensus rather than confrontation are highly held values. One of the national values in Singapore is decision making through consensus rather than contention or confrontational means¹². Pastoral counselling in conflict situations will have to bear this cultural ethos in mind.

An Asian psychology / Asian psychologies

William Wundt, the father of modern psychology saw psychology based on two traditions: the natural sciences and the social sciences traditions. From the latter arose cultural psychology (Völkerpsychologie) or indigenous psychology, which Wundt predicted would be the more important kind of psychology in the future¹³. In the Asian contexts, attempts have been made to develop such indigenous psychologies such as in India¹⁴ and other countries.

This is an important process since it addresses important questions. For example, in Filipino culture, the concepts of shame (*hiya*), *pakikisama* (yielding to the leader or the majority), and *utang na loob* (gratitude) are all based on the core cultural value of *kapwa* (shared identity with others)¹⁵. A mature Filipino person is one who shares his or her identity with others. The most mature person is one who belongs, not one who is independent. Many western psychologies are based on views of maturity linked with growing independence. The implication is that what is seen as healthy behaviour in one culture (say, in California) may be seen as unhealthy in another (say, China).

The global village

The discussion on cultural particularities must also be balanced with the trend of universal cultural patterns created by the media and technology. Many parts of Asia are open to modernity and the mass media originating in the West. The result is what Japanese writer Ken-ichi Ohmae terms the “californianisation of taste” with the phenomenon of common cultural icons in many different contexts: Nike shoes, Levi’s Jeans, Windows 95, Mr. Bean, Michael Jackson, coke etc.¹⁶ In fact, it may be true that teenagers across cultures may be more similar to each other to their own elders. In this sense, I feel that what is written in one culture may increasingly have currency value and relevance in many other cultures. I live in the midst of these phenomena where there is a resurgence of traditional cultures but also a growing similarity of popular cultures with other cultures largely because of new subcultures being promoted by the mass media as well as being created by new technologies e.g. the Internet, karaoke etc. We all seem to be riding the same waves of information these days.

Discussions on Asia inevitably also deal with the social contexts. Here again, there is a wide variety. Life span in Japan is 81 years, while it is only 50 years in Bangladesh. In Japan, the infant mortality rate is 5 per thousand live births while it is 118 per thousand live births in Bangladesh. The GDP in Singapore is twenty times that in Pakistan¹⁷.

Economic tigers and dragons

I live in a region where economies are growing rapidly. There is a growing economisation of life. The economy has become the major paradigm of life in several Asian nations. How does this affect people? One obvious sign is the increasing stresses of life due to the rapid changes and pace of life. People work longer hours, are fatigued and stressed out, and have little time for relationships and family life. Social pathologies are on the rise in many Asian countries. Family breakdown, drug addiction, suicide, violence and prostitution are some such signs. Another question is how the social environment defines and shapes the self. In these economically vibrant societies, the self is increasingly seen as efficient

worker and increasingly wealthy consumer. Christopher Lasch has written about the “minimal self” as the product of a marketplace paradigm¹⁸. He is right, and I believe that as a pastoral counsellor, I am faced with evaluating such definitions of self in the light of what I understand to be human dignity and personhood through theological anthropology. The marketplace may be forcing people to be functioning as efficient but hollow selves. The challenge for pastoral care giving is obvious.

Poverty and injustice

Many sections of Asian society are also marked with poverty and injustice, whether it is a village in Bihar or a kampong in Kalimantan. In our college, we have some students from Nagaland, a politically restricted area in India. Last year, two of these students had to return home because of the death of loved ones through malaria and dysentery epidemics¹⁹. The health care system is poorly managed. Through corruption, supplies are diverted into the black market and the money is pocketed. How does the pastoral counsellor function in such situations? Where corruption is strife, how does one guide? What advice can be given? In a “corruptometre” study²⁰, six of the ten most corrupt nations are Asian. How can pastoral care be given to people suffering from poverty? Are western models of pastoral counselling sufficient? Pastoral care in such situations has to take a more communal approach, since the problem is usually systemic in nature, and a social relief, social action, or development kind of approach.

Pastoral care as prophetic

Whether in a rapidly developing economy or a poor nation, the pastoral counsellor may often have to challenge the social assumptions or inertia. The role of the pastoral counsellor may be to go beyond helping the person to merely cope in the situation. If that is all the pastoral care giver does, he or she is no more than a servant of the unhealthy or unjust system. The care giver may have to challenge the social system itself which produces such social pathologies and dehumanizes people either through consumerism or poverty.

Before I conclude, I wish to mention two other issues briefly.

Models and training

Working in Asia I search for relevant home-grown models of counselling and care giving. There are some interesting models. One example is the “quiet therapy” model in Japan. Morita psychotherapy is a case in point²¹. It uses Japanese ideas and methods together with western concepts to develop an indigenous model of therapy. The therapy involves putting a person in a simple room to be alone without the usual sensory stimuli and activities. The patient discovers his or her own addictions, and also gratitude to significant people.

The interesting thing I have discovered is the close relationship between psychology and spirituality in traditional Asian societies. In the light of modern western exploration of the interface between spirituality and psychology, it must be noted that this has been going on for centuries in the Asian contexts. The “quiet therapies” are a modern version of this process.

Any model must take into consideration the way problems, the helper, and the helping process are perceived. In Asian contexts, these are shaped by culture and social factors as discussed above. Many problems are given a supernatural angle. The helper is seen as wise rather than as an expert. The helping process is strongly directive in many places. These facts must be remembered in developing culturally relevant models of pastoral counselling.

One interesting phenomenon in the west is the growing popularity of alternative medicine and a growing disenchantment with western medicine. In the Singapore scene, western modern medicine co-exists with traditional Chinese medicine. Would there be a growing popularity of traditional ways of caring and helping at the expense of modern professional counselling (cf. with western modern medicine)?²²

Networks

Modern pastoral Counselling came to Asia when Carl Rogers visited Japan in 1952. The first pastoral counselling course was conducted at the Union Theological Seminary in Tokyo. Paul Johnson visited Japan in 1964 and started the CPE movement in Asia. In 1966, one of the pioneer counselling

centres, the Churches Counselling Centre was started in Singapore. In 1981, the journal *Bokkai Shinri* (Pastoral Psychology) was launched.

Since then, the Asian Congress on Pastoral Care and Counselling was organized in Manila (1982), Tokyo (1984), New Delhi (1986), Manila (1989), and Bali (1993)²³. The sixth Congress will be held in Seoul in 1997. Recently a Christian Counselling Conference in Asia was held in Singapore with more than 800 people attending. Representatives from several Asian countries were present.

There is a need for more work to be done in thinking about pastoral counselling in the Asian contexts. I would like to see more Asian contributions in terms of theory-building, writing, training, and leadership.

Conclusion

I have recorded impressions and thoughts on some issues which I think are important based on my own reflection and experience. I live in an exciting region though it also has many dangers and difficulties. As a pastoral care giver, I am reminded daily to live and minister as a wise-fool, wounded healer, servant-guru, and powerless miracle worker in a rapidly changing context where good and evil, order and chaos, and life and death exist side by side.

Notes

¹ See the *Willowbank Report on Gospel and Culture*, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 2, 1978, p.7.

² John Clammer, *Sociology of Singapore Religion*, Singapore: Chopmen Publishers, 1991, chapt. 5, 6.

³ Eddie C. Y. Kuo and Tong Chee Kiong, *Religion in Singapore*, Singapore: Ministry of Community Development, 1995.

⁴ Paul Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle", in: *Missiology: An International Review*, 10:1, 1982, p.35-47.

⁵ See e.g. Winston Davis, *Dojo: Magic and Exorcism in Modern Japan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980.

⁶ Robert Solomon, *Living in Two Worlds: Pastoral Responses to Possession in Singapore*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994.

⁷ See Rodney Henry, *Filipino Split World: A Challenge to the Church*, Manila: OMF, 1986.

⁸ See Bong Rin Ro (ed.), *Christian Alternatives to Ancestral Practices*, Taiwan: Asia Theological Association, 1985.

⁹ Man Singh Das and Panos D. Bardis (eds.), *The Family in Asia* (Boston, Sydney, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), p.419.

¹⁰ David Augsburg, *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986, chapt. 4.

¹¹ See Christopher Nugent, *Masks of Satan: The Demonic in History*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1983, p.2, where these phrases are found.

¹² Jon S. T. Quah (ed.), *In Search of Singapore's National Values*, Singapore: The Institute of Policy Studies, Times Academic Press, 1990, chapt. 7.

¹³ See Uichol Kim and John W. Berry (eds.), *Indigenous Psychologies: Research and Experience in Cultural Context*, Newbury Park / London / New Delhi: SAGE, 1993.

¹⁴ See e.g. see D. Sinha, *Psychology in a Third World Country: The Indian Experience*, New Delhi: SAGE, 1986.

¹⁵ As noted by Virgilio G. Enriquez, "Developing a Filipino Psychology", in Kim and Berry (eds.), *Indigenous Psychologies*, op. cit.

¹⁶ Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies*, New York: Free Press, 1995, pp. 28ff.

¹⁷ These figures are obtained from *The Economist Book of Vital World Statistics*, London: Hutchinson, 1990.

¹⁸ Christopher Lasch, *The Minimal Self. Psychic Survival in Troubled Times*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1985.

¹⁹ See Robert Solomon, "Epidemics in Nagaland", *Newsletter of the International Pastoral Care Network for Social Responsibility*, Spring-Summer 1995, p.16-17.

²⁰ Reported in *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 26 August 1995.

²¹ See David K. Reynolds, *The Quiet Therapies: Japanese Pathways to Personal Growth*, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980, especially chapt. 2.

²² See e.g. Sudhir Kakar, *Shamans, Mystics and Doctors: A Psychological Inquiry into India and its Healing Traditions*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982, for an interesting account of how various traditional healing traditions co-exist with modern medical and psychological healing establishments.

²³ The above facts are described and more information can be found in Robert Solomon, "Pastoral Care and Counselling", in *The Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, to be published in the near future by Eerdmans in Grand Rapids, USA. ■

Nalini Arles

Western Counselling in the Indian Context

Problems encountered in application of Western (especially non-directive) models of counselling

Person and Self in the Hindu religious setting

The basic conflict in the application of Rogerian non-directive counselling in the Indian religious setting is in the way the person is understood. Carl Rogers' view is that the person is capable of attaining self realisation, reason is the final arbiter, humankind is the peak in the evolutionary process and he does not discuss the reality or relevance of the supernatural¹. This "reductionist view", Vahia argues, is limited and totally different from the wholistic view of the person taught in Hinduism². Hindus believe that no person is merely a biological product, but has had longer history than biological science³. According to the Upanishads (the sacred scriptures of Hinduism) a person has three important aspects:

a) the inconsistent matter of which the body is made; b) the mental being and c) the real person, "the pure self-existent conscious being", the *atman*.

The *atman*, which is part of the *param-atman* is encased in the body. It gives inspiration to the human mind towards encasing and identify with the original self⁴. Hindus see their original self in the universal self, a fundamental oneness and supreme consciousness of which the individual is but a tiny spark. Self is understood as an emergent aspect of the world process and not as substance different in kind from the process itself⁵. Radhakrishnan argued that it should be identified neither with a series

of mental states nor an unchanging essence⁶. A person is not a separate individual possessing qualities and relating to the environment externally but the elements are all interrelated. A human being is not an absolute individual. The individual and the world co-exist and subsist together, society and environment belong to the same nature⁷. Human progress is understood as increasing awareness of the universal self, seeking harmony between the self and environment building a world of unity and harmony⁸. The distinctive capacity of the person is to identify the self with the whole in co-operative enterprise. The objective pursuit is to reach the super conscious with a strong belief in the individual capacity for attaining spiritual realisation. The superconscious stage is described as the self becoming as wide as the world itself, recognising that one spirit is present in all minds and bodies⁹. The aim is thus to attain a corporate identity and not the individualism of the Rogerian non-directive approach.

Of course, the human person is understood as having individuality and personality. Individuality, called *jivatman*, is the product of ego sense according to which one distinguishes one's self and interests from that of others¹⁰. But true self, the *atman* encased in the body, is not to be confused with ego or human self. What a Western person regards as strength, firmness and consistency in an individual, is seen in India as a limitation and separation from the universal self¹¹. Hindus argue that individual development enhances the awareness of ego, *ahamkar*, pride in one's own achievements which leads one to cling to the world, which is *maya*, illusion.

There are also in India other religious groups - Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Zoroastrian and others - each with their own specific views of the person and society. It is difficult to make generalisations for counselling that are applicable to all of them. Nevertheless there is a common Indian culture and a social pattern which becomes clear when studying the organisation of the joint family¹². Though the delegation of work, and obligations vary from family to family according to the level of exposure to Westernization and modernisation, the power of the joint family provides a strong framework with the elders being responsible for decisions, exerting power and influence. The same pattern becomes a determining factor for social, political and economic life. For example, relationships are not limited to blood ties but extended to the whole caste¹³. Generally, Indians identify themselves in relation to their family, caste, place or position. One's name signifies one's identity. Unlike westerners Indians write their village, family or caste name first. This implies that the individual exists for the group or family. Insistence on one's rights disrupts the social solidarity, security and belonging. Though the 'power' exerted by the joint family can be a hindrance to growth, it remains the source where Indians find their identity. Kinship bonds give individual members a sense of belonging by constituting a network of interdependence and mutual support. The self is to be understood within this setting.

Therefore, Ego or Self for Indians is determined in relation to others in a given situation. Two consequences of this development of flexible self or ego¹⁴ are that the ego adapts itself to the nature of human relationships or situations and systems, develops with duties, traditions, customs or patterns of being which help an individual to feel secure and stable about one's ego-field as long as he/she conforms to the patterns. A person has been taught from childhood that relationships between members of a family are determined by their assigned roles, such as brother, sister, uncle and aunt. This extends to the *jati* (i.e. the extended family or caste). Each one joining the family falls into assigned roles which carry mutual life long obligations¹⁵ seen especially operative during family celebrations and crisis situations. Such obligations carry both good and bad effects. One learns to adjust to a

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given space and to perform one's duty. The flexible ego is more willing to adjust than to assert. The desire for independence and assertion of one's rights conflicts with one's understanding of self within such a cultural matrix. To take a course of action different from parental expectations is considered as creating disharmony and a disobedience that causes guilt.

Self-evaluation and accountability

The effectiveness of the non-directive counselling depends on the motivation to get help and the ability for self evaluation and criticism.

a) In the Indian context the strong motivation is to get help from the elders (relatives, friends, neighbours and religious workers) and family members. If one seeks help outside the family it is to discuss economic problems, seek information about study and job opportunities and not personal issues.

b) Non-directive counselling assumes that as genuine insight is gained, self acceptance will be enhanced and the person will deal with life situations more realistically and constructively. Gaining insights depends not only on the availability of a non-directive counsellor but equally on one's capacity for self-perception, self awareness and self criticism. Some Indians lack self criticism. Erna Hoch argues that the prolonged period of dependency in childhood prevents the development of strong ego boundaries¹⁷. Illiterates and semi-literates in a rural setting are not used to introspection or self reflection. Even if they do have a capacity for self-awareness, self-reflection is low. Spratt in his study of Indian personality uses a Freudian frame work and concludes Indian personality is narcissistic. One of the reasons he gives is a negative oedipus complex in the son father relationship which leads to submission rather than the aggression found in occidentals. This inhibits one from exercising a spirit of enquiry but promotes submission to authority¹⁸. K.V. Rajan indicates that the social hierarchy built on respect and obedience to elders prevents one from showing any disagreement since disagreement, however polite, causes anxiety to those in authority. This perpetuates a vicious circle where those under authority do not disagree with their superiors, but opt for their approval instead. Independent thinking and creative action are inhibited¹⁹. In-

dian education system tends to be based on rote learning and fails to enhance critical thinking and a spirit of enquiry. The reason for the lack of self-perception is the way Indians understand the totality of life. In the joint family clear boundaries are set in terms of obligations and expectations. When tensions occur child learns to accept and relate to all the members of the extended family. The child reacts in a manner which totally reflects the family member's expectations. K.V. Rajan notes a person raised in such an environment lacks the ability to look at life in its totality and attests that this split existence deprives people of the ability for self-criticism. They develop the capacity to accommodate contradictions, allowing science and superstitions to co-exist²⁰.

c) Decision making: To take a decision 'right now' is not the way many Indians operate. Depending on the problem, people consult the astrologers, Indian calendar and time. This varies in families depending on their education, exposure to westernization and the influence of modernisation on them. Though some take a decision, but such decision is changed at home depending on the locus of control at home.

The relationship between counsellor and counsellee

a) Relationship: The counsellor is a catalyst and not an advisor and in non-directive counselling, counsellor and counsellee relate as equals and such a relationship is devoid of parent-child, physician-patient or priest-parishioner model which implies deep affection, authoritative advice, submissive acceptance and following the leader. This is contrary to the Indian understanding of the *Guru-shishya* relationship. From childhood one is taught to respect teachers next to parents, elders and God. The *guru-shishya* relationship predominates in Indian family thinking and forms the basis of relationships in institutions and offices. Elders are respected and never addressed by first name. Counsellees find it hard to relate to the counsellor as an equal. Non-directive counselling proceeds with the expectation that the counsellor will be the enabler and the client (counsellee) will be responsible for decisions. There is no conflict between these two expectations. In the Indian context based on the *guru - shishya* model, the

expectation is that the teacher leads and the learner is led - a counsellee comes with that expectation. The *guru* or elder is not anxious about the *shishya's* dependence on him. *Guru* continues to reinforce such dependence.

b) Acceptance: A sub-ordinate in India may not stand or sit in front of his / her superior as a sign of respect. The same is seen in counselling situation. Acceptance is to be understood in a different manner from the Rogerian view. Acceptance is seen in relation to rapport and eye contact. In Indian culture, similar to African culture, a person being in the same room in close proximity is enough to indicate attentiveness. There is very little eye contact. Direct gaze is considered hostile by the Indians and is mostly used in disciplining. Like the Japanese the Indians also avoid eye contact as a sign of respect.

c) In non-directive counselling the relationship is limited to the periods of therapy and exists only within the counsellor's office. Even if it continues it takes a different form. In the Indian context the relationship is on going and not compartmentalized into 'professional' and social.

Notes

¹ Hurding, *Pastoral Counseling*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953, p.108.

² Cf. Vahia/Doongaji/Jeste, "Value of Patanjai's concepts in the treatment of Psychoneurosis" in: S.Aheti and G.Chrzanowski, *New Dimensions in Psychiatry. a world view*, London: John Wiley and Sons, 1975, pp.294-297, 302f.

³ P.Sankaranarayanan, "Human Person, Society and State: The Classical Hindu approach". in P.D.Devanandan and M.M.Thomas (eds.) *Human Person, Society and State. A Collection of Essays*, Bangalore: CLS, 1975, p.61.

⁴ "The Conception of Man in Indian Thought", *Religion and Society* Vol. X No. 3, September 1963, pp. 11-16.

⁵ *ibid.*, p.18. R.C.Zaehner, *The Bhagavad Gita with a Commentary based on the original sources*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969, pp.21f, 10f.

⁶ S Radhakrishnan, *Introduction to the Gita*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960, p.107; S.C.Thakur, *Christian and Hindu Ethics - Two*

World Religions Compared, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969, pp.88f.

⁷ "The Conception of Man in Indian Thought", op.cit., p.18.

⁸ S.C.Thakur, op.cit., pp. 88f; See Swami Ahilananda, *Mental Health and Hindu Psychology*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951, pp. 12, 14-16.

⁹ P.Shankaranarayanan, op.cit., p.63, Zaehner, op.cit., pp.11f, Swami Ahilananda, op.cit., pp.18f.

¹⁰ P.Shankaranarayanan, op.cit., p.62.

¹¹ ibid. p.63

¹² Erna Hoch, *Hypocrite or Heretic*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1983, p.106.

¹³ S.S.Jayaram, "Adaptation of Western Techniques to Mental Health in India", in: *Religion and Society* op.cit., p.69. Cf. P.D.Devanandan and M.M.Thomas, *Christian Participation in Nation Building*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1962, p.37.

¹⁴ K.V.Rajan, "Man, Society and Nation: A Psycho-analyst's View" in *Human Person, society and State*, op.cit., p.48; Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World - A Psycho-analytic Study of Childhood and Society in India*, New Delhi: OUP, 1979, pp.111f; Cf. Japanese Understanding of Self in Akihisa Kondo's "Morita Therapy: Its Socio-Historical Context" in S.Arieti and G.Chrzanowski, *New Dimensions in Psychiatry: A World View*, op.cit., pp.242-245.

¹⁵ Sudhir Kakar, op.cit., p.112.

¹⁶ Hoch, *Hypocrite or Heretic*, op.cit., p.107.

¹⁸ ibid. pp.83-86 and chapter 8.

¹⁹ Devanandan and Thomas, *Christian Participation*, op.cit., pp.144, 173; Rajan, op.cit., p.46.

²⁰ ibid., pp.48f.

World Religions Compared, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969, pp. 88f.

⁷ "The Conception of Man in Indian Thought", op.cit., p.18.

⁸ S.C.Thakur, op.cit., pp. 88f; See Swami Ahilananda, *Mental Health and Hindu Psychology*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951, pp. 12, 14-16.

⁹ P.Shankaranarayanan, op.cit., p.63, Zaehner, op.cit., pp.11f, Swami Ahilananda, op.cit., pp.18f.

¹⁰ P.Shankaranarayanan, op.cit., p.62.

¹¹ ibid. p.63

¹² Erna Hoch, *Hypocrite or Heretic*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1983, p.106.

¹³ S.S.Jayaram, "Adaptation of Western Techniques to Mental Health in India", in: *Religion and Society* op.cit., p.69. Cf. P.D.Devanandan and M.M. Thomas, *Christian Participation in Nation Building*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1962, p.37.

¹⁴ K.V.Rajan, "Man, Society and Nation: A Psycho-analyst's View" in *Human Person, Society and State*, op.cit., p.48; Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World - A Psycho-analytic Study of Childhood and Society in India*, New Delhi: OUP, 1979, pp.111f; Cf. Japanese Understanding of Self in Akihisa Kondo's "Morita Therapy: Its Socio-Historical Context" in S.Arieti and G.Chrzanowski, *New Dimensions in Psychiatry: A World View*, op.cit., pp. 242-245.

¹⁵ Sudhir Kakar, op.cit., p.112.

¹⁶ Hoch, *Hypocrite or Heretic*, op.cit., p.107.

¹⁷ ibid. pp.83-86 and chapter 8.

¹⁸ Devanandan and Thomas, *Christian Participation*, op.cit., pp.144, 173; Rajan, op.cit., p.46.

¹⁹ ibid., pp.48f. ■

Sung-Soo Lee / In-Sook You

Pastoral Care, Healing and Preaching of the Gospel

Report from a Korean parish

Contextualization of pastoral care

The post-modern society of the 20th century hasn't only caused positive but also negative changes in the social, cultural and religious sphere of human life. In the Korean society it hasn't become different either. Because of the rapid development from a rural area almost being like in medieval times to an industrial state which it has become in the last 50 years, life of the Koreans has become incredibly wealthy. The bad side of this material prosperity is the weakening of the own spiritual judgement, the weakening of humanity within social contact and thereby the distortion of the true human being.

Many people suffer from the confusion, respectively the distortion of the human image being created according to the image of God (Imago Dei).

The important task of the church in this context is the pastoral care and healing of the people in the own quarter of town with concrete help. Nowadays the gospel can be mainly perceived and preached by a parish by healing the sores and illness of the people who suffer from the personal and structural problems of society.

Jesus Christ has not only healed the ill people and given is love to the people who came to him, but he has visited himself the ill, the suppressed and the suffering people, he has visited, healed and freed them. Nowadays the church shall also follow the example of Jesus Christ. That means: Pastoral Care must be contextualized beyond the narrowness of the personal sphere into the living world of post-modern society. Our parish has worked over three prob-

lems for a long time:

- 1) Question of women's rights - dealing with the problems of women of the social lower class including the problem of taking care of the children before they go to school.
- 2) Question of problems of the youth - dealing with the destruction of dreams and humanity among the young people who are only drilled and supplied with pure facts at school;
- 3) Question of problems of senior people - dealing with old and retired people who are isolated and estranged from their families and society.

Before outlining the projects our parish works at, I'd first like to explain the traditional idea of the supreme happiness in Korean society, and the field of problems in our parish. According to the traditional idea a human being is only supremely happy when he has enjoyed five forms of happiness in life: a long life, wealth, health and a deep feeling of peace inside him, a good reputation by living virtuously, and a natural death. All these forms of happiness rely to life on earth. Even if in the Christian tradition the idea of supreme happiness is characterized by the longing for heaven because of the beatitudes in the gospel according to Matthew 5, 3-12, we must not leave out the earthen dimension of supreme happiness. For the life on this earth that God has given to us cannot simply be a painful one, but it should rather become a happy one by tasting in advance heavenly joy.

Case-studies and practical work in the parish

The district of my community, my parish, is in the country, near the border to the capital of Seoul. The total population amounts to 19.569. Half of the population (mostly indigenous and

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farmers) live in detached houses, and the rest (mostly commuters who go to work to Seoul every day) live in newly built skyscrapers.

• **Question of women's rights**

The question of women's rights automatically maintains the problem of taking care of the children. Whereas the women of the social upper class do their jobs in order to emancipate in society, the women of the social lower class are automatically forced to work, to be able to nourish their families. As those women aren't educated highly either in respect of jobs, they apparently can't get proper and well-paid jobs. Mostly they are unhappily married with men from the same social class. A lot of these men have got odd jobs, take other women. In addition to that they are alcoholics or gamblers. If these women have got any job, the actual problem arises who will be able to take care of the children. As the private kindergartens are too expensive for those mothers, they either do without work and so remain at the low limit of existence, or they lock their children in a room with food and drinks until they return home in the evening. Some years ago newspapers reported about some accidents of those children who had put on fire the room while playing with matches and had died in the flames because the room they were in had been locked. Certainly it is an extreme example, but today there are many similar cases. In this context I think that half of the women's problems will be solved when our parish takes charge of the children.

Case 1: Mrs. Pae Myung-Hee, 28 years old, gets social help. Two years ago, her husband died in a car accident. Since then she has lived alone with her 3-year-old son. As she wants to save money for the future of the child and also for her own financial situation, she has accepted a job at a hairdresser's. Work starts at 8.30, and she can be home only after 6 p.m. The child is too young to be alone at home the whole day. Most places that take care of children only work in the mornings. There are places that work the whole day, but she can't pay for them.

• **Kindergarten**

In order to solve such problems, our parish has established a kindergarten on March 3, 1995. 58 children between three and seven years old have been

accepted. Seven women with a full-time employment take care of these children. As we get great subsidies, we have hardly any financial difficulties. Viewing the number of children being not of school age in our district (1.516 children of which the number of children of the well-off families and the children in other kindergartens must be left off) the local contribution of our parish is relatively high.

• **Senior school**

The rapid process of industrialisation in the last 20 years has automatically caused a new structure of the traditional system of large families in the Korean society. It has caused lots of new problems that are related to the estrangement of people. Especially stricken by that are the old people who have come out of this process. Most of them suffer both from the financial and from the mental and spiritual impoverishment. Especially the too early retired people fight for their new identity that is seen as "useless for the society".

Many of them are still healthy, have lots of time and can work hard. But the society doesn't need them any longer. Even their own family doesn't need them. Because of the generation gap that is formed in a great measure by social changes, most of the grandchildren don't have any closer inner relationship to them. Therefore, they feel more and more lonely and useless even in their own family.

There are hardly taken any state measures on the local field. To sum up all that: the four characteristics of senior problems in the post-modern Korean society are impoverishment, illness, loneliness and loss of identity. All that leads to the loss of joy and courage of living. On task of the church in this situation is also counselling, company, and healing of these seniors with energy.

Case 2: Mrs. Im Yung-Hi, 72 years old, has been an housewife during her whole life. As her husband died very early, she had to educate alone three sons. For some time she had lived with the family of the eldest son until the youngest son became an alcoholic. Since then she's lived together with him in poverty. She is alone at home the whole day.

In order to give a small contribution to the reduction of the mental and physical decay of those people by isolation and for the integration of those people into a

changed situation of life, our parish founded the senior school on March 9, 1995. At the end of a 4 month's probation we've made written inquiries. Out of the 100 members of the senior school, 78 people have answered. The main reason for their coming to this school is said to be the making of new friends and the joy by learning. Because of these statistics we've learnt how important this new community is for the old people expelled by the post-modern society into isolation and estrangement.

Challenge for the Korean church

By the above-mentioned activities in our parish I have learnt that in a post-modern society of isolation and the individualisation of the communities of life by high-tech-industrialisation, the traditional pastoral care for the parish must be done in a new shape. That means: not only human beings, but also the whole own district is to be pastorally cared for, counselled, accompanied and really helped (= healed) individually by every parish. The fulfilling of this task within the own parish is - in my opinion - much more important than any missionary work in remote countries.

The question of the rights of women, children and senior people in our society is the question of the poor and the suppressed. Church must engage itself a lot for these people, because that is a form of divine service, too. We must not forget that Jesus fought at the side of such people.

Finally, I want to give biblical reasons for this new challenge for the modern church. As you can read in Deuteronomy, there will always be poor people in the country. "Therefore I command you, you shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in the land." (Deut. 15,11) And: "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." (Matth. 25,40) That means: "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you had, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." (Hebr. 13,16) ■

Edwin T. Decenteceo

“Burden-Bearing” as a Metaphor for Counselling

Experiences from the Philippines

Within his work with victims of human rights violations in the Philippines, Dr. Edwin Decenteceo has developed a model which takes up common images and experiences of Philippine people, and which may encourage the victims to describe and reflect on their difficulties in their own words, within their own story. The model starts from the image of “bearing a burden” and the Filipino culture of telling stories. In the Philippine context, the individual is generally interwoven with his or her responsibilities, and this is even more so with people who joined the resistance movement. Political detainees are very committed individuals, who took over many risks and give a higher priority to their goals than to their own person. A therapeutic model cannot neglect these responsibilities, these “burdens”, and put the person alone into the centre.

I am a clinical psychologist, I am not a worker in pastoral care. I am American trained and my specialisation is behaviour modification, behaviour therapy. My work has been with victims of human rights violations and workers, who work with these victims. These include families of victims of extra judicial killings, political prisoners most of whom have been tortured, ex-political prisoners, families of victims of disappearances, and ‘internal’ refugees - communities that have been sent from their homes, because they are in the way of an industrial project or in a combat

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zone. Counselling is only one part of a larger effort. Co-ordination and co-operation among different human rights organisations are very important. While individual counselling is conducted, the task of counselling is shared with other political prisoners, especially in distant detention centres to which visits are not frequent. This has been formalized into counselling training.

Most of the people I work with are very poor, and they speak in different languages. I am able to speak two of them. What I will talk about is a model that I have developed as a result of my work, but I will talk about it as it were a story. I call it: the story of burden-bearing. “Ang lahat ay may dinadala” is a common Tagalog saying, “we all bear burdens”. I will write the Tagalog terms, because it is important for you to realize that this story is rooted in the language of the people I work with - these phrases are there, in ordinary day-to-day conversation. And it is also important to realize that I am talking about the act of burden-bearing, the whole act. I can start the story anywhere, because no matter where I start I will eventually talk about everything.

There are different parts or aspects of this story. One part of the story is, of course, about the burden bearers. I have drawn here - or tried to draw - a farmer couple, the majority of the people in the Philippines anyway. As you can see, the man is carrying a plough and a little basket. The woman is carrying a baby and something wrapped in cloth. So these are burden bearers and they have their burdens. Burdens in this story are tasks, responsibilities, relationships. The burden of each of the couple is the relationship of the two, or their family. He traditionally has his farm to work with, that is his burden. She traditionally has the children to take care of

(although if you go into the farms you will see that half or more of the workers in the farms are actually women). Each burden has a destination. In the burden-bearing story, the destination is not a place, it is actually a condition: a family is brought to good health, given an education, given a good life.

So we have - let me put up the Tagalog terms again -: “Nagdadala”, the burden bearers, “Dinadala”, the burden, and “Patantuguhan”, the destination. There are two other elements I will talk about, and that is: The manner of carrying a burden, “Pagdadala” - in the Tagalog we say some people carry burdens heavily, some people carry burdens lightly, these have to do with the manner of carrying a burden. And finally, there is the way, “Pagdadaanan”. Sometimes the way is easy, sometimes it is difficult. Sometimes it is downhill, sometimes it is uphill. So these are the major elements of the burden bearer’s story. But we must also realize that the burden bearer is never alone. The burden bearer is always with a community. This community helps in defining all the elements of burden-bearing.

So now we have someone talking about his or her act of burden-bearing. How can I as a helper help in this act of burden-bearing? First I must ask: When does the burden bearer need my help? The burden bearer needs my help when the burden becomes heavy, or when the act of burden-bearing becomes difficult. When does it become difficult or heavy? When it is not clear who I am, I will have difficulty with my burdens. When it is not clear to me what my burdens are, I will also have difficulty with my burdens. When I am not clear about my destination, or if I do not accept my destination, it will also make burden-bearing difficult. I may be carrying in a way that makes burden-bearing heavy (e.g. the woman in this picture is carrying the baby on her hip. That may be difficult. In some cultures they carry a baby on their back, tied to the mother in a blanket). The path itself may be difficult, or events can happen, a flood, a fire, an earthquake, that make my bringing of my burdens to their destination very difficult. If these are what makes burden-bearing difficult, what can I as a helper do? Then an important part of my role is clarification, or to “enlighten”. In clarifying, I lighten the load. I can help to clarify the person, the burden, the destination. I can also help to clarify why that is the way that must be followed. I can also help in teaching

the person - the burden bearer - ways of making burden-bearing easier. I can also help by actually carrying the burden part of the way. I can also help by making the person - the burden bearer - rest.

(I am working among cause-oriented individuals, who feel that they should not rest. One of the major problems we had in talking about this resting, was the concept of "burn out", to which we are used. "Burn out" is based on the image of a candle burning down or of an engine running out of fuel. The people I work with cannot relate with those images. Burning out means: loosing any function. But if I point out: It's okay to put down the burden every once in a while, there is nothing wrong with that, you have not given up your burden-bearing - then they are more likely to listen to me.)

And there is one more way that I have

found among Filipinos, that is: I can listen to their stories of their burden-bearing. That also helps to enlighten their load. How is that related to burden-bearing? Those of you who do manual labour or know people who do this: breathing deeply. In the burden-bearing story, this act of breathing deeply in and out is equivalent to telling your story to someone else.

This is how this model has helped me to understand those who would come to me and say: "I don't need counselling, I just need to talk". It has also helped me to understand why the people I work with say they do not need counselling. Of course, they will say only those who are crazy need counselling; but there is more: Counselling deals only with the burden bearer. What the burden bearer needs is help with the act of burden-bearing. And I can help with all these

other aspects of burden-bearing. So I must take on a lot of roles - but my training has strained me to help only with the burden bearer himself or herself.

So that is the story, but it is now a model that I am trying to use in my work - both to help directly with people, and to train those who will help other people. And it is my hope that, because it is based on the experiences of the people I work with, we can talk to each other more, and I can be of help to them more.

One last point though: Who am I in relation to the burden bearer? I realize that I am a co-burden-bearer. I have my own burdens to bear. But I have a one additional burden: I have taken on the burden of helping other burden bearers.

Thank you. ■

Komatra Chuengsatiansup

Buddhism, Illness, and Healing

A comparative review of textual and popular Buddhism

The relationship between religion and medicine has long been the subject of academic inquiry. Both religion and medicine aim primarily at solving human suffering. Indeed, in religions around the world, illnesses are used metaphorically as the prototypical suffering experiences. In a very real sense, illness is the suffering experience par excellence in human existence. It imposes the immediacy of suffering upon us in the most palpable way.

In the Christian tradition, for instance, a great number of books have been written about Christianity and healing. But the relationship of Buddhism to healing has, by and large, been less thoroughly explored. In fact, Buddhism and healing have an intimate relation. Since its inception, the sight of a sick man was

one of the events that awakened the young prince Sidhattha (the later Buddha) to the problem of human suffering and inspired him to begin his spiritual search. Also, illness is an important constitution of *Samsara*, the Circle of Rebirth which consists of birth, ageing, illness, and death. Furthermore, the Buddha's Four Noble Truths illustrate the fundamental significance of healing in Buddhism. They indicate that he who is not enlightened is by definition "ill".

In this paper I will discuss different aspects and different views regarding the relationship of Buddhism, illness, and healing. Particularly, I will compare the description of illness and healing in Buddhist texts and the observation of anthropologists regarding the relationship between Buddhism, illness, and healing. I will focus on Theravada societies, and particularly, on the ethnographies of Thailand.

Means of healing permitted in the monastery

According to some Buddhist texts, certain healing agents, surgical methods, and other physical means of curing, were permitted by the Buddha for use in the Buddhist monastery. Also, certain behaviours were advocated by the Buddha for the purpose of health and healing. Birnbaum (1979, 4) reveals that the Buddha sanctioned five principal medicines to be used by monks. These were all common dietary elements including ghee (butterfat), fresh butter, oil, honey, and molasses. In addition to these basic medicines, several other substances were allowed. Note that in the illness situation certain substances normally forbidden for use by monks are permitted. Oil decoction mixed with strong alcoholic drink is allowed for wind afflictions. More interestingly, under the

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special circumstances of possession by a non-human spirit being, the *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga*, permits the use of raw flesh and raw blood as medicine. Birnbaum (1979, 221) suggests that such substances are permitted presumably because the non-human being is the one who actually eats these substances.

In present-day Buddhist society, these Buddhist texts are not the major references for medical knowledge and practices. Anthropological studies show that medical practices within the monastery extend far beyond those described in these ancient religious texts. Tambiah (1970, 257) observes that Buddhist monastery functions, in a way, as the library of ancient Thai literati, and its monks as the copyists. Such a function isn't limited to religious knowledge but extends to other realms of indigenous knowledge systems.

Also, Louis Golomb (1985, 85) notes that in Thailand some of the highly popular traditional herbal medical texts were produced and distributed by various Buddhist temples - usually upon the deaths of famous monk-practitioners. These texts are far more extensive and sophisticated than medical practices advocated by earlier Buddhist texts. Nowadays, Buddhist religious texts are not so much the sources of medical knowledge and practices as they are the sources of verses to be recited to ward off evil affliction (Golomb 1985, 62-64).

Miracle and healing

Healing miracles by saints are more prominent in other religions, for instance, Christian and Islam. But there are several descriptions of the miraculous curing by the Buddha in Buddhist texts. Though the Buddha is said to have promulgated a rule prohibiting exhibition of miraculous power by monks, his miraculous performances were explicitly described in several texts and sutras.

Buddhist notion of supranormal powers, or the "*iddhi*", as described in the *Visuddhimaga*, differs from the miraculous power of God in Christian religion. The *Visuddhimaga* suggests that *iddhi* are special powers available to Buddhist monks during the course of meditative practices. Tambiah (1987, 115) notes that Buddhist concept of *iddhi* cannot be simply associated with "miracle" as the term is understood in Christianity: "Miracles are a function of God's sovereignty, providence, and omnipotence; in a miracle God suspends the normal physical laws that govern nature. Bud-

dhist *iddhis*, by contrast, are special powers that become available to the adept who attains to higher meditative levels because he is able to transcend and therefore encompass the lower realms of materiality and causality."

Note that Buddhist *iddhi* consists of six supranormal powers: *iddhi-vidha* (psychokinetic ability), *dibba sota* (divine ear), *ceto-pariya-nana* (ability to penetrate and discern the mind of other people), *pubbe-nivasanussati* (knowledge of one's own previous existences), *dibba cakkhu* (divine eye), and the knowledge of the destruction of *asavas*. Thus, these Buddhist supranormal powers as described in the text diverge from what is understood as miracle not only that they are available through achievement in meditation, but also that only certain kinds of supranormal powers are procured.

In ethnographic account, Tambiah's study of a Buddhist meditation cult examines the notion of Buddhist *iddhi* as the power of healing illness. The master of the cult claims that through the practice of meditation, he has access to the benefit of *iddhi*, to mystical power. Although illness and suffering are interpreted in this meditation cult as resulting from "karmic retribution", the master claims to provide relief for their dependents by employing mystical powers of *iddhi* (Tambiah 1977, 100 and 123).

Louis Golomb, in his work *An Anthropology of Curing in Multiethnic Thailand*, describes several Buddhist monk healers in Thailand. According to Golomb's observation, Thai Buddhist mystical power derives mainly from the use of verses from Buddhist texts and Buddhist symbols.

Another source of Buddhist healing power can be observed in a case of a Buddhist monk who devoted his career to the treatment of drug addicts in Thailand. The healing method doesn't evoke supernatural power. Rather Phra Chamroon's healing hermitage at Tam Kra-bawk emphasizes Buddhist vow and commitment in addition to the use of some sort of herbal medicine.

Thus, although the life of the Buddha is paradigmatic for contemporary Buddhist monk in many aspects, mystical healing power in Buddhist tradition doesn't derive strongly from the example of the Buddha. Rather, what is crucial for the understanding of the role of Buddhist monks in healing is the understanding of the charismatic characteristics of the healers.

The objectification of charisma

In this regard, Tambiah in his study of the cult of amulets (1984), reveals an important mean by which the charismatic power of the Buddhist monk can be transferred and deposited in object.

Buddhist amulets became popular late in the history of Buddhism. Amulets are treated with respect by Buddhist Thais. Amulets with the image of the Buddha or that of famous forest monks are usually hung on a necklace and are worn around the neck. The amulets are mainly for protection or good fortune. There is a variety of protective amulets with specific powers: some protect wearers from danger - for example, it makes the bullet, intended to harm the wearer, swerve away and not hit him; some guarantee good luck; some assure wealth and / or health; and others have the power to ward off evil affliction.

The making of amulets is worth noting. Amulets are sacralized by the transferring of supranormal power, or *iddhi*. It is believed that by the recitation of sacred verses and sitting in meditation, monks are able to concentrate power and transfer it to the amulets. However, the reason of why and how amulets are efficacious is a matter of personal belief: "Some people would say that the '*teja*' inherent in the image transmits itself to the wearer and makes him immune from harm; other might argue that by reminding the wearer of the Doctrine, and particularly that part of it that counsels constant alertness, it enables him to keep out of harm's way" (Coomaraswamy, quoted in Tambiah 1984, 204).

Charisma of sacred place

"Sacred place" also has a crucial role in healing in Buddhist society. As a matter of fact, the importance of "place" has its root in Buddhist text. Tambiah (1984, 200) notes that the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* presents the norms the community of monks should observe. These include the "entrusting ... to laymen of the Buddha's relics, which were enshrined in dagoba: the sanctioning of merit-making pilgrimages to these monuments." The dagoba, accordingly, have become over time "field of merit", in which devotees can reap certain harvests.

It is noteworthy that, in northeastern Thailand, there is a Buddhist shrine in Nakorn Panom Province where persons who are accused of being the originating hosts of "*phii phob*" seek exorcism (Suwanlert 1978). It is held that Phra Thad Panom, the famous stupa at that

temple, has sacred power and can eliminate “phii phob” out from its host.

Healing power of “paritta”

A special method of curing disease, called “*paritta*”, is described in the Milindapanha, the dialogue between the Buddhist sage Nagasena and the Greek king Menander, ruler of a part of Northwest India (reigned 163-159 B.C.E.). Nagasena claims the method to have been permitted by the Buddha himself. *Paritta* magically dispels the disease through the recitations of various verses and texts. According to Nagasena the protective strength of these invocatory formulae is enormous: “And when, O king, the voice of those who are repeating *paritta* is heard, the tongue may be dried up, and the heart beat but faintly, and the throat be hoarse, but by that repetition all diseases are allayed, all calamities depart.” Nagasena further discussed the ability *paritta* has to repel calamities: “And when *paritta* has been said over a man, a snake ready to bite will not bite him but will close his jaws - the club which robber hold aloft to strike him with will never strike; they will let it drop and treat him kindly - ... the burning fiery conflagration surging towards him will die out - the malignant poison he has eaten will become harmless, and turn to food...” (transl. Davids 1963, 215-216). In discussing how *paritta* can cure diseases, Nagasena touched an important principle in Buddhist medicine: though various means can be used to subdue disease, when the affliction is due to deeply-rooted karmic causes, it will take its determined toll: “There is no ceremony or artificial means, no medicine and no *paritta*, which can prolong the life of one whose allotted period has come to an end. All the medicines in the world are useless, O king, to such a one, but *paritta* is a protection and an assistance to those who have a period yet to live, who are full of life, and restrain themselves from the evil of Karma. And it is for that use that *paritta* was appointed by the Blessed One.” (op. cit. 217)

Also, one may note that there are several sutras that claim to be protective verses. An example of these sutras is *Atanatiya Sutra* which describes the protective verses suggested to the Buddha by King Vessavana. King Vessavana is the king of demons. He is concerned with the safety of the disciples of the Buddha who dwell in remote forest areas where the *yakkhas* (demons) are

also dwelling. These *yakkhas* have no faith in the words of the Blessed Lord since the Buddha teaches a code of refraining from taking life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, etc., from which the majority of the *yakkhas* do not refrain. ” ‘In order to give these folk confidence, may the Blessed Lord learn the *Atanatiya* protective verses, by means of which monks and nuns, male and female lay-followers may dwell guarded, protected, unharmed and at their ease?’ And the Lord consented by silence” (transl. Walshe 1987, 471-472).

Tambiah points out that the sutra doesn’t contain words directly affecting misfortune or warding off evil affliction. For instance, the *Atanatiya* sutra describes the superiority of the Buddha over the *yakkhas* so that the *yakkhas*, although they could not be converted, were overpowered structurally. Tambiah notes that the reality on the empirical ground is full of tension between the lay orientation and doctrinal position of virtuous monks in the use of mystical power by reciting the *paritta*. A virtuous monk doesn’t advocate such a mystical power of *paritta* as the mean of salvation. But the laymen regard such a method as an efficacious mean of protection. In viewing such a tension, Tambiah suggests that “from a sociological point of view our interest lies in the duality of orientation and the attempt of both laymen and monks to use their religion to state and solve existential problems” (Tambiah 1970, 211).

According to Spiro’s observations, in his work *Buddhism and Society* (1982), Burmese explain the efficacy of protection rituals in several ways. They claim that the protection rituals work because of power associated with the Buddha - His own power, the power of the physical objects (images and relics) which represent Him, the power of the words spoken by Him, or the psychic power which is created in those who recite them. Another explanation cited by Spiro is that when a Buddhist text - any word related to the Buddha, the Law, or the Order - is recited, the *samma deva*, or the Buddhist gods, the guardians of Buddhism, will watch over and protect those who recite them. Another explanation does not invoke notions of power, rather it is believed that since the ritual includes offering to the Buddha, or to the monks, they create merit which creates an immediate change in his/ her Karmic balance. This in turn has the effect of averting the impending

danger, or (if it has already occurred) of bringing it to an end.

The role of the monk in healing

Buddhist canonical texts also discuss the role of monks in healing. Birnbaum (1979, 7) argues that some monk-healers employed their healing abilities as a means for spreading the *dharma* (the Buddhist teachings) and converting non-believers. In the Theravada tradition the habitual practice of medicine by monks in order to cure laymen is prohibited. Demieville points out that among the sutras, the early *Dirghagama* considers medicine to be a technical trade that other religions use to exploit believers, but which the Buddha forbids. This is interpreted as a warning against becoming a doctor rather than devoting time to the study of *dharma* (the Buddhist teaching) and spiritual pursuit. This strongly contrasts with the Mahayanist tradition. Mahayanist Buddhists claim that the Bodhisattva - who may be lay or monastic - should cultivate the perfections (*paramita*), one of which is the perfections of giving. He should vow unbiased compassion for all sentient beings. His obligation to heal the sick, whoever they may be, is expressly stipulated in the disciplinary codes. The *Dighanikaya* lists various occupations forbidden by the Buddha as unacceptable means of earning livelihood. Among these occupations are quite a few pertaining to healing. Zysk (1991, 27) argues that such condemnation was against accepting payment for performing any of the services.

Although it is prohibited both by the *Vinaya* and by the law, monks in Thailand, as in Buddhist societies elsewhere, still practice a variety of medical practices. Louis Golomb, in his studies of healers in Malaysia and Thailand (1978; 1985) shows that Buddhist monks employ various kinds of healing including animistic, love charm magic, astrology and herbal medicine to cure people. Gosling (1985) argues that the role of monk as healer is the rediscovery of the ancient role, and constitutes an example of Tambiah’s “continuities and transformations” between the past and the present.

Buddhist ideology and the theory of illness

Samyutta Nikaya explains the cause of human suffering as eight-fold: bile (*pitta*), phlegm (*semha*), wind (*vata*), and their combination (*sannibata*),

change of seasons (*utu*), stress of unusual activities (*visamaparihara*), external agency (*opakamika*), and the result of previous actions (*kamavipaka*) (Zysk 1991, 30). Note that the first four are the identical to the three humours in Ayurvedic medicine. Birnbaum (1979, 11) points out that these *tridosas* or “exterior poisons” - bile, phlegm, and wind - also relate to “the interior poisons”, that is, lust, anger, and delusion. Lust generates too much wind (*vata*); anger produces excess bile (*pitta*); and delusion yields an overabundance of phlegm (*semha*). The *Ekottaragama* also metaphorically compares the corporeal affections of wind, phlegm, and bile to the three moral affections. The metonymic and metaphoric associations between physiological and spiritual causes of diseases can be viewed as an effort to create a totalizing Buddhist theory of illness. In this regard, the inclusion of past actions (karma) as a category of medical aetiology, deserves special attention. Zysk (1991, 31) notes that the incorporation of karma into medical theory occurred purely on the theoretical level.

The doctrine of karma has been an important debate in anthropology. Spiro argues, soteriological Buddhism is unable to satisfy completely the universal psychological need to cope with suffering. Under the press of this worldly need, various of the doctrines of normative Buddhism have been modified or reinterpreted, and a Buddhist technology for satisfying it has been developed. The result is a modified version of Buddhist doctrine: Apotopaic Buddhism. Thus, immediate concerns such as health and illness, drought and rain, calamity and tranquillity are the subjects of Apotopaic Buddhism. Tambiah, in his work on Buddhism and the Spirit Cult in Northeast Thailand (1970), notes that Spiro’s argument overstates the dichotomy this world/other world, and associating Buddhism with the second. Other-worldly sacred values are by no means values of the beyond. “Psychologically considered, man in quest of salvation has been primarily occupied by attitudes of the here and now, for the devout the sacred value, first and above all, has been a psychological state in the here and now” (1970, 55).

A related point is the consideration that Buddhism is primarily fatalism; that lived and to be lived has already been predetermined by previous conducts in the former lives. This point is well discussed in Keyes’ article on popular interpretations of Karmic theory (1983).

He states that villagers evoke the karmic concepts for explaining the unfortunate events which they cannot do any thing to change the situation, but in the meantime, if there is any possible way to effect the undesired situation, villagers unquestionably employ such methods to resolve their life problems. Tambiah argues that one should see ritual and textual traditions not as belonging to different levels of reality but as coexisting and interdependent within a single tradition. In this regard, further investigation regarding the implication of Karmic theory on the perception and behaviour toward illness and healing is of interest. It seems, particularly in the real situation of ailment, that the experiential reality of illness as suffering can serve as a mediator of the other worldly/this worldly; textual/ritual; and doctrinal/popular dichotomy.

Conclusion

Above, I have reviewed the relation of Buddhism to illness and healing and tried to compare the literary Buddhist tradition and the observations by anthropologists. Relatedly, there is a rapid spreading of the dreadful disease as AIDS in Thailand. One wonder how Buddhism contributes to such a situation. In fact, the main route of HIV infection in Thailand now is through hetero-sexual contract. Does Buddhist morality as opposition to adultery have any significant effect on this issue? How does the Buddhist view of suffering and salvation shape the local experience of AIDS? How does the *Sangha* adjust its role to the tremendous suffering of this AIDS situation? These questions not only have theoretical significance but are also crucial to the practical solution of the AIDS problem if one believes that religion and medicine both aim at solving the suffering of existential human experiences.

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Phra Somnuek Natho

Basic Teachings of Buddhism

Excerpts from the lecture

Buddhism grew and spread in a worldview where we see that there are many beings in the universe: Those we can see and those we can't see. The trees, the mountains, the rivers are living beings we can communicate with. In the air, on the earth, in the rivers, in the trees there are deities, there are spirits that are living around us. It is in this kind of worldview that Buddhism started to grow.

The "four noble truths"

The first basic concept of Buddhism, the hard core of teaching, is the "Four Noble Truths". The Buddha spoke about the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of cessation of suffering, and the path of cessation of suffering.

The truth of suffering is the ordinary, existential suffering that we face in everyday life. The cause of sufferings are the desires: the greed, the hatred, and illusion rooted in our heart. The basic cause of these three poisons is the belief that there is a permanent Self. So the ideal, the aim of life is to practice to live your life so as to reduce your suffering until the end, the cessation of suffering, which is enlightenment. The last Noble Truth is the path to the cessation of suffering.

The path to the cessation of suffering

It is one path with generally three components: The first component is the development of wisdom, the right understanding, the right view. The second component is the right action, the right morality. And the last component is the right training of the mind: meditation.

The cultivation of the first part, the

wisdom, is to cultivate and get rid of the misunderstanding that there is Self (permanent self). Another aspect of this right understanding is the understanding that everything depends on causes and conditions, nothing happens by accident. And this is what we know as "the Law of Karma". Whatever happens to you, there are causes. Maybe, the causes occurred in the present life; or could be what you did in the last life.

Then the second part, the right precepts, the right morality, or the right way of life, is to live a life in which you don't harm yourself, you don't harm others, and you don't harm nature.

And the last part, the training of the mind, is to develop the strength of mind, so that the mind has enough power to develop wisdom. Another result of meditation is the calmness of the mind and happiness. When your mind is really calm and quiet and deep in meditation, some special knowledge may occur, known as 'extra sensual perception'. Your eyes may be able to see something that ordinary people can't see. Your ears may be able to hear something that ordinary people cannot hear, even the thinking of another person. Or you may be able to understand the thinking, the feelings of the person around you. Or you may be able to perform some special power to help other people, such as using the power for healing. The fifth capability of this special knowledge is the ability to understand your past life. Also with this capability you may be able to know other peoples' past life. And the last ability is the ability to know what will happen in the future - of yourself and of others. This capability, this sort of meditation, is available for everybody who is ready to put effort into this practice. Though it is not the aim of Buddhist meditation, it is a by-product of this meditation: The ability to communicate and see beings in other worlds. ■

The Buddhist Concept of 'Non-Self' and the Question of Individual Responsibility

Question from the discussion:

If the idea of a 'self' is considered illusory in Buddhism, who then is responsible for anything?

Phra Somnuek:

When we say 'self', normally we mean this body and this mind. But in Buddhism if we say 'self' it doesn't mean this. This is the problem of translation from one culture into another culture. The 'self' in Buddhism (the word 'attan') means something permanent, something static, something which does not change. So 'non-self' is associated very much with 'impermanence'. So when we say 'we are non-self', this does not mean that we do not exist. We exist according to causes and conditions. May I give you an example: Is this material iron? Yes. And is this wooden table iron? No. But still this 'non-iron' exists, and it exists according to causes and conditions. So when we use the concept of 'non-self', it means full responsibility, not less responsibility. Without you at the centre of everything, you take everything into consideration, not only yourself at the centre. Therefore, when we say 'non-self', it is associated with responsibility. But it is not a responsibility where we are at the centre. We take many 'selves' into consideration, including nature and everything. When you do not take yourself at the centre, naturally compassion will be the basic motif in your life. Therefore, another name of the Buddha is 'The Great Compassionate One' ■

Phra Prachan Somniuk Natho: Buddhist Monk and Abbot of a Monastery

Charles K. Konadu

Pastoral Care and Counselling in Africa

The case of Ghana

Introduction

Ghana is situated on the West Coast of Africa with a population of 17.5 million. Formerly known as the Gold Coast, the Country obtained its independence from the British in 1957 as the first black Sub-Sahara African Country to attain an independence status.

Ghana's population comprises many groups with a variety of cultural values which affect various aspects of life of the people.

The country has a mixed economy, and there is a dominant traditional agricultural sector, characterized by small-scale peasant farming, which absorbs about 60% of the total adult labour force. The problem of poverty is exacerbated by the high population growth rate, which is around 3% per annum, and places a burden on the majority of families, as well as on the national economy.

The 1993 National Church survey shows the following Religious groupings in Ghana:

Christians	61%
Muslims	18%
Indigenous Religions	21%

With the foregoing as a background the paper attempts to examine how the Ghanaian has handled life stresses; look at some of the current stress areas in Ghana; observe what the Church, specifically the Christian Council of Ghana has done about some of the stressful issues and conclude with some future

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dreams of Pastoral Care and Counselling.

Traditional approach of pastoral care and counselling

Families in Ghana, as all families in the world, face daily pressures and stresses. The degree of stress often differs from place to place or from one generation to another.

Regarding unpredictable and accidental happenings like, say lightning striking somebody, a car accident, sudden death, sudden sickness, many Ghanaians and Africans believe that nothing happens to people by chance. Hence, there is a cause to every misfortune. Thus, some mishaps that occur to people are supernaturally caused and they need supernatural (diviners and fetish) diagnosis to bring assurance and healing.

For example, when a 70 year old man died, the family thought the death was unnatural. They consulted an oracle and the diagnosis was that 3 people in the family with the power of witchcraft killed the man. And that the dead person was saying the 3 people would follow him soon. Within the space of 2 weeks, 2 members of the family died. The elders had to consult the oracle again to 'protect' the supposed remaining 'victim'.

Moral lapses such as drunkenness, cruelty, etc. have caused great strain in many families leading to separation and divorce. In all cases elders and parents have attempted to bring spouses together. It was common for the family head of the aggrieved partner in an arbitration to "place his foot" on the case and urge the niece or daughter to go back to continue the marriage. There has been traditional respect for the elderly and often people are forced to sup-

press their feelings and pain to obey their elders.

Concerning general incompatibility the traditional Ghanaian culture handled it better than what we experience now. People mostly lived and married from the same ethnic groups in the same area. Parents and family elders from either partner in the marriage had known each other and their respective children well. Therefore, selection was done adequately and to the satisfaction of the couple concerned because dad or uncle knew best.

Let us now turn to Ghana presently and examine some of the pressures and challenges families are facing.

Challenges in the changing society

The average Ghanaian is directed by three voices: Voice from the past/tradition, modern voice from the Western World with its changes, and religious voice (either Christianity or otherwise). Often there is no problem or stress or crises when one faces an issue and all the three voices are in agreement. However, when there is dissonance in the voices problems erupt.

The issue of polygamy can be used to illustrate this point traditionally, and religiously. Traditional marriage allows the man to take another wife or wives. While the Christian teaching is against polygamous relationships.

Again, sometimes cultural practices and beliefs from one tribal or ethnic group in Ghana differ from one another as night is from day. An example is the descent systems in Ghana: which have two systems of inheritance - patrilineal and matrilineal descents. The patrilineal allows children in a marriage to inherit their father's property and wealth. The father therefore makes sure he provides for his children even while he lives. The matrilineal descent enables children to inherit their maternal uncles - mother's brothers or family. Children from such descents are therefore sponsored in school or apprenticeship by their uncles, with fathers doing very little for them.

Below are some of the specific challenges facing the young couple.

• The youth and mate-selection

Traditionally, choice of a spouse was the work of parents or elders of the extended family. Marriage traditionally

was considered to be a communal event - the union of families. Thus such decision about marriage was too important to leave in the hands of children alone. Now, urbanisation and especially education cause many young people to be beyond the influence of their parents and elders of the extended families. The choice of a marriage partner is now largely within the hands of the youth. However, for marriages to be completed, the choice by the youth must receive the consent and approval of parents and relatives. It is here that the youth face conflict and stress. First, his or her choice may not come from his or her tribe, and second, the social, educational and professional position of the person chosen may be far below the expectation of parents. Consequently, there is undue pressure to abandon the spouse or deliberately calculated attempts to disrupt the marriage resulting in stress. The extended family system in Ghana is going through some changes presently. Modern conditions such as industry, modern urbanization, private property, wage earning, and easier mobility are contributing to the decrease of pressure or stress from the extended family. In urban centres the nuclear family in which a man, his wife and children alone live together, is on the increase. There is however, conflict and stress in this new arrangement too: the extended family expects couples to take on traditional responsibilities such as provision of the needs of nephews, nieces, younger siblings or ageing parents. Mother-in-law and sister-in-law also insist on their rights as members of the family. One experiences a lot of joy and happiness until the extended family visits; then there is a lot of stress.

• **Migration**

Rapid and unplanned movements of people is also a source of stress for many people. In a developing country like Ghana, both internal and international forms of migration are common. In Ghana, harsh economic conditions have compelled people to move from the rural areas to the urban centres or from the country to another country for “greener pastures”. Migration has social and emotional effect on the migrant, the remaining spouse, the children left behind and society as a whole. The migrant and the remaining spouse both deprive themselves of physical, emotional, financial and sexual benefits. These can lead to marital infidelities,

marital breakdown or infection of STDs or AIDS. Children also need the two parents to have a balanced growth. The pressure on the child in our contemporary world is too much for one parent to handle. Ghana’s internal migration to regional capitals puts severe pressures on the already inadequate services and facilities in these areas. The scramble for the inadequate facilities causes stress for many.

• **Female and male marital roles**

In Ghana and in most tribal societies in Africa there are traditionally assigned sex-typed division of labour. For example, women are supposed to bear and nurse children, cook food, fetch water and keep the house clean. Men must hunt, fish, build houses and do the hard work on the farm, such as felling trees in preparation for a new farm.

Conflict and crises come when both the husband and wife are professional persons and are engaged in wage-earning ventures. Who cares for the child, maintains the home or cook food? There is the case of this medical doctor (wife) with an engineer as a husband. In Ghana there are 582 medical officers in the public service. If that equal number are in the private sector, then we have one medical officer caring for about 17,000 people.

With this sort of demand on the life of a medical officer, there does not seem to be any time for household chores. But naturally, this husband would insist that the wife cooks his meals even though they may have a house help. Thus, this busy and highly sought after wife, mother and specialist doctor finds herself constantly under stress in an attempt to play all her roles adequately.

Urban life with husband and wife both careerist has created the situation where couples depend on house helps to take care of their small children and also do all household chores. There have been cases where the female adolescent house helps have become the “mistress” of the husband because they had taken over the running of the house for too busy mistresses.

• **Fertility and family planning**

Ghanaians traditionally want many children. Currently, the Total Fertility Rate is almost 6. Reasons for this high level of fertility are:

various socio-cultural practices and beliefs, low level of contraceptive usage and low level of education of females. The economic situation of the country cannot tolerate a high fertility rate. On the other hand, there have been some separations or divorces when a marriage produced no offspring. The divorcees feel cheated and unloved and the ensuing pressure under which they find themselves causes them to engage in unlawful acts such as stealing babies.

• **Normal developmental crises**

Early this month a lady spent over Cedis 30,000 (about 1/3 of her monthly salary) on medical tests later to be told that there was nothing wrong with her, that the results on the blood and urine samples showed her to be very healthy.

The lady is 46 and it seems she is beginning to experience menopause. There are many women like this one, who have little or no information on what changes occur during mid-life or old age.

There are people who are moving from one prayer camp to another, from one fetish to another just to find answers to personal and family crisis. The inability of the priests and spiritualist to find permanent solutions to their problems is another source of stress for many.

Other issues

The average Ghanaian faces serious economic problems / challenges. In the urban centres there are youth without employment, engaged in prostitution, teenage sexual affairs, involved in drug use and other social vices.

Sometimes, instead of facing these issues rationally people tend to blame others and attribute their problems to supernatural causes. There is a recent case of a grandson who clubbed the grandmother to death because he was told by an oracle that she had bewitched him. Many people who find themselves at the receiving end are bound to experience some degree of stress.

Christian Council of Ghana’s Pastoral Care and Counselling Ministry

The Christian Council of Ghana is an ecumenical body made up of 14 member Churches and two affiliated organisations. Some of the member

churches are: Presbyterian, Methodist, Salvation Army, Baptist, Evangelical Lutheran and Mennonite Churches. The affiliated organisations are YMCA and YWCA.

The Council responds to societal needs through its four specialized Departments, namely: Church and Society, Development and Environment, Church Relations, Theology and Research, and Finance and Administration.

The Department of Church and Society has four main units, namely:

- Women and Children's Programme
- Youth Programme
- Relief and Rehabilitation Programme
- Family Life and Welfare Programme.

The general purpose of the Department, in addition to spiritual upliftment of the Churches through its activities, is to create awareness in individuals, equip them with requisite skills for empowerment, development and transformation. One of the prime foci is to reduce stress and poverty and enhance the quality of life of people.

The Family Life and Welfare Programme (FLWP) handles Population and Pastoral Care and Counselling issues of the Council. The Programme was set up in 1961 as an ecumenical response to the need to in strengthen the integrity of the Christian family and to address certain common problems regarding Christian living.

The three foci of the FLWP since 1961 have been: Family Planning, Family Life Education and Family Counselling.

Let us take a closer look at the area of 'Family Counselling' for example:

Family counselling

Coping with the problems associated with the rapid rate of change in the world has not been easy for many individuals and families in Ghana. Some of these changes, which are contrary to some of our traditional norms, have sometimes created stressful situations for many people. Thus, the need for counselling.

Our churches and communities need counsellors who can help people to understand and cope with their varied needs. The counselling training programme offered by the Christian Council is meant to help along this line.

The Counselling Programme has been evolving through the years since 1967. It started with the training of Family

Advisors then to a 3-Part Structured Training Programme of Family Counsellors. The programme was structured not only to train people in basic counselling skills but also to equip them to lead in seminars, workshops, talks and rallies in the churches' programmes on family living. The 3 Phase Programme took 3 years to complete. Phase I was a two-week course, mostly, on family life education with some introductory counselling topics. Phase II followed a year later. This lasted for one week. Finally, the phase III took place in a year's time after the Phase II and it was also one week. In the intervening intervals, trainee counsellors were encouraged to meet monthly with other counsellors and through talks, discussions and role plays, deepen their knowledge on Family Life Education and Family Counselling.

Since its inception, over 800 family counsellors have been trained. The Christian Council is currently the only organisation which offers formal structured training in family counselling to both governmental and non-governmental organisations.

It is being proposed to separate the Family Counselling Course as it exists now into two: purely Family Life Education and purely Family Counselling. Phase I will be Family Life Education (FLE) to interested church leaders, individuals and representatives of organisations for 3 weeks. Phase II would be more selective, admitting only those who have the requisite qualification to undertake family counselling. A new training programme is being prepared.

Over the years, the course has affected the lives of many positively. Here are a few examples. Men who felt they had learnt a lot sponsored their wives the following year. Some wives also encouraged husbands to attend. Some Moslems were converted after listening to morning and evening devotions. A man learnt of ovulation, went to teach his wife whom he had been married to for nine years without a child and she got pregnant. They have a child now. Many marriages at the verge of collapse have been turned round. Many participants with personality problems have also overcome such difficulties through the individual counselling provided to all participants during the course. If these significant changes have occurred in the lives of participants, then one can imagine a greater impact the course has on the many people who receive counselling from the 800 trained counsellors.

A look ahead

The future of this Programme looks very bright, once the following have been put in place:

- The Christian Council, with assistance from donors envisages training of selected past students or beneficiaries of this programme to become facilitators or tutors, locally or abroad.
- With the separation of Family Life Education from Family Counselling, the varied background of the participants will be narrowed to make instruction easier.
- The Christian Council has contracted experts in various fields to write papers which will be put together as a source book for use by both tutors and participants as reading materials. A course outline has already been designed.
- Emphasis is being placed on biblical implications of topics treated since the programme is mostly church based.
- Individual churches who can afford, have requested for and been provided with local training programme based on the same contents of the training syllabus. The number of these requests is on the increase and the committee has put resources in place to accommodate such requests.
- Plans are also afoot to provide two training sessions a year for both programmes. This will double the number of counsellors trained every year. There is the need for funding.
- The local associations are being encouraged to meet regularly. Current topics in counselling and family issues can be discussed or presented at such meetings. The executive of the Marriage Counsellors' Association are working around the clock to inaugurate the association early next year 1996.
- Tutors who have lectured over the years are being encouraged to put their ideas together in the form of booklets for participants' use.
- A programme involving 3-5 families coming together as a support system in the local churches can be a substitute to the traditional extended family. Family Counsellors and educators are to be equipped to facilitate the setting up and

running of such family growth groups in the church.

Conclusion

Africa and other developing countries have some advantages as we look towards the 21st Century. We can learn from our traditional past and also from the industrialized world. We have the chance to choose what can help us best in coping with this constantly changing world with its stressors.

The resources are around us. It is our responsibility to ask-see and knock till we see people's lives enhanced.

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4

case studies and reflections from the study groups

Study Group on "Family":

The Case of Mrs. Afua Nimo, Ghana

presented by Charles K. Konadu

The setting is the office of the presenter which is situated at Osu a busy suburb of Accra. It is the official residence of the Christian Council of Ghana where both individual and group counselling is provided by professional staff. There is a Unit especially designed for dealing with Family and Marriage concerns. Afua Nimo got to know about the counselling facilities through one of the qualified workers of the Council whom she met while executing a national assignment.

Afua arrived for the first interview one afternoon and provided the counsellor with this information:

"At age 35 I work as a bilingual secretary, my dream-come-true job. I have wanted to be a career girl all my life thus I studied hard in school in order to become professional I met my present husband about eight years ago when I was in my final year at the University. We got married while I was serving the nation at Nsia, where he worked. After National Service, I was allocated a two bedroom house in Accra and found my new job and position a dream one: very fulfilling and challenging, one that makes an educated person proud and respected.

My widowed mother found my new position to be God's smile on her grieving after the death of the husband and her struggle to educate me and my sisters. Probably, the reason why I feel excited about my current professional status is that our father died early and his relatives took little or no notice of us, making our future seem gloomy during our school years. Watching mum struggle to pay our school fees and provide other needs was quite overwhelming. When I look at my mates, they seemed to have everything they needed. Next to them, I felt very poor and neglected.

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After my National Service, I got a job in Accra about 250 km away from my husband, with one of the prestigious governmental institutions as a Bilingual Secretary. I started negotiating with my husband to seek for a transfer from his employers and join me in Accra, since his employers had their head office in Accra. The decision to join me in Accra took my husband years to make. During this period, I invited my mother and two sisters to live with me in my two bedroom house. I was lonely and considering the poor conditions under which my family lived in the village, I thought city life would bring some relief to my ageing mother. Another major reason I invited my mother was the care she would give to my two small children while I was away to work.

Most evenings, I shared with my mother, the days experiences and on occasion, marital problems I had with my husband. Mum, mostly during my absence (I spent the weekends with my husband at Domiabra where he lives) discussed these problems with my sisters. I realized later that all of them spoke ill of my husband and quickly jumped to conclusions."

Subsequent interviews revealed that Afua was able to convince her husband Yao to move into the city only to be abused and tortured emotionally and subsequently, physically abused by his sisters-in-law in full support by the mother-in-law. The family split and Afua's depression and guilt feelings worsened.

"Yao finally agreed to my proposal to come and live with me in the city, to my utmost excitement. So he moved into my two bedroom house, already occupied by me the children, my mother and sisters. My difficulties started then. At age thirty-five I feel I have wasted most of my life. I have always dreamt of a degree and good job and a happy family. But here I was with my husband on one side, quarrelling and fighting with my mother and sisters on the other. Several incidents of misunderstanding occurred

within the period of two years. One day, while I was gone to work, my sisters with the approval of my mother abused Yao physically over a trivial incidence. (she sobs).

I was very hurt when I get to know of the abuse, especially since I was trying hard to keep my marriage, a job and family going, I reported the case to the police who arrested and jailed my mother and sisters over night. The case was however settled at home. The elders who were present at the arbitration ordered mum and sisters out of the house.

Mum lived with friends she had made in the neighbourhood. The sisters joined other relatives in the city. The biggest shock came within two weeks when Yao arranged with his employers for a transfer to Domiabra. He left with our two children. On occasion when this topic was discussed Yao was very adamant on his stand. He insists that he married me and so he decides where we will live.

One of my problems is that I am lonely, now that I live alone. I also get tired on Mondays when I travel to Accra very early at dawn in order to get to work early before my boss gets in. (He is very understanding though). I am scared of losing my husband since my Absence for the whole week is telling on the family. I have seen some signs of other women in the house. Thus when I come back to Accra, I feel terrible anxiety much of the time, particularly at night. Sometimes, I get so confused, I feel like running but I just can not move. It is awful because I often feel as if I am losing all that I have worked for - good job, husband and relatives. Much of the times, I feel guilty that I have not worked up to my potential, that I have been a failure to my mother and sisters who have not visited me for two years now. My mother consented to receive support from me after family elders mediated.

I am tired at feeling like a loser and I know that nobody is going to change my life for me, I must make a decision, a choice which is going to change my life for the better. My friends tell me I am dumb, because if they were in my shoes, they would have stopped the weekend visits if my husband who earns less than I do cannot swallow his pride and join me in Accra. I cry myself to sleep many nights, feeling so terribly alone and filled with anger and hatred. I don't know what to do with my life. Please help me."

Issues

After several sessions which have been merged into the above case, four major issues have become evident:

1. The extended family wields an enormous power on this marriage even in an era of technology advancement and changing role of women in families.
2. The Ghanaian culture expects the man to accommodate his wife and family, thus it was odd for Afua, the professional worker, to want to accommodate her husband.
3. Afua migrated to the city for economic, social and other reasons.
4. There is pressure on the professional woman/wife (Afua) in the developing world as a setting.

Explanation

Even though the nuclear family is gradually replacing the extended family in Ghana, there are still traces of the enormous power that it has over marriages that fall within it. Even though Afua may be educated and professional, she crumbled under that power when she allowed mother and sisters to live in with her. There were difficult times when she was torn between backing her husband and family. The family knew that Afua contributed far more to the housekeeping expenses than her husband. To them, he became a powerless, toothless husband who should be instructed and directed always.

Education, urbanization, industrialization, religious dogma and Western way of life and marriage are some of the factors that are contributing to shift the Ghanaian extended family and the relationships to the nuclear family systems.

In Ghana and elsewhere in Africa, marriage transaction and relationship are regarded primarily as an alliance between two kinship groups. Thus, traditionally, kinship ties are superior to marital ties. In contemporary time this dilemma creates conflict and stress for many people as they attempt to resolve the issue: The subordination of marital ties to those of kinships or vice versa.

Again in Ghanaian culture this caring of one's parents in their old age is an enshrined responsibility. Hence the education of children is to afford children to look well after their parents in their old age. Afua's therefore torn between her responsibility to the mother and husband.

Some years back, regarding conflicts among in-laws, the norm has been conflicts between a wife and her husband's mother and sisters. It was assumed that these sons were the sole providers in the home (husbands were literate with high education and lucrative employments). Son's education and employment were supposed to raise the status and conditions of the extended family. Conflicts usually ensued when the wife was seen to be enjoying what the extended family considered to be theirs. The reverse is now true with many married professional women, and especially with the case of Afua.

Gone are the days when women's work was confined to the home. In Ghana now, women are found in many professions even at the helm of leadership. Women are given accommodation just as their male counterparts as part of their benefits. If these accommodations are better, more comfortable, easily accessible, the best logic is to move in with the professional wife. Very few professional women are enjoying this privilege. There are many others who have to be content with the homes of their husbands. This is because some cultural practices are still strictly adhered to by even educated and some elite in the society. Yao felt intimidated, weak, useless and unsure even at his manhood. What worsens his position is the fact that he has two daughters, a sign of the woman being stronger than the man. The neighbours would usually show their dissatisfaction of female house owner. His colleagues at work may question, discourage and at times mock at him for succumbing to a dominant wife.

The third issue deals with migration of married people both internally and externally. Because of the economic situation in the country, many marriages have been affected by this separation. Most husbands (and at times wives) left their spouses to look for greener pastures. A lot of them ended up in other relationships which were referred to as temporary. Ghanaians went to Nigeria, Liberia, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, now Germany and Europe.

Families left behind deteriorated, children became wayward, pregnant and social misfits because the task of raising these children became the sole responsibility of only one parent - the single parent. Internally spouses leave rural

areas to find better paid jobs in the cities despite government's efforts at decentralization. Some leave with hope of later inviting the other members of the family as soon as they got employed and found suitable accommodation. However, these dreams, often never come true when the migrators are hit in the face by realities of city life.

However, an unidentified factor, the migration of most educated or brilliant females in the rural areas who struggle on to become professionals is another area of concern. This group of women are increasing in numbers and have to struggle for the few men, jobs, accommodation and other facilities and social amenities in the city. Afua cannot get the type of job she holds in Accra in Domiabra, where her husband lives. And so are many other Afuas who have left the village to semi-educated or uneducated female lot.

The fourth issue deals with the pressure on the professional woman/wife and in this case pressure on Afua as a woman, wife, mother and professional. She has to fulfil her household duties of cleaning and cooking. So she spends most of the week-end making sure that she stuffs the freezer with soups and stews. She washes clothes for the family and tidies up the home. She has to do the children's hair and mend clothes. After all these, she must make time to be with her husband and fulfil a wife's role. Back in the city, she has another home to take care of and has to make sure that her work is not affected by any of these other pressures. What happens when her children are sick? when husband has to travel out to work? who imparts the motherly virtues as example for the children to emulate?

To help Afua, she has to reassess her values, needs, goods, aspirations and priorities. She must be helped to make a decision as to which of the priorities is most important right now. ■

Barbara Lemmer

Report from the Study Group on "Family"

Impressions from the perspective of a participant

At the 1995 Prague Seminar I had previously participated in a similar study group in my capacity as a counsellor, affiliated with the Protestant Institute for Family Counselling. Although the focus as well as the participants varied in each study group, the method of communicating with one another and the gained experiences and insights have been similarly intense for me at both times.

Setting

Under the guidance of Barbara Schneider 13 participants from various countries (i.e. Ghana, Iceland, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, and Germany) - equally divided in male and female - gathered for four 90 minute sessions throughout the week of the seminar. The youngest participants thereby being in their late twenties, and the oldest being 65 years and older; their occupation ranging from physicians, social workers, family therapists, marriage counsellors, pastors working in parishes, psychiatric institutions, nursing homes, Telephone counselling capacities, etc. as well as theologians and students.

The variety of languages proved to be of great significance, in so far that it was an endeavour in and of itself to constantly work for an understanding in the two languages German and English, i.e. the most common denominator. This demanded patience and time, often led to misunderstandings and confusion but also positively slowed down the process, and invited a more careful listening, a more sincere attempt to understand and to be enlightened.

Contents of the group's work

Throughout the better part of three sessions Charles Konadu from Ghana

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Counsellor, Wuppertal (Germany)

introduced a case from his work as a coordinator for a family life and welfare programme of the Christian Council of Ghana: The group thus dealt with the case of an emancipated professional African female with two children, who developed a deep family and life crisis, because of the apparent discrepancy between her family of origin and her new way of living in an urban setting with a small family. The spouses finally separated, whereupon the children remained with the father.

The conflict arose because of a discrepancy between:

- African Tradition vs. Western influences
- the archaic image of a family vs. the Western image
- the extended family vs. the smaller family
- rural life vs. urban life
- traditional images of marriage vs. modern images
- general values vs. personal values
- traditional roles of male and female vs. modern roles
- traditional religious and cultural upbringing vs. new pastoral approaches, etc.

The group process

Time and again it was necessary to obtain more information in order to fully understand this specific family crisis; still, much remained incomprehensible. For example, to us the woman appeared to be a daughter who is unable to cut the strong ties to her mother, whereas in reality she is under the obligation to support her mother, her sisters, as well as their families, and to even let them stay with her. All this deriving from the fact, that after the father's death her mother still enabled her to go to university, therewith pushing her into the role of the family "bread-winner", the head of family.

Also, we were amazed that her spouse was able to simply take her children, and that the woman was not wrestling with this fact at all. Charles explained to us that according to ancient traditions marriages in Ghana are either "matrilinear" or "patri-linear"; i.e., depending on their family of origin the children either belong to the family of the husband or the wife, like property. In our case we were dealing with a patrilinear family structure, which meant that the husband's family would take complete care of the children., including hiring a household help who would suffice as a mother substitute.

All these misunderstandings led to unrest and impatience in the group and tempted us to give advice, to interpret, to interrupt and to attempt to correct the case presenter. After two sessions the group members voiced frustration, anger, feelings of resignation and depression. There even was a feeling of competition about the right and wrong understanding of the case among the participants.

Finally it became clear how the group's situation reflected the diversity of the case, including the role of the case presenter. This insight enhanced the group process.

In the fourth and last session each group member introduced his/her own professional approach to the case: "How would I as a pastoral care giver / counsellor react?"

It became apparent how much competence, acceptance, and professional identity existed in our group. The new insights into the case resulting from the different professional approaches was enriching. For most of us it was a great surprise and an even greater value to be able to offer our own professional insights while at the same time listening to others' from various professional, cultural and personal backgrounds. Many of us, for example, suggested that Charles should undertake a kind of family therapy, or couple counselling. Others believed that pastoral counselling and discussions about faith and the meaning of life would be beneficial for the woman. A third group was of the opinion that the woman would only be able to establish her own identity in individual counselling sessions. A theologian suggested to mediate a dialogue between husband and wife.

All of this was accompanied by a critical questioning of one's own view point, as well as the discovery of one's re-

sources through the gentle probing of the others. For example it became clear to me that I would have been too hasty in suggesting couple counselling to this woman, simply because this is my field of knowledge and expertise. But while exploring the situation I saw much greater value in helping the woman to find her own identity, in order to fully grasp and deal with the apparent discrepancies between tradition, emancipation, diversity and individuality.

Moreover, through the group's value judgement Charles was able to recognize what a calming factor he had been for the woman, while at the same time beginning to entertain the idea of couple counselling. To me he remained amazingly calm, and at times admirably protective when others attempted to criticize, misunderstand or deliberately counsel him. He did not deviate from his case presentation but was willing to gladly adapt the group's thoughts, ideas and experiences.

Conclusion

The fact that in the midst of all the diversity, a valuable and real encounter was indeed possible, was once again an enriching experience. What appears to be well known is being questioned and has to be judged anew; what seems to be foreign at first, changes and makes itself known through encounter. All this implies an attempt to really understand and to explain oneself accordingly. All too quickly many of us believed to have understood the case, when in fact it gradually became clear how different, how complicated the case was, because of the impact that Tradition and role models played.

At the same time we remembered that similar roles existed for men and women even in Western countries less than a hundred years ago, and that one had to fulfil traditional roles within the family of origin.

Although this case forced us to deal with a culture, foreign to most of us, in the end we all felt touched by and close to this woman and her life.

The encounter with the "Other" (individual/culture/world/faith) for me is the direct way to experience pastoral care, and by experiencing it I also seem to have a pastoral effect on others. This I would not want to miss, but hope to be able to relive again and again in similar encounters. ■

Study Group on "Parish Work":

A Case study from Germany

presented by Jürgen Huhn

Background

A neighbour drew my attention to Mr. K., who is attending the parish men's group on an irregular basis.

It was her impression that he is suffering from severe depression - and could I visit with him?

My first attempt to visit failed because of unfavourable circumstances. We made a new appointment at which we were able to talk in depth.

Life-story

Mr K. was talking about himself without further introduction and hardly interrupted by my few questions. He was brought up in a strictly Germanic neighbourhood in the South of the then newly established Soviet Union. His ancestors emigrated from Germany in the 18th century. His was a strictly fundamentalistic Christian community that connected the group in its minority situation, as well as it formed its identity. The whole village seemed to belong to this fundamentalistic community and no one was able to escape it, even if they wanted to.

It was my impression of Mr. K. that he participated in this fundamentalistic belief with utter conviction until the age of fourteen. After this point slowly distancing himself from this form of rigorous Christian existence.

To me this seemed to be a first, rather harmless rupture in his biography.

A second all the more drastic rupture was his deportation. At the beginning of WW II the family was brutally split up. He was kept in the "Gulag" (a work camp, installed by Stalin.), and he didn't know whether he would ever see again his wife, parents and siblings.

He survived the time in the work camp fairly well, because he was able to utilize his craftsmanship as a wheelwright, since there was no shortage of repairs to defect wheels of horse drawn carriages.

His skilled hands soon brought the carriages to order as well as making the scarce life of the camp more bearable by using his skills for various repair works. Therefore he never seemed to be short of friends among the prisoners who in return supported him in emergency situations.

It is also my impression that the Spartan life style of his home parish (no smoking, no drinking, etc.) in the end helped him to cope with the difficult situation of the camp.

After the war he was reunited with his family. Up to the beginning of the seventies they were able to live a relatively normal life in modest terms.

Then came the third rapture: His immigration to East Germany. Mr. K. chose not to talk about that in too much detail. Judging from his scarce comments and my impressions of him, the following image revealed itself: For the sake of the children's future he had moved to Germany. But only a part of his "self" arrived here, the greater part remained in the expanse of the Russian countryside. He now mainly lives from his memories, and in talking to me he became more lively. For me listening to him was more exciting than any thriller or crime story.

But shortly after telling his story, he collapses like a weak shell. "Yes, his children are well; they also survived the fourth rupture, that is Germany's reunification." But they seem to be very busy with themselves, and don't contact him very often. He became a lonely man in a small one bedroom apartment.

An afterthought

I am bringing this example because it is my opinion that here we are dealing with a fate that is very common in our times. There are still Germanic families emigrating into Germany from the states of the former Soviet Union.

But elsewhere similar human tragedies occur, and we encounter people with similar life stories. Bosnia, the distressing situation in the Balkans. Their refugees who are coming into the states of

*Rev. Jürgen Huhn:
Parish Minister and Counsellor, Berlin*

the EC all that is very present to us here in Europe.

The following question arises in a camp situation - a situation which is imposed on human beings and is extremely traumatic; a situation which Mr. K. and many other people in various different parts of the world have experienced (especially in the refugees camp).

How, is it possible to find the small path between adaptation and resistance, to walk it and not to be worn out by the inhuman conditions, and not to become cold, hard hearted and indifferent for the rest of one's life.

The other typical question which arises out of this biography is as follows: To stay or to leave?

What is proper for my family? On the one hand we are barely able to stay in our country, on the other hand we are not certain of what we will experience in the country we are about to move to. Young people have already returned to east Europe because they could not deal with our so called western civilisation. The elderly have not moved since they are afraid and feel unable to deal with yet another change in their lives.

How can we help people to make the right decisions which are so relevant for their future. What are the focal points, when one has to decide whether to go or to stay.

As a citizen of the former GDR, I know what I am talking about. Some left for Western Germany, others stayed. yet others are glad that they stayed after the change. Recently one of them said, "Had I known what to expect in the West, in what kind of human and social conditions I'd find myself, I would have never applied for immigration."

Subconsciously we projected all our longings and everything that was missing in East Germany into the West, which to us seemed to offer much more freedom and possibilities.

Now we became much more sober and see that next to the freedom one also finds many social constraints and needs for adaptation, a fact which not only in the West plays a formidable role. How, then do we deal with the ruptures in our lives? What is our conscious and subconscious involvement in all of this? How can we continue life despite of everything, and how can we accompany others and help them to discover new possibilities of living? ■

Study Group on "Hospital":

A Case Study from England

presented by Hilary Johnson

I have selected a client that I have had since December 1991 for this case presentation. Her name is Tina and the study also involves her daughter Sarah. Their story is complex and they have both needed a considerable amount of support and encouragement.

A) INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Biographical situation

Tina is a widow, she is 36 years old and has one daughter Sarah who is 6 years old.

Tina and Sarah live together in a ground floor Council flat in a large block close to the Hospital. Tina is unemployed and does a considerable amount of work for the parent teacher association at Sarah's school. She feels she has a duty of care for her mother, also a widow, who lives in an almshouse near the school that Sarah attends. All three members of this family are receiving outpatient care in the hospital each under the care of a different consultant. Tina has a large number of friends locally many of who are single parents and live in rented accommodation. Generally their standards of nutrition are not healthy, many of them smoke cigarettes, though Tina does not, and alcohol is frequently abused among this group.

Biographical processes

Tina has a number of brothers and sisters with whom she has little contact. She has minimal links with her husband's family because two sons from his first marriage physically harmed both Tina and Sarah in a family fight just hours after his death. Tina finds making relationships difficult due to the traumas of her childhood, compounded by the

early death of her husband just as she was beginning to trust him and to enjoy caring for their baby Sarah. Currently Tina is tentatively beginning a relationship with John who was widowed some seven years ago. Tina has a number of relationships with other health care professionals particularly a male social worker of whom she is very suspicious, a paediatric nurse who advises her on the care which Sarah needs as she suffers from chronic asthma. Tina trusts these professionals with only a limited amount of her own feelings and experiences. She has healthier relationships with the other members of the chaplaincy team both men and women.

Emotional relations

Tina sometimes experiences great difficulty in coping with her emotions. She finds anger very hard to bear except from Sarah so she works hard to protect herself from her mother's anger, and will apologize to me before I know what it is she might have to apologize about. Tina was abused by a number of her brothers when she was a child. She continues to feel embarrassed and ashamed of these events and is inclined to blame herself for them. Consequently she has poor self esteem though she is gaining confidence through her work with me and through her friendships, especially with John. She and Sarah sometimes switch roles with Sarah making the adult decisions about how to spend their time and money. On two occasions recently Sarah has had to summon help when Tina has been in severe pain at home.

Roles

Tina's major roles until recently, have been widow and mother. Her husband was twenty seven years older than her, and died at the age of fifty eight, just two days after undergoing major abdominal surgery to remove a cancerous growth. He had worked for many years

*Rev. Hilary Johnson:
Anglican Priest, Hospital Chaplain.*

as a bus inspector locally, and Tina continues to receive free travel on the buses as part of his pension. She is constantly reminded of her state by the comments and questions of those who worked the buses with her husband.

Tina requires a lot of affirmation to help her believe that she is a good mother for Sarah. Sarah enjoys Tina's company and when Tina is free of pain they do many interesting things together. They met John on the first holiday they have ever had, last August, at a holiday camp. Tina tries to be a caring daughter, but feels she fails this because she cannot forget that it was her mother's constant absence from the house that left her brothers with many opportunities to sexually abuse her and her younger sister. Tina was frequently punished by her parents for misdeeds that were later found to have been her eldest brother's fault. Tina's mother has been a heavy smoker all her adult life, now it appears that her mother may have a severe lung disease, possibly cancer. Tina believes she ought to feel sorry for her mother, but actually thinks she is suffering her just deserts.

Tina is tentative in her relations with professional people, both at the hospital and at Sarah's school, though she is gaining confidence and is beginning to articulate her own and Sarah's needs more clearly. She was reluctant to accept a proposal that she be the Chairman of the PTA at Sarah's school, but is fulfilling that role adequately, with support of staff and friends.

B) PERSONAL CONTEXT

Historic conditions

Tina was the seventh of nine children, two of who died in infancy, leaving four older than her and two younger. She feels that she was never seen as an individual person in that family and made many attempts to run away from home, usually being found by her eldest brother. She also tried several times to take her life but her attempts went unnoticed.

Tina experienced most affection from her maternal grandmother and later from her father.

She suffered repeated abuse from her eldest brother, sometimes with his friends joining in. When she was sixteen she was assaulted in the street by a stranger who then ran away. The next

day a police officer called at her home when she was alone there, saying he had some information about her attacker, but he also sexually assaulted her.

Tina did not achieve very much during the time she was at school, and left at the earliest opportunity to work in a local baker's shop. Her future husband was a regular customer there, and he gradually began to protect her from the inappropriate advances of some of the other male customers.

After their marriage they had some difficulty with Tina's parents who seemed to resent her husband's good influence on her, and her happiness.

Sadly Tina's happiness was interrupted by six deaths in the families in the next three years, including the late miscarriage of Tina's first baby. By the time Sarah was born in 1989 Tina's husband was experiencing some pain from the cancer, and he died when Sarah was fifteen months old, while Tina and Sarah were visiting him in hospital.

Tina did not know how to handle her stepson's anger and after their attack on her she took Sarah to live in her mother's home, thinking this would be a temporary arrangement, but ended up spending four years and six months there, in very cramped conditions.

Economy

Tina's husband left her a share of his pension and the small house that they had lived in together. Tina soon sold this house realising that she could not live alone there as it was so close to the hospital where he died. The sale realized approximately £40,000, which Tina has still got in a Building Society account. Tina and Sarah live easily within Tina's weekly income at present, and Tina frequently buys presents for Sarah. They have meals out places like McDonald's rather than more expensive restaurants, Tina does not smoke, because of Sarah's asthma, and only drinks wine or sherry occasionally.

Societal and political relations

One of the tasks that I have seen as important for Tina, has been to enable her to play a full part in adult life, to make choices for herself and Sarah, to claim what is hers by right, and to use her talents. Tina remains naive politically, and uninformed about wider debates surrounding issues like health care.

Cultural values

I find this a difficult area to comment upon as Tina is not often interested enough to pursue any, conversation in this area except in so far as she takes Sarah to the cinema occasionally. Most books and magazines in their flat are also related to Sarah's needs.

C) RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL FORCES

Tina spent some of the happiest hours of her childhood at Sunday School and later at Girls Brigade at her local Methodist Church. She still regularly visits one of the leaders, now retired. However even those leaders never followed through their promise to support her at home, and despite saying they would visit, they never did. Tina continues to wrestle with ideas of a God of Love who allows children to suffer as she did, and who "allows" her husband to die just at the time she was learning to trust him, and when their daughter was so young. Tina has begun to think about practising and nurturing the little faith she has, and Sarah has begun attending a local Sunday School regularly. I do not know what effect Tina's new relationship with John will have on her religious and spiritual life. ■

Study Group on "Psychiatry":

The Story of Wong Seng Choon

presented by Robert Solomon

Introduction

One of my students at the College, Richard Tan (not his real name) asked me one day whether I could see one of his acquaintances, a family friend: Wong Seng Choon (not his real name). I agreed to do so and met Seng Choon for the first time on 18 April 1994.

The first meeting

Seng Choon (SC) was a twenty year old Chinese young man, good-looking with a smiling face. His father accompanied him to my office and then left and waited somewhere else.

Presenting the problem

SC had joined the army to do national service. In fact, he had requested to do it earlier than usual. In the army, he failed his basic military training and was referred to the psychiatric hospital in early 1992 as he was hearing voices telling him to die.

(The case notes indicate that he complained of his muscles aching and the inability to control them. He was noted to smile to himself. He wanted to change his name and complained of the inability to masturbate. In the ward, he was "playful" and "disinhibited" and asked his father to take him to see a prostitute to cure him of his impotence. A provisional diagnosis of schizophrenia was made, though he exhibited unusual psychotic symptoms. He was treated with modicate, stelazine and prothiadine. He was later referred to the head of the psychiatric department of another hospital who noted SC's aloofness, interest in unusual hobbies, and inability to form good relationships. A diagnosis of schizotypal personality disorder was made. At about this time too, he attempted suicide by drinking an

overdose of methyl salicylate. The parents complained that his behaviour began to change when he was 15, when he started reading books on the occult and burned candles in his room.)

SC was treated by psychiatrists for a period of two years. He was kept on regular medication. He was brought to some Christians for deliverance ministry. Richard Tan referred SC to see me to help him in the spiritual dimensions of his problem.

Family

SC described his father as "weak" and his mother as "domineering" and "dictatorial". His mother "whacked" him a lot, and SC likened the experience to "eating a meal." (I wondered whether it was an experience mixed with pleasure and pain.) SC said that he felt nothing for his parents, that he has run out of feelings, though at one point he said that he despised his parents. SC also had a younger sister of whom he said little. (I found out through Richard that the father had a mistress.)

SC's story

SC saw himself as intelligent, good-looking, and wise. However, he was not happy with his name. He changed his name a number of times, this apparently having to do with numerology. (He had threatened suicide if his parents did not allow him to change his name). He was back to his original name but was planning to change his name again on his 21st birthday.

His view of himself was mixed. He wanted to change his face, get rid of his spectacles, and look stronger. He complained of impotency for two years, though he also said that he masturbated often by rubbing himself on a huge pillow (I wonder who this pillow is?). Two years earlier, he was interested in a cousin who called him a "square". He had then 'charmed' her using "Enochlan magic" after which they were quite close though they did not have sexual

intercourse. Then he grew cold and attempted suicide by drinking a concoction of coke and spirit. She was affected badly by this and both ended up in the same hospital ward where she told him, "You're not a man". After that, he failed his basic military training and started experiencing impotency.

SC was very enthusiastic about his knowledge of western and kabbalistic magic. He felt "called" by the Greek gods, and found Jesus and Satan to be "foreign powers" between whom he felt stuck. He did not think in terms of good and bad; to side with one is to be split. In his experience, he felt "threatened". He preferred "serenity-equilibrium-serenity". He enthusiastically drew diagrams to explain his concepts on magic.

The second meeting

We met a week later and this time he was accompanied by both his parents who then left him with me. He said that he had changed his psychiatrist some time ago who had also made some changes in the medication. He was also referred to a urologist. SC complained that his medication prevents him from concentrating. He felt he had lost his will. When he stopped his medication, he feared that he was being taken over by other people. He felt trapped.

He expressed strong frustration and anger against his parents. He had attempted suicide some time ago but his parents saved him and he resented that. If he had died, he would have been reborn on a certain auspicious date (18 Jan 1994) which would have made him famous and powerful. He said that part of him had died and there was no hope. I tried to clarify whether he wanted death or life. He had gone for massage and masturbation but derived no pleasure from it. He repeated, "I can't feel... I want to die." (What does he feel? What does he want? What will give him pleasure?)

The third meeting

A week later, he came without his parents. He was sweating and said that he had exercised by walking. He said that he really wanted love. He described his four "little wives" in the astral plane: two Americans, a Taiwanese, and Aphrodite (he claimed he was Adonis in an earlier life.) - representing four types of love. His explanations were vague. His favourite was #2 but she was then mar-

Rev. Dr. Robert Solomon:
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Theological College Singapore.

ried to someone else. #4 schemed to teach them all a lesson.

SC had two guides in the astral plane, an old Buddhist priest who had recently died in a Singapore temple, and a 300 year old American witch. He said that he was listening to "weird tapes" and was doing astral travelling but also felt the need to come down more to the physical plane. I encouraged him to do so. He wanted to be superhuman. We then talked about practical steps he could take to "remain more on earth". He had stopped his medication. I felt that there was better rapport between us. When he was leaving, he stopped at the door, and half-winked, remarking "I don't need medicine, I need love".

A tragic end

SC did not keep the next appointment. He had assaulted his father at home and was brought to the psychiatric hospital. Upon discharge, he was brought by his father to an Anglican church where he was exorcised and baptized with his father upon confession of faith on 19 September 1994. He was seen by a deliverance team comprising three men on three evenings. His books on the occult were destroyed. After his baptism, he was apparently well. On one occasion, he was found with a book on the occult and was warned about the dangers of backsliding. He committed suicide subsequently by jumping down from a high-rise building on 24 October 1994.

I was travelling at that time and when I learned what happened from Richard, we met together to experience some level of closure to this sad story.

Assessment

I believe that SC's problems had a lot to do with a very dysfunctional family as well as strong intra-psychic predisposing factors. His acts and interpretations were very symbolic and often were a desperate attempt to find meaning and love. I will not say further here as I would like to leave the discussion open. ■

Christian Dehm

Report from the Study Group on Prison and Violence

There is Nieke, an Indonesian woman pastor from Holland, who is the group moderator and leads the group in such a gentle manner that it becomes easy for us to find our way together with her. Then there is Edwin, the clinical psychologist with American training who comes from the Philippines and who presents his work among political prisoners; he is on the look-out for counselling models developed from the context of the people concerned. There are the other participants: two German women of very different age and background. The one, a deaconess of much experience and the other a doctoral candidate who has been to the Philippines; it is the latter who will more than once describe in vivid terms the vast difference between our experience and the Philippines. And there is a woman hospital chaplain who lived in the former GDR, then two pastors who have their own parishes, a German and a Czech, both of whom have got some experience of visiting prisoners. Finally, there is me, a German pastor cum psychologist, who is working in development education on a supra-parish level and is thus accustomed to deal with people as well as topics from very different contexts.

No doubt: intercultural encounter happened in our group. Our questions, our understanding and non-understanding differed widely. Because of Mirek and his repeated questions we were made to realize the difference between the oppressive situation in the Philippines and that under European dictatorships. There, prisoners remain in contact with their families who have to supply their needs. Mostly, they even live among their groups in the prisons. It is possible to visit them in small groups. As a result, counselling happens in the group. It is essential to share as much as possible, to eat together, to talk with one another. Health questions are important, much more so than psychological ones.

Edwin takes a great personal risk when he visits the people in prison to pursue his counselling work. To develop trust, he has to rely on the representatives of human rights organisations for help who accompanied him and who were already well-known to the prisoners. There, the objective of counselling is to stabilise the people in their special situation and within the group. We were made familiar with a certain situation in which one group member isolated himself from the group - most probably a consequence of his torture - and in which it was tried to ease the situation by a process of 'mediation'. Here in the West, this approach would be called 'holistic'.

It was of special interest to me to try and understand how Edwin lets these people use their own language, their own images when talking about their experiences. They need not familiarize themselves with scientific psychological problem definitions or theories of neuroses. Their own images are used to help them understand their situation and possibilities of change.

Edwin noticed that people who engage in political struggle out of their own conviction will survive torture better than others who have been recruited to engage in the struggle. The former ones are able to endure torture as something horrible that you have to go through, but the latter ones might come out broken.

The image of the carrier is of help in this context. It is an image that is directly related to the environment of the people Edwin works with. Counselling does not mean to take away the burden, but to help to make the burden easier, if necessary, to take a short rest in order to find time to re-think the way and what its aim is, may be to think about the burden itself, to find an answer whether one is really convinced of what one is doing.

Edwin demonstrated *Tai Chi* exercises he practices with the people in prison. We tried some of the exercises ourselves, flowing movements in harmony with our breath setting free energy inside us.

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Director of Studies at 'Haus am
Schüberg', Ammersbek (Germany)*

Again and again, Mirek compared this to the situation he encounters when he goes to visit people in prison. He refuses to make a difference between criminal prisoners and political prisoners. He does not visit them as a counsellor but as a pastor.

In our last session, I presented a story from my work of a woman who underwent long-time counselling who had suffered a lot of violence when she was a child. We did not have time to compare the different cases and situations. At certain times, there existed a supervisory situation which I benefited from immensely. However, what became very clear in the end is the huge difference between our approach in therapy and counselling in the West and the kind Edwin is trying out in the Philippines. We could have gone on for ages discussing the question of who holds the power in a certain situation, or rather who holds what power in any given situation. Edwin is trying to do without his learned Western skills, he is trying to empower his clients to be the master of the situation and above all to use their own language and forms of communication. It may well be that we in Europe are tempted too easily to assume that everybody involved in pastoral care and counselling speaks the same language and that we share power. I for my part are now very stimulated to re-discover the aspect of sharing of power in pastoral care and counselling in the particular context of my work. This is what I would like to thank all participants of the study group for and, above all, Edwin as our animating spirit. ■

Study Group on “Educational Work”:

A Case Study from India

presented by Nalini Arles

“Mrs. M” was 29 when she first came to work for us from a village in Karnataka in India. She had five children after which her husband took a second wife. They all lived in their one room house with a small kitchen, which perhaps would be about the size of your garage or cellar. The house had no electricity or toilet. The villagers used the large open space as their toilet. Mrs Ms husband supported his second wife and asked Mrs M to move out of his house with her five children.

M found employment in a nearby Christian institution. She had to walk 6 miles to work and walk back 6 miles as bus service was poor. She obtained a loan and added a room to the house where she and her children could live, leaving the other room to her husband and his second wife. She also borrowed money through the government to deepen the existing well in a very small plot of land which they owned. The husband started ill-treating their ten year old daughter. Ms defence of her daughter led to Argument and quarrels. His drink problem aggravated the situation. He used to come home drunk and abuse the family. With the help of the village elders, she asked her husband to live in a separate house.

The government threatened to take their possessions if they did not return the loan. M rushed to the counsellor for help. The counsellor knew the local bank manager, and her husband - being the head of the Christian Institution - had influence and power. They approached the people concerned and averted the eviction. Later they gave a loan for Mrs M to clear her loan with the government. She was faithful to return the money to the counsellor later, though her husband who accompanied her to request the loan did not take any responsibility to clear it.

The husband continued to harass M and started abusing his daughter. She could not tolerate his abuse and being concerned for her daughter’s safety M considered various options including separation. The counsellor spent time listening, discussing and clarifying the various options. After much thought M decided to move to another village. But the elders of the village advised her against migration and asked her to stay on and adjust with her husband. They accepted the second wife as a natural phenomenon. Her quarrels were dismissed as a natural part of life. M continues to live in the same house, though she proved capable of deciding, earning and managing her affairs. The final decision remained with the village elders in whom lay the locus of control.

Clarifications

1. In India people with status, power and position have influence to recommend people for jobs, admission in school college, hospital or an occupation. They can impose or avert a decision.
2. Not all villages can be portrayed as having no electricity, toilets and water supply.
3. M’s husband was the eldest son in his home. In India the eldest sons are looked up to and not questioned, treated as though semi-gods. They make all the decisions in the family.
4. In the village council (panchayat), there are mostly men elders who decide and rule from a male perspective.

Methodology used by the counsellor

Both directive and non-directive counselling were used as M had the capacity for self awareness and self criticism. The directive method was adapted and used. She had a sharp mind and was asked to think and reflect on her problems. As she gained insight she assimilated new perspectives. The counsellor facilitated the counselling process but

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refrained from making any decisions for M.

The counsellor allowed the counsellee to vent her feelings of anger, fear and hate both verbally and non-verbally and to cry aloud.

The difficulties faced in non-directive approach was that M always insisted to sit on the floor whereas the counsellor sat on the chair. The counsellor always managed to sit in such a position which allowed sufficient eye contact.

Problems faced by the counsellor

The decision of M was overruled by her village elders who held the final say, not because she was a woman, but because the locus of control lay in the male patriarchal system or culture. Such culture enhances the dependence of women on male elders. ■

5

sidelights...

The Mülheim seminar began with a pre-conference for those who were to lead the seminar proper. For a day we were the most internationally representative group. Twelve nations were there and none of us in a majority, whereas in the seminar proper, Germany had the largest representation and Europe over 80% of the delegates. The pre-conference addressed a number of significant issues.

The study groups, as the main professional activity of the seminars, were discussed in detail and two concerns dominated our thoughts. How to ensure that the voices of the “non-privileged” members were listened to, and how to care for the case presenters’ vulnerability in the face of criticism. It was not easy to identify who would be non-privileged, but already we were alerted to the power of language, which had not only to be spoken, but also understood or not as we were to discover. The theme of post-modernism was employed to protect us from our judgements on one another. For did it not mean that all points of view were equally valid, and could be generously received and held in safety? Awkward and unsavoury feelings were already stirring and it was unclear how they were to be expressed or whether they would find any home in the seminar. So we passed on to other business.

The sharing groups or conference safety nets were to be mere self selecting than before, but again there was concern about language and how to ensure that participants found their way into a group in which they had a reasonable chance of contributing. In turn this led to the matter of authority and how the conference was to be led. Should the organizers have a sharing group of their own in order to watch over the proceedings or should they look after their own interests and be free to go where they wanted? The meeting opted for the latter and some abdication of authority. Were we keen to be grown up, or to be left to our own childish devices?

Although we were not prepared for everything that was to come, it was apparent that the seminars are made up of many generations. Some have been present since the first meeting in 1986, and have enjoyed and survived famous triumphs and tragedies. Others of us were there for only the first or second

John Foskett

The Orient Express

A review of the seminar

In 1977 a train journey late in the night from West to East Germany was some undertaking for four of us. A Jewish psychotherapist, who had left Germany in the 1930’s returning for the first time, a Belgian priest evacuated as child to England in the war, a Presbyterian minister and theologian and an Anglican hospital chaplain. Into the night we went on an adventure we wanted and feared. We were not disappointed, the western guards were friendly, the eastern cold and totalitarian or so it appeared to us. Different as the four of us were, inheritors of such contrasting cultures none of which are unambiguously friendly to the others, we were bound together in our common anxiety of the unknown awaiting us. The priest was combative, the psychotherapist furious with him, the Presbyterian checking the timetable and the Anglican falling asleep. Nearly twenty years and many more journeys completed, the trip to Mülheim had none of the same friction. There was no common fear to obliterate our differences, no poles of East and West between which to stretch our anxieties and no hands to hold in the same frightened company. Indeed, who not to touch, became a theme of the seminar. We came this time with no protection against those cultural, racial, religious and gender differences which are common to all peoples and for which no one is innocent and no one alone is guilty.

Pastoral care and counselling in an intercultural context is a puzzling and perplexing rather than frightening business. There are few signposts or targets upon which to pin our loves or our hates. We know we can retreat into our familiar professional ghettos to be sustained by the theories and methods we

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espouse. We work well one to one and in those small meaningful groups, which contain our ambitions and affirm our humanities, especially when they are groups of our own choosing. But is there any hope or any point in gatherings of so many of us, either to listen to lectures or to endure the snap and crackle of “plenum” engagement, where devils are constructed and exorcised in the twinkling of an eye? Surely these extravaganzas can only end in tears and disillusionment?

It is not easy to see the railway along which we have travelled on our international pastoral care and counselling express.¹ We meet only occasionally on isolated platforms and enjoy the unconnected waiting rooms of emotional and intellectual intensity. We see and hold one another in disturbing and fulfilling embrace cut off for a week from the worlds around us. As a major devotee I know how much these events have meant to me personally and professionally. Eisenach² in 1977 gave me the affirmation I needed for the impossible job I had just begun. In Lublin² in 1981 I think I found my pastoral identity, whatever that may be, and courage to tell a Polish friend I didn’t like the Pope. Each meeting has carried me somewhere I did not want to go, and for which I am glad I went. Each has thrown another light upon my path, my work and my vocation. Some with all the glory of transfiguration and others with the stench of the tomb. Chastened and affirmed I have gone away with more of me exposed and more of me in common with these strangers and friends, who rode the express as well. At the final farewell in Mülheim, I looked around and saw once again what bewildered, bloody minded and beautiful people we are, for which I thank God.

time, and like the youngest in a family had to guess from the "parents" behaviour the significance of things that happened. All of us were being invited to inaugurate our first "multi-national" organisation, and with it to progress from an "oral" to an "anal" preservation of our culture. Shapes and structures are being laid upon the seminars and the ambitions and aspirations once held within the "womb" are beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel with documentary evidence of our "being". Captured in the dialogue between the host's radical teenage son and the venerable black American president of ACPE³, and celebrated in the romantic melodies of the 50's and 60's, we ended the day in 'passover' in our hosts' upper room.

Boundaries broken or respected

The seminar was almost universally Christian, the exceptions being a Buddhist monk and his two colleagues from Thailand. They became a vehicle for our concern about space, place, boundaries and the unconscious. The monk's helper explained that he could not touch women and so asked that they not approach or sit next to him, and he showed great agility in avoiding contact with most of us, and helped us face up to our uncertainties about approaching one another. Should we just look and smile or could we touch and hold, quarrel and kiss? If we understood the same languages whether of word or emotion we could experiment with the spaces between us, and in the darkened disco and over bottles of wine and whiskey we did risk intimacies across boundaries of gender, race and religion. But in public we remained shy and uncertain kept in our places and with our friends. Are women responsible in the end for men's temptations? Can we question other people's customs which are important to them but offensive to us? Is it right to leave mysteries alone or can we penetrate the woundedness of our emotions and tell each other what we feel when we feel it? On all these matters we found how divided we could be, how mesmerized we were by literal and metaphorical realities appearing and disappearing on us without warning, and how reluctant we were to value the small steps we did trust ourselves to take.

We have created an association for intercultural pastoral care⁴ and in our grandiosity we wanted it to be walk and talk before it had drawn breath. We

believe it would be all right for it to be Christian and to invite others of faith to join it, oblivious of how being "host" elevates us over the invited in both literal and metaphorical worlds. The humility of "the child born to us" is more than we can stomach. Yet in our intestines we already knew how it feels to be a guest invited and paid for. How can we say what we think, to our hosts, when we depend upon their wealthfulness? The irony is that our hosts need our truthfulness more than our gratefulness.

The hirelings of pastoral care

In our beginnings and the cost revealed more of the learning. If we are paid as pastors what becomes of our vocations? Are we mercenaries, the hirelings about to run from the sheepfold or does the payment of the labourer confirm that his/her heart is really in this business. Being paid to facilitate at the seminar drew a lot from me and helped me with the avalanche of projections which threatened to bury Ursula and me. My head and my heart were in it, but in a more interdependent way than when I pay for myself. Is this the difference between servanthood and son and daughtership?

The generations mattered in another way, as they do in families. How are we to use the envy, pride, lust and the incestuousness of our gatherings, both to hand on the culture and inspiration, but also to let it go and grow differently from the way it was conceived? What will become of our elderly? Will they be the wise and trusted figures of our past, the explorers of our ageing and death, or geriatric delinquents who will not lay down and die? The hope for me, both here and in Prague (1994), was to be in such a multi-generation gathering, to be old and young and in between all at once, and so to see that generational differences like those of gender, race, culture and religion propagate and then imprison us with the very fears and loves our "lives" depend upon. In our post-modern western societies it does appear to be easier to live and love and work as single autonomous beings. I am best I was told when I facilitate on my own. And that is the problem for us all, how to be as good at doing things together as we are at doing them alone.

I spoke in the plenum of my memory of my twin sons birth in the second year of my first job, I was ashamed that in my anxiety about doing well I left my wife to care for our children while I went off

to fulfil my vocation. Looking back I think we both contributed to that division of labour. We were trying to do the "best" we could by both family and vocation and there did not seem to be room for us to put our bests together for the sake of both. I was immediately accused of making the typical male excuse. Stung by the accuracy of this judgement, I wanted to say, "And fuck you", my rage expressed itself as intimacy crying out for a togetherness to break the circle of blame and excuse. I went on to say that it was our children who brought us back to reality by showing us how our "bests" had been mere interdependent that we realized. By then our doubts and hurts had left their mark and so like Jacob we limp on with their blessing in our ears. I hope the "children" of the pastoral care and counselling movement can show us how both "good" and "bad" breasts are in fact a part of the same body. And how East and West, theology and the human sciences, process and content reveal to us an interdependence which is hidden from us in our differences and in the passions which they ignite amongst us.

The centre of the world

The seminar took Germany as its universal centre and others as coming from the East and West of Mülheim, something which we Europeans assume without question. Furthermore we were engaged in a theology of justification by works reflected in the current power and energy of our host nation. We lived, worked and played at a phenomenal pace, with social activities beginning in the early hours of the morning. Was there a fear we would not be satisfied? India, Ghana and the Philippines were squeezed into two hours, we visited industries as well as cultures and religions, and had additional activities showered upon us and notices about them stealing our times together in the plenums? Or was it more a symptom of our fear of space and room and of treading on the holy ground between us?

Well we didn't sleep a lot and so whatever else happened we were there "watching and waiting", marvelling at the passion taking shape amongst us in the house and garden of the *Evangelische Akademie*.

The obvious and the not so obvious

The introduction to the seminars concentrated upon current pressures and

expectations in pastoral care and counselling because of these post-modern times, and elected to draw on the work of pastors in and their equivalents in Asia, South America and Africa and to see how they work in cultures as various as Buddhist Thailand, Shamanistic Korea, India, Ghana, the Philippines, Singapore and Brazil. Representatives of the two major American Associations brought another kind of authority to the proceedings and were invited to advertise their riches as the last word on all that had been done and said. So Europe and the immediate concerns and dilemmas of 80% of the participants were subtly obscured by the programme and left to erupt when and where they would. The plenums became open season for European anxieties to fester and engage. "Post-modernism" attracted the early hostilities and then was discarded as the non-event of the seminar. It had never been defined or elaborated upon (who would have dared do either) so what use was it except as an object of ridicule? We had forgotten that Dick Tielemann's lecture on its relevance to pastoral care and counselling had been the grand finale of last year's Prague conference, and his book was even now adorning the stands of the Frankfurt bookfare.⁵

As facilitators of the 'open plenum' Ursula Pfäfflin and I began to symbolize the straining forces around us and quickly became the causes of the wounds crying out for recognition. Should we order and control the evolution of this creation or, god like, leave it to itself. Once the first task of forming sharing groups was complete the seminar as a whole turned its attention on itself. Encouraged to form groups of healers, priests, monks and prophets, some could hole their frustration no longer and elected to be "people", outside professional ghettos, who demanded to be listened to, but were unheard in their clamour. Two others said they were 'victims' and agreed to represent the seminar to voice its needs and to respond to what the "helpers" had to offer. Truths were expressed, some nuns discovered amongst the monks and the market economy of care exposed, Our appetites whetted we were taken off on visits to the powerful of Düsseldorf.

Supermarkets

The shopping mall⁶ was a revelation of consumer friendly unendurables. Built

with no "ideology" in mind but only to be "practical", was practical at making profits for its owners and more profitable than its competitors. We were taken to the "temple's" door and shown how the lighthouse design above the portal enticed the public to their destruction upon the rocks of materialism within. At this rich person's gate sit the proverbial beggar in the company of his dog complete with generous bowls of food and water. "Are you a prophet?" We asked. "No", he replied, "I'm not a prophet, but a philosopher from the stone or is it concrete age and I'm reading science fiction". Both he and the supermarket were characters of a world uncertain of where to place its devotion. Wanting to be happily rich or poor and believing in things rather than creatures for its salvation. Three of us slunk away to commune over cups of coffee about matters which troubled our souls and found space within this latter day cathedral for such holy things to be.

On our return we divided characteristically into "good" and "bad breasts" experiences, some luxuriating in the nourishment of full and wholesome stories shared and held in mutual admiration, while others gnashed their teeth at the avoidance and denial. They bit hard into the neglectful "parents" of this plenum family. All hell broke loose in accusation and counter attack, and for a moment our "Jugoslavia" became, a "Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian" minefield. Participants struggled to make some sense of our "crisis", facilitators were reprimanded and affirmed, translators shouted at and ignored. Is this what it's like in a peacekeeping force? Dare we become the united nations of pastoral care and counselling? Indeed "we did not know what we were doing", of what we were guilty or of how we could rescue any good from such a catastrophe. "He is right, I can make myself heard here if I really try". "Her courage does inspire me", "I attacked him and now he talks to me?" "I thought the English were always polite". "I was very upset and I pity him his anger". "That is a typical of a man". "It's not a laughing matter is it?"

Plenums are like the baggage compartments on an oriental express. They contain all the things we carry around to clothe and support us on our journeys. Of course we have too much and in bags ill equipped for such bumpy journeys. But then we choose to believe in a God, who is supposed to care for us and then

leaves us at the mercy of the "plenums" of creation, which we can never avoid in the meaningful relationships of sharing groups -churches, synagogues and temples. Does God know what God is doing, does God know what we are really like? I think we cheated ourselves and let God miss out on our murderousness in the face of God's apparent carelessness. In the final service I wanted God to have my despair, my anger and my losing of you all, but then I am sometimes a polite Englishman, who knows how to behave when God is to be worshipped.

Notes

¹ The "Orient Express" was an image used by Roy Woodruff in the final plenum.

² Eisenach and Lublin were respectively the venues for the European Pastoral Care and Counselling Conferences in 1977 and 1981.

³ Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, USA.

⁴ The International Intercultural Association for Pastoral Care and Counselling founded in Düsseldorf in October 1995.

⁵ Tielemann, D.: *Spirituality and Pastoral Care in Post-modern Culture*, Kampen: Uitgeverij Kok 1995. An article based on his lecture in Prague will soon appear in *Contact*, the United Kingdom Journal of Pastoral Studies.

⁶ Seminar's excursion to the "Schadow-Arkaden" at Düsseldorf, an example of postmodern architecture. ■

Morning Prayers

Meditation on Mark 6, 34-44

(18. Oct. 1995, by Robert Solomon)

As Jesus went ashore he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them. (...) And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the hour is now late; send them away, to go into the country and villages round about and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." (...) And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." And when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." Then he commanded them all to sit down by companies upon the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand.

This story is, I believe, familiar to all of us. I wish to highlight one fact in the story for our reflection this morning. Jesus had five loaves and two fishes to feed a multitude. He took the bread, gave thanks, broke the loaves and asked his disciples to distribute them. Here, the miracle appears. The secret seems to be hidden in verse 43. When the eating was over, the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. It is important to realize that the leftover food was in broken pieces.

Imagine what could have happened. After Jesus breaks the bread, he distributes the broken halves. Ten people receive bread and perhaps think to themselves: "How lucky that I happen to be near Jesus. At least I get some bread to eat." Then they hungrily bring the bread to their mouths but stop short because they begin to notice someone else nearby and see his or her hungry face. "How can I eat while this person remains hungry", each of them think and drawing inspiration from the example of Jesus, they break what they have and hand over one of the pieces of bread to the other persons they noticed. So, now,

twenty people have bread to eat. Just when these twenty set about to eat their precious meal, they again notice other hungry human faces. Bread is broken and now forty people have bread. Strange, somehow the bread seems to be enough for each. I suppose if the sharing stopped here, this story would be called "The miracle of the feeding of the forty". But this was not the case. The sharing continued until everyone had something to eat. God is willing to do a miracle to the extent to which we are willing to share with others.

That is the truth of the story. The key to this truth is that sharing is possible only when human faces are noticed and acknowledged. This story is indeed of how Jesus turned a crowd of masks into a community of faces. May he help us to notice other human faces, and share, and thereby become part of a community of faces.

Amen.

Meditation on I Kings 19, 3-15

(20. Oct. 1995, by Hilary Johnson and team)

Elijah was afraid, and he arose and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree; and he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers."

"It is enough..."

There is too much all around my head, squeezing me.

Restlessness in my heart.

I can't see the meaning any more.

I can't hear God any more.

I am like someone who flees.

I lost the thread and can't find it again.

My 'life-story' - how will it go on?

(...) And the angel of the Lord came again a second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, else the journey will be too great for you." And he arose, and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

And there he came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they see my life, to take it away."

God has time, endlessly.

God lets me go out of all restlessness.

God takes me away from everything that squeezes me.

Far away.

Forty days and forty nights away.

Through the calmness of the desert.

Through its emptiness and harshness.

God shows the way to him, the way to myself.

God gives the power to see and to say what is.

And he said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (...) And the Lord said to Elijah, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria."

I wait for the calmness with God.

Again living through the turbulences of unrest.

But thereby - a while of waiting,

a waiting, awaiting God.

And then:

I come to the calmness with him.

I can hear again, all ears.

I can see again, where the thread is running along,

and hear, how God is telling on my life-story with me,

thank God. ■

Some of the participants of the Intercultural Seminar at Mülheim (Ruhr) 1995