

Table of Contents

A New Look in 2011	3
Editorial Policy	
The Editorial Board	4
THEME: RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN FORMATION AND SUPERVISION IN MINISTRY	
SECTION 1: REFLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY, HEALTHY BOUNDARIES, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF VIRTUE	
Editorial	6
Reflective Responsibility	
Karen Lebacqz	10
Healthy Boundaries, Healthy Ministry	
Marie M. Fortune	24
Trustworthy or Accountable: Which is Better?	
Barbara J. Blodgett	34
Tandem Roles of Written Standards in Personal Virtue in Appraising Professional Practice	
Gordon J. Hilsman	46
Review Essay of Niebuhr's <i>The Responsible Self</i>	
Joseph E. Bush Jr.	59
SECTION 2: JOHANNA'S DILEMMA: A CASE STUDY	
Editorial	64
Johanna's Dilemma	
Multiple Perspectives	65
SECTION 3: RESPONSIBLE FORMATION AND SUPERVISION IN THE DISCIPLINES	
Editorial	80
Ethics of Spiritual Guidance	
Lisa Fullam	83
Accountability Issues in the Supervision of Lay Pastoral Ministry	
Ron Sunderland and Ted Smith	97
Sacred is the Call: Supervisory Accountability and Responsibility in the Formation of Spiritual Directors	
Janet K. Ruffing	110
Accountability and Professional Supervision of Pastoral Ministry Leaders	
Raymond A. Reddicliffe	125
The Role of Co-Active Spiritual Coaching in Supporting Responsibility and Accountability in Formation and Supervision	
Marianne LaBarre with Karen Frank	139
Working to Prevent Clergy Sexual Misconduct	
Christie Cozad Neuger	155
SECTION 4: NOT FAR OUTSIDE THE THEME	
Editorial	169
Identifying and Educating the "Too Wounded to Heal" Student	
Margot Hover	171
Looking Again at the "Too Wounded" Student: A Response to Margot Hover	
William R. DeLong	184

SECTION 4: NOT FAR OUTSIDE THE THEME (CONTINUED)

Integrative Learning for Ministry: A Case Study for the Presbyterian School of Ministry in New Zealand
Joseph E. Bush Jr. and Twyla Susan Werstein 187
Role, Goal, and Content within System-Centered Therapy:
A Theoretical Perspective on Authority
Paula J. Teague..... 203
Reviewing Our Goals in Theological Field Education
Neil Sims 217

AAPC THEORY PAPER

Trunkie Trees and Growing Branches: On Being Supervisors and Supervisees Together
Kathleen Weaver Kurtz 230

ACPE THEORY PAPER

Supervision and Mutual Vulnerability
Mary Christine Mollie Ward..... 245

Book Reviews

Expanding the Circle: Essays in Honor of Joan E. Hemenway
by Catherine F. Garlid, Angelika A. Zollfrank, and George Fitchett, eds.
Reviewed by Sandee Yarlott 272
Courageous Conversations: The Teaching and Learning of Pastoral Supervision
by William R. DeLong, ed.
Reviewed by C. George Fitzgerald..... 273
For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry
by Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, eds.
Reviewed by Matthew Floding..... 277
Beyond a Good Death: The Anthropology of Modern Dying by James W. Green
Reviewed by Nancy Chambers..... 281
The Practice of Spiritual Direction by William A. Barry and William J. Connolly
Reviewed by Elizabeth Liebert 282
Hearing Beyond the Words by E. Justes
Reviewed by Michael S. Koppel 283
Helping the Good Shepherd: Pastoral Counselors in a Psychotherapeutic Culture
by Susan E. Myers-Shirk
Reviewed by R. Scott Sullender 285
The Resilient Clinician by Robert J. Wicks
Reviewed by Peter Yuichi Clark 288
Movie Review: *In Good Conscience*, DVD, directed by Barbara Rick
Reviewed by Rod Seeger..... 289
Being in Ministry: Honestly, Openly and Deeply by Douglas Purnell
Reviewed by Donna Duensing 290

Index Volumes 21-30..... 292

Subscription/Order Form 304

A NEW LOOK IN 2011

Reflective Practice Joins the Digital Age

To be more eco-friendly and
to optimize our availability
as a global resource in formation and supervision
for the next generation

Reflective Practice is moving toward

ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING.

We anticipate that our next volume will be electronic.

Printed copies will be available on request.

More information about this transition

is available on our Web site:

www.reflectivepractice.org

Appropriately,

the theme for Volume 31 is

FORMATION AND SUPERVISION IN A DIGITAL AGE

EDITORIAL POLICY



Good practice relies on constant reflection. And the capacity for critical self-reflection is an essential dimension of any habitus for ministry and religious leadership. Pastoral supervision is itself a practice that occurs in relationships that encourage such critical reflection in ministry. When formation is added to supervision, the practices are expanded to include the many ways by which people are prepared for and sustained in religious leadership. This journal, *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry*, seeks to provide a framework for reflection on supervision and formation for a range of ministries, in a variety of contexts, and from different faith traditions. The mission statement of this journal supports that goal:

Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry is a journal that seeks to understand, expand, and promote theory, learning, and reflection in the practice of supervision and formation in various ministries from diverse ethnic and religious perspectives.

This journal is a continuation of the *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* that was founded in 1977 to foster critical reflection and writing on supervision for ministry. Over the years, *JSTM* expanded beyond its original contexts of clinical pastoral education and pastoral counseling to include supervised field education and formation for spiritual direction. Each time another context or discipline has been added to the conversation about supervision, the task of holding together the increasingly rich diversity of theoretical perspectives and ministry practices becomes more complicated.

Although the Journal has changed its name and its editorial location, supervision remains the central practice for reflection. *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* is the new name and the San Francisco Bay Area is its new editorial home. The various educational centers provide a richly diverse religious, theological, and clinical context in which to explore the future of formation and supervision.

As an Editorial Board, we are committed to that diverse dialogue. We are determined to enhance the richness of reflective practice through soliciting articles from a variety of religious and ethnic/cultural perspectives. With this issue, Elizabeth Liebert, Lynn Rhodes, and Peter Yuichi Clark leave the Board. The wisdom of these Board members during the transition to *Reflective Practice* and its location in the Bay Area has been beyond measure. Thank you. We are grateful that Peter Yuichi Clark will continue as the ACPE Theory Paper Editor with the added responsibility of choosing the annual recipient of the Cederleaf Award. We are grateful for the willingness of the following individuals to join the Edito-

Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry

rial Board as we begin our transition to electronic publishing: Susan S. Phillips, Kamal Abu Shamsieh, Eva Marie Lumas, SSS, and Carrie Bruckner. We have not lost any wisdom, and we have gained greater diversity.

We hope that readers will learn from reflecting on the practice of supervision and formation in disciplines and contexts quite different than their own. We invite you to send your comments about this Journal and its focus through our Web site www.reflectivepractice.org. And of course we hope you will submit for publication your reflections on the practice of supervision and formation in ministry.

The Editorial Board
Spring 2010

Theme for Volume 31 of *Reflective Practice* FORMATION AND SUPERVISION IN A DIGITAL AGE

How we live has already been profoundly affected by digital communication and the rapidly emerging tools of social media are likely to change forever how we solve problems and create social renewal. Patterns of communication, revolutionized access to information, shifted the balance of power between experts and amateurs, expanded collaboration in solving problems, redefined the way that we think about membership, and created new possibilities for social intimacy. Digital technologies and the new media landscape are also transforming the church. This shift will accelerate in the coming years. As *Reflective Practice* begins its own digital era with Volume 31, it is timely that we focus on this theme: **Formation and Supervision in a Digital Age.**

- What needs to be done to form a new generation of pastors and supervisors for whom digital technology is natural?
- What might the success of distance learning teach us about digital supervision?
- Is it necessary to balance electronic meetings in supervision with face-to-face meeting with a supervisee?
- How will the fluidity of personal boundaries in social networks like MySpace affect the willingness to be vulnerable in formation or supervision?
- How will confidentiality be secured if the internet is the vehicle for formation and supervision?
- How will the specter of predators who use the internet to attract victims affect forming learning communities of trust?
- Although sharing may be more intimate online, how might the absence of in-person connections affect the sustainability of relationships limited by distance from the outset?
- How will digital formation/supervision affect people with different levels of skill and adaptability to the technology?

More than ever, it is important that young pastors, supervisors, and leaders in ministerial formation write about this topic at this time. Proposals are welcome any time. Articles should be submitted to Herbert Anderson, Editor, by December 1, 2010, for inclusion in Volume 31.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN FORMATION AND SUPERVISION IN MINISTRY

SECTION 1

REFLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY, HEALTHY BOUNDARIES, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF VIRTUE



When the theme for Volume 30 of 'responsibility and accountability in formation and supervision' was chosen in early fall of 2008, responsibility was already a slogan in the campaign for president of the United States, and it was well on its way to being a societal crisis. The subsequent global financial collapse elicited moral outrage at irresponsible risk-taking and created wide-spread human misery because of unpayable medical bills, home foreclosures, increased domestic violence, and generalized anxiety. Political and financial leaders promised greater responsibility and transparency and then reneged. And when promised accountability was not delivered in church or society, it became another occasion for cynicism. Although none of the essays in this volume address this larger social and global crisis, it adds urgency to the consideration of responsible formation and supervision. All leaders, and perhaps especially religious leaders, will be evaluated rigorously by diverse definitions of responsibility and by higher standards of accountability. *We need to keep asking how fostering personal responsibility or forming accountable religious leaders is or should be an aim of pastoral supervision?*

There are some who believe that the current worldwide financial crisis will enhance "the whole of humanity's relationship of responsibility toward the resources of the planet and their use."¹ This sentiment was also reflected in the phase "responsibility revolution" that *Time* magazine used in its September 11, 2009 issue to describe emerging trends in the United States marked by an increased willingness to volunteer and a deepening commitment to the common good. As a corrective to heedless self-interest that Franklin Delano Roosevelt once defined as 'bad morals,' the *Time* essay proposed that, since the recession, we have discovered that "enlightened self-interest—call it a shared sense of responsibility—is good economics."² The phrase 'shared sense of responsibility' implies a commitment to the common good that does not seem to be an accurate description of United States society at this time. In a society intoxicated by individual freedom, shared responsibility struggles to

be a viable choice. *How does the current political and financial context of mistrust and cynicism and unchecked self-interest influence the process of forming religious leaders? Is a 'shared sense of responsibility' evident among the many professional individuals who have a collective hand in shaping the next religious leaders?*

Responsibility is also a personal reality. I write this introductory editorial as a recovering 'responsible child' from my family of origin. Several quarters of clinical pastoral education, marriage and parenthood, years of psychoanalysis, and extensive supervised ministry experience did not fully liberate me from a deep sense of responsibility for my mother's well-being. I felt responsible for her pain and worked hard, sometimes risking the well-being of my own family, to make things better for her. My hunch is that many men and not a few women of my generation found their way into religious leadership because they had a deeply embedded sense of responsibility. When being responsible becomes a part of one's self-definition, it is hard to give up even though the weight of the responsibility was burdensome. And when significant communities to which we belong reinforce the role by applauding responsibility, it is doubly difficult to let go. A professor in graduate school would excuse my excessive sense of responsibility by insisting that the world needs a few over-achievers to function effectively. People hooked on being responsible are often happy to be heroic.

One aim of pastoral supervision in the past was to temper excessively responsible behavior in order to care for the self more consistently and not unwittingly impede others from caring for themselves. In what sense are responsibility and accountability dominant issues in the pastoral supervision of future religious leaders? Rodney Hunter observed, in his seminal essay in Volume 29 of *Reflective Practice*, that one negative factor for the postmodern student was "difficulty functioning responsibly and professionally."³ *Is fostering "a shared sense of responsibility" a necessary and appropriate goal for supervision for ministry in these times?*

The intent of the Editorial Board in selecting this theme was to explore dimensions of responsibility and accountability in formation and supervision that certainly include but extend beyond a supervisory relationship. Supervision is a relational system that depends on mutual responsibility, including the capacity to assess the effectiveness of the process. Anyone engaged in forming or supervising future religious leaders is accountable to a range of unseen or even unknown religious communities and institutions not present in the supervisory relationship. Moreover, we have been sensitized by postmodern and postcolonial perspectives to be aware that our assumptions

about the communities we serve and the regulations that have guided practices must be explored with new eyes. *What are the impediments in formation and supervision to developing patterns of enduring responsibility and accountability appropriate for this time? How does our understanding of authority relate to accountability and responsibility?*

The review at the end of this section of H. Richard Niebuhr's classic work *The Responsible Self* (pp. 59–63) provides a theological framework for rethinking responsibility and accountability in supervision. Responsiveness, interpretation, accountability, and social solidarity are woven throughout almost all of the essays in this volume. Karen Lebacqz has written a thoughtful essay that will become standard text for conversations about responsible formation and supervision. For Lebacqz, our particular responsibility must be discerned with wisdom and insight. It requires 'reflective interpretation' so that our response is fitting. Whenever we ask 'what was I thinking?' there has been a failure of accountability, a lapse of responsibility. "Only the supervisee who learns to hear risk and vulnerability will be prepared to be reflectively responsible" (p. 17).

Marie M. Fortune has been a pioneer advocate for forming religious leaders who understand the necessity of healthy boundaries that create the kind of safety people need to explore their vulnerabilities. She also recognizes in this essay that it is impossible to do ministry without crossing boundaries. "The point of policies, training, and discussion of boundaries is to help us understand when it is appropriate and necessary to cross boundaries in ministry and when it is a violation of boundaries that can cause harm" (page 31). Our responsiveness to others in ministry is measured by what we want *for* them but not what we want *from* them.

We are delighted to have Barbara Blodgett writing again for *Reflective Practice*.⁴ She has a way of asking provocative questions for which there are no easy answers. Trust is always risky between people, she says. Accountability contributes to trust but is not the whole story. Supervisors who are open to outcomes they may not have expected are not simply looking for a faithful accounting of responsibilities, important as that might be. Students are also trusted to make judgments about their duties. "We want to be able to hand them something and see where they go with it. For in those cases, we are entrusting ourselves to them, not to the practices and procedures laid out before them" (p. 40). Accountability is important, Blodgett argues, but in the end there is no substitute for trust. It is finally sturdier and more fruitful than accountability. In an increasingly cynical society in which trust is in short

supply, that is a necessary but challenging word for any engaged in forming religious leaders. The reader might find this distinction helpful in reading the case study and responses later in this volume.

Trust is something we do but trustworthiness is a disposition of the soul or a virtue. In his essay, Gordon J. Hilsman addresses one of the critical questions regarding the task of forming responsible and accountable religious leaders. What internalized criteria do we have against which to measure the effectiveness of what we do in supervision? Hilsman argues that it is the responsibility of clinical practitioners to pay attention to one another's virtues and by extension to be attentive to the virtues of those we supervise. Although his reflections focus on overseeing the professional practice of certified clinical supervisors, they are applicable to any process of forming religious leaders. Hilsman links the traits or virtues he proposes with the standards of a professional discipline like ministry. They could also be collated around *authenticity* in ministerial practice. The great enemy of authenticity is self-deception and the inclination to claim too much for oneself as a person or a religious leader. Appropriately, humility is first on Hilsman's list of virtues. You will find discussion on the connections between responsibility, vulnerability and authenticity woven throughout all the essays in this volume.

NOTES

1. Lewis S. Mudge, "After the Financial Crisis: Fostering Stakeholder Responsibility as Practical Theology." Shortly before his death, Mudge presented this unpublished paper to the International Academy of Practical Theology meeting in Chicago, July 30-August 3, 2009.
2. Richard Stengel, "The Responsibility Revolution," *Time* 174, no. 11 (September 11, 2009): 38.
3. Rodney J. Hunter, "The Changing Faces of Theological Education: Implications for Clinical Pastoral Education," *Reflective Practice* 29 (2009): 201.
4. Barbara J. Blodgett, "Field Education and Critical Pedagogy: A Conversation," *Reflective Practice* 28 (2008): 179-191.

Herbert Anderson
Editor

ing of circumstances, history, and future possibilities, all within an overarching theological framework.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

A brief glance at the rise of “responsibility” as a core theme in ethics yields some insights regarding the relative role of thinking as it impinges on professional responsibility. I begin with Weber’s notion that an ethic of responsibility is one in which “one has to give an account of the foreseeable results of one’s actions.”² In this notion, accountability and responsibility are clearly linked: to be responsible is to be held accountable for one’s actions and their results. Indeed, *holding one responsible* in the sense of accountable is one of the two approaches that Albert Jonsen identifies as dominant in philosophical understandings of responsibility.³ We *attribute* responsibility to people when we hold them accountable: they can be blamed or praised for what they do; their actions may be justly rewarded or punished. To be responsible means “owning up to” our deeds and acts.⁴ Attributing responsibility means expecting agents to defend their actions, to give reasons that hold up to public scrutiny. Agents are not responsible if they act under constraint or ignorance, and responsibility may be mitigated if there are excusing circumstances. But we expect an agent to deliberate, to have clear intentions, and to have motives that are sufficiently transparent to be defensible. This is one clear public meaning of “responsible.” It focuses on actions and their justification.

A second clear public meaning also emerges in philosophical literature. Responsibility is not simply about actions, and it is not simply something attributed to others; it is something that we also claim for ourselves. We grow into responsibility by taking it on ourselves, by becoming responsible people. My mother used to say that I was “overly” responsible. By this, she meant that I took on responsibility where I was not necessarily expected to do so. I worried about things, I worked hard to make them come out right, and I carried a sense of caring for the world around me that left me always feeling responsible. Responsibility in this sense focuses not on particular actions and their justification, but on character and moral agency.

Responsibility requires that we have a “self” or center of integrity. It requires that we exercise foresight into possible consequences of our actions. It requires that we are conscientious about what we do, not simply reacting but deliberating and being serious. Our actions over time should exhibit some

Reflective Responsibility

Karen Lebacqz

What Was I Thinking?! Every one of us has probably at some time in our lives looked back and wondered, “What was I thinking?” In the country-western song by that title, the youth admits he was not thinking.¹ He was carried away by a little white tank top; in the thrall of lust, he did some very stupid things. Whether it is lust or loyalty or love or longing or simply a lapse in judgment, most of us have moments when we have made bad decisions. With the benefit of hindsight—and a big sigh or two—we wonder “what was I thinking?” Or perhaps we ruefully admit: I wasn’t thinking.

The indiscretions of youth may be somewhat forgivable, but those of professionals are less so. Professionals are expected to be responsible, accountable. But what do these elusive terms mean, and what is the role of thinking in responsibility? This essay attempts to answer these questions. I will argue that responsibility requires a certain kind of thinking—a pondering and consider-

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consistency. Finally, we must be willing to be identified with our actions: to be held accountable for them by others. In this second sense, responsibility appears as a virtue, a virtue “which inclines [one] to considered, conscientious, committed conduct.”⁵ This is *appropriation* of responsibility.

Both *attribution* of responsibility and *appropriation* of responsibility are helpful in thinking about supervision. Supervisors are both expected to be accountable for their actions (and help train their supervisees to be similarly accountable) and to take on responsibilities. Minimally, they must take on the responsibilities specified in contracts or job descriptions, and they must perform those responsibilities in ways that are publicly accountable. Both their conduct and their character are at stake. From the history of philosophical discussions of responsibility, we gain at least this much insight. All professionals must think about what they do. They must deliberate, not make excuses, and have intentions that are appropriate to their position. They must be conscientious, committed, and thoughtful. They must “own up to” what they have done. These characteristics alone begin to frame what reflective responsibility might mean in supervision.

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RESPONSIBILITY

But when we turn from the philosophical to the theological literature, we find that responsibility takes on even deeper meanings. Joseph Bush’s apt review of *The Responsible Self* in this issue is a good beginning place.⁶ While H. Richard Niebuhr was by no means the first or the only theologian to stress responsibility, his brief posthumous study has become iconic: He gives definitive shape to the concept of responsibility as we receive it in the theological world today.

Niebuhr’s model of responsibility revolves around four aspects: response, interpretation, anticipation of response to our action, and understanding that we act within an ongoing community. Niebuhr called the last two “accountability” and “social solidarity,” respectively, though these uses of the terms are rather idiosyncratic. Put together, the four aspects mean that all of our actions, all of our choices, are understood within a framework in which we are responding to prior actions upon us, which we have interpreted both in order to act and in order to anticipate the consequences of our actions—the responses that our actions will generate within the community to which we are accountable. Our actions, for Niebuhr, must “fit” within this overarching framework of attention to the past, anticipation of the future, and interpreta-

tion of the meaning of all actions within an ongoing community. He gives us, as Bush notes, a “cathekontic” ethics—an ethics of the “fitting.”⁷

Niebuhr contrasted his ethics of the fitting with two other approaches to ethics: the teleological that focuses on results or consequences of an action, and the deontological that focuses on doing one’s duty in accord with rules. It is not enough *simply* to try to maximize good consequences; while results are important, a focus solely on future outcomes neglects important dimensions of ethics. In particular, it neglects past histories. If we have harmed someone in the past, we have responsibilities to them that we do not have to those whom we have not harmed. We have a duty of reparation, for example. In his study of the possibilities of dialogue among different religious traditions, Lewis Mudge suggests that responsibility means “being accountable to humankind for wrongs that have been done in the name of religion.”⁸ Part of the task of interpretation is discerning what past actions mean for present duties. We may have duties of gratitude, reparation, justice, or not-harming that can trump concerns for future outcomes.⁹

But it is also not enough to focus on duties, especially if these are identified with rules. Our particular responsibility in a given situation is never fully defined by a rule. It must be discerned with wisdom and insight. As I write this essay, Haiti struggles to deal with the aftermath of a devastating earthquake. From my small rural hospital in northern California, six members of the medical team (three doctors, three nurses, and an emergency medical technician) are on their way to Haiti to help. They had no specific “duty” to do this; indeed, they may have had to put aside duties to their local patients in order to go. Yet they felt a sense of responsibility to utilize their specialized skills in the crisis situation and assist as best they could. Their response, even if not required by rules or by the stated duties of their professions, is “fitting.”

DETERMINING A FITTING RESPONSE

But how does one determine a fitting response? There is a danger in responsibility ethics that may be illustrated by Joseph Fletcher’s adaptation of the concept. In *Moral Responsibility: Situation Ethics at Work*, Fletcher deliberately draws on Niebuhr.¹⁰ He focuses on Niebuhr’s first aspect: response. “The factor of response [is] the real key to responsibility,” declares Fletcher.¹¹ In responsibility ethics, the burden is on the action-taker: the question is not ‘what should I do?’ but ‘what should I do?’ Rules will not help us; we must simply decide in the unique and transient situation in which we find

ourselves, responding to the concrete call of the situation and being aware that we may be mistaken and, hence, are ultimately reliant upon grace. For Fletcher, there is only one rule: the rule of love. We respond in love to whatever is happening.

The difficulty is immediately obvious: a stress on response leaves open a question as to the appropriateness of our response. Not all responses are fitting. We may not need rules, but we certainly need some guidance as to how to determine which actions fit best in the situation. Engaged as he was in the “situation ethics” debate of his era, Fletcher eschewed rules. He stressed the “concrete calls and claims of others.”¹² He stressed the immediacy of response within a framework of love as the ultimate value and guide. He may be on the right track, but his approach seems “thin” at best.

I would argue, as I believe would H. Richard Niebuhr, that our immediate responses can be dangerous. Certainly, the unreflective response is not likely to be the fitting response, even if it is motivated by love. Rather, it is precisely the *reflective* response that fits. The reflective response requires *interpretation*.¹³ As Bush notes in his review, Niebuhr would have us ask first, “What is going on?” The proper answer to this question requires several levels or layers of interpretation. There is the immediate situation as it first appears to us. There is also, however, the meaning of that situation as it is enmeshed in systems and structures—the “context” of the situation. And finally, for Niebuhr, as for other Christian ethicists who have stressed responsibility, there is a deeper level of interpretation, in which we must ask what God is doing in the situation. I will return to this last layer below, but first I want to say a bit about other levels of interpretation.

BENEATH THE SURFACE OF A SITUATION

Here, I find helpful William Schweiker’s extended discussion of responsibility ethics.¹⁴ Schweiker finds in the literature on responsibility ethics three different foci. Some authors stress the moral *agent* or decision-maker; some stress the *social setting*; and some stress *dialogue*—responsibility as “response.”¹⁵ Most theologians, he argues, are in the dialogue camp. Their basic model is one of “call-response.” Certainly H. Richard Niebuhr and Karl Barth fit into this model, as would Fletcher. But Schweiker suggests that responsibility ethics must be able to account for all three foci. For instance, I would argue that, in the supervision setting, social roles are crucial to determining responsibilities. While one is always responding to God’s actions

in the world, one’s responses may be limited or largely determined by role expectations. Indeed, to the extent that we *bear* responsibility or can be *held* responsible, our roles may be central. Thus, the call-response model must be enhanced by attention to social settings. Even the *assumption* of responsibility, which has largely to do with agency and character, can be wrong if we are assuming responsibilities that do not fit our social roles.

But Schweiker wants us to think about responsibility even more deeply than this. Indeed, he argues that the call-response model that H. Richard Niebuhr gives us is inadequate to our modern context. True responsibility, in Schweiker’s view, depends on what *values* are basic to our moral life.¹⁶ Always when we act, we are choosing values to promote. Often we must make tough decisions among competing values. Schweiker therefore argues that the very integrity of existence is at stake, and that “responsibility ethics” should be less about response and more about discerning the values to protect and promote. He therefore argues for what he calls “radical interpretation,” which is “reflective, critical inquiry aimed at the question of what has constituted our lives in terms of what we care about and what ought to guide our lives under the demand of respect for others.”¹⁷ At root here, Schweiker is concerned that we live our lives not in an ongoing search for power but in a manner that will enhance community and respect others as persons.¹⁸

For my purposes, however, what is central is the idea of “radical interpretation.” I once described feminist thinking as schizophrenic. By that I meant that feminists must always function on at least two levels at once: we see what is going on, but we ask not simply “What is happening?” but “What is going on underneath the surface?” On the surface, it may appear that someone is fired for inadequate work; but underneath the surface, charges of inadequacy may be an excuse for what is, at root, a festering sexism. There may be a pattern in which it is consistently women whose work is found “inadequate” and who are fired. Feminists look for patterns, not just for situations. It is this key element of pattern recognition that is implied by H. Richard Niebuhr’s stress on interpretation rather than simply on response. We need to ask “What is going on?” not simply on the surface, but underneath the surface. Radical means “to the roots.” We must get at the roots of what is happening.

For true radical interpretation, I would argue that even pattern recognition is not enough. There is a deeper layer of interpretation that must be included in the work of asking “What is going on?” Sometimes we are scarcely aware of what is going on, but, to be responsible, we need to be aware. Suppose, for instance, that there is sexism at play, but it is unrecognized. The work

of philosopher Iris Marion Young is instructive here. In *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Young tackles the question of our pre-reflective responses to those who are “different.”¹⁹ Drawing on the work of French feminist Julia Kristeva, Young notes that we often have an instinctive, pre-reflective aversive response to difference. We draw back, for example, when we encounter someone who looks different.²⁰ Most philosophers would say that what we experience as instinctive or pre-reflective is not a matter of justice or injustice. Young disagrees. Aversive responses are not simply “instinct.” They are culturally induced and reinforced responses, and as such, are a proper subject for attributing judgments of justice or injustice. We are responsible, Young argues, for examining the cultural context that has led us to such a pre-reflective response.

SEEING THE HAND OF GOD AT WORK

The levels of interpretation that we bring to any situation are therefore crucial. We must analyze the situation, looking for patterns and for hidden or pre-reflective patterns that may be a clue to what is really happening. But there is yet more. As Gustafson and Laney note, interpretation must be not only “an assessment of what is going on, in factual terms” but also an assessment of “what ought to go on, in normative terms.”²¹ The fitting response is not necessarily what we immediately want to do. To be responsible, we must chart a course between conformity to laws, rules, or role expectations and openness to what is happening and what *should* be happening. This requires, I would suggest, interpretation of the situation, the context, ourselves, and God’s actions and desires.

For Niebuhr, interpretation itself will be suspect unless it is brought under the widest and strongest possible lens. “History is the story of God’s mighty deeds and of man’s response to them.”²² It is not enough to see patterns in events or to look for hidden meanings. We must learn to see in events and patterns the hand of God at work. This gives us the sense of what “ought” to be happening. Here, Niebuhr stands in a long line of Christian thinkers, who see in the world around them the actions of a loving God and who are then “called” by God to respond. From the great Roman Catholic theologian Bernard Haering to famed Protestant resister Dietrich Bonhoeffer, numerous Christian theologians argue that we can perceive in the world around us a message from God and that our purpose is to participate in God’s designs for the world. There is no ethical dualism in “responsibility” ethics: the world *is* the arena in which God calls and we respond. Or, as Niebuhr put it, “God

is acting in all actions upon you. So respond to all actions upon you as to respond to [God’s] action.”²³ Thus, the patterns that we are to recognize are the patterns of God’s actions. Through our finite interpretations and actions, we are responsible to the Infinite.

Finally, then, we arrive at what Gabriel Moran considers the key to responsibility as the concept takes shape in contemporary times: we are not simply responsible for our actions, but responsible to something.²⁴ For Christians, that “something” is God. For others, laments Moran, the concept of responsibility has been stripped of its roots and is in danger of collapsing. What we are responsible for depends on what we are responsible to; lacking a clear sense of to whom or to what we are responsible, we risk emaciating the concept of responsibility. We must “hear” the demands of the situation. For Moran, then, “moral deficiency is mostly a hearing failure.”²⁵

To whom or to what do we listen and how do we hear? Listening to ourselves is only the first step; we must listen to the past as well. We may not be responsible for the past, suggests Moran, but we are responsible to it and must listen to what it would tell us. Similarly to Young, then, Moran notes that we are shaped by the intellectual and cultural situation and by the overlapping communities and organizations in which we move. All responsibility is both personal and corporate, he suggests. Marie Fortune picks up this sense of responsibility to and for organizations and communities in her essay in this issue.²⁶ We function, suggests Fortune, within institutions that set standards and expectations for pastoral roles of leadership within communities that are vulnerable and trusting. The patterns that she would have us “hear” include patterns of power, vulnerability, risk, and the structures of our professional practice. Only the supervisor who attends to these important patterns will act in a fitting way. Only the supervisee who learns to hear risk and vulnerability will be prepared to be reflectively responsible. Faith communities are responsible for setting standards that ensure, at a minimum, that their leaders do no harm. Structures of accountability are vital.

STRUCTURES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Indeed, the importance of structures of accountability may be illustrated by a controversy bordering on scandal that has erupted recently in the scientific world. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has produced consensus documents for the United Nations to use in developing policies on climate change. In November of 2009, e-mails were leaked

to the press suggesting that the work of some of the scientists was biased and unsupported by evidence.²⁷ The IPCC had to admit that some of its predictions were based on unsupported evidence. The attack was not only on the integrity of specific scientists, but on the structures of accountability of the IPCC itself. While its chair has rigorously defended the work of the IPCC,²⁸ public doubt and distrust began to grow, leading to a recent editorial by the president of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences on the question of how to ensure accountability within the scientific community.²⁹ The Academy is considering various ways to shore up its structures in order to ensure accountability for the accuracy and reliability of evidence used in policy making.

Structures of accountability are crucial in all professional work. Indeed, I would join William F. May in going further: structures are important not only for ensuring accountability, but also because they “supply the forms through which the energies of the people of God can bloom.”³⁰ Those who eschew rules sometimes assume that all structures simply constrict. To the contrary, good structures enable flourishing. Children need not only love but boundaries in order to grow up strong and healthy. Churches need not only love but structures in order to grow strong and healthy. Niebuhr did not stress structures, and Schweiker may be correct to argue that Niebuhr’s model is not adequate to the complexity of our current situation. I would argue, however, that Niebuhr’s stress on *interpretation* leads us in the direction of recognizing the importance of structures for complex institutions.³¹

This, then, brings us to a crucial point regarding interpretation: the question of freedom. In my view, one of Niebuhr’s most important contributions to responsibility ethics is his understanding of the role of freedom. Where Fletcher seemed to interpret *freedom* as freedom to act, Niebuhr puts the stress on freedom to interpret—specifically, to reinterpret. The self, suggests Niebuhr, is not stuck with the past as received. We can see in it new possibilities, new meanings, new ways in which God has been and is at work in our midst. In short, we can reinterpret the past.³² Take, for instance, the person who suffered abuse as a child. The trauma left from that abuse tends to shape an entire lifetime. But the adult has the possibility of seeing the abuse in a new way—of coming to understand, for instance (perhaps after long and painful years), that the abuser may have been herself abused or trapped within a hopeless cycle of pain and addiction. When we can look with compassionate eyes at those who have harmed us, we can see them in a new light. We can reinterpret their actions. We are freed, not from the abuse itself, but from the

previous hold that it had on our lives. To be sure, this is not an easy path. But it is a possibility for those who genuinely believe that God is acting in everything, as Niebuhr would proclaim. Niebuhr therefore urges us to study our social history and reexamine, generation after generation, national tragedies such as slavery. The past must be remembered, accepted, and reinterpreted.

In *Professional Ethics: Power and Paradox*, I argued that one of the key tasks of the pastor is to name or define reality.³³ There is a power in naming that is familiar to any reader of the Bible: names are changed to signify important shifts in social location, to symbolize new beginnings, to rejoice at new freedoms. This power of naming is also the power of reinterpretation. It is what therapists work so hard to do with their clients. Freedom comes when we see differently and the past no longer has a hold on us but opens up to new possibilities.

INTERPRETING IN THE LIGHT OF GOD’S PURPOSES

Finally, then, we arrive at the key for any Christian who would be reflectively responsible: all events must be interpreted and responded to in light of God’s actions and purposes in the world. For Barth, God has made us responsible and we are to witness to God’s grace in all our decisions and actions.³⁴ For Haering, the Christian in all relationships—to oneself, to others, to the world of creatures and nature—perceives a word and message that comes ultimately from God.³⁵ For Bonhoeffer, God loved the world and reconciled it to Godself; hence, as we act in the world we are to participate in the reality of the fulfilled will of God.³⁶ For Niebuhr, as we have already seen, we are to respond to all actions upon us as though we are responding to God’s actions. We respond in all responses to the One who is the source of our being.³⁷ As Bonhoeffer puts it, “...responsibility is a total response of the whole [person] to the whole of reality.”³⁸

This means that every action must be taken within the widest possible framework. Here, we can certainly pick up the elements of accountability and social solidarity that Niebuhr incorporated in his understanding of an ongoing community of agents. But we must be careful that we not limit our ongoing community to the immediate community in which we act. Fortune is correct that “practically we are accountable to those who credential us to serve,” but “ultimately we are accountable to our faith community and to God.”³⁹ While she puts emphasis on our practical accountability within credentialing structures, I draw our attention here to the wider framing of issues. Indeed,

I would follow Robert Johann here: our action must be adequate to the demands and exigencies not simply of the occasion, but of a “reality” that is in continual creation.

Part of the problem with rules is that they tend to serve only static reality. If we are to serve the Infinite, which is never static, we must be attuned not only to rules that have served well in the past but to the possibilities of the future. Put in more theological language, I would say that we must be oriented to redemption, not to creation. How can the potentialities of being best be realized? Attention to power, risk, vulnerability, and structures are a good beginning point, but they must also be placed within a framework of attention to the ultimate purposes of God’s redeeming activity—love, justice, peace, and plenty. The book of Revelation must be as important in our ethical thinking as the book of Genesis. Genesis gives us our origins, but Revelation gives us a vision of our ultimate destiny; both “nature” and “destiny” matter to ethical discernment.

Orienting ourselves toward future possibilities and trying to be “responsible” to them may mean that we must move from “routine” or “conventional” responsibility to what Mudge, drawing on Winston Davis, calls “transcending” responsibility.⁴⁰ For many of us in our roles as supervisors, “routine” responsibility will be adequate. Of course, because we must attend not only to the immediate situation but also to those deeper, more hidden, cultural and institutional levels, we deal with “complex” responsibility as well. But in our contemporary world, we are sometimes drawn into complexities that defy easy interpretation. In these situations, we are pulled toward “transcending” responsibility—a responsibility that seems to go beyond what any person or institution is routinely responsible for, pulling us into uncharted territory. New paradigms may be needed. For instance, the paradigms of power, risk, and vulnerability have long served us well in the arena of professional ethics and supervision; but as our world becomes increasingly a global arena, even these terms may not be adequate and we may need to find new frameworks for thinking about supervision and its responsibilities.

In short, then, reflective responsibility requires what Moran calls a “discriminating intelligence.”⁴¹ We must decide which information is worth our attention and what it means for past, present, and future. We must look for patterns. We must look for hidden implications. We must be able to discern what Roman Catholic theology calls “the signs of the times.” In short, we must think. Anytime we ruefully admit, “I was not thinking,” something is wrong.

There is a failure of accountability, a lapse of responsibility. Anytime we must ask, “What was I thinking?” we already know that something is amiss.

Reflective responsibility requires all the characteristics named in philosophical literature: attention to motive, intentions, absence of excuses, presence of careful deliberation, consideration of alternatives, and consequences, conscientiousness, and commitment. But reflective responsibility also requires something else. Reflective responsibility is a response *to* the call and claim of God in our lives, and only when we place our actions within this framework are we fully responsible. This is a tall order. It is no wonder that Bonhoeffer cautions us that we can never lay claim to our own righteousness but must depend on the grace of God and be willing to accept guilt.⁴²

Here, we are helped by understanding that responsibility is built into our very being as humans. We are the “responsible” animal. We do not simply “respond,” as do other animals to their environments, their enemies, their lusts. We are given what Mudge calls the “gift” of responsibility: we can assess and plan and be accountable; we can take responsibility for our responses; we can think through what is demanded by the situation; we can place that situation into broader and broader frameworks; we can analyze our own feelings and reactions so that they do not have the same hold over us that they would otherwise have. In all of these ways, we can be reflectively responsible.

NOTES

1. Dierks Bentley, “What was I Thinkin’,” compact disc, 2003, Capitol. In a key line, the singer admits “I know what I was feeling, but what was I thinking?”
2. Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *On Being Responsible*, ed. James Gustafson and James Laney (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 301; quoted in Gabriel Moran, *A Grammar of Responsibility* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 46.
3. Albert R. Jonsen, *Responsibility in Modern Religious Ethics* (Washington, DC: Corpus Books, 1968), chap. 3.
4. Lewis S. Mudge, *The Gift of Responsibility: The Promise of Dialogue Among Christians, Jews, and Muslims* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 7.
5. Jonsen, *Responsibility in Modern Religious Ethics*, 69.
6. Joseph E. Bush Jr., “Review Essay of Niebuhr’s *The Responsible Self*,” *Reflective Practice* 30 (2010): 59–63.
7. *Ibid.*, 60.
8. Mudge, *The Gift of Responsibility*, 8.

9. Weber contrasted an ethic of responsibility with an ethic of "ultimate ends" in which one might ignore some of these particulars in order to achieve a final outcome. While Weber saw the two approaches to ethics as complementary rather than contradictory, it is clear that he preferred the "responsibility" approach that attends to particulars. See Moran, *A Grammar of Responsibility*, 46–48.
10. Joseph Fletcher, *Moral Responsibility: Situation Ethics at Work* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1967).
11. *Ibid.*, 231.
12. *Ibid.*, 233.
13. In his study of "Abrahamic" responsibility, Mudge also stresses interpretation: "among the requirements of realizing this Abrahamic responsibility... is the need responsibly to interpret sources, words, and actions" (Mudge, *The Gift of Responsibility*, 9).
14. William Schweiker, *Responsibility and Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
15. Schweiker, *Responsibility and Christian Ethics*, 40–41.
16. Schweiker, *Responsibility and Christian Ethics*, 107–108.
17. Schweiker, *Responsibility and Christian Ethics*, 176.
18. Schweiker responds in part to the challenge of Hans Jonas. Jonas argued that human power had vastly increased and that this changes the nature of human action and, hence, of responsibility. For Jonas, then, power is a central issue in determining what responsibility can mean in the modern world. See Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: in Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984).
19. Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), chap. 5.
20. I would note that it is precisely such "instinctive," aversive responses that often cause great pain for people with physical disabilities, particularly facial deformities. See, for instance, Lucy Grealy, *Autobiography of a Face* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), 7: "The pain these children brought with their stares engulfed every other pain in my life."
21. James Gustafson and James T. Laney, "Introduction" in *On Being Responsible: Issues in Personal Ethics*, ed. James Gustafson and James T. Laney (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 13.
22. Albert R. Jonsen, *Responsibility in Modern Religious Ethics* (Washington, DC: Corpus Books, 1968), 134.
23. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 126.
24. Moran, *A Grammar of Responsibility*, 72.
25. Moran, *A Grammar of Responsibility*, 85.
26. Marie M. Fortune, "Healthy Boundaries. Healthy Ministry," *Reflective Practice* 30 (2010): 24–33.

27. Eli Kintisch, "Stolen E-mails Turn Up Heat on Climate Change Rhetoric," *Science* 326 (December 4, 2009): 1329.
28. Pallava Bagla, "Climate Science Leader Rajendra Pachauri Confronts the Critics," *Science* 327 (January 29, 2010): 510.
29. Ralph J. Cicerone, "Ensuring Integrity in Science," *Science* 327, no. 5966 (February 5, 2010): 624.
30. William F. May, *Beleaguered Rulers: The Public Obligation of the Professional* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 2001), 216.
31. I find it ironic that Liberty Mutual has now adopted "responsibility" as its theme and slogan: "When people do the right thing, it's called responsibility; when a company does it, it's Liberty Mutual."
32. Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self*, 102–105.
33. Karen Lebacqz, *Professional Ethics: Power and Paradox* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1985).
34. Jonsen, *Responsibility in Modern Religious Ethics*, 84–85.
35. *Ibid.*, 92.
36. *Ibid.*, 119.
37. *Ibid.*, 145.
38. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, trans. Neville Horton Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 258.
39. Fortune, "Healthy Boundaries. Healthy Ministry," 24.
40. See Mudge, *The Gift of Responsibility*, 103ff.
41. Moran, *A Grammar of Responsibility*, 72.
42. Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 234–240.

Healthy Boundaries, Healthy Ministry

Marie M. Fortune

Maintaining the integrity of the pastoral relationship and protecting those who are vulnerable are two essential dimensions in the practice of ministry. In order to fulfill these goals, one must have healthy boundaries sustained by self-awareness, self-discipline, and accountability.

Accountability is a recognition that we function within an institution with standards and expectations as to our behavior in a pastoral role of leadership within a community that is vulnerable to and trusting of us. Ultimately we are accountable to our faith community and to God, but practically we are accountable to those who credential us to serve. The institution of the faith community, if it credentials individuals for leadership, has a responsibility to do all it can to insure that its leaders do no harm.

There are facts of life in ministry that should inform our work to supervise and train candidates for ministry:

1. Power is real in the role of minister whether we like it or not. It accrues by virtue of our training, knowledge, experience, and role as faith leader and interpreter.
2. Ministry is a public role and should be transparent. We minister with individuals in a faith community. Even though there are times when we are with a congregant privately and confidentially, the fact that we are relating to this person in ministry should not be a secret, but rather be transparent.

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3. Congregants, clients, students, staff members, and others are vulnerable but not powerless. There are many variables that contribute to their vulnerabilities not the least of which is social location. But personal crisis trumps all other variables. Vulnerability means having fewer resources at a particular moment in time which makes one susceptible to harm.¹
4. Ministers are at risk to cross boundaries because of the intimacy of ministry but are rarely vulnerable unless in a particular situation that inverts the balance of power based on, for example, size, gender, status, or age. If a clergywoman goes to visit a male congregant who is bigger and stronger than she. If he chose to, he could sexually assault her. In this case, her role as clergy means little.
5. Boundaries in ministry are important in many areas including but not limited to sex, finances, use of drugs and alcohol, use of the internet, and avoidance of plagiarism.

How do we teach and support our supervisees in these important dimensions of ministry? Several aspects of learning are at work in ministerial supervision, and all are instructive to the supervisee. Supervisory training includes direct teaching for which the supervisor is responsible. How do we increase supervisees' awareness of power, vulnerability, and boundaries in ministry? How do we help them integrate awareness and discipline into their ministerial self-image so that the practice of healthy boundaries becomes second nature? These are some of the challenges of supervision and formation in ministry. There is also the supervision process that often instructs through modeling. The supervisor's awareness of and maintenance of healthy boundaries with the supervisee becomes a primary source of instruction. This element of teaching boundaries is critical and often overlooked.

One of the primary responsibilities in supervising a student is to insure the student's safety in the assigned ministry setting. For example, if we are a senior minister or rabbi supervising a seminarian in our congregation and if the seminarian reports to us that the chair of the Board of Trustees, a longtime member and generous giver, has made sexual advances to the seminarian, we must intervene immediately. Or if we are the seminary faculty advisor and if the student reports that the clinical pastoral education (CPE) supervisor is sexually harassing her or him, we must intervene including reporting the CPE supervisor to the program and to the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.

Of course in order to be able to intervene in these situations, we must make clear to the supervisee that, if they come to us with these concerns, we will take action. Establishing this norm (in the context of policy and procedures within the congregation or training program) is also an important learning

opportunity for the supervisee. But this is the only way that trust can be established and nurtured between supervisor and supervisee.

Basic orientation of a supervisee should include presentation of policies and procedures regarding conduct and misconduct within the setting of the assigned ministry. This is both practical and educational. The supervisee needs to understand that he or she is expected to follow the policies of this setting and to understand that violation of the policies will result in consequences *and* sharing of information with their seminary and denomination or movement.

For example, a student intern who was doing youth ministry in the congregation was discovered to have served alcohol to the teenagers and showed them pornography. This was reported to the seminary advisor who talked with the student and noted that he had “boundary issues.” If I had been that advisor, I would have ended the internship and indicated to the student that I would not be able to provide a positive reference to his denomination for ordination. This misconduct is very serious and suggests much more than poor judgment. In fact, serving alcohol to minors is a misdemeanor in most states.

When a supervisee engages in minor inappropriate boundary crossing, this can be a teaching opportunity, and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to use this opportunity. But when the boundary crossing is serious and potentially harmful and/or illegal, the supervisor should act to protect the congregants from the supervisee and prevent the supervisee from being credentialed. In other words, the supervisee needs to learn about accountability very early in ministry.

USING POLICIES AS A TEACHING TOOL IN SUPERVISION

A supervisor is in a position to help a supervisee be aware of and understand policies that shape accountability within their setting of ministry in their denomination or movement. The purpose of policy language is to clearly lay out the behavior parameters expected of the person in ministry. In the early days, the only language suggesting a standard of conduct was vague and general. For example, in the United Church of Christ, the “policy” only prohibited “conduct unbecoming the ministry.” This is clearly inadequate direction given our capacity to interpret in a way that would serve our own purposes. In addition, there is no specific behavior indicated against which to measure the minister’s conduct. Then, as now, there would be no consensus on “conduct unbecoming the ministry.”

There are three areas that call for accountability in pastoral relationships: conduct, intent, and impact. Impact is the bottom line ethical issue: What is the impact or potential harm to the congregant, student, client, staff member of the minister’s conduct? Therefore the conduct is the thing that can be measured against a standard. The intent is only secondary.

The Hippocratic Oath which was established for physicians in 500 BCE is the earliest known “policy” addressing professional misconduct: “Whatever house I may visit, I will come for the benefit of the sick, remaining free of all intentional injustice, of all mischief and in particular of sexual relations with both female and male persons, be they free or slaves.”²

- “Whatever house I may visit”—in the setting of providing care for another
- “I will come for the benefit of the sick”—to maintain the integrity of the helping relationship
- “Remaining free of all intentional injustice, of all mischief”—all conduct that would cause harm
- “In particular of sexual relations with both female and male persons, be they free or slaves”—*specifically* sexual activity with anyone in the household regardless of status

The Oath addresses the setting, the goal of the relationship, the commitment to not engage in exploitative conduct, and specifically to not cross sexual boundaries with anyone in this setting.

This mix of general and specific expectations falls within the context of a concern for the misuse of one’s power to exploit a vulnerable person. Power and vulnerability are the core issues of healthy boundaries. Impact usually includes the betrayal of trust in the relationship which is perhaps the most damaging result of boundary violations. Policies should be both general and specific with the intent to guide us in our conduct but also with the intent to provide a standard against which to judge our conduct.

FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY

The principle of a fiduciary from the profession of law can help us understand and be accountable for our ministerial conduct. A fiduciary responsibility arises when we are in a role of authority where we are called on to care for the needs of a vulnerable person. Originating from the Latin *fides*, “faithfulness,” a fiduciary is a person who acts in the best interest of the other even when this does not serve one’s own self-interest.

For example, let us say that I am teaching a seminarian who expects to finish her degree this year and that I would like to invite her to be my re-

search assistant for next year. However, she asks me for a reference for her ordination process because she plans to go into hospital chaplaincy following graduation. I would prefer that she remain and be my research assistant, so I might be tempted to withhold a positive reference for her. But as a fiduciary, I am expected to respond to her best interest rather than my own. I of course provide her with the requested reference so that she can pursue her vocation. To understand oneself in ministry as having a fiduciary relationship with our congregants, clients, students, and others provides a valuable touchstone for avoiding conflicts of interests and unhealthy boundary crossings.

As people of faith, this important principle also rests within our understanding of the hospitality code that is cited numerous times in Hebrew and Christian texts. The hospitality code mandates that we care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger or traveler. These are the groups of people specifically identified because of their circumstance of vulnerability and lack of resources. But the obligation to care for individuals in these groups is fiduciary in nature: even at the expense of oneself, care for the other is mandated.

The most significant dimension of this teaching is that it is not presented as an act of altruism. "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exod. 22:22). It is based on a recognition that we all experience vulnerability in various situations. The obligation of those who have resources to care for those who are vulnerable establishes, in a larger sense, a relationship of mutual responsibility: When you are in need and I have resources, I will care for you; when I am in need and you have resources, you will care for me. This literal one-on-one responsibility works in a peer relationship but not necessarily in a pastoral relationship. My partner and I assume this reciprocity of care because we are peers in a committed relationship. But in a pastoral relationship, I have the fiduciary duty to act in my congregant's or student's interest beyond my own.³

The reminder here is that we all experience vulnerability and that, when we do, we should turn to those who can appropriately respond to our personal needs. So if I am in personal crisis, I turn to my pastor or therapist, family, and friends for primary support and not to congregants, clients or students with whom I minister.

CONFIDENTIALITY VERSUS SECRECY

A thirty-five-year-old woman seminarian was doing her field placement at a local church and was being supervised and mentored by the senior pastor

who was fifty-five years old. He had made it clear that their weekly supervision sessions were confidential, by which he meant "what goes on in this room, stays in this room." After several months, she began to be uncomfortable with the supervisor's conversations. He began to ask her about her sex life with her husband, her sexual preferences, etc. After every supervision session, he would remind her: "what goes on in this room, stays in this room."

The student wanted to talk with her husband about this, as well as with her field education faculty advisor at the seminary. But the supervising minister led her to understand that confidentiality meant that she could not share what was going on in supervision. So she tolerated the supervisor's behavior even though she told him she was uncomfortable. When he began asking her for a hug at the end of sessions, she could no longer keep quiet. But initially she felt guilty for speaking to her faculty advisor and reporting the supervisor.

This is a perfect example of a supervising minister misusing the power and authority of his role with a student to take advantage of her vulnerability *and* to silence her in order to protect himself from the consequences. In the process, he distorted the meaning of confidentiality and equated it with secrecy to serve his own interests. Not only did he create an unsafe situation for her, he also distorted her learning about the meaning of confidentiality.

The privilege of confidentiality lies with the person who is vulnerable, the person who may seek a safe place to talk about personal issues. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to keep these confidences unless the supervisor becomes aware of information that might be harmful to the supervisee or someone else (for example, threats of violence). The supervisee owns the information and the conversation and should be free to discuss the experience of supervision with anyone outside that relationship, whether partner, faculty advisor, therapist, or friend. This is what is meant by transparency in ministry. As ministers, we should assume that our conversations in our supervisory or pastoral relationships will be shared with others and act accordingly. We will not share our conversations, but our students and congregants have every right to. We have no privilege here except to seek supervision ourselves for issues that may arise in our supervision of a student. Even here the student's confidentiality should be maintained. We may take a situation to a colleague or supervisor only in order to improve our care or supervision.

GATEKEEPING

Another challenging aspect of accountability in supervision is the gatekeeping function that rests with the institutions of learning and credentialing. When a candidate for ministry presents herself to the credentialing body (denomination or movement), who connects the dots between the candidate's experience in training with the institution's standards for vetting?

The supervision relationship generally takes place within a teaching setting that should have some connection to a credentialing body of a denomination or movement. The supervisor is accountable to this teaching setting, for example CPE, for his conduct. But he should also be accountable to the credentialing body. If there are issues for the supervisee about poor boundaries, poor judgment, and/or misconduct, the supervisor is responsible to insure that this information goes to those who are responsible for determining fitness for ministry and credentials. Then it is the responsibility of that credentialing body to use this information in their discernment process.

Unfortunately, this gate-keeping function is not clearly defined and owned by many who have the capacity to carry it out. For example, in Protestant settings, most denominations assume that a master's of divinity degree from an accredited seminary means that the graduate has been vetted in terms of fitness for ministry. On the other hand, many seminaries do not see vetting as part of their job in granting degrees. They assume that denominations will do the vetting and determine fitness for ministry before ordination. The local congregation assumes that someone has vetted any ordained person who is referred by their denomination or movement as a possible candidate for placement or call. The sad fact is that too often no one is responsible for vetting. (This is less of an issue for Jews because the seminary is the ordaining body; there is more of a chance that issues that have arisen in a student's supervision and training will be factors in any decision to grant a degree and ordain.)

Trinity Lutheran Seminary learned this lesson the hard way in 2004. The seminary was a defendant along with the Synod and national Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in a lawsuit brought by fourteen plaintiffs who disclosed that Gerald Patrick Thomas, a Lutheran pastor, had sexually abused them. In 2003, Thomas was convicted of possession of child pornography and eleven counts of sexual abuse of minors and was sentenced to prison. The civil suit was brought against the seminary and the church because there was cause to be concerned about Thomas' behavior when he was in seminary and during an internship. It is a complicated case, but the bottom line is that

seminary faculty and a field education supervisor had concerns that they did not convey to the Synod where Thomas was ordained or to the subsequent calling congregation. He was allowed to practice ministry until he was arrested and prosecuted. Only then were his credentials withdrawn. The various entities within the ELCA failed to carry out the gate-keeping function necessary to protect vulnerable people from potential abusers.

Subsequently, some of the ELCA leadership began to review their procedures and suggested that there needed to be better communication among the entities. Whoever is making a decision needs all the relevant information.⁴ It remains to be seen whether seminaries and denominations are adequately sharing relevant information about students and candidates for ministry. Confidentiality need not limit this process. Students/candidates should be asked permission to share information from the seminary experience with the credentialing bodies. If they are unwilling to do so, then their request for credentials is denied or tabled indefinitely. This process provides for accountability, and students should not be allowed to opt out of the process.

MINISTRY IS ABOUT CROSSING BOUNDARIES

When we talk about respecting boundaries in pastoral relationships, some people jump to the conclusion that we are instituting a new rule: "Thou shall not cross boundaries." These are the people who respond to a discussion of appropriate touch boundaries with, "Okay, I just won't ever touch anyone again," and stick their hands in their pockets.

This reactionary response is more concerned with political correctness than with healthy boundaries. We cannot do ministry without crossing boundaries. The point of policies, training, and discussion of boundaries is to help us understand when it is appropriate and necessary to cross boundaries in ministry and when it is a violation of boundaries that can cause harm. This requires us to spend time and attention on our choices.

Ministry with an individual is a public, professional relationship entered into voluntarily by a congregant, client, student, and so forth. Those we serve assume a trust relationship with us where they can receive resources as needed and where they are safe from harm. In this relationship, they tacitly allow us to cross boundaries *in their interest*. In fact they expect us to do so. For example, if I am supervising a student and if I become aware of a fellowship opportunity that might be of interest to the student, I will initiate communication with the student to inform the student of this opportunity. I have crossed

a boundary with that phone call or e-mail. Likewise in a congregation, if I get word that a member has been hospitalized, I will most likely go to visit that person before they even notify me. But generally this is an appropriate boundary crossing in service to strengthening the pastoral relationship.

This is one of the differences between a pastoral relationship and a therapy relationship. A minister has the prerogative to initiate contact with a congregant *for the congregant's well-being*. A therapist, like a doctor, must wait until a client seeks out their help. This is a boundary crossing, and it can be essential to good ministry. But it is our responsibility to understand the difference between boundary crossing that serves the congregant, and boundary crossing that violates trust and seeks to exploit the congregant.

When as a minister, we encounter an individual in a vulnerable situation, we have two options for response: (a) How can I support and empower you and lessen your vulnerability? or (b) How can I take advantage of your situation to meet my needs? For a predatory person, the choice of options here is simple. But for the non-predator who is simply confused and sometimes overwhelmed, the choice is less clear. In fact for many of us, we may not even realize we are faced with this choice of how we respond to a vulnerable person. An appreciation for this choice is essential to an integration of boundary awareness and healthy ministry. The challenge that we all face daily in ministry is how to assume that we begin with the question: How can I support and empower you and lessen your vulnerability?

IN CONCLUSION

Structures of accountability within our various settings of ministry or supervision are vital to the maintenance of healthy boundaries. Policies and procedures provide us with a valuable framework for understanding our ethical responsibilities and reflecting on our behavioral choices. Colleagues who share our commitment to healthy boundaries can help us think through our confusion about a particular situation. The disciplines of self-care are an obligation of ministry. If we are not taking care of ourselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually, we jeopardize our capacity to use good judgment regarding healthy boundaries.

A colleague of mine suggests this touchstone: He says that we should never want something from a congregant, client, student, etc. We can want something *for* them but not *from* them. We can want them to find healing, for-

giveness, peace, and so forth, but if we want them to give us attention, money, sex, etc., we are in trouble.

Finally, we must remember that ministry is a privilege, not a right. We are called into ministry by God, and we serve at the pleasure of our faith communities. We are all accountable; the same rules apply for us all. Healthy boundaries give shape to our pastoral and teaching relationships and as such are a great gift. They enable us to bring our gifts and skills to bear on a hurting world in ways that can make for healing.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews in Christian scripture describes our mandate for ministry this way: "Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed" (Heb. 12:12-13). In spite of our drooping hands and weak knees, we are called to bring healing and not harm.

NOTES

1. I do not use vulnerability here to refer to openness or trust but rather to a situation of having less power than the minister or helping professional.
2. Ludwig Edelstein, trans., "The Hippocratic Oath," no.1 in *Supplements to the Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1943).
3. This does not mean that my congregants do not respond to my personal crisis, such as illness or death in the family. But they do not do so as my family and friends do.
4. David L. Miller, "Texas Verdict Spurs Policy Review," *The Lutheran* (October 2004): 48, 58.

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Trustworthy or Accountable: Which is Better?

Barbara J. Blodgett

What is the relationship between trust and accountability? The answer is not as straightforward as might commonly be assumed. In the supervisory relationship, it is not enough that supervisors and supervisees prove themselves trustworthy by demonstrating their accountability to each other. Trust is both more complicated and more interesting than that. Trust between two people is essentially a relationship. It grows and deepens through the willingness of both to take risks and make themselves vulnerable to each other. Trust involves risk because both open themselves to outcomes that neither can predict with certainty. Accountability, by contrast, is the obligation to provide a reckoning of one's actions to another. It contributes to trust but does not tell the whole story.

LEARNING TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM CON ARTISTS

Let me begin by drawing upon a narrative that may be familiar to many readers but may never have been associated with supervision, trust, or accountability. In the 1973 film *The Sting*, two con artists wish to play a confidence game on a notorious crime boss who recently ordered a hit on one

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Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry

of their friends.¹ Henry Gondorff and Johnny Hooker team up to pull off an elaborate scheme—a “sting”—on Doyle Lonnegan. Gondorff has been in the con business a long time; Hooker is a rookie who wants to advance in it. You might say that Gondorff is the supervisor, and Hooker is his protégé. The scheme they concoct requires that Hooker pose as someone he is not. He must win Lonnegan's confidence so that the mobster will follow Hooker's advice and wager a significant sum of money on a horse race, money that the pair will eventually take. Gondorff and Hooker set up a fake gambling parlor. Hooker pretends to Lonnegan that he has an accomplice who can delay the race announcements just long enough to know which horse won before a bet is placed. Thus Lonnegan will be able to bet on a sure winner, all the while unaware that the entire operation is a charade.

How does Lonnegan, an otherwise ruthless and untrusting man, come to believe what Hooker is telling him and agree to follow his lead? Hooker poses as one of Gondorff's protégés who holds a grudge and wants to get back at Gondorff by taking a lot of money off of him. He spins a story about past mistreatment. Lonnegan is inclined to trust Hooker's story because he himself holds a grudge against Gondorff for besting him at a high stakes card game. He therefore trusts Hooker in the way that people do who share mutual enemies. It is not so much trust in Hooker that motivates Lonnegan as it is his intense and insatiable desire for revenge.

Lonnegan does insist, however, upon testing out the “con” Hooker wants him to help pull on Gondorff. He agrees to place an initial bet for a small amount of money just to see that the system works. He bets on the horse Hooker tells him to bet on, and it wins, and Lonnegan is satisfied. Just to be thoroughly assured that Hooker can be held accountable, however, Lonnegan demands to meet Hooker's accomplice. Hooker arranges for Lonnegan to meet the man who supposedly has insider knowledge of the races. This meeting, too, of course, is a charade, but Lonnegan believes what he sees and concludes that he has satisfactorily checked out the whole operation. He agrees to place half a million dollars on the next horse race in order to take Gondorff for everything he's got. Hooker and Gondorff have successfully conned their mark. Shortly after handing over the money for his bet, the gambling parlor is raided by friends of Gondorff and Hooker pretending to be police, and Lonnegan is hustled out of the place without being able to collect his money back.

Doyle Lonnegan is a character who places trust where he should not. His flaw is not simply that he is too trusting and, therefore, gets himself duped. Anyone can be lured into misplaced trust by being deceived. His flaw, rather,

lies in the fact that he entrusts himself to a scheme whose players he does not take the time to get to know. In the film, he never really establishes a relationship with Hooker. Instead, he focuses on the system Hooker presents and its operations. Satisfied that everything seems to work as it is supposed to, he invests in the betting scheme. Lonnegan places his trust in procedures rather than people.

TRUSTING CREDENTIALS IS NOT ENOUGH

In contrast, the film offers a very different portrayal of Gondorff's and Hooker's evolving trust relationship. Gondorff has not met Hooker before they join forces to pull off the con on Lonnegan. He takes his time getting to know the rookie. Hooker had been mentored by Luther, the grifter who was killed. This relationship is his initial "in" with Gondorff. When Hooker shows up at Gondorff's doorstep eager to meet and team up with the legendary con artist about whom he has heard so much, he doesn't make it past Gondorff's partner until he offers up Luther's name. "Are you Hooker?" she asks, "Why didn't you say so?" Credentials are often important to the establishment of trust because people want to know that the other is familiar, known by someone they also know.

But credentials are not enough. Hooker may know the right people and come bearing a positive reputation, but these are just his ticket in the door. Unlike Lonnegan, Gondorff is more careful about who he agrees to team up with. Throughout their initial meeting (throughout which, incidentally, Gondorff is shaking off a hangover from the night before), the older man bides his time and clearly sizes the youngster up. He teases the overeager Hooker, who wants to get started right away before the pair even figures out whether they are well suited to work together. He quizzes Hooker, asking him how much he knows about Lonnegan. Hooker has to give a little recital of Lonnegan's record in the mob before Gondorff is satisfied that he knows enough about the man they are up against to be a credible partner. He also assesses Hooker's seriousness and commitment to the task that lies ahead. He tries to figure out whether the younger man's goals are realistic or whether he will blow the job by pressing for more gain and glory than they can reasonably expect. "Don't be coming back afterward saying it isn't enough because it's all we're gonna get."

Gondorff eventually approves Hooker and agrees to teach him how to pull off the big con. Immediately after, he becomes Gondorff's right-hand

man. Hooker, however, lies to him. Word has spread that someone passed counterfeit bills off to the police to get out of a scrape; that was Hooker. Gondorff wants to be sure that he hasn't teamed up with a bad risk, so he asks Hooker about the counterfeiting. Hooker denies it. A bit later, Hooker discovers that someone, presumably from Lonnegan's mob, is tailing him. Again he fails to share this information with Gondorff, even when pressed. In other words, despite having been accepted and entrusted by the very mentor he wanted to study under, Hooker consistently proves himself to be an untrustworthy student. He is one of those students who is smart, highly capable, and a good learner, but also cocky, irresponsible, and evasive. He doesn't yet know what it really means to work as a team in the con business. Does Gondorff realize this? Does he suspect that Hooker may be holding out on him? Or has he naively agreed to mentor someone he should never have entrusted with so much responsibility?

THE RISKINESS OF CAUTIOUS TRUSTING

It turns out that Gondorff has hedged his bets about Hooker all along. A wise mentor, he trusts but is not overly trusting. He puts a safety net in place. Unbeknownst to Hooker, he assigns a colleague to follow him and make sure the young man remains unscathed. He admonishes Hooker when the truth about the counterfeiting and the tail on him come out. "What else haven't you been telling me? ... You just won't learn, will you? I'm teaching you things maybe five people know." He even issues a direct lesson to his student about trust relationships: "You can't play your friends like marks." As a supervisor, Gondorff grants a great deal of responsibility to Hooker—nearly enough for Hooker to ruin the whole plan if he were rash enough to do so. Yet all the while, Gondorff works to ensure Hooker's safety and the safety of the whole operation. Gondorff effectively creates the conditions necessary for Hooker to grow into trustworthiness. One glance between them toward the end of the film tells it all: when Hooker shows up with Lonnegan at the betting place unscathed, having realized that his mentor protected him, there is obvious relief on Gondorff's face and gratitude on Hooker's.

The Sting, a film whose very theme is confidence, teaches us a lot about trust. The relationship between Gondorff and Hooker shows us what real trust is like: We do not always have the luxury of choosing to trust only those people who have in some prior way already proven themselves to us. We are not always given partners who can demonstrate with clarity the qualities of

honesty, fidelity, and responsibility that make up the trustworthiness we hope they possess. We are not always provided a detailed accounting of their history. More realistically, we have to accept people as they are, with all their mix of virtues and vices and a track record that may be checkered. We have to take a risk with them, extending perhaps more responsibility than they are ready for, but judging that risk to be acceptable. Trusting someone is like going out on a limb. You cannot know with absolute certainty how things will turn out, but you wager some of your security in exchange for the payoff that a closer relationship will bring.

For his part, Johnny Hooker has to learn to trust Henry Gondorff as well. Gondorff does not appear at first glance, or even second glance, to be someone who makes a trustworthy mentor. Not only is he passed out on the floor next to his bed when Hooker first encounters him, but it comes out that the reason he has been out of the business for so long is that he blew it on a big job. "Don't kid yourself, friend, I still know how," he maintains, but his current position managing a shabby amusement park hardly conveys confidence. Only through little hints and exchanges does Hooker slowly learn that, despite all appearances, Gondorff is still a capable operator who can teach him things. And the lessons are not what he expects at first. Hooker is caught off guard when Gondorff guesses that one of Lonnegan's men may be tailing him. "I didn't see anyone," Hooker protests, to which Gondorff replies, "You never do, kid." At one point in their conversation, Hooker realizes that Gondorff feels apprehensive toward the job they are about to undertake. "You're afraid of [Lonnegan], aren't you?" Hooker says with dismay. But Gondorff simply concurs, "Right down to my socks, buddy," as if to say that self-assurance does not eliminate all fear, and that a little fear in a professional may even be a salutary thing. As Hooker continues to try to minimize the threat Lonnegan poses, saying with bluster that "He's not as tough as he thinks," Gondorff calmly replies, "Neither are we." Gondorff is teaching Hooker humility. He is also teaching his student that appearances can be deceiving and that it is possible to place trust in someone who is imperfect and has failed in the past. Those who at first seem the most unlikely of mentors because of their flaws and vulnerability may turn out to be the very ones who are safe to trust.

MUTUAL VULNERABILITY AND TRUST

Gondorff and Hooker become mentor and protégé because they are willing to risk being in relationship with each other even before they have complete

assurance that the risk will prove worthwhile. At first tentative with each other, engaging in a sort of dance, they learn to "read" each other. That is, they learn where the other's strengths and weaknesses lie and how much they can expect of the other. They are vulnerable—in this case, the mentor even more than the protégé—and this helps their mutual trust to grow. They learn that it is all right to risk honesty and that it is also acceptable to hedge a bit against the other's potential dishonesty, just in case. They show us what the lived experience of trust is like: trusting another person is a complex mix of caution, calculation, and stepping out in faith. There are some things you want to know about the other person right from the start. Can anyone else I know vouch for him? Does she have a record of coming through for others? Does he genuinely appreciate what is at stake in my trusting him and in him trusting me? But there are other things you can never know. You do not know whether greed might get the better of the other person. You cannot prevent the other person from listening to the counsel of third parties and even disregarding you at times. You cannot be sure she will not make a decision you dislike. But you have to entrust yourself anyway. You wager that, even if he surprises you, he will do so because he has your best interest at heart. This is what it means to trust someone after all and not merely to count on them to come through precisely the way you stipulated.

Is this not how many trust relationships, including supervisory relationships, develop? When we trust, we yield a part of ourselves to another person. We give the person something we care about for her safekeeping. We hope it will remain safe in her hands, but we also assume she will take care of it the best way she knows how. Simply put, trust involves allowing for discretion. We allow the people we trust to make decisions about the well-being of the things with which we entrust them. We trust them to exercise good judgment in these decisions. The reality of genuine trust is that usually the end is open; part of what we are putting our faith in is the other's ability to act in ways we cannot fully predict. Sometimes that might mean acting in ways we did not expect and could not stipulate ahead of time. The most trustworthy people may even surprise.

The most trusting supervisors do not merely look to see that their students did what they said they would do. Supervisors who place the most trust in their students are ones who are open to outcomes they may not have expected. They may even hope that their students will break with procedure and come up with something even better than expected. This openness, so ineliminable in real trust, is the reason I argue that trust and accountability are

not the same thing. When we trust others, we do not do so only because their performance conforms to what was promised. “Trustworthy” has become so synonymous with “faithful” that we forget that it does not merely mean having a record of discharging responsibilities consistently. In other words, a trustworthy person is not just someone who can produce a faithful accounting that passes inspection.

With respect to students under our supervision, we are not simply hoping that they will produce a faithful reckoning of their responsibilities—although this is understandably desirable, especially at the beginning of a supervisory relationship. The behaviors that produce a good accounting are important. We certainly do not wish for the opposite, that is, for a student who is inconsistent, quirky, and unreliable. But we also wish to be able to give our most trusted students discretion with respect to their duties. We want to be able to hand them something and see where they go with it. For in those cases, we are entrusting ourselves to them, not to the practices and procedures laid out before them.

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Trust—or, more precisely, a lack of trust—is a topic of widespread conversation these days among those who worry about institutions and their leaders. Many bemoan its seeming decline among today’s practitioners. A common response to the apparent crisis in trust is to put increased effort into trying to make practitioners, and those who would become the next generation of practitioners, more trustworthy. Regulatory schemes, assessment plans, and third-party audits proliferate. Greater trustworthiness is widely assumed to be secured through greater accountability. If we could only keep better tabs on what people are doing in their work, the thinking goes, then we would be assured in placing our trust in them. So accountants are subject to more audits, health care providers to more documentation, ministers to more safe church rules, and teachers and students to more assessments, to name just a few examples of the proliferating new forms of accountability. As British philosophers Neil Manson and Onora O’Neill write:

in place of trust [skeptics] look for stronger forms of accountability. In effect they concentrate on improving trustworthiness, and suggest that we can forget about trust. The currently favoured methods for improving trustworthiness advocate stricter and stronger systems of accountability that clarify powers, obligations and rights, imposed by formal contracts and codes, backed by monitoring and inspection of performance, by sanc-

tions for failure...and by redress for those who are let down...Systems of accountability are seen as ensuring that institutional and professional action meets acceptable standards.²

In contrast to today’s stricter, stronger, formal systems of accountability, interpersonal trust may seem hopelessly quaint. Even worse, talk about trust may sound to some like advocacy for the paternalism of the past. In an earlier era, when we could not keep tabs on everything professionals were up to, we simply trusted in the persons themselves. We assumed that “father knew best” and would operate with our best interests in mind. This way of deciding whom to trust appeared to work, at least for a while, and forestalled the crisis of trust.

Accountability as a “Second Order Obligation”

There are two problems with equating trust with paternalism and trustworthiness with accountability. First, trust does not have to be bestowed blindly. There are smarter and dumber forms of trust, and it is important to learn to distinguish between them. I and others are not advocating a return to the unintelligent or blind placing of trust in practitioners qua practitioners. A full discussion of smart trust is beyond the scope of this article, but there are ways to learn to practice it.³ Second, it is false to assume that accountability is preferable to trust just because it reveals more and seems to provide more evidence of assurance. Accountability is really only trust one step removed. Let me explain.

Accountability means that I am entrusted with a responsibility for which I have to give an account. Anybody who is held accountable for their practice has, in effect, a dual obligation. Their first obligation is a direct one; they must answer directly to the people they serve or to their jobs. A nurse, for example, is obliged to care for his patients in a competent manner; a student is obliged to study her course material. At the same time, however, they have an obligation to provide an accounting of how they have met their responsibilities. The nurse does not just provide care but must also account for his competent caring. He answers to someone else, by filling out a chart or making a report to a supervisor. The student must not only learn the material but also demonstrate what she has learned. She takes tests and submits work for evaluation. She is thereby answerable both to herself and to her teacher. Almost everyone employed or taught or supervised has this dual set of obligations.

Another way of saying this is that accountability is always a “second order obligation.”⁴ The first order obligation is to do the job; the second order obligation is to show that the job was done. Manson and O’Neill outline this

multi-step structure of accountability (expressed in the sort of language with which philosophers are fond): “X ought to be done by A; B has a right to X being done by A; A has a further obligation to render an account of success or failure in doing X to C.”⁵ So, for example, “Pastoral care ought to be provided by Chaplain A; Patient B has a right to pastoral care being provided by Chaplain A; Chaplain A has a further obligation to render an account of her success or failure in providing pastoral care to Supervisor C.” Both obligations are important. Primary obligations can never, of course, be neglected, as they are primary. But secondary obligations are also important, and increasingly so in this era of heightened emphasis on accountability.

Dual Obligations

In a typical structure of accountability, the obligation to account for one’s work is often rendered to a third party rather than back to the person in the primary relationship. Although the nurse and his patient probably have a pretty good idea about what competent caring is, they do not get to define it all by themselves. The nurse is accountable to a nursing supervisor who has set standards for the patient’s competent care. As for the student, she may well have established her own internalized criteria for what constitutes good learning, but she also must demonstrate what she has learned to the person who designed the syllabus and set its goals. In chaplaincy training programs, chaplains in training make verbatim reports to their groups and their supervisors, who assess the nature and quality of their patient interactions. In other words, a third party has usually set standards to which we are held accountable. This third party (“C” in Hanson and O’Neill’s terms) is, in turn, responsible for holding us accountable. And, I should say, in the case of misconduct, third parties also apply sanctions and a means of redress for those who are harmed.

Tensions can arise when those entrusted to do good work have to balance these dual obligations. Under pressure to provide an accounting of their work, for example, they may neglect their primary obligation in favor of taking the time to fulfill their secondary obligation. Like teachers who learn to “teach to the test” in order to produce high test scores and thereby show their superiors they are effective teachers, the focus on rendering an accounting of practice can overtake practice itself. Good work can become neglected in the effort to demonstrate good work. The stronger and stricter our systems of accountability become, the greater becomes the danger that we feel more obligated to the parties holding us accountable than to those we serve. We

have probably all felt at one time or other the pressure to make sure our practice looks good and places well within its respective scoring system. Under this sort of pressure, we can start making our practice conform to whatever the scoring standards are. Practice can actually ironically begin to suffer as practitioners strive to make it ever more presentable to those holding them accountable.

DECIDING WHOM TO TRUST

Let us turn our perspective, however, to those who have to decide whether to trust us. Will they be able to make this decision simply by asking for a better accounting of our practice? Is accountability the same as trust? Does it replace the need for trust? If the structure I have outlined for accountability is accurate, our answer must be: accountability cannot necessarily replace trust. If accountability is always second order, then so too is the trust that accountability generates. If someone trusts me on the basis of the accounting I have been able to provide, then properly speaking, they do not trust me, but rather the party holding me to account. In the terms used above, if what B wants is not just X service but also assurance that A has done X well, then B is not only trusting A but also trusting that C will hold A responsible. Sometimes B wants the assurance as much as the service. B trusts the account of A’s practice, not really the practice itself. In fact, properly speaking, B trusts the method or procedure C uses to evaluate the account of A’s work.

Let us take an example from the world of financial services. If I know little about investments but have just sold my house and have a sum of money to invest in a retirement account, I must choose a person or organization that knows something about long-term investing to entrust my money to. I can study the track record and past performance of the organization by reading their materials and talking to others who have invested with them. But in order to trust that the record is accurate and the materials authentic, chances are I rely heavily on the fact that the organization gets audited on a regular basis by independent auditors. My assurance, in other words, really comes from another party whom I trust as a source of second-order information.

Or take the ministry. Members of a search committee hoping to select someone good to be the church’s next minister probably interview their candidates directly. But they also trust in the ecclesiastical body charged with endorsing ministers, including their candidates. If a candidate were to have a history of misconduct, the search committee would hope that such informa-

tion would have been discovered, filed somewhere, and passed on as necessary. They hope not to have to place confidence in the candidate alone but also in the processes by which candidates are vetted. As Manson and O'Neill put it: "Those who rely on systems of accountability in effect place their trust in second-order systems for controlling and securing the reliable performance of primary tasks, and in those who devise and revise such systems of accountability."⁶ But this is not really replacing trust. It is simply placing trust at the next level. "Pushing trust one stage, or several stages, back does not eliminate the need to place or refuse trust, and to do so intelligently."⁷

Therefore accountability is one part of trust but not a substitute for it. Systems put into place for accountability in various practices and professions give us a lot of information, but we can never eliminate the need for interpersonal trust when we rely on them. In the case of my investment, I simply bestow trust in the auditors in addition to the investors themselves. In the case of the search committee members, they not only have to trust their candidate but also the diocese or presbytery or other ecclesial body and in that body's vigilance in tracking cases of misconduct and sharing information appropriately. (The committee may also legitimately hope that misconduct has been adequately prevented through effective systems of ministerial formation and training.) Good systems for accountability do provide a lot of evidence upon which we can base decisions about whom to trust, but it is still the case that other human beings produce that evidence and design the ways by which it gets collected. In short, there will always remain multiple people we have to trust.

TRUSTING PEOPLE MORE THAN PROCEDURES

Doyle Lonnegan did not just trust the wrong people; he failed to trust people. Instead, he trusted the procedure that had been set in place to provide an accounting of the horse race betting operation. In effect, he "audited" the operation by looking at a sample of it. He placed a test bet and got a satisfactory result, one that squared with what he had expected. The practice in question appeared to do what it said it would, and therefore he concluded that Hooker was someone who could be held accountable. This gave Lonnegan the confidence to trust Hooker and thereby go on to bet an even bigger sum. The problem was that there was no true relationship between the reliability of the practice and the trustworthiness of the practitioner. Hooker was fully accountable but not at all trustworthy! The fake horse racing

scheme in the film is an extreme example of a practice made to look good when it was not good at all. The "practitioner" totally fabricated the results of his practice, but he answered to what was asked of him. The problem was that Lonnegan asked the wrong things of him. Therefore, Lonnegan's approach is an extreme example of holding someone accountable without trusting them. In other words, he attempted to substitute accountability for trust.

In the end, there is no substitute for trust. Accountability is important because it gives us much-needed evidence of other people's reliability, which is especially valuable in situations where we cannot establish primary relationships with them. But first-order interpersonal trust will always be important too. As the film's central relationship between Gondorff and Hooker shows, trust is not necessarily easy, but it proves sturdier in the end and even more fruitful. Hopefully we have not yet considered it obsolete in our own practices of ministerial formation and supervision.

NOTES

1. *The Sting*. 1973. Directed by George Roy Hill. Zanuck/Brown Productions and Universal Pictures. The point of using this film is not to recommend the con business, but to reflect on the trust relationships it depicts.
2. Neil C. Manson and Onora O'Neill, *Rethinking Informed Consent* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 162–3. See chapter 7, "Trust, Accountability, and Transparency."
3. See my chapter on "The Practice of Trust" in *Lives Entrusted: An Ethic of Trust for Ministry* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008).
4. Manson and O'Neill, *Rethinking Informed Consent*, 182.
5. *Ibid.*, 182.
6. *Ibid.*, 163.
7. *Ibid.*, 163.

Tandem Roles of Written Standards and Personal Virtue in Appraising Professional Practice

Gordon J. Hilsman

Maintaining acceptable practice in a professional organization depends heavily on two intertwining entities: written standards and personal virtue. The two in tandem, one maintained externally and collaboratively and the other guiding internally, either uphold professional accountability or allow practice to slide below acceptable association levels. It is likely true that those practitioners who fall below a level of adequate practice due to impairment or impulsive judgment have failed either to comprehend or attend to specific written standards, on the one hand, or to develop sufficient maturity of virtue to relate to established standards with integrity, on the other.

This article contends that paying attention to one another's virtues is a professional responsibility of clinical practitioners, especially as those classical characteristics of personal behavior affect attitudes toward the standards of the practitioner's primary professional organization. It suggests that appraisal of competencies at mileposts of certification needs to be augmented by assessment of specific classical virtues at other key points during a career

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and that the Internet provides new tools with which to facilitate this mutual, inter-subjective monitoring.

The far sighted individuals whose ingenuity developed dozens of innovative helping disciplines during the twentieth century eventually saw the need for written standards to organize the new professions that had evolved. Fashioning standards for social work, addiction treatment, grief counseling, hospice caregivers and dozens of other professions provided a structure within which quality of practice could be assessed. It is through creating and progressively revising written standards that these movements transformed themselves into effective organizations that honor both the need for consistency and the ongoing development of standards required to promote practitioner functionality. Professional organizations of ministers are not exempt from the need for both standards and virtues.

The term *standard* arose from naming the poled flag that ancient armies used to rally troops and claim conquered territory. Earlier, the word *stand*, from the Latin verb *stare*, had been coined to mean "to have both feet solidly beneath you, be firm," in other words, to have found and be occupying the place you most highly value and will defend at great cost. Standards delineate what is essential for members of an organization to manifest its ethos, maintain its core values, solidify its unique identity and accomplish its essential work. It is risky to employ members of an organization that does not have written standards.

THE PURPOSES OF STANDARDS

Standards fulfill several purposes. Even as they provide a yardstick with which to evaluate the functioning of practitioners and programs in certification and accreditation processes, the standards also promote accomplishment and excellence in pursuing the mission of the association. In so doing, they instruct young practitioners, guide maturing practices, help shield consumers from inadequate programs, and can even inspire those members who may need a shot of idealism during difficult times.

Written standards alone are no more useful than idle tools and unread books. Even if the elected leaders who devise, revise, and approve standards are thoughtful and diligent, the standards remain useless if the second essential element in fostering and monitoring quality is missing. Physicians treat but only patients can heal; therapists counsel but only addicts can recover; and teachers instruct but only students can learn; similarly, organizational

leaders provide standards but only practitioners can decide to honor them in maintaining their own adequate practices and contribute to the ever-changing content of standards.

Indeed, standards that reflect excellent practice in writing can easily be mouthed rather than lived. Organizations that adopt standards from the publications of other organizations, rather than working through a rigorous process of collaborative discerning and negotiating to clearly define what standards they actually are willing, able, and ready to follow, can hardly claim to have standards at all.

Organizational leadership carries the responsibility to capture the organization's core identity. But that responsibility falls to all members when the changing paradigms of its development require the renewal of written statements. Aging, inflexible standards eventually feel Procrustean to lively, creative practitioners. How can clinicians use their direct observation and responsibility for collaborative peer evaluation to assess the adequacy of one another's participation in the dynamic tension of the standards maintenance process?

VIRTUE AND STANDARDS

While the terminology of *virtue* may be seen archaic for use in evaluation of professional practice, it continues to fit professional associations of clergy schooled in the language of traditional religion. Organizations historically developed by Christian leaders can appropriately look to the Scripture-based virtues for guidance in the personal characteristics necessary for responsible practice. Herbert Anderson has used the notion of the "habitus" of a particular minister to point to the established way that minister consistently acts, almost without reflection, because specific functions have become second nature to that person. He contends that the habitus or character of ministers is rapidly increasing in importance: "Because the church and its ministers no longer hold the power and influence they once could assume, character is a greater integrating factor for the practice of ministry."¹

The classic understanding of Christian virtues derives their legitimacy both from their history and their current applicability. They developed (or evolved) over centuries through direct observation of "human nature" long before psychology was born. In currently relevant ecclesiastical and political issues, the lack of Christian virtues is routinely observable in significant societal suffering. Leaders in the field of medical ethics recently embraced the

concepts of traditional virtues and employed them in the aspects of their work that deal with the professional obligations of practitioners.²

Here are some of the Christian virtues that are most relevant in overseeing professional practice of certified clinical supervisors. They are drawn from my experience of collaborating with, supervising, appraising, and certifying ministry leaders over the past thirty-five years.

Humility

Accurate self-appraisal or humility includes embracing your own essential goodness and, at the same time, constantly recognizing your own limitations. Self-absorbed pride, arrogance, and grandiosity stand on one side of humility while passivity, hiding, and meek acquiescence is on the other side. New Testament depictions of Jesus castigating religious and political leaders who were devoid of humility stand as historical teachings on having humility as the basis of any mature life. The other major world religions also teach the value of humility as a key spiritual characteristic.³ The focus on self-awareness, common in the pastoral care and counseling movement, is a prelude to humility.⁴ Remaining carefully attentive to ourselves generally manifests a level of humility in attitude and decisions.

Exaggerated or underestimated assessments of self skew one's regard for professional standards. The grandiose are more likely to ignore a relevant standard, while the habitually acquiescent individual follows them in unreflective compliance. It is irresponsible to dishonor a particular standard that challenges one's convenience. It is equally irresponsible to remain silent when substantive emerging issues are challenging the organization with a need to revise standards. Knowing better than anyone else is no worse than thoughtless indifference toward issues regarding standards when they arise.

Both clinical pastoral education (CPE) and the certification processes required in becoming a pastoral clinician have traditionally included challenges to the docile self-management characteristics expected by traditional Christian organizations of their leaders. Supervisors and chaplains have had to find their personal power in order to stand with interdisciplinary professionals and lead groups of clinical learners in settings characterized by widespread human pain. Some may have become drunk on the powerful feelings related to the assertiveness and self-possession required to negotiate certification processes, turning them into bravado and grandiosity. Standards shrink in the minds of the arrogant and can then be highly rationalized and even ignored.

It is one thing to embrace ones strengths, giftedness, and beauty in learning to lead and quite another to abandon forever the capacity to be led.

Prudence

Prudence is the capacity to see broader value and use foresight, circumspection, and discretion to make quality decisions in the present. Although prudence generally comes only with experience, some people seem to bring it to situations early in their lives. Others find it curiously difficult to learn from experience at all.⁵ One can be easily mystified by how academically educated, clinically trained, and certification-authorized individuals “slip the traces” in ways that are harmful to students, themselves, the organization as a whole, and even the entire field of pastoral helping.

An aging supervisor, conducting a final evaluations retreat with a group of CPE students at a cabin, had been drinking an undetermined amount of wine. As he reclined for the night in a sleeping bag in a common area, a female student entered. They chat amiably, and at one point he invited her to join him in the bag, thinking he was making a joke. She filed a formal complaint that included a few other such comments made during the course of the CPE program, and the complaint was processed to the final national level. What was he thinking? Prudence would prompt him to maintain a professional decorum consistently, even in a cabin atmosphere. If temperance in alcohol consumption is necessary to keep him circumspect, then it is his responsibility to address his excess and possible impairment.

Wisdom

Wisdom traditionally combines knowledge and understanding in finding insightfully helpful perspectives on very difficult situations. It is related to prudence. While prudence accentuates current foresight in making safe decisions that result in the least harm, wisdom emphasizes an entire identity that can be counted on to grasp complex circumstances and intricate implications; wisdom suggests actions that have the best chance of not only meeting the situation but preparing for similar circumstances that may occur later. The Wisdom Literature component of the Hebrew Scriptures juxtaposes wisdom to “the fool,” who acts without circumspection, restraint, and guiding values.

During a final individual conference with a female student about his age, a male supervisor hears her offer to have sex with him as a gratefulness gift. He likes the woman and wants to maintain a positive relationship with her. He replies that they both are married and that, even if they weren’t, his

ethical nature would not allow the supervisory relationship to be so misused. Finding words to decline the proposition may have been much more difficult in his youth. He is prudent here, but, if he uses the event to learn, teach, and influence the structure of his judicatory or professional organization, he is indeed growing in wisdom as well.

Counsel

We might call this consultation today. Counsel is the developed capacity to open oneself and one’s inner processes to at least one trusted peer or expert, hoping to garner broader perspective on difficult situations while learning from them in the process.⁶ From the Latin *con* or “with” and *sultare* or “to strike,” it implies “striking together” with other savvy people for the benefit of expanding one’s views and clarifying one’s best understanding of self and one’s life situation. It is what group peer supervision was originally devised for: to help budding caregivers value, learn to elicit, and then benefit from quality feedback. It is what is missing when practitioners plod on alone and begin to sink beneath the practice level of particular standards. Counsel’s absence is a chief indicator, along with waning humility, that a colleague has ceased to learn from the practice.

Through informal observation and even casual conversation, it is clear that, in some areas of the United States, clinical pastoral supervisors consult very little with one another. If they do consult, where does it happen and with whom? Is this lack of peer consultation after certification due to poverty of fortitude, meager professional trust, pride, or over-focus on image born out of low self esteem? Or is it because many supervisors have never developed consultative skill that some would consider the primary focus of Level I in CPE? The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) Standards require an active supervisor to maintain consultative relationships with collegial peers. Whatever the origin of such fierce avoidance of openness about one’s own supervision, it at least suggests an egregious lack of the virtue of counsel. It also places too much pressure on each individual to be personally responsible and accountable.

Benignity

This is an archaic word for “simple goodness.” Benignity is found in young love that is earnest and altruistic. Those who exhibit it habitually may be seen as naïve, gullible, or even simple-minded because they are too trusting. But some measure of benignity is an essential ingredient in caring for people on a basic level. When it is lost, practitioners and organizational leaders are

no longer thinking of people, either members of their communities or consumers of services, or holding them in their hearts at all. Other motivations have taken them over, and close observation can be surprisingly clear that such is the case.

Benignity matures into an undefined ability to make decisions based on what is actually best for the people involved, rather than what works most effectively for my own convenience, image, position, or status. The lack of benignity, on the other hand, is seen most clearly in the inveterately cynical. It devolves into hurtful cynicism when one's own interpersonal wounds and discouragements have not been healed. Cynicism devoid of benignity looks at new standards or changes first for how they will complicate or deter my own life rather than what may be practical here for the good of the organization, the field, and consumers. It is likely to suspect similar base behavior from others, not seeing the pure motives of some to bring better life circumstances to all of humanity, including all of one's colleagues and students. The New Testament validation of Christian disciple Philip as "a true Israelite who has no guile" exemplifies the virtue of benignity (John 1:47).

A supervisor had brought data about a troubling supervisory student for consultation to an established peer group of colleagues. He had actually accepted the supervisory student into his program twice, once after a disastrous event that occurred when the student was left alone by another supervisor to lead a group of students in clinical pastoral education. As the consultation proceeded, a colleague laughed at the supervisor's foolishness for being so gullible as to repeat a previous bad decision by accepting the student a second time and then dismissed a transference issue the presenting supervisor had identified with the student. This lack of simple goodness from the one of the participants changed the level of trust in the peer group. What characteristics does it take in a peer group to make honest consultation possible? What prevents some supervisors from learning how to offer the useful and timely critique listed in the standards of ACPE for what are now Level I and Level II of supervision?

Fortitude

The strength to stand for what one deeply believes in, against whatever or whoever is threatening what one holds dear is, what we call fortitude. Fortitude is also the willingness and even eagerness to stand beside someone who is in current need. The military standard bearer, for example, injected

inspiration into the lives of soldiers, stirring up their courage by boldly illustrating the values for which he was willing to fight and even die.⁷

There are practitioners in every discipline who would not consider confronting an errant colleague, even when the impaired behavior was violating standards of the organization to which they all belong, not to mention doing harm to consumers. Excusing ourselves when we experience incompetence or less than ethical behavior in our colleagues does not serve one another or the profession well. Some of us take refuge in the fact that organizational policies are in place to safeguard quality, expecting somebody else to confront the behavior itself. That may be cowardice or it may be sloth. But it is inexcusable. Jesus' reprimand of his lead disciple Peter to "get thee behind me Satan" (Mark 8:33) was in response to Peter's wimpy advice to avoid the conflict that was necessary to fulfill the Master's life purpose.

In a supervisory peer group, one supervisor raised the following question in response to recent conflict in the group: "What do you all think this group needs to do when one member openly questions the competence of another?" One colleague suggested that new organizational procedures are being fashioned to deal with declining competence. Another member of the peer group questioned the supervisor's observations in the first instance. Other peer group members deflected the question in other ways, and the group as a whole refused to take it seriously. Isn't there a lack of fortitude here? No procedure or standard can be effective until some personal action is taken. Who will take it? At what peril from colleagues? Fortitude bolsters decisive action in risky and challenging situations. Without it, seemingly mature professionals commonly acquiesce when a colleague is in need of guidance, confrontation, and a healing disciplinary process.

Love or Charity

Charity is one of the three Christian theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity) that are classically said to be "infused" by the Holy Spirit and that can only be "stirred up" but not really generated by effort. Genuine charity is the altruistic treatment of all people as special, no matter the situation. Accurately indefinable, love is perhaps best described by the familiar inspirational paragraph in 1 Corinthians 13 that proclaims that all human activity is trivial unless it is motivated by love.

The fact that psychology has mostly ignored the term love due to its perpetual ambiguity and inassessable nature need not dissuade religious professionals from using it. Christianity as a religion is based firmly on love of self,

The Deity, and one’s neighbor.⁸ The other religions of the world also espouse love toward one another as a high value. Its lack is sometimes palpable in professional practice. A physician I know quickly assessed a former colleague of mine as “not caring much about anything but himself.” Can questions and shared impressions of whether one is functioning out of genuine care for people or not be useful in honest peer feedback?

It is obvious that virtues cannot always be identified by observation. That is their primary drawback as an assessment tool. In fact, some virtues can grow exponentially through a single challenging event, from a minuscule seed to heroic proportions. But for the reflective practitioner, feedback from colleagues and friends on how one is seen relative to these ancient traits would seem to be highly valuable. And it could contribute to preventing errant behavior by practitioners before they are challenged later by difficult, career threatening situations.

ASSESSING ONE ANOTHER’S VIRTUES

Until Freud, the Christian virtues, along with the seven deadly sins, comprised the primary framework for assessing spiritual behavior in the Western world. Because of their partially observable quality and decisive starkness, they can still stand legitimately with frameworks such as the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory, classic psychopathology, and the Enneagram as tools for evaluating behavior. Most people take umbrage at negative feedback on such traits as wisdom, love, and fortitude. When, however, the practitioner requests assessments of virtue, the assessments can provide unique perspectives on how that professional relates to colleagues and measures up to a professional association’s mission and standards.

A classic strength of clinical chaplains has been the capacity to use their impressions in brief conversations to assess and respond to people in the midst of human pain situations. Could that same strength be harnessed for peer assessment in new ways using evolving electronic tools? As in many aspects of clinical education, peer collaborative evaluation provides the best feedback and antidote to self-deception. As an experiment, I sent the simple questionnaire in figure 1 to sixty CPE supervisors across the country familiar with my professional functioning and fifty former students from my CPE programs. They were asked to evaluate me according to the following definitions for these virtues. A blind return to my colleague supervisor promoted candid

Please respond to the following items regarding _____ *Name* _____, a professional who is familiar to you, regarding his demonstration of the Christian virtues named. One is low, five is high.

Humility—Self-awareness and accurate self-perception
1•••••2•••••3•••••4•••••5

Counsel—Interpersonal openness or teh willingness to open inner processes to trusted peers for the sake of better perspectives, continued learning, and personal growth.
1•••••2•••••3•••••4•••••5

Fortitude—Interpersonal courage, the willingness to stand firm for the sake of troubled others or against whatever threatens ones values.
1•••••2•••••3•••••4•••••5

Prudence—Practical good-sense ability to meet difficult situations with circumspection, discretion, and measured foresight.
1•••••2•••••3•••••4•••••5

Wisdom—The ability to combine knowledge, understanding, and experience to find perspicacious ways to address important situations.
1•••••2•••••3•••••4•••••5

Benignity—Ability to access a “simple goodness” attitude and perspective to find what is best for people in anything being proposed (the opposite of habitual cynicism).
1•••••2•••••3•••••4•••••5

Love—Vigorous positive regard for specific other people
1•••••2•••••3•••••4•••••5

Figure 1. Peer virtue survey for self-reflection

responses. The return rate for colleagues and students was twenty-six percent and twenty-eight percent respectively.

Figure 2 summarizes the results. I was proud of the feedback, almost completely represented by 4s and 5s. But I was also sobered by two individu-

Christian Virtue	Professional Colleagues	Former Students
Humility	3.8	4.1
Counsel	4.3	4.5
Fortitude	4.4	4.4
Prudence	4.0	4.5
Wisdom	4.4	4.8
Benignity	4.3	4.8
Love/Charity	(not included)	4.5

Figure 2. Results of author's peer virtue survey for self-reflection

al colleague respondents who see me as operating in the "2" level on several virtues.

I believe this simple but pointed process could have several applications in clinical supervisory practice. Peer review programs, for example, could benefit from a virtues perspective review. Since specific virtues have a key bearing on a practitioner's attitude towards standards, using them in the review process could play a part in heading off potential problems with practice. It would also seem beneficial that this peer appraisal begin taking place early in a supervisor's professional career, since practice can have either a positive or a negative effect on the crystallizing of a practitioner's attitude toward standards.

This method of appraisal could also become a useful aspect of the certification processes. Asking applicants for certification to be a pastoral supervisor to survey their peers and supervisors regarding an applicant's manifestation of key virtues would offer one more scale on which to assess potential problems, even in those whose functioning and professional integration appears to be excellent for a beginning practice. Indeed such an appraisal, now made exceedingly facile by electronic media, could be a part of the election processes for leadership positions in the organization, both paid staff and professional volunteers. What better opportunity for self-reexamination than the times of transitioning into new places of communal responsibility?

Regardless of the usefulness of the respondents' data, however, the exercise of virtue appraisal itself prompts self-reflection on one's own attitudes. By studying peer impressions of our practice of specific virtues, we are likely to improve our awareness of our own level of respect for and use of an asso-

ciation's standards throughout our career and in our contributions to the viability of the clinical ministry movement.

PATHWAYS TO DEVELOPING VIRTUE

One obvious reason virtues have not been used to appraise one another is that virtues cannot be developed at will. Their growth emerges from a combination of effort, endowed character, and painful circumstances that unpredictably challenge an individual to mature. And in some religious circles, virtues are regarded as a gift of the Spirit of God. Most of us can recall childhood moments of our own thievery, lying, foolhardiness, and cowardice in which the penetrating light of parents or teachers revealed our surreptitious behavior and evoked at least a modest commitment to develop some virtue. Adolescent self-exploration and life-reflection also invites the expansion of childhood efforts to include those human characteristics that are necessary to live as a quality citizen and relationship partner. Prolonged intimate engagement with another in youth and middle years provides another chance to grow spiritually as we discover the virtues necessary for community living. Being in a committed relationship expands these challenges through the interpersonal furnace stoked by the intense needs for emotional connection and sexual pleasuring. The development of such virtues as prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, without which no human partnership can endure, also benefits professional practice.⁹ Over the decades of a career, peer appraisal, grieving the necessary devastating losses of human living, and personal psychotherapy can prod attentiveness to one's personal catalogue of virtues.

For those perpetually fascinated more by pathology than virtue, Christianity offers the seven deadly sins as an alternative yardstick. Observed excesses in one another's behavior become indicators pointing to the potential violation of standards. These "deadly sins" include greed and avarice regarding money; gluttony; rest, sloth, or laziness in relation to food or drink; inflated or diminished self regard or pride; sex that is devoid of human love becomes lust; envy or jealousy is evident whenever we compare ourselves with the material possessions or personal advantages of others; and anger or wrath that may become visible in outbursts of hostility and resentment. Developing an eye for such excesses while they are still modest offenses constitutes a valuable skill in genuine professional collegueship.

CONCLUSION

One of the traditional objectives of clinical pastoral education has been for students to explore their own attitudes, values, and assumptions relative to ministry work. As chaplains or pastoral supervisors progress through certification processes, the quality of their functioning depends on their attending to their own attitudes toward and values of the standards that define adequate practice in their professional organizations. There are places in the professional associations for appraisal of one another's virtues as well.

NOTES

1. Herbert Anderson, "Authenticity and Character in Pastoral Ministry," in Heather Cameron and others, *Together in Ministry: Essays to Honour John Pavor* (Melbourne, Australia: Uniting Academic Press, 2009), 157.
2. Thomas L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 5th ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 26–51.
3. Muslim, Hindu, Hebrew, and Buddhist teachings similarly honor humility as a key personal characteristic. The Qur'an, for example, warns "And walk not on the earth with conceit and arrogance (17:37).
4. Robert C. Roberts, "Humility as a Moral Project," in *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans: 2007), 78–95.
5. Edmond Pellegrino and David Thomasma, "Prudential Judgment and Religious Commitment," in *The Christian Virtues in Medical Practice* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1996), 99–115.
6. Thomas Keating, "The Gift of Counsel," *Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit* (New York: Lantern Books, 2000), 59–69.
7. Peter Kreeft, "Justice, Wisdom, Courage, and Moderation: The Four Cardinal Virtues," *Back to Virtue: Traditional Moral Wisdom for Modern Moral Confusion* (Fort Collins, CO: Ignatius Press: 1992), 59–69.
8. Pellegrino and Thomasma, "Charity in Action: Compassion and Caring," in *The Christian Virtues in Medical Practice*, 84–97.
9. Gordon J. Hilsman, *Intimate Spirituality: The Catholic Way of Love and Sex* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 15–46.

Review Essay of Niebuhr's *The Responsible Self*^a

Joseph E. Bush Jr.

As we reflect on responsibility and accountability in supervision and formation, H. Richard Niebuhr's *The Responsible Self* merits fresh consideration. Originally published posthumously in 1963, this book is taken from the Robertson Lectures delivered by Niebuhr at the University of Glasgow in 1960 and the Earl Lectures delivered by him at the Pacific School of Religion and at Riverside Church in 1962. Nearly half a century later, this book seems to anticipate directions that education for ministry has subsequently taken, and it continues to provide a framework for understanding these educational developments. In particular, Niebuhr's model of the responsible self and his understanding of an ethics of the "fitting" can enrich an understanding of: (a) the action-reflection model of education, (b) the importance of description in practical theology, and (c) the emphasis on context in contextual studies.

Niebuhr identifies four aspects of responsibility in his model. Responsibility involves: responsiveness, interpretation, accountability, and "social solidarity." With these four aspects in mind, he summarily defines responsibility:

The idea or pattern of responsibility, then, may summarily and abstractly be defined as the idea of an agent's action as response to an action upon him in accordance with his interpretation of the latter action and with his expectation of response to his response; and all of this is in a continuing community of agents (p. 65).

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Each of these four aspects of responsibility entails implications for formation and supervision in ministry and will be discussed in turn.

RESPONSIVENESS

That responsibility entails responsiveness may sound like something of an oxymoron, but it remains a most significant observation and a correction on more formal conceptions of moral responsibility. To be responsible, one must respond to something and to someone. One cannot speak of responsibility in the abstract by appealing to notions of the good or the right. The moral life happens within relationships and in response to each other's actions.

This reality of responsiveness is one of the key assumptions behind the action-reflection model of education, utilized in some form by most of the readers of *Reflective Practice*. We find ourselves responding to others, and we reflect on our actions and responses within specific situations. We attend to the data of our interactions in mutual responsiveness with others.

With regard to pastoral ministry in particular as reflective practice, Jackson Carroll has written that pastoral leadership occurs "in the midst of messes,"² by which he means attending to matters that are already complexly in process. In a similar vein, I have elsewhere written about pastoral ethics beginning "in the middle."³ In other words, we are called to respond to others and to events already occurring.

INTERPRETATION

Niebuhr's second element of responsibility—interpretation—is also one of the key assumptions behind the action-reflection model. We **reflect** on our actions and responses. We interpret and reframe our actions, responses, and the situations themselves, so that we can deepen in our self-understanding and our understanding of others.

Niebuhr would have us ask, "What is going on?" or "What is happening?" as an initial line of inquiry. Then, secondly, one seeks to determine an action in response that is "fitting" to the situation. Hence, Niebuhr's ethics of responsibility is also an "ethics of the fitting" or "*cathol̄kontic* ethics" (pp. 60, 87).

Moreover, there are levels of interpretation that are possible for attending to whatever is going on. There is the immediate perception of events, conditioned as we are to see and interpret them as we do. Actions occur, though, within systems which bring meaning to actions and which themselves are subject to interpretation. These are social and political systems as well as nat-

ural systems. Niebuhr refers to the total "context" of an action for interpreting its meaning. He writes: "The act is understood only because its relations are understood, and the question is about the extent of its relations, about its context" (p. 123).

For Niebuhr, at an even deeper level, actions are ultimately to be interpreted with reference to God—to a monotheistic faith and to an understanding of sin and salvation in Christ that affirms life over and against the forces of death. As the book proceeds, the chapters become increasingly theological and confessional.

The Responsible Self thus models for us the pattern of theological reflection that we typically now use in theological field education. Various iterations of the "pastoral circle" move from an initial description of a situation, to a deepening analysis of its social context, to explicit theological reflection, and finally to an informed pastoral response.⁴

The handbook *Studying Congregations* that is commonly in use by students in theological field education as well as in courses on congregation studies provides such a model. Beginning with description, it moves through analysis of a context and theological reflection, resulting in action. The authors of this handbook emphasize the importance of description:

Don Browning, for instance, in his book *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, suggests that the first task of practical theology is to ask, How do we understand this concrete situation in which we must act? He argues that this task of description is, in fact, a theology task.⁵

In that same handbook, Robert Schreiter notes that Thomas Groome as well as Don Browning begin with description, and he emphasizes: "Description of the environment is not something extrinsic to the theological process, but is deeply part of it."⁶ Niebuhr's understanding of responsibility involving interpretation and responsivity resonates and reverberates strongly with these materials.

ACCOUNTABILITY

For Niebuhr, though, the social context is also entwined with the third and fourth elements of his definition of responsibility—accountability and social solidarity. Accountability for Niebuhr is the recognition that our actions have consequences. Not only do we respond to events preceding our actions, but our actions provoke responses from others following our actions. These responses to our actions include natural cause and effect, but also, more complexly, the social community of interpretive agents surrounding

us and our actions. We act within society, and our social partners respond to us in accordance with their interpretation of our actions.

This response to our response is itself a form of accountability, but we also anticipate and internalize our expectations of others' responses. When we do so, that anticipation of others' responses to us enters into our own decision-making and responsibility. Following the social behaviorist, George Herbert Mead, Niebuhr refers to the "generalized other" as an ingredient of conscience (p. 76).⁷ Niebuhr writes: "The generalized other or the impartial spectator of the empirical conscience is a knower and an evaluator, representing the community but also the community's cause" (p. 84). The generalized other is that socially formed internalized conscience.

Throughout *The Responsible Self*, Niebuhr follows his understanding of G. H. Mead and Mead's interpretivist and interactionist model of the self. Mead's theory continues to be of interest to scholars in the social sciences. Niebuhr quotes Mead: "'The self,' he writes, 'as that which can be an object to itself is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience'" (p. 72).⁸ It is this model that allows Niebuhr to balance materialism and freedom, individualism and society, in his own conception of moral agency.

This is an intersubjective understanding of conscience and accountability. It is at once subjectively internalized for the individual, yet it is essentially a social phenomenon in its genesis and function. It is much akin to that which we, as educators, are seeking to help shape and form among our students, as we have them reflect on their experiences of ministry in the contexts of their peers and contemporaries. We are hoping that our students internalize from these conversations with others a sense of responsibility and accountability that they will be able to access when serving in leadership or ministry positions beyond that group of peers and fellow students.

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

Finally, by social solidarity, Niebuhr is acknowledging that all individual agency is occurring within this wider social context. This has implications not only for individual moral responsibility and personal relationships but also for broader political and social life and witness. It is instructive that Niebuhr introduces his model of responsibility by attending to its relevance for two types of circumstances: personal suffering and social emergencies. Both represent situations that may be imposed unwanted upon people but to which people must necessarily be responsive; their responsiveness would

be in accordance with their understanding of personal suffering or of the social crisis respectively.

It is a strength of Niebuhr's model that it fits with each level of challenge presented to the formation of conscience within community. It fits with the individual's internal processing of events as the minister deepens in formation for ministry. It fits with the nature of interpersonal relationships as we contemplate our interactions with others in mutual responsiveness. It fits with our sense of responsible participation in larger social structures, policies and movements as we seek to understand their significance. And it fits with our hope, apprehended by faith, that the ultimate significance of our actions is held within the universe of God's creation and salvation.

It fits, in sum, with much of our hope as teachers for our students' increasing awareness, deepening empathy, and social conscience and engagement. It fits with our praxeological methods of instruction that have students reflect on their own actions within a community of peers and with an eye toward further formation for ministry and engagement in church and society.

NOTES

1. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1963; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 183 pp.
2. Jackson W. Carroll, *As One With Authority: Reflective Leadership in Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 121.
3. Joseph E. Bush Jr., *Gentle Shepherding: Pastoral Ethics and Leadership* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2006), 2.
4. See for instance Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books Maryknoll, 1983), 7–8.
5. Nancy T. Ammerman and others, eds. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon, 1998), 16, citing Donald S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991).
6. Robert J. Schreiter, "Theology in the Congregation: Discovering and Doing," chap. 1 in Ammerman and others, *Studying Congregations*, 26, citing Thomas H. Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), also citing Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*.
7. George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 154.
8. Citing A. Strauss, *The Social Psychology of George Herbert Mead* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 217.

SECTION 2



JOHANNA'S DILEMMA: A CASE STUDY

This case is a composite of several actual experiences. The names and genders are altered so that any resemblance to actual situations is coincidental. Our intent in using this case is to examine responsibility and accountability in the practice of supervision from different religious perspectives and from different practices of formation and supervision. The respondents were invited to reflect on the case from their particular perspectives.

Herbert Anderson
Editor

Johanna's Dilemma

Johanna, a twenty-eight-year-old married seminarian from a Midwest Protestant seminary, is serving a twelve-month long church internship in a medium-sized church in a suburb of San Francisco, California. She has completed about four months of her internship when the annual youth snow trip occurs. The participants are ninth through twelfth graders who are in the youth program at the church. One of Johanna's responsibilities in her internship is to staff the youth program. Sixteen young people and five adults trained in youth ministry, including Johanna, go on the snow trip. They depart from the church Friday afternoon and return from the trip Sunday evening. All twenty-one stay in an elegant hotel in the mountains close to the ski slopes. The entire trip occurs without any ski/snow board accidents, no bad weather, and general good cooperation from all participants.

About a week after the ski weekend, one of the twelfth grade boys on the trip asks to speak privately with Johanna. During the ski weekend, Kevin tells Johanna, several kids mixed drugs and alcohol one night. It seemed harmless at the time, but Kevin does not remember what happened. He has discovered two monogrammed towels and a glass from the hotel in his possession and now wonders what else might have occurred. He has only talked with one friend who was there. She does not remember the episode either, although Kevin is certain she was present. He is unwilling to give Johanna the names of the other kids involved. He wants to know what to do with the towels and glass from the hotel. Most of all, Kevin is concerned that he might lose a college scholarship he has applied for that depends heavily on character recommendations.

Johanna expresses her appreciation to Kevin for coming forward, but she does not promise to keep quiet about this episode. Johanna is uncertain what to do next. She remembers her own experimenting with drugs and alcohol on several occasions when she was that age. As one of the adults responsible for this activity, however, Johanna is concerned that if nothing is reported, she will be implicated if eventually the episode is revealed. Talking with the other adults on the weekend would be difficult because two of them are parents of kids who might have been involved in the episode. Her supervising pastor had not been very helpful to her in the past, and he has not been very interested in helping her figure out complicated situations. As a result, Johan-

na contacts her supervisor from clinical pastoral education (CPE) the previous summer for advice. Johanna indicates that she needs some supervision around an incident that has just occurred on her internship and that she does not trust her supervising pastor to help her deal with the situation. Johanna also sends an e-mail to the director of Field Education at her seminary briefly describing the episode and indicating that she is seeking help.



Venerable Thom Kilts is an Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) supervisor, an endorsed and commissioned member of the Dzogchen Community of North America, and an ordained lineage holder of the Celtic Buddhist tradition. He writes from a Buddhist perspective as an ACPE supervisor.

A term from the Vajrayana Buddhist perspective that comes to mind after reading the case above is *samaya*. In the general sense, samaya is like a vow or commitment made between student and teacher. Developing samaya takes work both on the part of the student and the teacher and should always be attended to mindfully and very seriously. In Vajrayana Buddhism, there is a commitment to work with some very difficult aspects of mind, under the guidance (or for our terminology here, supervision) of a qualified teacher. In CPE, the samaya is created and developed in the first weeks, but, during that time, the samaya also has an end date. This is made clear during orientation. For a unit of summer CPE, the end date of the samaya is eleven weeks or when the program officially ends. Does this mean that I no longer speak with students when they leave CPE? Of course not, but I do recognize that the relationship has changed. There is no longer the same level or intensity of samaya between us that constitutes the supervisor/student relationship while working in the constructs of a CPE program. In my view, the relationship becomes one of consultation and not one of supervision. When I am supervising, I am much more involved and more apt to challenge, clarify, and support in a deeper and more impactful way (again, there has been samaya in a shared context established there). In consulting, there is a more hands off approach, less riskiness on my part and a clearer boundary around what we will and will not explore together.

The issue for Johanna is not that she is seeking supervision or needs help and guidance in this situation, but it is in how she is approaching it. If she would come to me, I would listen to the story, affirm her search for con-

sultation and also let her know that my role in this will only be to help her explore options for how she can attend to her process within her new context. As with most situations, many aspects of the case study point to larger problems in Johanna's new ministry setting. The lack of guidance and trust are just some of the huge issues this little ski trip seems to be unveiling. I would empathize with Johanna's difficult situation, but I would not become involved and would refuse to "supervise" or become her supervisor again around this issue. In the spirit of "the *path* is goal," a Vajrayana phrase I use in my CPE work, I would consult with Johanna and recommend that she take more responsibility for getting her needs met within her current situation. I would make it clear that turning to me is not the solution, but again I would consult with her about ways in which she can get her needs met closer to her context. I would encourage a more proactive attention to the larger systemic issues and the lack of accountability and responsibility of her new situation that has led her to call me.

Johanna does not feel that her supervising pastor is trustworthy, so there is no samaya there. Those feelings could be very well-founded, but she still needs to be accountable to her new supervising relationship and responsible for doing her part to create new samayas. What if she struggled (as I am sure she would have in the beginning) with establishing samaya with me during her unit? If she went to another more trusted supervisor in the past, then there may have been no movement or developed trust in our relationship. Johanna doesn't need to trust her supervising pastor to start addressing the issues in the context she is in currently. She is not being very trustworthy herself by avoiding approaching her responsibilities and accountability to her new ministry setting. I would consult her to address this issue with the parties involved and at the same time encourage her to bring attention to the larger issues in the community. In our time together, when there was samaya in the context of an ACPE program, I was teaching her how to be a leader; now would be the time for her to put it in practice.



Eldon L. Olson is a retired pastoral counselor and is still an occasional consultant to denominational and parish systems. He writes from Seattle, Washington, as someone who has counseled troubled clergy later in ministry.

I regret that Johanna does not have a good relationship with her supervising pastor. I cannot discern why he has not been helpful in "complicated cir-

cumstances." His counsel and participation in any continuing conversations Johanna will have is essential. His role as Johanna's field supervisor and as pastor of the congregation cannot be circumvented, no matter how uncomfortable or complicated Johanna may feel. The situation that is outlined must become a matter for his pastoral care for members of his congregation. He probably knows the families of the youth who were involved, as well as the adults who are designated as youth ministry volunteers for the event.

Since Johanna is short-term, inexperienced, and largely unsanctioned as a pastoral caregiver, her responsibility is to refer any such matters to the pastor. That supervising pastor also will have organizational oversight of adult volunteers who are entrusted with the care of children and youth on church-sponsored programs. If she withholds information that might be germane to his pastoral relationships within the congregation or his responsibilities for oversight of volunteers in ministry on behalf of the congregation, that pastor would be advised to seek a termination of her internship. I doubt that she could repair the damages that have occurred and serious questions should be raised about her competence for public ministry.

While the case study seems focused on issues raised by Kevin's disclosures—purloined towels and glass, character references for college scholarship, the confidentiality of the conversation with Johanna, possible counsel of CPE supervisor and seminary Field Education contact—all of this obscures the central concern: a very dangerous event has occurred during a church-sponsored activity of children. The issue is not the morality of the children, violation of acceptable codes of teenaged behaviors while on church-related activities, or what to do when candid disclosures of unacceptable behaviors are reported. The primary issue is the safety of vulnerable minors who participate in the ministries of the church. Certainly, unknown alcohol/drug activities are in violation of behavioral codes, but they are also potentially dangerous. Children can be seriously damaged, even killed, by such activities. The very discovery that such an activity has taken place requires immediate and decisive action.

Not only would the supervising pastor be justifiably angry with Johanna's response to the disclosure, those adults who had been designated as youth ministry advisors/chaperones would also be angry. They would have been trained to accompany youth ministry events with the primary purpose of ensuring the safety of children in their care. They may well have other functions in the youth group—discussion leaders, arrangement makers, adult counselors, and so forth. Parents would have entrusted their children to their

care with a primary confidence that their children would be kept safe. The fact that some of them are also parents of participating children heightens the urgency that they be fully informed of the incident and that this incident underscore the importance of their role as adult attendants to youth activities.

Finally, if parents were to find out that their children were involved in any of the described activities, either actively or passively, they would rightly be enraged that such information had not been disclosed to them. The litigious possibilities would be daunting. As parents of minors, they have every moral and legal right to hear of any activities that might put the safety of their children in jeopardy. This is true of all parents of any children who participated in the church activity, not just those who are reported as directly involved. They should be fully informed of all information Johanna possesses as quickly as possible. It would be best if the supervising pastor were involved in these conversations, assuring the parents of the ongoing support and pastoral care of the church. The parents would have a parental responsibility to confront their child, examine the dimensions of the group's involvements, enquire about precautions that were taken, and, hopefully, use this event as an opportunity for deliberate education for their child about the dangers involved in consuming alcohol and drugs. Under parent supervision, this incident may well provoke church-sponsored education or sensitization about the misuse of any chemical substances. The parents also have a right to report the incident to the local police if there is any indication that children were abused or endangered in the course of this activity.

As the situation is stated, Johanna is circumventing the resources that have been put in place—the supervisory pastor, the adult/lay advisors/chaperones, and the parents. She demonstrates a pattern of conflict avoidance and fear. But above all, she appears unable to discern the seriousness of the critical issues involved, distracted by her self-comfort and self-protection. Regarding the towels and ashtray, I would counsel that either an anonymous package be sent to the hotel or a large hole be dug in the backyard of the church.



Jeffery M. Silberman is a rabbi and an ACPE supervisor at Norwalk Hospital, Norwalk, Connecticut. He writes both from his Jewish tradition and from his position as an ACPE supervisor.

My religious tradition values honesty, responsibility, and personal accountability. Obviously these are some of the issues inherent in the case study.

Yet, for me as an ACPE supervisor, the question is not to judge or impose these values upon the seminarian who has approached me for help. The key phrase in the case presentation must be "some supervision." What does Johanna want from me as a supervisor? Is she primarily focused on her own culpability? Is her worry her own professional or personal self-interest? Does she feel the need to "blow the whistle" on her young man from the congregation who has spoken to her? Is her interest in punishing or protecting the teens? My first task must be to determine exactly what it is that she is struggling with and then determine how I can help her?

The case presents issues on a number of levels for me. The first is the level of the teen's behavior in the context of a religiously sponsored event. The second is the level of the seminarian's moral choices in being the person with responsibilities to the congregation and for the teens at the event. The third level is the question of what supervisory guidance do I want to offer Johanna. There are also specific questions, if I step back for a moment, about supervisory strategy.

On the first level, some things are clear. There was theft. There was underage drinking and use of drugs. There may have been more inappropriate behavior, including possible sexual activity. But, there is also remorse and contrition on Kevin's part. Going further onto the second level, there is a clear sense of Johanna's own responsibility, evidenced by her thinking about seeking consultation. She has been forthcoming in telling the story to the Field Education director and going to the CPE supervisor. Now she is decidedly at a crossroad.

This is the context for her seeking "some supervision." It does not in any way fall to me as supervisor to decide or dictate. I see my role merely to clarify the implications of each option that Johanna can choose. My own inclination is to see these circumstances as a learning opportunity for everyone. What does the seminarian need to learn from this? What do the teens need to learn?

Therefore, my intervention as a Jewish supervisor would be to help focus the issues for each one involved. Kevin trusted Johanna with an honest confession of his wrong doing. He likely felt guilty in addition to his fears about his future in college. He did not ask Johanna to keep this confidential, so he must know on some level that she could make this public or, at the very least, tell his folks. What does Johanna think he could, or perhaps should, learn from this? By the same token, Johanna "failed" on one level to monitor the teens under her supervision. She also has succeeded in building a trusting relationship with one of the teens in her care. Honesty may be the best policy,

but then it is also necessary to live with the consequences of one's choices. How does Johanna consider this tension?

From my religious perspective, I hope for what is best for Johanna. In terms of communal responsibility, Judaism draws upon Exodus 19:16. The first part of this verse states "do not stand idly by." This is a mandate to act. But the verse ends with "while your neighbor's blood is being spilled." There is no blood being spilled here. Johanna is the only one who really can decide how to resolve this. It is for her to decide.



Mary Ann Moman is associate general secretary in the Division of Ordained Ministry of The United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. She writes from the perspective of a director of Field Education and the supervising pastor.

Support and accountability are held together by trust. What is not clear in the case study is the covenant or agreements of trust that are in place with the supervising pastor. Without that clarity, it is difficult to know how Johanna might work with her supervising pastor in this situation. Although the supervising pastor would be the direct supervisor, Johanna also has a covenant with the director of Field Education at her seminary. Both of these persons will be critical in working out the solution to the problem that has been presented to Johanna.

While Johanna contacted the director of Field Education with the information, it is clear that she is relying on her CPE supervisor for advice and support. The United Methodist Church values both support and accountability. From the perspective of the director of Field Education, it would be important to help Johanna identify the next steps in the process of working through the issue of drug and alcohol abuse and theft of property at the church-sponsored retreat. The director would help Johanna determine what to do with the information she has received from Kevin and who should be involved with the youth and their parents. Accountability without this kind of support is unfair, especially for a student pastor. The director of Field Education can provide support for Johanna to meet with her supervising pastor.

The supervising pastor should be informed about the situation immediately. The event was sponsored by the church, and there could be repercussions within the congregation and the community. Johanna also has the responsibility to inform the adults who were on the trip of the event. It is

not Johanna's job to "protect" the information that has been shared with her. She was right not to promise to keep the secret. There may be legal ramifications depending on what actually happened. She has a responsibility to the youth, their parents, and the pastor to respond to Kevin's information. Even though she perceives that the relationship with the supervising pastor has not been helpful to her, she is responsible to report this incident and be open to the counsel of the supervising pastor. Ultimately, the pastor will be held responsible.

Johanna needs support to learn from this situation. This will not be the last time Johanna will be confronted with a confounding situation. Nor will it be the last time she works with someone who doesn't seem to be responsive to her learning needs. This situation can provide an opportunity for her to learn and grow in a safe environment and to build a better working relationship with the supervising pastor. Some of the questions that Johanna needs to explore would include:

1. What are Johanna's expectations for resolving the problem that Kevin has presented?
2. What are the theological issues involved?
3. What support does she need in order to understand the situation and then act appropriately?
4. Does Johanna have appropriate boundaries with regard to this specific situation, and how will she work through her experience with drugs and alcohol as a teenager?
5. Is Johanna open to creating a new relationship with the supervising pastor?
6. What new covenants/agreements need to be made with the supervising pastor and the congregation?

As the supervising pastor, I would want to have regular conversations with Johanna that would include reflections on her work and opportunity for me to give feedback. The process of setting expectations and regular supervisory conversations will be important throughout her career in ministry. In The United Methodist Church regular supervision is part of our connectional system. That supervision comes from senior pastors, district superintendents, and staff/parish relations committees. Supervision holds us accountable for our ministry. Support allows us to test our assumptions and learn from our mistakes. Accountability makes resolution possible for all persons involved.

It is important to remember that Johanna is a student. Her assignment to this congregation is part of her seminary education. The supervisor can "walk with" Johanna through this situation and provide both a spiritual center and

practical guidance as she tests her role as pastor. United Methodists are guided by John Wesley's rules to do no harm, do good while attending to the ordinances of God. Johanna's supervising pastor can help her make decisions and guide her through the process, helping her understand the importance of these rules not only for her, but for all of the persons involved.

This event may also be a time for Johanna to exercise her teaching role with the youth and parents. As they work through a process together, issues of sin, repentance, and forgiveness will need to be discussed and rituals developed to attend to repentance and forgiveness. Steps will also need to be taken so that the incident is not repeated.



Kamal Abu-Shamsieh is the director of the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno. He is a Sunni Muslim who serves in a Shiite Islamic Center and is an ardent advocate of interfaith and intra-Muslim dialogue. He responds as if the case of Johanna had occurred in a Muslim context.

The case is indeed interesting and its impacts are far reaching on multiple levels. On one hand, there are religious, familial, and inner-organizational violations that must be rectified and ultimately dealt with. On the other hand, there are legal and civic law violations that must be addressed.

In the formation of Muslim leaders, they are taught that it is the responsibility of Muslim leaders and all members to live their lives in accordance with Islamic teachings and to respect the law of the land where they live. In case of Johanna, her immediate responsibility toward the youth is to foster their religious empowerment in a safe and healthy environment. Her goals should include helping the youth practice their faith, advance their religious education, and encourage them to become contributing Muslims in a nation of diverse faith and ethnic communities. To achieve her goals, Johanna must herself be a responsible and professional adult with high work ethics and excellent communication skills.

It is inevitable that Muslim leaders will encounter passionate debates among religious leaders, parents, and youth regarding the mixing of the sexes, dating, or substance abuse just to name a few. Whenever a religious offence occurs, Muslims have the religious obligation first to seek understanding of what happened. Second, it is imperative not to promote the offense or make it material for the grapevine. While Western popular culture supports joint activities between members of the opposite sex, Muslims' approaches vary. The

majority of Muslims frown on mixing of the different sexes, while others approve of it with caution. No practicing Muslim will allow underage boys and girls to be secluded without constant adult supervision. In this case, underage teens were left without supervision long enough to mix and abuse drugs and alcohol.

Johanna failed to report to her supervisor and instead turned to unauthorized individuals and used unsecure channels of communication. Also, she established her professional relationship with her supervisor based on perception instead of facts, which led her to doubt her supervisor's intentions to help her deal with the current situation. Alternatively, she must meet with her supervisor immediately and together meet with the teen and his family for further discussion.

Johanna and her supervisor are encouraged to seek additional information. They need to keep in mind their responsibility to protect the privacy of their members and not to contribute to a situation where the information collected will lead to isolation of community members or damage to their reputation. Assuming that not all teens who participated in the field trip abused drugs of alcohol, only the families of the involved teens must be informed about actions involving their sons or daughters.

The religious institution is educational and not punitive; even so, one must respect the law of the land at all times. Faith leaders, in this case, do not have the authority to report to law enforcement agencies; it is the responsibility of the parents or the legal guardians to do so if they wished. In case of an investigation, faith leaders must cooperate fully with the law. The liability of the religious institution is limited. Prior to the activity, it is customary that the legal guardians sign a release of liability that protects the institution from damages, intentional and unintended. However, inter-organizational discipline must be carried out in regards to Johanna when her levels of breach of contracts are determined.

The drug and alcohol abuse in this case is not the only problem we are dealing with. According to the teen's testimony, he has found a set of mono-grammed towels in his possession. The religious institution may contact the hotel to arrange for the return of the towels. I encourage sending a letter of apology along with an offer to compensate the hotel. As for the teens involved, I recommend counseling sessions. The youth program should feature educational programs about peer pressure, risks of drug and alcohol abuse, and personal responsibility.

Finally, the process of repentance in Islam is unique. The highlight is on God, the one whom the individual is seeking help from, rather than the offense itself. The outcome is a deeper acknowledgment and stronger relationship with the Divine. While repentance flames remorse and the feeling of guilt, individuals need to be empowered with tools to correct the current sin and with the resolve not to indulge it in the future.



Elizabeth Soto is the coordinator of Field Education at Lancaster Theological Seminary in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She writes from the perspective of someone responsible for approving sites for ministerial practice, training pastors in becoming supervisors, and supporting seminarians in field placement.

I understand that my primary role is to empower Johanna to address this complex crisis locally. In the phone conversation initiated by Johanna, I would aim at offering emotional support as she looks at the available resources around her. There will be two pedagogical goals to address: what does she need from my role as director of Field Education that will assist her in building self-trust to deal with the layers of this situation. Later on, when we debrief the situation, I will want to know what she learned about herself and her calling for ministry.

There are two issues that need to be addressed in a different manner. The first task is to provide support and directives for the seminarian. The second issue is the lack of support from the supervisor as understood by the student. In cultures that have suffered oppression, "trust is established as we walk in a relationship" whereas in predominantly Anglo cultures, I have observed that relationships "start with certain degree of trust." As a woman, I am aware that issues of trust are related to the use of power. The student pastor is not equal to her supervisor. How does one address this dynamic within field placement? Some of the power dynamics involve gender/race/age in the relationship between the seminarian and her supervisor. Although the seminarian has found in past experience that "the supervisor has not been helpful," we need to validate her feelings and at the same time explore the other side of the story. The pastoral supervisor is mandated to create a trusting environment with Johanna as part of the teaching responsibilities.

In this case study, the seminarian/intern pastor is seeking help from a former CPE supervisor and her director of Field Education—both of whom

are outside the congregation. Overwhelmed by the potential replications of the outcome of this crisis, she is in need of clear guidance. As a director I will actively listen and allow Johanna to ventilate her feelings, enabling the students to sort out the next step to take. The priority in this case is safety for the youth, not silence.

Johanna must understand that the outcome of this case will directly reflect upon her ministerial skills as well as her ministerial vocation. There are two major issues in this case that require different levels of inside and outside involvement. The support from outside the congregation should be to empower her to use her agency/authority in convening/informing all the necessary parties starting with her supervisor. At the same time, the director should respect congregational autonomy in internal issues. It is the congregation's responsibility to create a positive learning involvement for the seminarian. This situation can provide for a teachable moment for the seminarian, the local church, and the seminary.

In the midst of this crisis, we need to ask, "Where is God in all of this?" As the Chinese wisdom teaches us "crisis is an opportunity for change." What are the changes we need to implement in training supervisors in building trust, working in unequal power dynamics, and what are the clues to look for in approving long distance field education sites?

There is a parallel worth noting between responsibility of the director of Field Education toward Johanna and Johanna's responsibility toward the youth in her congregation. The field education director has an institutional and pastoral responsibility in the formation of the seminarian's ministerial life; on the same note, Johanna has a moral and pastoral responsibility in providing guidance to the youth. These two types of responsibility must be exercised carefully, but not avoided. A good balance between direct and influential support should be offered, still allowing Johanna to act. At the same time, the on-site supervisor/pastor has covenanted with the seminary allowing the field education director to approach the supervisor in order to enhance the student/supervisor relationship. As director, I will assess my involvement with Johanna according to three principles: empowering others to make their decision, respecting boundaries, and supporting the ones for whom I have responsibility. Accountability and transparency are two factors that allow the pastoral supervisor, congregation, seminary, Johanna, and the field education director to move toward a peaceful and responsible outcome.



Martha Stortz is currently professor of Historical Theology and Ethics at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California. In the fall, she will become the Bernhard M. Christensen Chair in Religion and Vocation at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota. She was invited to respond both to the case and to the six responses above. She writes as an ethicist deeply concerned about the practice of ministry.

Johanna has *reacted* to information told to her in confidence by Kevin; she has not yet *responded*. She worries that being "implicated" will affect her future; she fears that talking with her adult team will be "difficult." Because she doesn't "trust" her supervisor, she seeks counsel from trusted others. This is all important information, but it constitutes a reaction, not a response. The human brain reacts instinctively—by guts alone—for survival, and it employs reason to sift information from other parts of the brain to choose a considered response. If Johanna were to move beyond reacting, what would a considered response look like?

1. Responsibility is more process than a single action.¹ Like an act in four parts, the process first acknowledges agency. Johanna must see herself as a subject of action, not the object of someone else's action. Certainly, she neither invited nor initiated the actions of the youth on the snow trip. She could easily feel a "victim" of circumstance: "Kevin told me something..." Claiming agency, however, moves Johanna from accusative to nominative case: "I heard Kevin's confession." She claims agency, albeit unwanted.

Some commentators argue that she should have shared Kevin's secret first with her supervisor, rather than going over his head. She knows she'll have to do more, even if she is at present "uncertain" what that involves. At the moment, one of the best things Johanna does is to pause—and take stock. In her essay in this volume, Karen Lebacqz describes this reflective dimension of responsibility as "a certain kind of thinking—a pondering and considering of circumstances, history, and future possibilities, all within an overarching theological framework."²

2. Taking stock focuses on the second step in responsibility: assessment. Johanna has to address the question: What is going on? Elizabeth Soto reframes the question spiritually: Where is God in all this? However assessment is framed, it considers players, roles, and power involved.

At the outset, Johanna identifies her supervisor, the other adults on the snow trip with her, parents of the other teens, her CPE supervisor, and her director of Field Education as players in the situation.

Eldon Olson rightly zeroes in on the blind spot in her deliberation to this point: vulnerable minors. Kamal Abu-Shamsieh adds God to the list of players, seeing the incident as an opportunity to draw more deeply into relationship with the divine mystery.

These players are arrayed around the incident in concentric circles, some in tight orbit around the actual incident, others more at a distance, all under the umbrella of divine love. Interestingly, at present Johanna does not have contact with players on the innermost orbits: the other teens involved and her supervisor. Contact with her supervisor is important and urgent, for he bears legal responsibility for oversight of the volunteers and spiritual responsibility for the pastoral care of the congregation.

At the same time, as she identifies players, Johanna will be aware that almost all of them have dual roles. Some in the youth ministry team are also parents of the teens in question. Her supervisor simultaneously exercises oversight over the volunteers and serves as their pastor. Finally, Johanna herself is both youth minister as well as a temporary student intern in the congregation.

As she examines the roles each person plays, Johanna identifies vectors of power throughout. Elizabeth Soto names elements of race/class/gender/age/privilege that color this incident. Johanna is closer in age and experience to the teens, younger than their parents and her supervisor. Her supervisor holds social power as male, and he is also probably older and a long-term presence in the congregation. Finally, in confessing to her, could Kevin be testing his social power as male against her professional power as intern? Mary Ann Moman's point is crucial: Johanna is still a student.

As Johanna sorts through all of these players, their various roles, and the power that flows through them, she constructs an **assessment** or **complex mapping** of the situation. This will help her discern appropriate next steps. This spatial layout identifies "different levels of inside and outside involvement," as Soto puts it, zones of appropriate confidentiality and support. Thom Kilts proposes a kind of three-dimensional mapping with his insight that *samaya*, the covenant between a student and teacher, may be limited to a specific time and space. His distinction between consultation and supervision underscores the time-frame of a supervisory relationship. Any *supervision* Johanna receives from her former CPE supervisor may make her less reliant on seeking supervision from her *de facto* supervisor in this situation.

3. With a complex mapping in place, Johanna is ready to move to a third step in the process of responsibility: **accountability**. Moral accountability requires Johanna to anticipate the players' possible re-

actions and responses to any given course of action she might take. Johanna registers her own array of reactions and responses, but this step challenges her to imagine those of others.

Here the distinctions between gut-level reaction and considered response will be particularly tricky. How will her pastoral supervisor receive Johanna's information when he learns of it—and the fact that she has shared it with others before speaking with him? Will he react or respond? Let's hope he turns out to be someone like Jeffrey Silberman, whose wise and measured insights model good supervision. How will Kevin receive what she does with his confidence? Will he understand that she has to do something? What will his array of reactions and responses be? Finally, as Abu-Shamsieh underscores, one response is certain: whatever happens, Johanna can lean on divine mercy, deepening her relationship with the divine.

4. Acting toward a common good is the fourth and final step in responsibility. I use "toward" intentionally. There will be no "perfect" resolutions here: everyone's hands will be dirty; everyone's motives will be mixed. And yet people of faith can hope for a "good-enough" resolution, one from which everyone learns something—if they can unclench their hands to receive it.

I take very seriously the use of drugs and alcohol among minors in general: it is a staging ground for sex and coercion, violence, and even death. That this happened during a supervised church-sponsored event is more serious than Johanna—and some of the commentators—grasp at the moment. Kevin and the other teens need to know theft is the least of their problems.

Regardless of where they fall in the array of concentric circles radiating out from the initiating incident, all of this plays out against a divine horizon. What we are responsible for depends on what we are responsible to. "Reflective responsibility,"

Karen Lebacqz writes elsewhere in this volume, "is a response to the call and claim of God in our lives."³ Everyone in this situation is a child of God. If Johanna can respond reflectively rather than reactively, she may be surprised by the embodied grace of other players.

NOTES

1. In what follows, I draw loosely on H. Richard Niebuhr's discussion of a "pattern" of responsibility in his book, *The Responsible Self* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 61–65.
2. Karen Lebacqz, "Reflective Responsibility," *Reflective Practice* 30 (2010): 10–23.
3. *Ibid.*, 21.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE MINISTRY DISCIPLINES



In *Master of Souls*, a volume in the series of mysteries of ancient Ireland by Peter Tremayne, Sister Fidelma and her companions encounter a rough-hewn blacksmith who promises to take them over rough seas in search of those responsible for a series of violent deaths in the region. Sister Fidelma is surprised by their sudden generosity and asks why. “Because of the character that you have revealed to us,” the smithy replies. Sister Fidelma’s authenticity inspired the reclusive blacksmith to take an enormous risk for a complete stranger.¹ The demonstration of character promotes trust, opens doors for cooperation, and invites deeper engagement with people. In this fictional account from the seventh century, character mattered, and it matters for religious leadership today.

Character is the predisposition to act in accord with one’s principles and values. In that sense, character is the complex set of mental and moral traits that mark an individual. This emphasis on character presumes that good works arise from good people. The minister’s work does not follow from a moral code or a set of theological principles or even well-developed skills and competencies but from habit, out of an ingrained, inculcated pattern of living informed by dispositions of the soul.

Ministerial character is both distinctive and deliberate. Moreover, it is never static but evolving throughout one’s lifetime. The psychologist Viktor Frankl once described the therapeutic process in a way that corresponds to the formation of character. He noted that what therapy has to achieve is to “transfer an *unconscious potentia* into a conscious *actus*, but only in order to re-establish an unconscious *habitus*.”² The formation of ministerial character requires such a transformation so that the work of religious leadership will be marked by trusted spontaneity or ‘un-self-conscious *habitus*.’ It should be as close to us as breathing.

Character formation is not an end in itself but a way to authentic living. Being an authentic individual means being naked before God. People of faith are invited to live without pretense because they believe that the human soul is ultimately hidden in God whose graciousness touches everything with mercy—even the minister’s soul. “The living of an authentic life is a continu-

ing challenge and should not be interpreted in moralistic terms, but seen as a genuine attempt to live an integrated life.”³ Religious leaders face an ongoing temptation to self-deception. In order to remain responsible and accountable, they must be willing to uncover, own, embrace, and acknowledge self-deceptions for the sake of a liberating and durable authenticity.

The essays in this section recognize in a variety of ways the significance of authentic character in the practice of religious or spiritual disciplines. The virtues that Gordon Hilsman connected to professional standards in a previous essay, Lisa Fullam examines as part of an ethical framework that is necessary for spiritual guidance. The spiritual guide must embody the virtues he or she seeks to form. Virtues are the qualities of character that help us be alive. “They are the narratives of human flourishing, of the integrity of lives well-lived, of being people like those we find worthy of imitation” (p. 89). Even though perfection is not possible, the spiritual guide needs to be devoted to a continual process of embodying virtues.

For Ron Sunderland and Ted Smith, forming and supervising lay ministers of care in and for a hospital setting is grounded in “accountability for the baptismal vows through which believers are instated within the gospel story” (p. 99). Within a covenant framework for learning, accountability is fundamental for the quality and effectiveness of lay ministry. The authors also insist that churches must be held “accountable for their failure to empower laypeople to engage in pastoral ministry as a vocation in which they seek to live out their baptismal vows” (p. 108).

Very little has been written about the formation and supervision of spiritual directors. Janet Ruffing has provided a comprehensive review of this developing form of spiritual guidance. She reiterates the theme of continual growth for both supervisee and supervisor articulated by Lisa Fullam. “Because supervision of neophyte spiritual directors is very much a spiritual process, supervisors also need to attend to their own self-care and the depth of their own contemplative lives and spiritual growth” (p. 123). The centrality of prayer in spiritual direction must be mirrored in supervision.

Most religious institutions have some rubric stating that ministers have the responsibility to ensure that they receive regular professional supervision. There has been ample evidence in the last decades that religious institutions have not always held themselves accountable to the same standards that they have expected of ministers and religious leaders. On the basis of his pilot project on professional supervision of pastoral ministry leaders in the Uniting Church of Australia, Raymond A. Reddicliffe argues persuasively for dual ac-

countability to strengthen the safety net for religious leaders and to transform the institutions to which they are accountable.

The program of renewal for lay and ordained pastoral leaders that Marianne LaBarre describes is a distinctive program of spiritual coaching that combines spiritual direction and professional supervision with the practice of leadership coaching. Once pastoral leaders identify, with a spiritual coach, the changes they want to make, an agreement of mutual accountability is made that seeks to reinforce the resolve of the pastoral leader to make changes. To create an environment that encourages and supports the desired change, spiritual coaching, as LaBarre defines it, aims to foster an ethic of enduring responsibility and accountability that is simultaneously individual and mutual.

In the concluding essay in this section, Christie Cozad Neuger discusses the ongoing tragedy of clergy sexual misconduct. As this volume is being prepared, more allegations and instances of child sexual abuse and institutional negligence are emerging in the Roman Catholic Church in Europe. Neuger's focus is on clergy-to-adult forms of sexual misconduct, not because it is more offensive than child sexual abuse but because it continues to be more easily excused or overlooked. If the Christian Church is in decline in the West, it is in part because congregations have not always had pastoral leaders committed to embodying and maintaining trustworthy relationships. Character matters. To paraphrase Christie Neuger's last line, trustworthiness and authenticity must be a top priority for all religious communities because too much is at stake.

NOTES

1. Peter Tremayne, *Master of Souls: A Novel of Ancient Ireland* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005).
2. Viktor E. Frankl and James M. Dubois, *On the Theory and Therapy of Mental Disorders: An Introduction to Logotherapy and Existential Analysis*, trans. James M. Dubois (New York: Routledge, 2004), 213.
3. John E. Paver, *Theological Reflection and Education for Ministry: Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 2.

Herbert Anderson
Editor

Ethics of Spiritual Guidance

Lisa Fullam

Ask most people about ethics in spiritual guidance—defined broadly to include pastoral ministries, spiritual direction, and other forms of spiritual care—and you'll quickly find yourself in a discussion of two issues: boundaries and confidentiality.¹ If you push further and ask about accountability, often you'll get a response about financial transparency. Ask about responsibility, and perhaps they'll mention vulnerable people, especially children and others liable to sexual abuse or exploitation. All of these are important, even crucial, issues.

The problem starts when you then ask what should be done about these ethical problems. On boundaries, you might get a list of whom one may and may not date. On confidentiality, they'll often respond with a list of who is a mandated reporter for what. Financial transparency? Have a pastoral council that provides budget oversight. Abuse? Have a window put in the door of your office. These are not bad ideas, but I will argue here that they skip a step and miss a critical aspect of what it means to be a professional offering spiritual guidance: they miss questions about the character, the virtues, of the guide. Ethical reflection that focuses on the character of the agent is an ancient

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mode of ethical reflection that is enjoying a new resurgence in many areas of applied ethics. Here, I will first make a case for why I think virtue ethics is particularly apt as a mode of ethical reflection for spiritual guides in their work.² Then, I will describe virtue ethics as a method more completely, concluding with some preliminary thoughts on how a virtue ethicist might approach the topics of responsibility and accountability.

WHY VIRTUE ETHICS?

A virtue ethics approach often seems to lack the zippy clarity of the kind of aphoristic rules listed above and instead focuses on the formation of the guide. Yet it seems to hold special promise for the work of those providing spiritual guidance.

Consider this analogy. A person wishing to be a basketball coach will do well to learn as much about the game as she can. A better coach can employ this expertise in adaptable and flexible ways, given the situation on the court. Likewise, a good coach can read the strengths and weaknesses of another team and adapt her team's play likewise. These are what I will call the objective skills of coaching, and you cannot be a good coach unless you have some grasp of them.

But there's more to being a great coach than knowing the game. A great coach is involved not just in winning games but also in the development of the players. The cultural mythology about sports is built largely around its capacity to form players into better people overall; it is hoped that your alert and decisive point-guard will bring the same attentive self-confidence to her work as a trial lawyer. "The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton," the saying goes, and we regard cheating not merely as a violation of arbitrary rules of a game, but also as a reflection of a deeper lack of integrity of the players and, by extension, their coaches.

Spiritual guidance, of course, aims at this formative level. It would be absurd to think of a minister hoping that his parishioners will become really expert at a particular spiritual practice as an end in itself. "Well, Janet might be a liar, a gossip, and a pilferer, but gosh she's always there for adoration, and she's inexhaustible when she leads the Rosary—and she gets it done quickly, too!" Such a statement might be an accurate statement about Janet's actual state of spiritual development, but few would regard that as a satisfactory goal or end-point for one's faith life. The practices of spiritual life are aimed at deepening our relationship with the Divine, raising our sensitivity to the nu-

minous in the universe and especially in others, and cultivating ethical lives of devotion to service and the cause of justice in the world. If they do not at least have the potential for that kind of deep formation, then we had be better off spending our time doing something constructive. And a minister or director fails if he or she cannot be a resource, at least imperfectly, for that process of facilitating the spiritual growth of those we serve. Spiritual guidance, then, is the business of formation of those in our care. That much is obvious.

But let us return to the basketball team. The personality, priorities, attitude, and values—the character—of the coach is central to the success or failure of the personal formation of the members of the team, within limits. At one level this is obvious too: a coach who is not diligent in studying the game will have little to offer strategically when the team struggles. If that message of laxity regarding the game is conveyed to the players, then the game is no longer a sport but merely a pastime played like badminton at a picnic. If the coach is not devoted to the game, why should the players be? And when what is needed from the players is a maximum effort at practice, why should they bother if the coach does not care?

The opposite bad attitude can also be easily seen: if the coach cares so much about winning the game that she puts her players at physical risk by insisting they play while injured, then the players get the message that the game counts more than they do, and winning is the only acceptable outcome. And if clever cheating can gain the same kudos that diligent work can, why not cheat? It is easy to see how translating these into other areas of life can be a problem. Why not just skate by at work doing the minimum one can, especially if doing the work of advancement would be unpleasant? Conversely, why not grab for all the advancement one can, at the expense of one's own health, balanced lifestyle, relationships with family and co-workers, and so forth? If the position or the paycheck is the only important thing, then it is to be pursued at all costs.

There's one more step. The coach is a formator by example of her own attitude to the game and the players. A related set of questions involves asking about the life of coaching: coaches can grow obsessed with coaching and lose track of their own well-being, which generally affects both the coach and the players adversely. And while there is a reasonable boundary in keeping details of the coach's life private from the team, still the overall color of the coach's life will be evident. Coaches become formators for integrating life and sport, life and work, for the fundamental attitudes toward challenge, oppor-

tunity, and adversity that are formative in a less direct, but perhaps more profound, way than the other levels of one's approach to the game.³

CONNECTING SPIRITUALITY AND PRACTICE

Spiritual guides are formative in the same two ways: first in the direct formation of how one approaches spiritual matters specifically, but second, in how their own lives reflect or fail to reflect the goals of relationship to the divine, the numinous, and the neighbor. Because of the nature and aims of spiritual practices, the connection between these two levels is far stronger than that of other endeavors like sports coaching. There is a distance between playing and coaching that allows non-athletes to be good coaches, and for coaches with serious dysfunction in other areas of their lives to be able to coach. But in spiritual matters, the practice and the spirituality are known by their fruits: if a spiritual guide lives a life of snappish anger or inability to love, the guide's message is compromised, perhaps entirely. Like the coach, there are reasonable boundaries of privacy about the details of the spiritual guide's life. But since the spiritual guide is engaged in a formative business that promises growth in the peace, harmony, and devotion to God and world, the glimpses and gleanings of serious disharmony concern exactly the matter about which the spiritual guide is supposed to be expert.

So can only the perfect and saintly presume to be spiritual guides? Not at all. Here also the basketball analogy is helpful: it is often said that the greatest players do not always make great coaches. The mid-level or lower-level players, those who might have to figure out through diligent practice and attentiveness to details about how to move their feet in guarding a player, are often better at cultivating other players, at finding the seeds of grace in their game and helping them nourish them. So too in spiritual guidance, where it is not so much sanctity that is asked, but diligent attentiveness to the practices and processes of spiritual life. After all, we all remain both graced and sinning, but, we hope, we are also devoted enough to respond to Jesus' invitation to "be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect." Perfection, here, is not a state or an achievement, but a process worked by the Spirit with the collaborative soul. Spiritual guides must be devotees of the process, even—and especially—where they struggle.

So we have three levels of questions: those directly about knowledge of spiritual guidance and how to convey it; those about understanding guidance as a mode of human development of one's client in some more holistic way;

and those about how one's own life is a formative influence on others. In spiritual guidance, as I've said, the second two questions are inextricable because of the nature of what we offer. Most work on the ethics of spiritual guidance focuses on the formation of the client. Here I want to consider the formation of the formator. And this is the task of virtue ethics.

WHAT IS VIRTUE ETHICS?

Virtue ethics holds that the first concern of ethics is not actions ("can I date a parishioner?") but character and its development ("what are the virtues of a good minister?") In the Aristotelian/Thomistic school of virtue ethics which I employ here, virtues are understood as perfections of natural human capacities. Just as we are born with muscles that may be strengthened by exercise, so we are born with the capacity for justice, prudence, and other virtues that are developed by attentive practice. "We become builders ... by building, and we become harpists by playing the harp. Similarly, then, we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions."⁴ While it is true that "the just man justifies,"⁵ it is also true that the just man becomes just by doing works of justice deliberately and with self-awareness.

According to Aristotle, virtues become second nature—stable habits or ways of responding to the challenges of life. Most of the time, our actions reveal (as well as form) our characters. Think of the kinds of stories we tell when toasting a bride or bridegroom at a wedding or the stories we tell at a wake—in an incident, we try to reveal something about the kind of person the spouse or the departed is. "Oh, yes, that's him!" is the aimed-for response. In virtue ethics, all our actions, both those we think through carefully and those we do by rote or by simpler decision-making processes, are significant insofar as they have the effect of underscoring or eroding the character we possess.

Virtues are matters of practical rationality: they are habits of knowing what to do in varied and changing circumstances. It is the virtue of prudence that guides the virtues to acts appropriate to the situation and to recognize the next step in growing in virtue. Prudence is sometimes misunderstood as cautious holding back from what we are considering doing. In fact, prudence can as often urge us to take chances or go forward when caution seems safe but not virtuous. For instance, a spiritual director who finds himself with a client who seems not to be engaging the process honestly or whole-heartedly can let the waste of time continue (despite the director's mounting irritation), or

he might, after sufficient reflection, raise the matter with the client. Prudence here would counsel addressing the issue, both for the sake of the client and the director.

A virtue is a reasoned mean between an excess and a deficit, both of which are vices. This is easy to see in the case of courage. A person deficient in courage is a coward. But it is also true that a person can have too much of what looks like courage and rush stupidly into unreasonable danger. Prudence points to the reasonable response in a given circumstance, for a particular person. Humility is also a reasonable mean. In Christian tradition, we tend to think of a dichotomy of humility and pride, in which pride is a grievous sin and humility, conversely, can be misconstrued as self-abasement. But an ethics of virtue urges us also to be aware that if pride is a vice opposing humility, so is its opposite vice: groundless and unreasonable self-abasement. Some of the people we guide—and guides ourselves—may need to be warned against excessive pride, but others of us need to be encouraged to more self-assertion because we are inclined to excessive self-abasement, declaring ourselves somehow not worthy of attention, celebration, or effort.

GROWTH IN VIRTUES

Since acquiring virtue is a process of perfection, growth in virtue is always construed in personal terms. We begin with a certain state of a virtue (except prudence, which Aristotle and Thomas agree is entirely acquired by education and experience.) Our path to perfection is shaped by our natural “baseline” of a virtue, the particularities of temperament, and other life circumstances. A naturally choleric person has farther to go to achieve patience than a less irritable person. Both are called to perfection, but the small steps that take us there are prudential estimations of the best the individual can do at that moment on the way to true virtue. Likewise, the form a given virtue takes varies with the situation of the individual. Both pastors and fighter pilots are called to be courageous, but in different ways. Not every person who is patient or courageous will manifest those virtues in the same ways. The fighter pilot will always seem to be more daring than the average pastor, even when both have acquired the courage that fits their callings. A virtue ethic makes us aware of the infinite variety of manifestations of human excellence, humble in our estimations of others, and kind to ourselves also as we strive to become more fully virtuous.

People, not ideas. The benchmarks for virtue are not ideas but people. We do not encounter virtues as pure concepts; rather we see them at work enlivening the lives of people around us. We learn justice by noticing Rosa Parks refusing to move to the back of the bus. We learn compassion from watching the nurse at the hospital. We learn patience watching a teacher work with a student who just does not get it. This goes back to the beginnings of virtue ethics: in a stark disagreement with his teacher Plato, Aristotle said that we cannot begin with abstract ideas, but “we ought to begin from things known to us.”⁶ Aristotle derived the hodgepodge group of virtues he describes in his *Nicomachean Ethics* inductively. He looked around at who seemed to be flourishing in Athens and took note of the virtues they seemed to possess.

This process had flaws. If we merely look around at who seems to be doing well in a particular setting, we are likely to wind up with a fairly biased image of what is virtuous. In grade school, it can look like the people who are the most successful are the bullies or the teachers’ pets. In a consumer society, the rich appear best off. Aristotle has been criticized for presenting a set of virtues that reflect the character of free, wealthy Athenian men, not humanity generally. But the definition of virtue is about human nature: a virtue is a perfection of a human capacity. So the method itself has a built-in corrective factor. A virtue, as virtue, must reflect human nature, not merely the desires of a given group. Since human nature transcends individuals, groups, and cultures, it is possible to enter into a true dialogue about the good life in ways that challenge or affirm our cultural heritage.

Choosing exemplars carefully. It matters, then, who we take (or who we offer to others) as exemplars. Bad exemplars will form us in the ways of vice, not virtue. Good exemplars will help us grow in virtue. How do we tell the difference? Remember, virtues involve an assessment of human nature: What are the qualities of character that help us to be “fully alive,” individually and communally? Virtues are not ascetical practices that lead to happiness, as though we will be rewarded with happiness if we are sufficiently kind or temperate. In this tradition, virtues are the content of human happiness: to live in accord with virtue is to live in accord with our created nature, which, all other things being equal, will be profoundly, humanly satisfying.⁷ Sources for how we understand virtue are in the stories we tell of “profiles in courage,” of little engines “that could,” of people like Gandhi facing down the British empire with only a loincloth and a smile. They are the narratives of human flourishing, of the integrity of lives well-lived, of being people like those we find worthy of imitation.

In a Christian virtue ethics, norms for virtue can be found in the person of Jesus, the lives of the saints, and our hopes for the Reign of God. Ethicist William Spohn points to the role of the analogical imagination in ethical reasoning. Far from a facile “what would Jesus do?” Spohn challenges us to ask whether a given value or course of action “rhymes with Jesus.” What would a person who tries to embody the virtues of Jesus do in trying to respond well to this or that situation?⁸ Likewise saints point to a vast array of virtuous and flawed responses to the call of Christ. Collectively, they are a motley collection of people trying to refract the light of Jesus through their own personalities and contexts. Saints are all over the place, too. They are not just in the stained-glass windows in our churches, but they are the people around us who possess traits we find admirable, that speak to us of the presence of the Spirit and the coming of the kingdom. Jesus described the reign of God in terms that are practically useless as action guides—“the reign of God is like a mustard seed”—but in terms that invite us instead to employ all the resources of imagination and energy to cooperate with the coming of that kingdom.

Reconfiguring virtues. Virtue ethicist James F. Keenan offers a set of cardinal virtues re-configured for our time.⁹ The word “cardinal” means hinge; cardinal virtues are virtues that contain or embrace all the other virtues that we posit. Keenan suggests that we consider four cardinal virtues of justice, fidelity, self-care, and prudence in light of the ways in which we are relational: we are related to the whole of human society, our capacity for which is perfected by the virtue of justice. We are related specially to those to whom we are closely and individually united—life-partners, children, individual clients, and others—and our capacity to engage those relationships is perfected by fidelity. We are related uniquely to ourselves, and so self-care is a cardinal virtue. Finally, Keenan understands prudence in much the same way as Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle, as the virtue that helps the other virtues to their own ends in given situations for different people.

I would add as a cardinal virtue for spiritual guides, and for other professionals as well, the virtue of trustworthiness, which would include all the distinct professional capacities we should possess, ranging from the specifics of academic preparation to the kinds of skills we need to practice well, like active listening, understanding the limitations of our disciplines, and devotion to continuing education. Most or all of the matter of trustworthiness can be understood in light of the other virtues; I add trustworthiness as a cardinal virtue chiefly to emphasize that virtues in professions are not just the broad human ideals to which we are all called, but include a special category defini-

tive of the profession itself. I concur with Barbara Blodgett’s essay in the previous section in which she argues that one cannot substitute accountability for trust.¹⁰

THE VIRTUES IN SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

What does virtue ethics have to offer people who are working in spiritual guidance? Space does not permit a discussion of the full array of virtues for spiritual guides here. Thus, I would like to examine this question in general, but with special attention to virtues that are related to the concerns of accountability and responsibility with which I opened this essay.

The first-order insights of virtue ethics will seem obvious to most people engaged in this kind of work: the key to being an effective spiritual guide is the focus on the spiritual growth and integration of the client, and that growth can aptly be expressed in terms of virtues. But virtue ethics asks of guides: “Who do YOU wish to become in and through your work as a spiritual mentor? How are you pursuing those goals?” According to virtue ethics, the cultivation of a guide’s own spiritual life and especially a guide’s good relationship to the work is a professional skill. The conscious engagement with our own on-going formation in the virtues is apt material both for one’s own spiritual direction and for consultation/supervision sessions with other formators. Who are those who exemplify what is best about the practice we share? What are the qualities of character that they reflect, and how do we manifest them or try to manifest them, in our own practice? And as Gordon Hilsman proposed in his essay, assessing one another’s virtues could contribute to preventing errant behavior by professionals.¹¹

Prudential Precepts. Once we leave the realm of the cardinal virtues and begin to explore the subsidiary virtues, we begin to see that there is a wide range of virtues appropriate to good spiritual guidance. Further, those subsidiary virtues give rise to a number of “prudential precepts” that are shorthand ways of approaching certain situations that are generally, but not always, consistent with virtue. Those prudential precepts include some of the rules I listed in the second paragraph of this essay, such as “don’t date your parishioners.” Those prudential precepts are nearly always true, and if a pastor elects to violate a prudential precept, the pastor should do so with caution and self-awareness.

Prudential precepts are not absolute: they hold if and insofar as they are consistent with a virtuous response to a given situation. If pastors could never

date parishioners, then single pastors in small rural denominations would often be faced with a choice of violating an absolute, dating outside a tradition that is both personally and professionally important to them, or being forced into unwilling and unchosen celibacy. None of these are appealing options. But are they the only virtuous choices?

An Aristotelian/Thomistic virtue approach invites a closer look at the precept and asks why the prudential precept is usually true. Then the consideration might turn to thinking of the influence pastors have on their parishioners, especially when pastors are seen in light of their presumed connection to the mysterious Voice to which church people tend to be drawn. It is about pastoral power, but it is also about the relationship of pastors to parishioners and to the people they date and how those relationships differ. It is clear to most of us that a person dating the leader of their own church has no pastor—no one in that community, at least, who fills the unique role of pastor. The virtue of fidelity to the parishioner requires, at a minimum, that the pastor consider whether the relationship is so important and so promising that it is worth depriving a parishioner of a pastor.

The virtue of self-care requires, at a minimum, that the pastor seriously examine his or her social life more broadly: Is the pastor so connected to the job that the pastor has no substantive relationships outside the community? Is the pastor using a community member to fulfill true needs that could be better met elsewhere? The virtue of justice to the community requires, at a minimum, that both consider how the pastor's role might be seen to change if some parishioners are seen as dates, and how the pastor's relationship with the whole community might be colored—especially if the relationship ends, and the pastor begins to date another parishioner. And prudence helps the pastor begin to engage the kind of reflection that might help a decision be more mature, fit in better with the pastor's commitment to ministry and the service of the community, and the pastor's vocation generally.

Being accountable and responsible. Accountability and responsibility, in an ethics of virtue, can be seen to overlap substantially. Accountability can be seen to be an external force. We are accountable to those who may ask us to give an accounting for our actions or decisions that affect our clients and also for how those decisions reflect or fail to reflect the vision or tradition of service in which we are trained. Accountability may be seen to be an objective constraint on the limits of good practice. Responsibility, on the other hand, implies our own inner sense of the requisites of good practice. Responsible people hold themselves accountable to the standards of the practice. Taken more

literally, to be responsible is to be able to respond to situations in ways that are fitting in light of the relationships involved,¹² the potential for growth or harm inherent in the decision, and the effects of those on-going processes of formation for the guide, the client, the tradition in which they live, and broader society as well. Structures of accountability are like prudential precepts in that, by and large, they reflect the practices of prudent spiritual guides. The most extreme of them—for example, rules against violating the safety of a client—are virtually absolute, while others are less stringent.

In a virtue ethic of spiritual guidance, however, responsibility has much greater reach than accountability: we are responsible to our clients, clearly, in that relationship of fidelity that defines the discipline. Our professional skills, which are partly acquired by and contribute to our professional trustworthiness, serve the client's needs. But we are also responsible to our discipline. For some of us, this implies contribution to the academic resources of the profession or to training new practitioners. For all of us, it implies conducting ourselves with honesty and integrity, sub-virtues both of fidelity in the immediate relationship and justice to others with whom we share our discipline.

At the height of the sex abuse crisis in the United States, for example, many Roman Catholic priests felt especially suspect because of the pathological behavior of a small percentage of their confreres. The cover-up of the abuses of the sick minority by many bishops contributed to the widespread distrust of Catholic clergy which hampered priests' ability to serve. "Solutions" like requiring that one counsel vulnerable people, especially minors, in a room with a window in the door ignore the real problem, which in this case is a systemic pattern of toleration of abuse and secrecy that eroded, perhaps permanently, the public perception of Catholic clergy. The root problem was vices afflicting leadership—secrecy, clericalism, aversion to real reform, and others—not doors without windows.

Justice, Self-Care, and the Temptations of Power. The virtue of justice also raises larger questions about social justice, its role in the lives of those we serve, and how we conduct our professions so that all may benefit, not only an economic or other elite. We are responsible for—and accountable to—those we fail to serve due to social, economic or other injustices that afflict our societies.

Self-care is a particular concern when thinking about the responsibilities and accountabilities of spiritual guides. If we are seeking an integrated life of virtue ourselves, we cannot fall prey to the failures of self-care that contribute, for example, to the nearly 50 percent burnout rate of new ministers. Often,

people new to ministry misunderstand Jesus' command to "deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow me," to mean a 24/7 availability that undercuts reasonable self-care. But a workaholic is preaching a different God from the God of Jesus. The exhaustion, harried mien, and short temper of the workaholic speak volumes to the client.

Moreover, the roots of misdeeds by spiritual guides may often be found in bad self-care. Inappropriate relationships are easier to trip into if we are too enmeshed in those we deal with professionally. Boundary violations of all kinds can reflect a needy and unreflective guide more than a deliberate predator. An ethics of virtue invites special attention to the phenomenon of counter-transference, a normal part of counseling relationships. This is a place where attention to good self-care can help the counselor cope responsibly and in ways conducive not only to good professional service of the client, but also to the guide's own self-understanding.

Remember that virtues are prudential means between excess and deficit. Responsibility is no different. Many of the temptations faced by spiritual guides take the form of failure to care for the client enough—to behave irresponsibly. A pastoral minister who just cannot take another conversation with a difficult parishioner may be tempted to tell parishioner "what I really think." A spiritual director might subtly enjoy being regarded by a directee as uniquely wise and be tempted to drift into self-satisfying over-direction. We hurt others, we sin, more often from power than from weakness. We harm those entrusted to us by failing to care for them rightly. Virtue ethics also opens our eyes to the flip side of this scenario; it is also vicious to feel excessively responsible for the other. In some cases, this leads us to trespass into the sacred ground where God cares best for the client, and our responsibility is, in part, to stay out of God's way. Or a guide might feel responsible for a client whose life spirals sadly into addiction, despair, or even indifference. When guides assume too great a sense of responsibility for such situations, they are unlikely to be able to continue to work without harming themselves and perhaps others in their personal or professional relationships. Like all vices, the vice of over-responsibility is a lie, leading us to believe we have failed, when, if we have done our professional best in light of devotion to the virtues of our practice, we will have done all we can.

CONCLUSION

I have offered a case for a virtue ethics for spiritual guides. Such an approach is especially apt for our work because the witness of our own lives represents the vision of spiritual life that we offer our clients as much, or more, than do our words or professional skills. Virtue ethics invites us to regard professional ethics as a matter of formation of the formator, not only the supervisee or the client. I described virtues as perfections of natural human capacities; to be virtuous is not to be super-human, it is to be fully alive, thoroughly human in light of our created nature. The perfection of virtue is a process in which we acquire virtues by attentive and reflective practice. We look to moral exemplars to show us what virtues look like in real life, in a myriad of different incarnations. The important role of moral exemplars reminds us that any community's vision of the good life for human beings is liable to be incomplete. Virtue ethics invites us to look beyond our borders to engage the wisdom of other cultures and those we tend to overlook in our own milieu. Ultimately, Christians seek the reign of God, a realm that, in the words of U2 lead singer Bono, is "a place that must be believed to be seen."¹³ The reign of God demands our imaginative pursuit of the good life for all.

Spiritual guidance is an arena for the practice of numerous virtues. Responsibility and accountability are reflected in the cultivation of the virtues such as trustworthiness, justice, fidelity, and self-care, all under the guidance of prudence. While accountability implies extrinsic constraints, responsibility is a virtue, a virtue that calls us to manifest the virtues of fidelity, justice, and self-care in particular ways. Considering responsibility as a virtue also opens our eyes to the possibility of "over-responsibility," a harmful assumption that we bear too much of the burden of the spiritual growth of our clients.

Ultimately, spiritual guides are blessed to work daily on holy ground, where the people we serve seek the God we worship. Our pursuit of the virtues of spiritual guides leads us to recall that the service of God is never a zero-sum game, never a benefit of the client at the expense of the guide or of the guide at the expense of the client. God desires and enables the diligent seeker to draw closer to the ground of all being, and in this basic call and response, the guide and the client are on the same path.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Richard M. Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), in which the framework for theological and ethical decision making is followed by a discussion of two issues, sexuality (a consideration of boundaries) and confidentiality. Prof. Gula has since written a new work on ministry focusing on questions of justice. See *Just Ministry* (New York: Paulist Press, 2010).
2. For essays exploring virtue approaches to pastoral ministry, see James F. Keenan and Joseph Kotva Jr., ed., *Practice What You Preach: Virtues, Ethics and Power in the Lives of Pastoral Ministers and Their Congregations* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1999). For a more in-depth introduction to virtue ethics as a method for Christian ethical reflection, see Joseph Kotva Jr., *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics* (Washington, DC: Georgetown Univ. Press, 1997).
3. The importance of role models in education is well known. See, e.g., Plato's Republic. For contemporary analysis, see A. A. Bucher, The Influence of Models in Forming Moral Identity, *International Journal of Educational Research* 27, no. 7 (1997). For a summary, see Daniel Rose, "The Potential of Role-Model Education," *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education* Web site, (2004), http://www.infed.org/biblio/role_model_education.htm (accessed 18 March 2010).
4. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd ed., trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., 1999), 1103a.
5. Gerard Manley Hopkins, "As Kingfishers Catch Fire, Dragonflies Draw Flame," *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1918; New York: Bartleby.com, 1999), line 9.
6. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095b.
7. All other things are not always equal—virtuous people can experience random misfortune just like the vicious can of course. However, according to Aristotle, virtues assist us in dealing with misfortune when it strikes, allowing us to cope with as much dignity and good-heartedness as the circumstances allow. To be, for example, impoverished and virtuous is better than to be impoverished and vicious—the virtuous impoverished person will be happier. Poverty is bad, but virtue always helps.
8. See William C. Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2000).
9. James F. Keenan, "Proposing Cardinal Virtues," *Theological Studies* 56, no. 4 (1995): 709–729.
10. Barbara J. Blodgett, "Trustworthy or Accountable: Which is Better?," *Reflective Practice* 30 (2010): 34–45.
11. Gordon J. Hilsman, "Tandem Roles of Written Standards and Personal Virtue in Appraising Professional Practice," *Reflective Practice* 30 (2010): 54–57.
12. See, e.g., H. R. Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self* (Westminster, MD: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999).
13. U2, *Walk On*, Universal Import, 2001.

Accountability Issues in the Supervision of Lay Pastoral Ministry

Ron Sunderland and Ted Smith

The notion of accountability is deeply embedded in human understanding of the relationship with the deity. It appears in the first words and images of Torah and, thereafter, is never absent. Adam and the woman are set in the Garden with freedom to use its bounty with one exception: when they abuse their privileges, they are held accountable and must live with the consequences. A similar result occurs in the days of Noah (Gen. 6–7) and is repeated endlessly (for example, Ps. 95). Everett Fox, in his definitive exposition of the Torah, notes that in Deuteronomy, "Moshe's voice functions fairly indistinguishably from God's own—and then closes off the text by stipulating that nothing in the future is to be added to or subtracted from it. So we are dealing with a text of directly authoritative character...Hence, Deuteronomy introduces into the Bible for the first time the concept of canon—a bounded, accepted body of authoritative literature."¹ The text is instructive, demanding of Jews, then and now, what is expected of God's people: "Thou shalt" is the repeated command (Lev. 1:1, Num. 5:5, and Deut. 5).

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Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL WARRANTS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Fox indicates that the inclusion of Deuteronomy as the fifth book of the Torah signaled the task of “explaining” or instructing Israel regarding the terms of the covenant relationship of God with Israel—a covenant in which the nation’s accountability is firmly declared. Fox cites G. Earnest Wright with approval: “The central purpose of Deuteronomy is to furnish Israel with a complete order of faith and life which is the prerequisite for a prosperous and secure existence on the God-given land. The historian [of the preceding books] shows how Israel failed to keep it and what the consequences were.”² Fox states that Deuteronomy focuses mainly on the relationship between God and Israel: “Every act Israel performs as a community, and every one done by individuals, is to be seen in that light. As elsewhere in the Bible, breaking one of God’s rules means not merely a violation of a statute but an affront to...the sovereign Lord, and thus a grave risk to society’s well-being and even to its very existence.”³ Israel’s failure to maintain its covenant agreement and its accountability for that failure is a constant theme throughout its history.

The covenant relationship is spelled out in terms of obligations and expectations, and mutuality and vulnerability. When a sacred scroll was read before King Josiah, the king acknowledged God’s wrath against Judah because, he declared, “Our ancestors did not obey the words [of Torah]” (II Kings 22:13). When the king had read from the scroll, acknowledging the people’s accountability to God, he reaffirmed the covenant with God: committing the nation to keep [the Lord’s] commandments, decrees, and statutes by performing the words of the covenant which he and all the people made (23:3).

Christian Scriptures

The theme of accountability is carried forward into the New Testament. Explicit references in each of the Gospels indicate the sternness Jesus expressed toward those whose hardness of heart and unrepentant spirit left them vulnerable to God’s wrath: failure to forgive one’s brother or sister *from the heart* or to open one’s heart to a neighbor’s need will lead to eternal punishment (Matt. 18:23–35; 25:41–46); causing harm to a child or stumbling into wrong behavior can lead to a similar end (Mark 9:42–48); failure of a servant to treat his fellow servants well or to use his master’s assets prudently will lead to punishment (Luke 12:41–46; 19:11–27; 20:11–19). Throughout his Gospel account, John declares that the religious elders stood condemned by their intransigence and their failure to believe (John 9:13ff). The writers of the

Epistles warn of the danger of failure to believe the Gospel and to conform one’s life to the spirit that was in Christ Jesus (1 Pet. 2:6–8; 1 Cor. 10:1ff; Gal. 6:7–8). The authors of the Gospels and Epistles wrote about our accountability for our actions and the intent that lies behind them. Yet there is another imperative that is more fundamental, for it determines both intent and the behaviors that ensue: accountability for the baptismal vows through which believers are instated within the gospel story.

It is said of Martin Luther that, in his darkest moments, he took refuge in the reality of his baptism, uttering, “Thank God, I have been baptized.” Christians who declare their confirmation of those baptismal vows in their Confirmation services reiterate them in each Eucharistic celebration. Every Christian, having received the Holy Spirit and thereby a particular gift of the Spirit, is charged to exercise that gift in acts of loving service (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4) to the buildup of the body of Christ, the Church. The Gospel record indicates that we are accountable for our employment of the gifts we have received; according to Matthew 25, our fealty to the spirit of Christ will be judged. Among those Spirit-endowed gifts is that of our care of one another—and of those who despitefully use us, let us remember—which today we call the pastoral ministry of the Church. As with every gift of the Spirit, each person’s sense of call to a specific ministry must be confirmed by the calling congregation, and each member so gifted is to be held accountable for his or her ministry.

The Social Contract

Before turning to examine our accountability for fulfilling our baptismal vows, it is noteworthy that the notion of accountability not only has biblical warrant, but it is also part of the social contract, written into the fabric of every society. Most if not all cultures operate on the basis of moral conduct, truth-telling, and relationships between their members that expresses the ethos of the respective culture and expects accountability of individuals for maintaining the norms each society has established. In the United States, this social contract is enshrined in the nation’s Constitution and its Preamble. In many cultures, such codes, if not written, are understood by their respective members, as are the consequences of breaching the culture’s norms. Codes of professional ethics are written for each professional community. Employee job descriptions require accountability of every individual on a company’s payroll. In the authors’ hospital, accountability is one of the five core values that all employees are expected to abide by.

The Church as a Covenantal Community

What is held by society at large is true for religious communities, their congregations, and for individual members, vividly expressed, for example, in the theme of the 1963 Congress of the Anglican Communion: *Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ*. The Toronto congress was called to address the disparity between “sending” and “receiving” churches that constituted the Anglican Communion. It called for a “peer-ship” in place of the dominant-submissive relationship that had lasted from colonial times, noting that *mutual* and *responsibility* are relational terms, and required of national churches that they accept and respect each other as peers. The notion of *mutual accountability* emphasized that their relationships were those of partnerships in mission. The stresses plainly visible among Anglicans world-wide since the mid-1980s illustrate graphically the level of accountability expected of each other by the various parties to the discussion and the consequences when individuals and their communities cannot reconcile their understandings of “mutual accountability.” Accountability of the Church for its obedience to God’s call is applied to every aspect of the Church’s life. We turn to pastoral ministry as a particular ministry of the Church.

Clinical Pastoral Education Centers as Covenantal Communities

The notion of accountability has been a fundamental characteristic of the clinical pastoral education (CPE) movement and its centers and members throughout its existence. CPE supervisors and students alike are held accountable for their behaviors in regard to their educational processes as well as for the character of their services extended to clients or patients and colleagues in their respective clinical settings. The androgyny basic to the CPE enterprise expects students to commit themselves to the learning process, expressed in the form of a *learning contract*, often termed a learning *covenant*. It is a relational system that depends on the mutual accountability that student and supervisor expect of each other. In this paper, we extend this general statement to the Lay Ministry program as an outgrowth of our CPE experience at The Methodist Hospital in Houston’s Texas Medical Center.

LAY PASTORAL EDUCATION AND MINISTRY IN THE METHODIST HOSPITAL SYSTEM

Brief Description

Laypeople have filled a role in the ministry to patients at The Methodist Hospital for over fifty years. A lay minister and former patient known famil-

iarly throughout the hospital as “Uncle Charlie,” began his daily ministry in 1960 as he served patients under the oversight of the Department of Pastoral Care and Education. The formal introduction of a corps of trained laypeople was launched in 2001 as lay ministers were recruited to augment the services of the permanent staff chaplains. The training program was up-dated in 2006 with the introduction of two new programs—the Lay Ministry Institute and the Lay Ministry College.

The Lay Ministry Institute provides a brief introduction to basic pastoral skills based on the action-reflection model of clinical pastoral education. Following a weekend orientation session to ministry in a hospital setting, participants meet every two weeks on Saturday mornings over three months with a curriculum that focuses primarily upon basic tools of pastoral listening and grief theory and ministry. Participants present their verbatim reports of patient visits for peer review and discussion. Completion of the Lay Ministry Institute is a pre-requisite for participation in the hospital’s lay ministry program and for some participants it is an entrée to the College.

The Lay Ministry College is an advanced, one year program designed for laypeople who experience a call to pastoral ministry and seek a forum to become more skilled and to discern where their call might lead them. Their future may take one of three directions: (1) continue as a layperson in the general ministry of the church or an institution (hospital, nursing home); (2) continue as a layperson and become a paid staff person (full- or part-time) in a congregation’s pastoral ministry; or (3) seek ordination and serve in the representative ministry of the church. The intent to live out this call and to discern a future direction is central to each participant’s application, screening interview, participation in the course of training, and in the ensuing assignment in pastoral ministry in the hospital or in the lay ministry of a congregation. (During the discussion that follows, references to the College curriculum and program are applied equally to the Institute, although adapted to the less intensive structure of the latter.)

The 100-hour Lay Ministry College curriculum includes the basic pastoral skills of the Lay Institute, augmented by segments on theology and ministry, advanced grief ministry, and cultural issues in pastoral ministry. The curriculum emphasizes the reporting of pastoral visits for discussion in weekly group sessions. The pedagogy of both the Institute and College programs, in common with all clinically-based education, presumes that students accept responsibility for identifying and meeting their learning goals. Supervisors

accept their responsibility to provide students with a creative and challenging learning environment.

The first and second College classes were structured on a four-semester, two-year curriculum model. The first class began in February 2006 with fourteen participants and concluded in December 2008 with twelve graduates. The second class started in February 2007 with ten students and finished in December 2009 with eight completing the program. Given its two-year length and voluntary nature, the attrition rate for the Lay Ministry College of fifteen and twenty percent respectively was remarkably low. Graduates received certificates indicating completion of the program issued jointly by the hospital and the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. With the beginning of the third class of College participants in September 2009, the structure and marketing of the program was revised to be a one-year program incorporating the same total of 100 hours of didactic and verbatim sessions and fulfillment of the pastoral assignments within the hospital on which the program is based.

Most lay ministers in the Methodist Hospital program commit to serve for two to three hours per week (others visit bi-weekly). The program enables the Spiritual Care department to move closer to the goal of visiting each patient at least once during their hospital stay and as soon after admission as possible. The disadvantage lies in the fact that, with today's rapid discharge of patients, many lay ministers have minimal opportunity to engage in long-term ministry. This is remedied for lay ministers who apply their hospital-based learning within their local congregations—visits that Lay Ministry College participants report for supervision by their hospital supervisors.

Because as laypeople, few Lay Ministry Institute and College participants have explored their self-identification as a caregiver (compared with the rigor expected of ordained pastors and seminarians), this process is one of the principal emphases of both Institute and College programs; awareness of each participant's sense of pastoral identity is a constant theme of the course. Our experience with the first and second classes of College graduates and interviews with the third class enrolled in September 2009 indicates that most participants who opt for a role as lay ministers within a hospital also anticipate applying their experience within their respective congregations. With thirty-one College participants to date, hospitals within our system have been the primary focus of their ministry. As will be noted below, sadly, most of their own pastors have been reticent to authorize their ministry in congregational care.

Supervisory Issues Unique to Lay Ministry

The program requires lay ministers to submit their pastoral visits for supervision by the department's CPE supervisors, as one means of ensuring participant accountability. Since neither Institute nor College qualifies for ACPE credit, what kind of leverage is available to the supervisors when faced with resistance? Thus far, student commitment to learning, including presentation of patient visit reports, has been remarkably high among thirty-two College and eighty-four Institute participants. External verification of this claim was voluntarily offered by a high-ranking leader of a United Methodist agency who visited a typical evening session. "Everyone leaned forward in their seats during the verbatim presentation and I was moved to match their investment." His comment was especially meaningful since "it came after a long day."

The programs' faculty place a high degree of importance on the support that staff chaplains provide to lay ministers assigned to the hospital's clinical areas and on the caliber of the oversight by which their accountability for their respective ministries is maintained. With respect to students' comfort with writing and submitting verbatim reports of their patient visits, we have determined that the written verbatim is not the only format for supervision. Some of our lay ministers are more comfortable making oral reports, either in peer group settings or in one-on-one meetings with their supervisors.

The supervisory covenant so central to the CPE process is no less important to both Institute and College programs. It begins with an understanding of the character of the Supervisor-Student relationship that underlies that covenant. We perceive the central issue in the relationship as one of authority rather than of power. The terms *teacher* and *student* too easily imply that power is wielded by those who teach trainee lay ministers who are neophytes or blank slates—in St. Paul's words, those on a milk diet not ready for "solid food" (1 Cor. 3:2; see also 1 Pet. 2:2). While seminary students presumably have begun to explore their pastoral identity, lay ministers are unfamiliar with this concept and its language, yet they quickly grasp its meaning and embrace it. They are entering a sphere which in the recent past was regarded as the province of the ordained clergy. Some may be confronted by people (clergy and laity) who still have not accepted a theology of ministry defined in terms of baptism, charisms (Rom. 12:1–18; 1 Cor. 12:1–13ff, and Eph. 4:1–16), and call to ministry and who expect pastoral care from the (senior) pastor.

Most lay people understandably are anxious as they complete the orientation process and are introduced to their ministry areas (whether a hospital

or parish setting). It has long been understood that a degree of anxiety enhances a student's learning, yet it is not the case that lay people bring a blank slate to the learning process. With appropriate screening that recognizes and affirms their gifts of ministry, lay students bring their life-time experiences to their new role. Often they are "wounded healers" who have resolved their own concerns sufficiently so as to be ready to function as pastoral care providers. Sunderland's experience over forty years of training and supervising laypeople in their roles as lay ministers indicates that they are capable of serving as competently as many ordained ministers and, in some contexts, may offer more effective pastoral care. Nevertheless, it is important to note that neophyte lay ministers face the task of developing a sense of pastoral identity that is a new experience to most. The task of the teacher-supervisor therefore begins with reinforcing the student's integration of this new identity.

Authority versus Power Issues

Underlying the concern to safeguard and strengthen the autonomy and dignity of the layperson as student is the issue of where power is perceived to reside in the relationship. If students experience a sense of loss of control, the relationship may detract from, rather than strengthen, their freedom to learn and thus maintain dignity and self-esteem. As noted above, the alternative is to ensure, as far as possible, that power issues are dealt with as authority issues.

The supervisor's style of leadership role is one starting point. The leadership construct is properly viewed in terms of a "servant-leader" image that is manifested in the teaching role of Jesus. The servant theme addresses the image of the kingship of Christ. Jesus defined his "kingship" in terms of his authority but rejected the trappings of power (Matt. 20:20–28). Applying this notion to the learning process, students authorize the relationship by entering into a learning covenant with the teacher, holding themselves accountable for addressing their learning issues, and recognizing the supervisor's authority as one who has knowledge the student wishes to acquire. While the student is not yet a *peer* of the teacher, both accept that status as the goal of the learning process. Both authorize the relationship and enter the relationship on an equal footing, a transaction that affirms the dignity of each as full participants in the relationship. When this is established at the outset in the minds of both student and teacher, the focus shifts to the mutuality of the relationship and emphasizes that each brings gifts that are offered to the other. Assumption of a servant role does not diminish the supervisor's authority, but invites stu-

dents into a partnership of learning that evokes a strong, positive response. The relationship is one of mutuality—both teacher and student feel they bless and are blessed.

Issues of authority and accountability shape the manner in which pastoral carers minister to those under their care. John Patton notes the meanings of *authority* and *accountability* are intertwined. Pastoral carers, both clergy and lay ministers, are persons under authority, and cannot offer care apart from the religious body that endorses that ministry and authorizes that it take place in a particular hospital or parish setting. "There is no such thing as the private practice of pastoral care." He continues, "In addition to being accountable to structures beyond themselves for what they are and do, pastoral carers *are themselves* authorities," who have been "educated in the theory and practice of the faith, whether ordained or not, (and thereby) possess an authority themselves."⁴ Patton argues that the terms *pastor* and *pastoral* mean that both ordained and lay pastors are subject to or accountable to their authorizing communities and for the exercise of the authority they possess. It is equally important to note, as does Patton, that in offering pastoral care, they *convey* authority to others: "Being under authority, being an authority, and conveying authority are all related to the pastoral carer's inner sense of pastoral identity. Moreover, the (carer's) acceptance of a pastoral role is essential to functioning adequately in that role and in interpreting (that) role to others."⁵ Ordained pastors are accountable to their ecclesial communities; both clergy and lay ministers are accountable to their peers in ministry in order to maintain standards of good practice; and each pastoral minister is "accountable to himself or herself to advance in the practice of ministry—to become competent in caring and in understanding the faith tradition he or she represents."⁶

Ordination to the clergy office, Patton suggests, means that ordained pastors assume an "in-between" role with respect to lay ministers. They receive authority, exercise it, and convey it to lay ministers. They are accountable for the competence with which they undertake each function, as lay ministers are accountable for the manner in which they carry out their ministries. That is, with respect to their oversight of lay ministers, ordained pastors fulfill a "gate-keeper" role.

THE SUPERVISOR AS "GATE-KEEPER"

It is important that pastoral ministry students recognize that whereas they are accountable to the supervisor for the integrity of their learning role and the

competence of their ministry, supervisors are accountable to their institutional administrators for students' pastoral activities. (Similarly, ordained pastors who accept lay ministers as colleagues are accountable to their congregations for the quality and competence of the pastoral ministry offered by these lay ministers or lay pastoral associates.) The supervisor thus serves as gate-keeper to the student's access to the clinical setting as the locus of the student's learning. In most clinical learning settings, while supervisors may not be able to guarantee that their respective students can do any good, they are at least expected to ensure that their students do not do any harm. Lines of accountability are unambiguous and firm. The supervisor's vulnerability and readiness to risk "failure" on the part of students is integral to the learning process.

Administrative discipline can be swift. A supervisor and his student learned this lesson when the lay ministry student conducted a chapel service that expounded on the image of a person "turning the other cheek" when insulted. The student asked a patient to join him, whereupon the student tapped the patient lightly on one cheek, and said, "After I slapped him, he should invite me to slap his other cheek." The man was a psychiatric patient who complained to an administrator, and the student was summarily dismissed on the orders of the hospital administrator, while the supervisor was warned to keep stricter oversight of his students. The effort to create a viable learning setting that gives students space in which to learn can become a balancing act between accountability to students while being accountable to the institution—administrators *and* patients—in which the emphasis is on the supervisor's own practice and student oversight.

The fundamental importance of accountability for the quality and effectiveness of the pastoral care that lay ministers provide resulted in the emphasis on *supervised* ministry incorporated in the College curriculum. Initial orientation to hospital ministry is followed by assignment of each student to a clinical area which becomes the "parish" in which the student offers ministry. The College faculty use a "shadowing" process during which supervisors and students make patient visits; students observe the supervisor's ministry and are, in turn, observed by the supervisor, followed by discussion of these ministry events. As lay ministers begin to make solo visits, oversight is maintained by both the supervisors and the lay ministers' respective staff chaplains assigned to the clinical area. Lay ministers are urged to bring specific patient needs to the staff chaplain's attention, and to that of their supervisors. The program is further strengthened by the provision of continuing education sessions for the lay ministers.

Accountability to the Hospital as Institution

As this paper is being written, the accountability of the Lay Ministry program to the administration of the hospital which, until now, had seemed informal and non-threatening, is forcing us to adapt to a new factor. The previously informal process involving lay ministers (the Administration knew what we were doing!) is now required to meet the stringent reporting and evaluation recently required of all volunteer-based programs, despite our theological stance that lay ministers are not *volunteers*, but are *conscripted* to ministry by their baptismal vows. That is, the administration as a "secular" authority expects certain basic levels of accountability; we have to meet and surpass these requirements, for we remain accountable to another authority—that of him who calls us to be fellow servants with Christ.

Supervision of Lay Pastoral Ministers in the Local Congregation

The Methodist Hospital Lay Ministry program was created to meet three goals: to enable lay people who experienced a call to pastoral ministry to acquire and practice pastoral skills; to augment the ministries of the Spiritual Care department's permanent staff; and to produce a corps of lay pastoral ministers eligible for appointment to full- or part-time positions as lay pastoral associates on congregational staffs. The third objective raised the issue of the readiness of ordained pastors to provide competent oversight of lay ministers they recruited for congregational care.

Our training of laypeople as lay ministers prepared for deployment in congregations is based on the proposition that pastoral ministry is a task of the *congregation* rather than the exclusive province of ordained pastors and that, within each congregation, there are members gifted by the Holy Spirit for that ministry. It is worth noting that Sunderland's development of the notion of supervised lay pastoral ministry in the mid-1960s and its implementation in local congregations since the early 1970s confronted an entrenched conviction on the part of ordained clergy that congregational pastoral ministry was their exclusive prerogative. It is apparent that the reluctance of many clergy to embrace the role of lay pastoral ministers remains a barrier to their employment by congregations. We return to this factor as well as to the issue of clergy training for their supervisory role.

CLERGY SUPERVISORY TRAINING

The issue of the readiness of clergy to provide informed oversight of lay pastoral associates was brought into sharp focus in the mid-1970s as Per-

kins School of Theology faculty at Southern Methodist University considered ways to make the seminary's field education process a more effective learning opportunity for their masters of divinity students. The field education faculty was aware that the quality of students' experiences in their congregational placements would depend on the effectiveness of the oversight they would receive. It was determined that the first step was to provide supervisory training for participating pastors—completion of which was one of the prerequisites for congregations that wished to participate in the program. Further, continued participation required pastors to attend regular sessions in which they submitted accounts of their student oversight for supervision by seminary faculty and by Ron Sunderland and co-opted CPE supervisors. The resulting supervisory training process constituted a significant continuing education opportunity for both the pastors and the lay oversight committee that was formed in each participating congregation.

The Methodist Hospital Spiritual Care department offers ordained pastors the opportunity to capitalize on the program's facilitation of clergy orientation to supervisory training as a means of enhancing their pastoral as well as their oversight skills. We recognize that we cannot *require* clergy to engage in supervisory training, and we would be less than honest if we did not acknowledge our disappointment at clergy apathy towards taking advantage of these opportunities. (Patton has drawn attention to the reality that many clergy have difficulty being authorities, that is, being accountable for what they say or being set apart from those over whom that have authority.⁷) Clergy disinterest in employing College graduates has been even more disappointing in light of the fact that congregations could thus acquire lay staff members with demonstrated pastoral competence without assuming the burden of the financial encumbrances that would be entailed by an additional clergy appointment. The program would appear to attract the attention of congregations that need to provide more extensive pastoral ministry but are unable financially to assume responsibility for an additional clergy appointment. Yet, in our experience, clergy continue as gate-keepers to laypeople who experience the call to pastoral ministry, exhibiting indifference or passive resistance to employment of lay pastoral associates. We have done what we can do: bring to the attention of ecclesiastical authorities the need to hold clergy accountable for their failure to empower laypeople to engage in pastoral ministry as a vocation in which they seek to live out their baptismal vows.

IMPACT OF THE COLLEGE PROGRAM ON ITS PARTICIPANTS

With each Lay Ministry College graduation ceremony, the formal relationship of mutual accountability no longer exists between the graduates and the faculty members. Yet, both parties feel a measure of accountability to each other in order to honor the integrity of the College experience symbolized in the graduation certificate. Graduates want to demonstrate their effectiveness in ministry; faculty members want the training they provided to be more than adequate for the pastoral needs the graduates encounter.

Thus far both sets of expectations made been fulfilled. While only a couple of graduates have secured employed ministry positions, virtually all the other graduates are actively engaged in spiritual care ministry in either hospital settings or local congregations. Overall their level of performance has been commendatory.

Representative of the vast majority of her colleagues, this Lay Ministry College graduate offered the following retrospective summary:

The experience of the Lay Ministry College was not only affirming of my call to service but prepared me to respond to that call. The training was a resource to develop skills and knowledge that have equipped me for pastoral care ministry in the hospital and congregational settings. The leadership and commitment of the College provided an environment that valued and encouraged the service that graduates can bring to local church communities working in collaboration with pastors. And finally, it gave to me an identity as a lay minister and what that means in a biblical sense and what it means to me personally.

NOTES

1. Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 842, emphasis ours.
2. *Ibid.*, 842.
3. *Ibid.*, 845.
4. John Patton, *Pastoral Care in Context: An Introduction to Pastoral Care* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 78ff.
5. *Ibid.*, 80, footnote 6.
6. *Ibid.*, 81, footnote 7.
7. *Ibid.*, 79.

Sacred is the Call: Supervisory Accountability and Responsibility in the Formation of Spiritual Directors

Janet K. Ruffing

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The development of programs and processes for forming spiritual directors is a relatively recent phenomenon. Clinical pastoral education has a much longer history of supervision, as do supervisory structures and expectations for pastoral counselors and educators. The literature related to supervision in spiritual direction is sparse, and supervisory processes have usually been developed by adapting processes from other pastoral ministries. To further complicate the situation, spiritual direction is an ancient practice within the Christian tradition and has primarily been considered to be a charism and the fruit of contemplation. It is seen, therefore, by many to fall outside the purview of external standards, licensing, certification, and various forms of accountability standards for most professions. In a recent leadership insti-

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tute on supervision for spiritual directors and program directors, I found myself naming spiritual direction for the first time as a hybrid ministry that is both charismatic and professional.¹

Those of us who practice spiritual direction and form others as spiritual directors in the first world cannot do so without holding ourselves accountable to the ethical norms and behaviors commonly spelled out in other ministerial professions. At the same time, we want to leave God's Spirit free to animate, inspire, and guide others through the finely spirit-attuned persons who understand and can mediate the ways of God to others. Such individuals may demonstrate a charism for spiritual direction even though they do not have graduate degrees or the formation equivalents. There remains an ongoing tension in spiritual direction between professional competence and charismatic authority rooted in personal experience.

From its origins twenty years ago, Spiritual Directors International (SDI) began to develop minimum standards for formation programs in spiritual direction.² At the time, the organization was an exclusively Christian group that struggled mightily to accommodate denominational and theological differences across these traditions. It has since grown to be an interfaith organization creating even greater complexity.

At that early phase in its history, SDI developed a set of "guiding principles" that all formation programs at that time agreed to accept. It also offered mentoring for program directors who were contemplating starting new programs. These guiding principles were shared with new program staff. In 1992, a group of trainers agreed to hold themselves collegially accountable to one another to maintain these minimum standards and to continue to reflect together and present to one another new developments in their programs. This decision resulted in a "trainers' symposium" preceding the annual SDI conference. Later, this conference was called "the annual leadership institute."

Because of the growth of spiritual direction programs (more than 300 in the United States alone) and the inability of program directors to regularly attend a SDI conference in another part of the country or world, the "annual leadership institute" could not fulfill the function of maintaining formation standards. SDI, as an organization, has not assumed responsibility for finding new ways to address the issue of minimum standards for spiritual direction formation programs. Standards of accountability for SDI member spiritual directors are promoted through the aspirational "Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in the Spiritual Direction Relationship," first approved tentatively in March 1996 by the members of the trainer's group present at that meeting,

and then accepted by the membership present at the annual SDI conference in 1999.³ These guidelines spell out the responsibilities to self, the directee, and to others (colleagues, faith communities, and society).

By the 2006 trainer's symposium in Costa Mesa, California, the "guiding principles" had been renamed "program components."⁴ This proposal, however, was never communicated to those program leaders who were not represented at that meeting, nor were the reflections on "program components" published to members at large. Rather than a mutually accountable group, this annual meeting has become one opportunity among many for program directors and staffs to reflect on their formation and supervisory processes. It no longer has any collegial binding force among the trainers. In addition, SDI has made no recent effort to develop a new set of minimal collegial standards for programs. If a consensus develops within this group at the meeting, there is neither a mechanism for communicating it to other formators in the organization nor for facilitating common norms.

GUIDELINES FOR THE ETHICAL CONDUCT OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

Because of concerns that initially arose about insurance and liability in 1993, SDI commissioned a group of its members with special expertise (a moral theologian, a lawyer, and others) to develop a set of guidelines for ethical conduct for spiritual directors. This process was completed by 1999. More recently, in 2005, Bill Creed, SJ, who was part of the task force that worked on the ethical guidelines for spiritual directors, has called for new standards for spiritual directors and for programs forming them.⁵ He stated in summary: "at a minimum, the guidelines named and brought to awareness various areas of right conduct in the spiritual direction relationship."⁶ But in the face of the complete lack of any ability to disqualify a spiritual director from practicing the art of spiritual direction because of failure to observe these guidelines, he asserts that we need more:

We now need minimal standards below which it is clear that a spiritual director is acting unjustly. These standards must address issues of confidentiality, community and collegial responsibilities, and other important issues. Mechanisms for reporting and responding to unjust behavior need to be created as well as forums for defending against unfounded accusations. Articulating these minimum standards and developing appropriate mechanisms to ensure that they are maintained will protect both vulnerable directees and the integrity of the gift of spiritual direction.⁷

In addition, to minimal enforceable ethical standards, Creed also recommends that "accreditation standards need to be developed for formation programs" themselves and that "those involved in the formation of spiritual directors need to communicate about and collaborate in determining basic criteria for formation programs that move beyond the 'invitations' of 'The Guidelines for Ethical Conduct.'"⁸ To date, I am not aware of any body working on addressing these concerns within the spiritual direction formation community.

BECOMING A SUPERVISOR FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

Currently, just as there is no recognized certification process for spiritual directors or minimum standards for their formation, there are as yet no objectives, standards, or criteria for becoming a supervisor or a spiritual direction formation program faculty member. Typically, programs and their directors have adapted the guidelines for spiritual direction and applied them to the parallel process of the supervision of spiritual directors. Most supervisors are mentored into this role after several years of experience as a spiritual director. Some follow a criterion of five years as a spiritual director. Some spiritual direction supervisors bring mentoring skills from having worked with beginning teachers. Others have clinical competence in some form of therapy and the supervisory experience related to the therapeutic context, and they also have become spiritual directors themselves. Models of both individual supervision and group supervision are typically used. If the direction experience includes directing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in the nineteenth annotation thirty-week experience, the thirty-day enclosed retreat, or a silent six- to eight-day directed retreat, the supervisor needs to have special expertise and experience in directing the Spiritual Exercises. Programs in spiritual direction, in which the practicum element and its supervision take place away from the site of the program (in other words, in another part of the United States or another country), have surfaced the need for developing some training in supervision for already experienced spiritual directors.

Supervisors have more frequently been mentored into this ministry by working on a formation team with others for a while before assuming responsibility for one-on-one supervision. This may have been done by co-supervising in a small group or by participating for some time in a peer supervision group. As a result, there has been less reflection on the expectations and re-

sponsibilities of supervisors of spiritual directors than in other pastoral ministries. In addition, the emphasis on the experience of the spiritual director, rather than on issues brought up by the directee, has at times led to an artificial division between “supervision” and “consultation” and a preference for seeking out the expertise of a psychologist or some other specialist about something happening in the spiritual direction relationship.⁹

Programs in spiritual direction recognize the need for clinical psychological competence among the supervisors or for a consulting role to assist with recognizing and interpreting resistance, transference, and counter transference in spiritual direction. There is also a need to assist inexperienced spiritual directors to work competently with a directee who, for instance, may be seriously depressed or suffering from some other psychological phenomenon. Recent developments in pastoral counseling advocate particularly the use of the self in the pastoral relationship that requires an ability to recognize and make use of the unconscious material emerging in the pastoral relationship appropriately.¹⁰ In all supervision, there is much learning from the experience of supervising and the experience of one’s own practice of spiritual direction. This depth and breadth of experience is placed at the service of the supervisee by a skilled supervisor who has learned from both successes and mistakes in her own practice in both ministries under the reflective gaze and support of one’s own supervisor.

Despite a lack of norms and standards for supervision and for the formation of spiritual directors, most supervisors take their responsibilities very seriously and usually adopt the approach by which they themselves were initiated into the ministry. To whom then are supervisors and formators of spiritual directors accountable? The ministry of supervision, like that of spiritual direction, is rooted in pastoral competency and a call to mentor others for the sake of “the absent other.” I believe that supervision is a charism just as much as spiritual direction itself is. It is rooted in the particular gifts of persons who delight in assisting the growth of others, who take as much joy in another’s development as in one’s own, and who have developed a capacity to mentor others in a practice in which they excel. Supervisors communicate their trust in God’s ways with directees and with those they supervise and draw their supervisees into this trust. They approach their vulnerable supervisees with carefully calibrated empathy—accepting beginner’s mistakes, recognizing personal challenge, and creating an environment in which it is safe to learn

from mistakes. They are responsible and accountable both to the institution in which they serve and to their supervisees.

INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Supervisors in spiritual direction and formators have been hired or appointed to this task by an educational institution, such as a college, graduate school, retreat house, a diocesan spirituality center, or a program director of an independent program. They are responsible for working at the appropriate professional level expected by that institution or setting, including having the necessary credentials in addition to experience and competence in spiritual direction. In a university setting and in many retreat houses, the faculty and supervisors are often covered by the liability insurance of the institution. At Fordham University, for example, the supervisees are also insured; legal counsel reviewed the document, “Understandings and Expectations of Spiritual Direction,” that delineates what spiritual direction is and is not and describes the supervisory oversight of the interns. Although the document was revised according to the lawyer’s recommendations, this document also serves as an “engagement agreement” that the directee signs. It helps clarify for the directee what the directee can expect in terms of service from the director, so it also protects the directee. Included in this document are norms about confidentiality—its promise, how it is maintained within a supervisory process, and the legal obligations for mandatory reporting.

Faculty and supervisors are responsible to insure their supervisees do no harm, that they resource them appropriately in relationship to the individual challenges each faces in the directees, and that both the directee and supervisee learn and grow as a result of the practicum experience. Thus, a supervisor is “on call” as needed. Rarely have supervisees needed help after hours. But a neophyte spiritual director with a suicidal directee, for instance, needs to know who to call and needs to feel free to do so for his own sake as well as the directee’s sake. In relationship to the hiring institution, decisions made by supervisors and faculty affect the institution and the reputation of the program. Program participants need to trust they will be treated fairly and that decisions will be made with sufficient transparency to make sense to them.

DISCERNING THE CALL TO SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Most programs approach training in spiritual direction as a testing of a call to do this ministry. This approach brings into play the staff’s and the pro-

gram director's own skills and gifts in discernment of spirits. This means that students/interns are apprised about who will make determine whether or not they proceed to the practicum phase of the program and on what basis. This frequently includes pre-admission conversations, interviews, narratives, and assessment of progress throughout the preparatory course work or seminars, such as the pastoral counseling skills class leading to the practicum. Some do more rigorous screening prior to beginning the program. Others do the more rigorous screening in the course of the program. It is most helpful for the potential spiritual director to receive feedback from more than one person if at all possible. In the evaluation process leading to participating in the practicum, potential supervisees need to have demonstrated their ability to receive feedback without being excessively defensive about their work, have the capacity to reflect on their feelings and responses to a directee, and demonstrate a developmental readiness that I call "supervisability." Are they reflective about their own experience? Can they connect their reactions to material in their directee's narratives? Can they put this awareness into words?

In some programs, a decision to proceed to practicum or internship occurs after two years of work. In academic programs, if a student is denied admission to the practicum, it is important as a justice issue to allow the student to apply credits to another program concentration. Finally, the institution needs to be clear in its promotional materials when classes are expected to be taken and that progression to the practicum is not automatic.

In relationship to the supervisee, the supervisor needs to set clear expectations about what the practicum experience will entail: readings, class discussion, number of sessions with directees, verbatims, process notes, case conferences, and individual supervision sessions. The supervisor is responsible for tracking a supervisee's work with each directee regardless of whether or not every directee is the focus of a verbatim. This might be done through a combination of process notes and one-on-one supervision. Supervisees should leave a practicum experience with a clear, mutually arrived at understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the supervisees, areas for further growth and potential ways of addressing those areas, and a clear recommendation about whether or not to continue to see directees after the practicum, as well as how to secure post-practicum supervision.

Occasionally, the practicum ends without clarity about the director's call or ability. This is sometimes the result of an insufficient number of sessions or the level of difficulty posed by some directees for a beginning spiritual direc-

tor. Again, a supervisor needs to be clear about an inability to make a recommendation. This outcome may demonstrate careful discernment skills—leaving the question open until necessary information becomes available to the supervisee.¹¹

TRANSPARENCY IN SUPERVISION

In order to best serve supervisees and their directees, some programs make their own supervisory process transparent. The supervisor who works with the program supervisors to reflect on their work with their supervisees also rotates through the group supervision sessions, providing the interns with a second experienced supervisor in the group and psychological resources for at least half the sessions. Further, the supervisors process their group and individual supervision with each other as well as with the outside supervisor. This is a collegial process in which the supervisee benefits from more than one personality style, supervisory style, and understanding of the dynamics of spiritual direction and spiritual growth. The supervisee usually finds the support needed by at least one or more persons on the team. This collegiality and transparency make it easier for supervisors to discriminate between their own issues and their supervisees' issues, as well as examine cultural differences that may impede or affect communication.

Supervisors also often model learning from their own mistakes. In this way, supervisees can understand that everyone makes mistakes, that one can learn from them, and that mistakes should be addressed before they create obstacles in the spiritual direction process. Finally, supervisors need to be clear with their supervisees about how the program director maintains the confidentiality of information about them in the files and how long those materials will be kept should they be needed for recommendations for ministry openings that involve spiritual direction.

This mutuality in the process of evaluation and discernment of the director's call to continue spiritual direction and with what kind of directees (younger directees or persons in recovery, for example) is complemented by the supervisee's evaluation of the supervisor. It is important to spend some time in the final supervision session talking about how the process of supervision has gone for both the supervisor and supervisee. It allows some reflection about the entire process of supervision—the challenges, the learning, the joys, and the ups and the downs. Supervisees often give supervisors openings to reflect more deeply on some of the dynamics of this relationship—whether it

has been difficult or easier. In the termination phase, amazing breakthroughs can occur that may lead to greater mutual transparency and recommendations for personal work that can be of great benefit. It is also important to give an opportunity for a written evaluation of the supervisor's work for the supervisor's benefit as well.

SUPERVISORS AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS DO NOT WORK IN ISOLATION

For both directors and supervisors, it is important to remember that we should never be completely alone in this intimate work of supervision or spiritual direction. Directors and supervisors maintain the integrity of their work by continuing to engage in spiritual direction themselves and in other spiritual practices that keep them attuned to the contemplative dimension of life and available to partnering with God's spirit in these ministries of intimate accompaniment.

Both directors and supervisors engage in supervision on a regular basis with peers or with a mentor and also seek consultation as needed with other qualified persons.¹² This external supervision is in addition to keeping personal supervision notes of sessions with directees or supervisees and reflecting on what happened for the directee or supervisee and what might have been going on with one self.

In addition to confidential supervision, it is important in the formation of spiritual directors that supervisors and faculty work as a team. This builds in a mutual accountability to one another. When possible, a gender balance on the team is also highly desirable because it creates a better chance of interns receiving what they need from faculty and supervisors. It is important for supervisees to have some choice in the supervisor—to get a fresh start if needed or to get the more comfortable gender accompaniment to support the challenging work of supervision. Supervisees thrive as do supervisors when there is some freedom in the relationship. Some teams work out the supervision groups with input both from the participants and from the team members.

Supervisors and supervisees address their personal issues in therapy if supervision and spiritual direction are not enough to restore equilibrium if unexpected personal issues are triggered by one's supervisees or directees. It is a truism that we get the directees and supervisees we need to deepen our own self-knowledge and resolve once again at a deeper level long-standing or long-buried personal issues triggered by our work with others. Knowledge

inadequacies also need to be identified and addressed in course work, in-service workshops, and professional reading.

IN THE SERVICE OF THE "ABSENT OTHER"

Mary Rose Bumpus defines supervision as "a conversation between peers that ultimately fosters the well-being of an absent other."¹³ I am particularly taken by the image of an "absent other." Supervisors and formators of spiritual directors do not "direct" the absent other through the supervisee; rather they help the director discover how best to help the directee through his own gifts of grace and personality. At the same time, supervisors are ethically responsible to help sessions unfold in the best interest of the directee's spiritual well-being. The director's directee is a looming presence in supervisory sessions, although clearly physically absent.

Directees, however, are not the only "absent others" who impinge on the supervisory conversation. Our supervisees are also always members of communities in which they practice. Frequently directees match their director's ethnic and denominational identifications. These may or may not be entirely familiar to a supervisor who has some responsibility to understand the world of the director and the directee. Supervisors do not have a right to impose their own cultural and denominational assumptions on others. Yet neither do directors have a right to impose their cultural and theological views on their directees. As the ethical guidelines for directors asserts, "spiritual directors honor the dignity of the directee by respecting the directee's values, conscience, spirituality, and theology." In addition, the guidelines address the director's relationship to faith communities. Directors are to "appropriately draw on the teachings and practices of faith communities and to respect the directee's relationship to his or her own community of faith." Supervisors and formators bear the responsibility of concretely assisting their supervisees on a case-by-case basis to discover what this means with their particular directees.

If our supervisees are international participants or missionaries who have lived a long time in another country, there will be more than one culture in the room as well as ways of being religious. Will this supervisee be doing spiritual direction in the United States context with all of its diversity, or will the supervisee be returning to her country of origin or to the same mission area? In both of these cases of ethnic and cultural difference, the absent other may be entire worlds that we will know only through our supervisees. Our responsibility as supervisors is to help these international supervisees reflect on

the applicability of our model of spiritual direction to their own cultures and communities and help them reflect on how they are changing in the supervisory/training process and how they might facilitate similar change, if judged desirable, in the contexts in which they are the cultural experts.

Society, in general, constitutes yet another “absent other” in the supervisory/formation process. Supervisors, particularly, in the absence of any credentialing body become the “gatekeepers” by determining who continues to practice as a spiritual director after the internship or practicum experience. Statistics from formation programs in spiritual direction indicate that only forty percent of those who complete these programs in all settings continue to practice spiritual direction after the completion of the program. In my own experience, the few intern directors I have tried to dissuade from continuing to offer spiritual direction are likely to receive and act on my recommendation. In some cases, the director may need to successfully address personal growth issues—stabilize in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction or complete a messy life-transition—before resuming a spiritual direction practice. In more serious cases, directors who have struggled to provide a safe holding environment by maintaining appropriate boundaries, who have been excessively stressed by the work, or who have demonstrated other long-standing personality issues that are unlikely to change are the least likely to act on a recommendation not to continue. On the other hand, frequently the most successful interns are appropriately more hesitant to continue offering spiritual direction and recognize the need for on-going education and supervision. This experience suggests that preventing the second group especially from proceeding to an internship or practicum is a critical responsibility for the sake of society in general. As a supervisor, I can only hope and pray that directees will discontinue spiritual direction with such directors.

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SUPERVISORY PROCESS

As stated above, toward the end of the practicum, supervisees participate both orally and in writing offering their reflection on the effectiveness of the supervisory process from their perspective. This includes comment on the group process, the didactic component, the contribution of their peers in the small groups, as well as feedback to the supervisor on both their individual and group supervision style. They also comment on the contribution of the psychological consult (the supervisors’ supervisor).

There are many signals throughout the process of whether directors are able to make use of the supervisory process in their work with directees. Supervision, like other helping relationships, requires time to develop the working alliance and time for the supervisee to welcome the supervisor into the experience of spiritual direction as an ally who offers support, empathy, and challenge and who also requires accountability. Supervisees have access to everyone on the team, and all team members develop. This has the effect of supporting the supervisee even if the supervisor or the supervisee is experiencing “disturbances” or challenges in their relationship. The immediacy of supervisor-supervision (a session each week that focuses on either work with individuals or the group) helps address challenges before they become problems.

Supervisors might ask themselves some of the following questions when reflecting on their personal effectiveness as a supervisor:

- From my perspective, does my supervisee trust me and feel free enough to bring successes and mistakes to the process?
- Have I developed a strong enough connection with this supervisee to challenge her more deeply?
- Do I adjust my supervisory concerns to the developmental level of the supervisee? Some bring many years of prior experience as spiritual directors.
- Am I comfortable working with diverse supervisees (for instance, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, denomination, lay, religious, clergy)?
- Is the supervisee increasingly free to make use of the supervisory process?
- Does the complexity and depth of the supervisee’s process notes increase over the course of the practicum?
- Is the supervisee responsive to my interventions? For example, does the supervisee try out suggestions, report back on subsequent experience, become increasingly transparent, seem to be less invested in “fixing” problem areas, and so forth?
- Do I arrive at insights and potential new behavioral suggestion collaboratively with my supervisee?
- Do I model the skills of exploration, insight, and the promotion of behavior changes the director needs to use with directees?
- Does my supervisee demonstrate empathic connection with directees?
- Do I continue to deepen my empathic attunement with the supervisee?
- Are we both surprised as what we discover together about the director’s experience of the directee and of spiritual direction?
- Is my supervisee appropriately being challenged—neither too much challenge nor too little?

This set of questions focuses primarily on the development of the supervisory relationship itself.

The following questions, however, suggest much more significant criteria about the supervisee's potentials. For instance, is the supervisee's work with directees demonstrating an interior freedom on the part of the supervisee to be himself and to be attuned to the presence and guidance of God in the session? Does the supervisee trust God more and trust the directee's relationship with God? Is the supervisee growing in compassion and empathy? Should these qualities be absent, the intern may be incapable of serving as a spiritual director because his personal and interpersonal unfreedom is so deep or because the intern is so narcissistically self-absorbed that he cannot be hospitable to a directee.

IMPEDIMENTS TO RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN FORMATION AND SUPERVISION

The final topic I wish to address is the impediments to developing patterns of enduring responsibility and accountability in formation and supervision. One such impediment is our own habit that makes us inattentive to new experiences and changed conditions in our supervisory practice. The lack of agreed upon external standards, either for program components or supervisory adequacy in the formation of spiritual directors, is an impediment. Working essentially exclusively on an "honor" system related to supervision and training is an impediment. Increasingly, interns presenting for training in spiritual direction are not connected to any particular faith community or identified group of persons they envision themselves serving as spiritual directors. Such interns may, indeed, have a call to offer spiritual direction based on their spiritual experience, but with no community affiliations of any kind, there can be no credible form of accountability.

The quality of supervisor supervision is yet another factor. Do programs or the hiring institution provide the necessary supervision for the supervisors to whom they entrust the practicum/intern stage of the program? Placing a supervisor on the team with clinical credentials protects everyone in the process—the directees, the directors, the supervisors, and the institution. All supervisory teams do not have this expertise, and there may be team issues that prevent the transparency needed to secure the necessary supervision in a group. I have only recently come to understand at greater depth the narcissistic vulnerability of supervisees in the process of supervision. Supervisors, just

like directors in training, may be deeply threatened by their own self-esteem issues and may be reluctant or unable to participate in supervision as deeply as needed in order to grow and learn from the supervisory process. Finally, because supervision of neophyte spiritual directors is very much a spiritual process, supervisors also need to attend to their own self-care and the depth of their own contemplative lives and spiritual growth. Supervisees just like directors need to pray their way through sessions as well as before and after. If this is, indeed, a charismatic ministry, then so too is its supervision.

CONCLUSION

Despite the challenges and concerns elaborated in this article, nevertheless, those of us who form spiritual directors and supervise them typically share a passion and love for the ministry of spiritual direction and supervision. We care deeply about supporting the hundreds of "absent others" whose spiritual lives their supervisees will accompany and serve. We care about the churches and the institutions that support this ministry. And we care about co-laboring with the Spirit in the transformation of the world through the inspired actions of our supervisees and our directees. Nevertheless, collectively we need to move to the next level of accountability and responsibility for our programs and our supervisory processes.

NOTES

1. Janet K. Ruffing, "The Supervision and Practicum Element of Spiritual Director Formation: Uncovering Inherent Mutuality," with Vivienne Joyce (Spiritual Directors International Leadership Institute, Litchfield, CN, 25 October 2007).
2. SDI serves about 5,000 members worldwide. Their membership does not include all spiritual directors since there are other networks, especially among Jesuit Retreat Houses who also form spiritual directors in the process of directing the Spiritual Exercises, and a network of spiritual directors who work in seminaries. Various Jesuit groups have also developed national and/or regional norms in the United States for formation of spiritual directors within this network.
3. Spiritual Directors International, "Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in the Spiritual Direction Relationship" (SDI, Bellevue, WA). For a short account of this history, see Carol Ludwig, "A Brief History of Spiritual Directors International Part II," *Presence* 8, no. 2 (June 2002): 21–28.
4. Initially, the "guiding principles," agreed to in 1991, included theological foundations, psychological and developmental foundations, instruction in the discernment of spirits, a practicum that included actual experience with directees, and supervision in this practicum experience. When the focus shifted to program leadership, the following "program components" were added: program team, program participants, contem-

- plative dimension, required texts, recommended readings and bibliography, cultural dimensions, and communication and methods. Participants themselves added ethics, boundaries, and professional ethics.
5. Bill Creed, "From Compassionate Listening to Compassionate Justice: A Call for New Standards" in *Sacred is the Call: Formation and Transformation in Spiritual Direction Programs*, ed. Suzanne M. Buckley (New York: Crossroad, 2005), 152–157. Bill Creed was also kind enough to discuss with me some of the other issues addressed in this article.
 6. Ibid, 155.
 7. Ibid., 155–156.
 8. Ibid., 156.
 9. See my essay, "An Integrated Model of Supervision and Training Spiritual Directors" *Presence* 9, no. 1 (February 2003): 24–30. See Maureen Conroy, *Looking into the Well: Supervision of Spiritual Directors* (Chicago, IL: Loyola University Press, 1995), for the first book-length treatment of spiritual direction supervision based on the model developed by Center for Religious Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which worked with only already experienced spiritual directors. This approach helpfully focused spiritual direction on the directee's experience of God and on supervision as a parallel contemplative process.
 10. See Pamela Cooper-White, *Shared Wisdom: The Use of the Self in Pastoral Counseling* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004).
 11. In some cases, an indeterminate outcome might suggest the failure of an internship or practicum. When such internships are longer than an academic semester, that might well be the case. Within an academic setting, when directees are volunteers who do not offer any stipend or payment for spiritual direction sessions, occasionally some of these directees fail to complete the number of promised sessions or may have serious psychological issues that may make spiritual direction difficult if not impossible for even a very experienced director. Thus, if through no fault of their own, an intern's experience remains ambiguous at end of the internship, acknowledging the lack of information needed for discernment about continuing actually models the fact that discernment does not always happen on our preferred time schedule.
 12. Supervision ordinarily focuses on the experience of the director or supervisor with her directees or supervisees. In the integrated model discussed above, this may well include a supervisor resourcing a director with needed clinical information or other information necessary for effective work with a particular directee. Consultation usually entails a director or supervisor seeking specialized help from another appropriate professional other than one's supervisor. For instance, the director meets with a psychologist to focus on a depressed directee and assess suicidal potential and an appropriate intervention. Or if legal issues are involved, a director or a supervisor may consult with legal counsel. Consultation focuses more on the directees or supervisees than on the interaction transpiring between them and their clients.
 13. Mary Rose Bumpus, "Supervision: the Assistance of an Absent Other" in *Supervision of Spiritual Directors: Engaging in Holy Mystery*, ed. Mary Rose Bumpus and Rebecca Bradburn Langer (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2005), 5.

Accountability and Professional Supervision of Pastoral Ministry Leaders

Raymond A. Reddicliffe

A recent pastoral supervision pilot project, undertaken on behalf of a Presbytery of the Uniting Church of Australia in South East Queensland, involved comparisons of different types of group supervision.¹ The project's results reflect the issues of accountability and the supervision of pastoral ministry leaders. The main objective of the study was to test the viability of three modes of group supervision, and to assess the extent to which these could function as alternatives to the well-established one-on-one model of pastoral supervision. In this essay, I revisit the processes and outcomes of the supervision pilot project with the purpose of reflecting on the issues of accountability and the professional supervision of pastoral ministry leaders as well as the relationship between these issues. Reference will be made to details of the report on the supervision pilot project since it makes accessible relevant case study material for major issues to be explored. Also, because the project involved attending to the lived experiences of the participants

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Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry

in the process by engaging in an exercise of creative listening and spiritual discernment in relation to the feedback received, the processes employed are regarded as consistent with those usually employed in the early stages of practical theology methodology.²

I offer working definitions of the key concepts and then provide a brief overview and discussion of the main processes and outcomes of the pilot project. Then I review how the concepts of accountability and professional supervision are understood and applied in particular contexts, including the ministry of pastoral supervision, business organizations, and the professions. Finally, some conclusions and recommendations are presented relating to accountability measures and the practice of professional supervision with pastoral ministry leaders.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

In common usage, the concept of accountability refers to any process whereby individuals and groups are answerable to others, i.e., “responsible to someone or for some action.”³ In some contexts, the concept may carry the meaning of “liability,” having legal or moral responsibility for some person or action, such as teachers in an educational system.⁴ Accountability is understood in this essay to be multifaceted, complex, varying somewhat in respect to different cultural contexts. It does not readily submit to simplification. Accountability is implicated in relationships at the personal, interpersonal, group, and community levels and usually involves mutual or complementary expectations, roles, and responsibilities. Evaluative processes of accountability are integral to particular partnerships or covenants and have implications for ethical and moral decision-making as well as for setting standards for expected performance levels and behavior. In Christian ministry and pastoral supervision contexts, these may be expressed as a code of ethics for the practice of ministry. There is also a theological dimension of accountability that may include actually doing theology⁵ as well as experiencing and responding to the judgment and grace of God.⁶

The term professional supervision (also referred to as pastoral supervision) is used here to refer to processes involving an intentional relationship of a supervisee with at least one other person for the specific purpose of engaging in theological reflection on experiences of ministry. The aim of this process is the development of professional identity as a ministry agent along with the acquisition of ministry skills or competencies in accord with per-

sonal learning goals. The adjective professional is preferred over pastoral in this context because it makes clear that the following discussion on supervision is primarily (but not exclusively) focused on the professional roles and responsibilities that ministers undertake, recognizing that these have much in common with those of some other professionals serving the specific needs of particular groups of people. The broad working definition adopted here of a professional is “a knowledge based worker in a defined domain.”⁷ Another reason for favoring “professional” over “pastoral” is that in some contexts the term “professional supervision” can indicate a narrow focus in terms of purpose that implies a close relationship with the concept of accountability. For example, the definition given of professional supervision in the Constitution and Regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) is “the relationship a Minister has with another professional or group whereby the Minister is assisted to maintain the boundaries of the pastoral relationship and the quality of ministry.”⁸ Both purposes mentioned here have important accountability connotations.

Although the term *pastoral ministry leaders* refers to women and men serving in a specified ministry (commissioned or ordained) of the Uniting Church of Australia (UCA) and working mainly in congregational or chaplaincy ministry contexts, a much broader application is assumed throughout the paper.

SUPERVISION PILOT PROJECT: OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

The pilot project that provides the primary data for this essay involved people serving in ministry roles in a Presbytery of the Uniting Church of Australia (UCA) located in South East Queensland. It was undertaken to follow up on some of the findings of a Presbytery-wide survey on the professional supervision of its ministry leaders.⁹ The survey had found that over half of those in active ministry positions (placements) had no specific arrangement in place for receiving regular supervision. Not unexpectedly, the data did confirm anecdotal evidence of a lack of participation in regular supervision by a large proportion of ministers serving in the Presbytery despite knowing that regular supervision was mandatory for people serving in ministry.

Once the decision to implement the supervision pilot project was made, personal letters were distributed, setting out basic details of the three small-group supervision options and inviting prospective participants meeting specific criteria to register interest and, if appropriate, to nominate their group

preference. Out of the twenty-six ministry leaders that were contacted, fifteen indicated a desire to participate; on the basis of the information provided, each was assigned to one of the following groups: a supervisor-led group, a peer supervision group, or one of two triad groups.

The participants received documents relating to the functioning and administration of the supervision program along with other relevant resources prior to commencement. Although a questionnaire inviting feedback was distributed two months into the program, it was necessary to exclude that data from the assessment process because the two triad groups had met only once or twice by then. There was also a low response rate from the members of the other two groups. The supervision program operated over a six-month period and evaluation involved analysis of the written feedback received from all participants in the form of questionnaire responses toward the end of the program. The data included information that was used for statistical analysis as well as evaluative comments concerning various aspects of participants' experiences of the program.

SUPERVISION PILOT PROJECT: OUTCOMES

The main outcomes of the pilot project are as follows:

- All groups produced positive outcomes for their respective participants, and all participants indicated enthusiasm for pastoral supervision.
- No one form of group supervision was perceived to be more effective than another.
- The need was identified for appointed group conveners who were trained and experienced in group supervision and familiar with the organization and functioning of such groups.
- Conveners need to have in place arrangements for receiving supervision of their work with their respective group.
- Effective communication links are vital to enable administrative issues to be dealt with in a timely manner.
- Provision of adequate funding of group supervision programs needed to be seriously addressed by the appropriate resourcing body.
- Small-group supervision programs were perceived to have the potential to enhance the quality of pastoral supervision, as well as increase the proportion of ministers regularly participating.
- Such programs are able to increase levels of pastoral support and enhance professional development for ministry leaders through group supervisory relationships and interaction.

Several of these points will be discussed in more detail in considering the issues of accountability and the professional supervision of ministry leaders, although accountability issues were far less overt. Nevertheless, their significance should not be underestimated since accountability measures and processes were imbedded in the project from the beginning. One of the reasons that the project was initiated was that all active ministry leaders were accountable to the Presbytery to participate in professional supervision. The survey results indicated that for some ministers the cost of professional supervision was a disincentive and others mentioned the difficulty experienced in accessing appropriately trained and available people for the role of supervisor. Yet even though the Presbytery regarded professional supervision as mandatory, it seems that members of the Presbytery talked minimally at formal meetings about the most effective means of involving pastoral ministry leaders in professional supervision.

ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS ELEMENTS

Accountability is multifaceted and complex, varying somewhat in respect to cultural contexts. Three key elements in the process of accountability appear to have wide application. Writing out of a social welfare organizational context, Harold Weissman identified these three elements in this way:

1. Establishing a set of role relationships that detail who is accountable to whom, for what, both within and without an organization;
2. Utilizing methods and procedures through which an accounting is given to the responsible parties that standards of effort, effectiveness, and efficiency have been met; and
3. Redistribution of rewards and costs that accrue during the accounting process.¹⁰

The first element is particularly relevant in the context of the supervision of pastoral ministry leaders. It is vital that when role relationships are established, the details of the terms of agreement or covenantal partnership are also clearly defined and mutually agreed upon by the parties concerned. In the case of the pilot project, guidelines were provided for establishing learning contracts and protocols for the functioning of the supervision groups. However, a lack of clarity about who was to initiate contact with the program coordinator when a group failed to convene, as happened in the case of both triad groups, led to an inordinate and unnecessary delay in those groups commencing on the program.

The second element of providing feedback to the relevant stakeholders that appropriate standards have been met has only partially been undertaken in respect to the pilot project. As important stakeholders, participants in the supervision program received only general information about the functioning and outcomes of their respective groups.

The third element in the model outlined above regarding the redistribution of rewards and costs that accrue due to the accounting process should also receive consideration in a professional supervision context. One of the outcomes of the supervision pilot project was the need for appropriate levels of funding to support professional supervision programs. In Weissman's approach to accountability, there must be appropriate rewards to organizations and their staff for demonstrating the openness and flexibility required to enable accountability processes to achieve desired outcomes. In church and other not-for-profit organizations, the reference to the redistribution of rewards may need to be reinterpreted in other than monetary terms for volunteers so that these initiatives may serve as positive reinforcement of behavior, such as engaging in professional supervision.

A decade ago, John Patton observed that supervision in ministry involving supervisees and patients usually deals with a mix of depth psychological and spiritual experiences that are challenging contextual issues. He described these as "holy complexity."¹¹ Some of the accountability issues that professional supervisors and supervisees confront are certainly no less complex. If, as Patton suggests, there are risks that pastoral supervisors may be paralyzed by contextual issues that deplete their confidence and impair their ability to work with supervisees, then perhaps one of those most challenging contextual issues is dealing with accountability related matters.

ACCOUNTABILITY: A COMPLEX CONTEXTUAL ISSUE

Accountability is complex in part because of the variety of meanings attached to the concept in different settings. For example, words such as *accountability*, *liability*, and *responsibility* are often used interchangeably in everyday conversation and by some conference speakers or authors.¹² The concept undergoes changes in meaning when used in different cultural contexts. A study of perceptions of accountability involving educators in Ethiopia found that, while respondents had a strong grasp of the concept of responsibility, there was little understanding of accountability as it is currently understood by most people in the Western world.¹³ For instance, while the

appropriateness of accountability to government was recognized, these respondents preferred to speak of having responsibility "for" such stakeholders as students, parents, and members of the wider community, rather than being accountable "to" them.

On the other hand, there is evidence that in some new religious groups or movements in the West, the term "responsibility" is defined or used in such a way that accountability to moral standards, the expectations of others, or one's own principles, are often excluded.¹⁴ This is in stark contrast to the approach adopted by mainline groups within the Judaeo-Christian tradition and other world religions, where a strong link is consistently maintained between the concept of accountability and the notion of moral responsibility. When attempts are made to simplify its essential meaning, there is a risk of both distorting the meaning of accountability and producing negative outcomes. In holding workers accountable in the information environment of corporate business organizations, Lance McMahon asserts that in its simplest form accountability safeguards the right to scrutinize or pursue a suspicion.¹⁵ If the culture of the organization is already characterized by a lack of trust and fragmented relationships, such an understanding of accountability is likely to generate even more suspicion and distrust.

A second reason for its complexity is that the notion of accountability and its application may be much more subtle than how it is popularly perceived. In business and the professions as well as in the context of mainline religious and church groups, it is widely held that there is a direct positive relationship between strong measures of accountability and more effective service outcomes. It is an unquestioned assumption is that if accountability is given a high level of priority whether the context is the operation of a business, a not-for-profit service organization, a religious body, or community group, then it can be confidently expected that there will be corresponding beneficial outcomes as a consequence.

Lee Forschheiser has written an article strongly advocating that accountability measures have a positive and linear relationship with success in business.¹⁶ He begins by suggesting that one way to understand the positive effects of accountability in the business world is to note the features of a workplace where accountability is lacking or given low priority. Top performers often leave because they desire and deserve accountability measures and leave out of frustration when their positive contribution is not recognized. Ironically, so the argument runs, the company seems to reward poor or mediocre performers, while struggling to retain or replace talented workers. Standards

tend to slip as workplace complacency and mediocrity become accepted as norms within the group culture. More and more responsibilities fall to the key leader as others in the organization become less accountable for decision making. One inference of this approach is that when ensuring accountability structures is a high priority, an organization is more effective both in achieving its strategic goals and in retaining its most competent and productive workers. Despite the appeal of this approach to accountability, one question needs to be raised: Does this perspective present an accurate assessment of the process and affects of accountability measures as they are experienced in the world of business and in other contexts, including that of professional supervision?

ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND SERVICE OUTCOMES

The relationship between measures of accountability and more effective service, according to Harold Weissman, is better described as curvilinear rather than linear.¹⁷ Accountability measures usually have positive effects in improving the quality of service, but only to a certain extent. In many instances, a decline in the quality of service occurs, even though accountability measures may have been improved. At various points and for different reasons in an organization's attempt to have more control over procedures and outcomes, accountability initiatives may lead to less rather than to more effective service because of political, social, technical, and economic constraints. Political constraint occurs when power struggles develop within an organization, or one or two key user groups impose their priorities. The changed dynamics invariably divert attention and scarce resources away from the organization's main agenda. The negotiated order that results from such change inevitably means accountability is essentially a political process and not an objective administrative one.¹⁸

Pseudo-accountability is the term used to describe the outcomes of adversarial relationships between agents and the organizations that hold them accountable. In some instances, both parties protect themselves against criticism, but the quality of the service does not improve.¹⁹ This is an unhealthy form of collusion that undermines the goal of mutual accountability because it eschews the kind of honesty and transparency in communication that promotes the development of mutual trust necessary for strong effective partnerships within and between organizational units. Even organizations perceived as very successful may only become aware of their strengths and weaknesses after a thorough review. It was only after an ethics and values audit that the

University of Central Lancaster began a process through which its members are reported to have grown in respect to accountability and openness, and "developed their understanding of the paramount importance of good interpersonal relationships, clear communication, professional behavior and ethical standards."²⁰

It should not be surprising that although the relationship between accountability measures and production outcomes in service-oriented organizations has usually been represented as a positive linear one, such a viewpoint has been challenged by Weissman and others. Other empirical studies suggest that accountability positively affects dependent variables, such as performance, satisfaction, conformity, goals, and attentiveness; but they also cite contrary research results indicating that accountability measures have resulted in creating dysfunctional behavior in some contexts.²¹ The theory is being called into question not only because observing behavior within organizations provides anecdotal evidence of glaring incongruities, but more importantly, because there is mounting empirical research to the contrary.

THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

In spite of the diversity of views about the nature and function of professional supervision and approaches to its practice, there are vestiges of "overseeing," in the sense of "watching over" the ministry performance and professional development of another, in that process. For that reason, it is important that the traditional function and relationship of supervision is modified by appropriate theological reframing. In a ministry context, Kenneth Pohly has suggested, the supervisor stands *with* us in the sense of being alongside us, rather than over us.²² When the abuse of power in helping relationships in church or other contexts is widespread, it is vitally important for the fundamental supervisory function of oversight to have a continuing and valid place. The practice of oversight must be held in balance by means of two other essential elements, namely, an effective supervisory working relationship and an agreed upon basis for mutual accountability. All three elements are directed toward the accomplishment of what Pohly identifies as the dual purpose of supervision: the utilization of professional skills to achieve a service outcome and the formation and development of the ministry agent's professional identity.²³

For most ministry leaders there is the obligation to submit their practice of ministry to review processes of one kind or another on a regular basis. For

example, the preamble to the “Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice” of the Uniting Church in Australia states that the document is to be applied within the context of the *Constitution and Regulations* of the Church which set out the Church’s requirements in relation to the conduct and accountability of its ministers.²⁴ Clearly the two emphases noted earlier of assisting ministers to maintain appropriate boundaries in their pastoral relationships and the quality of ministry service being offered indicate the close association between this perspective on the purpose of professional supervision and the issue of the accountability of ministers. It should be noted that the relevant regional judicatory authority (e.g. Presbytery) has a responsibility to assist ministers under its pastoral and administrative oversight to fulfill various duties and responsibilities, including that of engaging in professional supervision. However, in another section of the Code the following assertion is made: “Ministers have a responsibility to ensure that they receive regular professional supervision.”²⁵ These two statements may appear to indicate some confusion about who is ultimately responsible to ensure that ministers receive regular professional supervision. Another way to approach this apparent anomaly is to recognize that there is a qualitative difference between “being held accountable” by an organization and “holding oneself accountable.” As Harold Weissman has observed, “No matter how hard an organization tries to hold another accountable, the ‘bottom line’ is the willingness of the accountable agency to be held accountable. They have innumerable opportunities...to subvert the process.”²⁶

Nevertheless, it can be safely assumed in most supervision contexts that the differential in authority and power between the supervisor and the supervisee has important implications should a complaint be lodged or lawsuit ensue. The party exercising the most power and authority (invariably the supervisor), will also carry the heavier burden of responsibility. In the case of professional supervision and litigation, the principle usually applies: “Responsibility is multiplied, it is never divided.”²⁷

So regulating for dual accountability for the professional supervision of ministry leaders would appear to have much to commend it as a measure to strengthen the safety net for ministry leaders and the church authorities to whom they are accountable. A similar point could be made in respect to individual members of a peer supervision group. While each member is accountable for his own learning and growth, at the same time there is the expectation that other peer group members will assume a measure of responsibility for making that learning and growth possible. Brigit Proctor has made the astute

observation: “A peer group demonstrates that ‘in the end we are all self-accountable; (but) we should never be *only* self-accountable.’”²⁸ Participants in the supervision pilot project indicated that significant elements contributing to the reported high levels of satisfaction and commitment to the program were the quality of their relationships with peers and the sense of being mutually accountable for the functioning and outcomes of their respective groups. From the feedback received, it was clear that, for the majority of participants, the experience of group supervision enhanced their sense of accountability for the manner in which ministry was exercised as well as their ongoing commitment to undertake some form of professional supervision.

The link between professional supervision and accountability issues is further illustrated by Kenneth Pohly’s identification of the six components in a supervisory relationship that need to be adequately addressed. The first of these is the administrative component that encompasses the provision of accountability and involves feedback and evaluation.²⁹ Pohly also asserts that an essential characteristic of pastoral supervision is what he describes as “covenant making.” This term also encompasses six functions within the supervisory relationship: “It names the participants, states expectations, defines responsibilities, identifies resources, sets forth an accountability structure, and provides for change.”³⁰ Note again the integral place assigned to having an effective accountability structure as one of the necessary functions in a pastoral supervisory relationship. The pertinent issue for the appropriate church judicatory bodies, therefore, is not whether there should be an accountability structure, but rather what purposes and goals of the structure should be and, therefore, what forms would be most appropriate considering the supervisory context in which it is to operate.

CONCLUSION

Having clear expectations and standards for performance of ministry, including professional supervision and other behavior, in accessible forms, such as ethical codes, is vital. But in and of themselves, these strategies are insufficient for several important reasons. The first is that effective means are required to ensure that the relevant information is widely known and that ownership of accountability measures by all relevant stakeholders is actively encouraged. Second, if the most positive outcomes of implementing accountability measures are likely to be achieved through covenantal partnerships involving mutual accountability between pastoral ministry leaders

and their judicatory church authorities, then there is a strong case for incorporating dual accountability measures in professional supervision. Third, if full weight is given to the empirical evidence that the relationship between accountability measures and service outcomes is best expressed as curvilinear rather than linear, there are implications regarding our approach to accountability processes. For example, instead of church judicatory bodies focusing mainly on achieving conformity of their pastoral ministry leaders to regulatory standards of engaging in regular professional supervision, there are compelling reasons to invest more time in and attention to removing the roadblocks to fuller participation and more effective ministry service.

It is, therefore, recommended that authorities holding pastoral ministry leaders accountable for professional supervision consider the merits of implementing the following strategies:

1. Model openness and flexibility within the organization rather than exercising authoritarian control by insisting on conformity to set standards in a legalistic manner and unnecessarily excluding some stakeholders from decision-making processes. Should an individual or group demonstrate an unwillingness to be held accountable, there may be few positive outcomes for the organization and others involved in pursuing the disciplinary pathway, except in exceptional circumstances. It is also essential to implement appropriate ways to reward openness and flexibility within an organization.
2. Promote more effective communication by using multiple means of conveying information and ensuring that important messages are clear and concise and received and accurately understood.
3. Encourage relationship-building exercises as an integral part of agenda planning for formal meetings and as an option for informal gatherings in order to foster more effective teamwork.
4. Adopt a creative problem solving approach to resolving accountability issues. While clear and precise standards of accountability are important for any organization, it is also essential that disagreements or conflicts are addressed in a safe and supportive environment for all parties and that the requisite resources are available to provide satisfactory resolution of issues.

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**Theme for Volume 31 of *Reflective Practice*
FORMATION AND SUPERVISION IN A DIGITAL AGE**

How we live has already been profoundly affected by digital communication and the rapidly emerging tools of social media are likely to change forever how we solve problems and create social renewal. Patterns of communication, revolutionized access to information, shifted the balance of power between experts and amateurs, expanded collaboration in solving problems, redefined the way that we think about membership, and created new possibilities for social intimacy. Digital technologies and the new media landscape are also transforming the church. This shift will accelerate in the coming years. As *Reflective Practice* begins its own digital era with Volume 31, it is timely that we focus on this theme: **Formation and Supervision in a Digital Age.**

- What needs to be done to form a new generation of pastors and supervisors for whom digital technology is natural?
- What might the success of distance learning teach us about digital supervision?
- Is it necessary to balance electronic meetings in supervision with face-to-face meeting with a supervisee?
- How will the fluidity of personal boundaries in social networks like MySpace affect the willingness to be vulnerable in formation or supervision?
- How will confidentiality be secured if the internet is the vehicle for formation and supervision?
- How will the specter of predators who use the internet to attract victims affect forming learning communities of trust?
- Although sharing may be more intimate online, how might the absence of in-person connections affect the sustainability of relationships limited by distance from the outset?
- How will digital formation/supervision affect people with different levels of skill and adaptability to the technology?

More than ever, it is important that young pastors, supervisors, and leaders in ministerial formation write about this topic at this time. Proposals are welcome any time. Articles should be submitted to Herbert Anderson, Editor, by December 1, 2010, for inclusion in Volume 31.

**The Role of Co-Active Spiritual Coaching
in Supporting Responsibility and Accountability
in Formation and Supervision**

Marianne LaBarre with Karen Frank

With the commitment of the Lilly-Endowment to support programs on Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE), the Seattle University Pastoral Leadership Program (PLP) was instituted in 2003. Each year, twenty-five proven and promising lay and ordained pastoral leaders from ten to twelve different denominational backgrounds gather for two to three days a month for renewal and revitalization.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROGRAM

In addition to their courses on effective leadership and creating healthy systems in ministry, participants take part in peer groups and spiritual coach-

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Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry

ing during this nine-month program. In this article, we will explore what spiritual coaching is in the context of the Pastoral Leadership Program, and how we see it as a vital means of ongoing formation, supervision, and accountability for experienced ministers.

Personal spiritual renewal is the heart of the program, offering students the chance to reconnect with their deepest spiritual longings and wrestle with challenging questions in a safe, supportive, and resource-filled environment. Participants accept responsibility for identifying and living out an authentic calling. They are accountable to themselves, to their faith communities, to the group, and to their spiritual coaches to invest themselves wholeheartedly in the process and to implement strategies to change behaviors and reach new goals.

Pastoral leaders are invited to reclaim their sense of “calling” by diving deeply into their spiritual and personal renewal. They focus on:

- Nurturing deeper questions
- Committing to inner work
- Living with authenticity
- Claiming strengths
- Honoring limits
- Attending to the shadows

CARL ROGERS AND MAXIMIZING THE POSITIVE

The Pastoral Leadership Program begins with the assumption that these individuals have within themselves the potential for growth, for increased self-awareness, and for solving their own problems. During the year, these ministers become clearer about their strengths and limits. With this clarity, they are able to lead more effectively. They claim what is life-giving in their ministry and move toward new understandings of how the Spirit is calling them.

Russ Moxley captures this dynamic of growing self-awareness and living out gifts in his book *Leadership and Spirit*:

The journey to self is neither easy nor quick. Because we evolve and change, the journey lasts our whole life. Some seem unwilling to do the hard and deep work necessary to complete this journey. Others start but turn back before the journey is complete. But those who stay the course become the person they started out to be. They find their own voice, their own truth. Along the path, they not only understand their true self but

also claim their gifts, heed their call, move toward wholeness, and learn to be authentic.¹

Building on the person-centered psychology of Carl Rogers, Donald Clifton and Paula Nelson identify two basic building blocks for this journey of person discovery and growth: living our strengths and managing our weaknesses.² By asking the question, “What is right with us?” rather than focusing on deficiencies, Clifton, Nelson, and their colleagues from the University of Nebraska have done extensive research on the impact of positive behavior. They note that one way to emphasize strengths is learning to listen to our yearnings because our yearnings act “like an internal magnet” pulling us toward the deep desires that well up within us starting during childhood.³

Clifton and Nelson’s research identified several qualities that characterize living out of our strengths. One is that we are likely to get “a kick out of doing it” if it is an area of strength.⁴ Another evidence of our strengths is rapid learning. Catching on to something quickly is an indicator that this is something we are good at accomplishing. Often this rapid learning corresponds to a sense of effortlessness or naturalness, as if we have done this all of our life. If we develop our strengths to the maximum, the strength becomes so great it overwhelms the weaknesses.⁵ They reframe weakness by calling it “misyearning.”⁶

Clifton and Nelson suggest the following strategies for managing limits:⁷

- Clarify what you do not do well and stop doing it.
- Delegate the task to those with strength in that area.
- Team with someone with complimentary strengths.
- Utilize support systems whenever possible.

If these strategies are used wisely, our limits diminish, and our strengths are given full rein to thrive and develop. Frederick Buechner identifies this as vocation, “the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep longing.”⁸

In her excellent description of translating coaching into the supervisory process, Sue Fox aptly discusses the person centered approach of Carl Rogers as the basis of coaching:

For coaching to be effective, the relationship must be comfortable enough for trust to develop between the student and supervisor, but distinct enough for the coaching conversation to challenge the student’s existing paradigms or mental models. ‘This delicate balance is aptly captured by Carl Rogers’ concept of “person-centered” values.’

A person-centered climate, the foundation of coaching, includes the following values from which are derived all other aspects of the coaching relationship. People:

- Are inherently motivated to grow and develop
- Are naturally creative, resourceful, and either have the answers or are capable of finding them
- Are approached holistically, as mind, body, spirit
- Are accepted and prized for who they are; they do not need to hide parts of themselves to be acceptable.⁹

In the Pastoral Leadership Program, faculty members follow this “person-centered” process by replacing self-limiting beliefs with new behaviors and patterns supporting inner attentiveness to personal strengths and inner yearnings.

IMPLEMENTATION

Despite the positive approach of the Program, anxiety increases as the new group of pastoral leaders gathers. Some wonder: What am I doing here? Is there anyone here I can relate to? Will I learn anything I don’t already know? Misgivings and apprehension abound. It is no comfort to them to be asked to write down their hopes and expectations, fears and concerns, when it seems the better course of action would be to bolt from the room. Even more distressing is our request that each person reads each hope and fear out loud. The panic begins to decrease as one by one familiar hopes and fears are named: Not enough time! Too little support at work! Can I go deep enough—do I want to? The voices become a chorus expressing their commonalities. Starting then, rigid shoulders relax, and a collective sigh of relief is heard.

As we establish norms of confidentiality and respect, individuals realize that in this group of peers and colleagues, they can risk sharing the truth without constant censoring. In this room, we are not pastors with parishioners but pastoral leaders among peers. This is a safe space to be ourselves, to be authentic, which from the Greek root literally means “to be author of our own life.” The hope is that each person in the group takes this message to heart and embraces the opportunity to alter some patterns in their lives that may not be helpful in realizing their potential.

As part of this change process, each participant attends an hour-long, monthly, one-on-one spiritual coaching session. This serves as an informal

supervisory process for these experienced participants who are a mixture of ordained and lay ministers from large and small congregations as well as hospice, university, and prison chaplains. The agenda of the session is set by the pastoral leader though often the content and assignments from the class work serve as a catalyst for the conversation. The program’s emphasis at the beginning of the year on developing deep questions, designing an individualized learning contract focused on an area of personal or professional growth, and writing a paper on a ministry failure, all surface issues that may be helpful to explore in the spiritual coaching session.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AND SPIRITUAL COACHING

Spiritual coaching offers a container to help pastoral leaders sort out their lives with the supportive advocacy of a companion. The spiritual coach invites each individual to courageously attune themselves to God’s movement within, claim their most critical responsibilities and be accountable to the Spirit’s urgings.

What is Spiritual Coaching?

Fundamentally, spiritual coaching provides a sacred space for listening to the truth of the heart. Our process of spiritual coaching developed as we searched to find a practice to support ongoing renewal and vitality of pastoral leaders. We started our search for this integrating component by building on the tradition of spiritual direction and combining this with the practice of leadership coaching. Coaching and direction each provide unique qualities that support the growth and effectiveness of pastoral leaders.

The Advantage of Spiritual Direction as a Part of the Process

The art of spiritual direction stems from an ancient Christian tradition. In this process, a more experienced person in the spiritual life serves as companion, mirror, support, and guide through the varying landscapes of the spiritual life. Spiritual direction offers:

- Deep listening to enable the person to attend to the movements of the Spirit
- Discernment processes to clarify motivations and other factors that affect decision-making
- Prayerful support both from and with the spiritual director

Jesuit priest William Barry, who has written about spiritual direction over the past three decades, defines spiritual direction as the “help given by one believer to another. This enables persons to pay attention to God’s per-

sonal communication to them, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God and to live out the consequences of the relationship."¹⁰ In other words, spiritual direction implicitly demands that the directee be accountable to God and responsible in living out the insights gained from the relationship.

In particular, Barry's reflection on our invitation to join God's Dream, requires responsive action on the part of each believer. Learning to discern the subtle stirrings of the Spirit is vital in filling our role in the mission of bringing about the reign of God. Barry stresses that the spiritual direction process invites us to enter into an adult relationship with God, leaving behind the parent-child pattern of relating. Authentic growth in the spiritual life deepens our commitment to the ongoing work of the Gospel toward creating a just and peace-filled world.¹¹

The Advantage of Leadership Coaching as a Part of the Process

As fruitful as the spiritual direction relationship is, the leadership coaching methodology offers other dimensions for improving and sustaining leadership effectiveness. Coaching provides the setting to:

- Set goals and strategies for becoming more effective in our ministry
- Be accountable for following through on decisions and commitments
- Clarify feedback and raise awareness on areas of self-sabotage, impasse, or lack of freedom
- Develop more effective leadership skills

Currently business leaders are investing in the services of coaches as a way to raise the bar on leadership effectiveness. Training sessions for coaches have sprung up nationally to fill this need. Google the term "business coaching" nationally and the internet search engine will display over 1.2 million listings. The term *coach*, which originated with sports, carries with it upbeat connotations of cheering on, motivating, challenging, and goading the athletes to be the best they can be. Sports and business coaches also instill lessons about teamwork and mutual accountability in their charges. Responsible for carrying out personal commitments, individuals are accountable to the whole team and to each other.

The foundation of the coaching process is the understanding that the agenda of each meeting belongs to the individuals being coached. The coach comes with questions rather than answers and empowers those coached to access the answer within them.

The spiritual coaches in the Pastoral Leadership Program have a background in theology and spirituality as well as in coaching. Both spiritual direction and spiritual coaching start with the belief that we have within ourselves the necessary wisdom and resources for solving our problems and reaching our goals. Spiritual coaching combines the faith stance of spiritual direction and the built-in accountability of leadership coaching.

Sometimes clients don't think they have the answers; sometimes they'd rather believe someone else—an expert—has the answers for them. In some cases people have a powerful sabotaging voice that tells them they don't have the answers. But co-active coaching stands in the certainty that clients really do know. When they look inside, with the help of a coach, they'll find they know themselves, their strengths, and their limitations. They'll also discover what they want, what they fear, what motivates them and what holds them back.¹²

With the support of their coach, ministers are able to find their own way. The belief of a spiritual coach that individuals have the creativity, resourcefulness, and wholeness within themselves is contagious. The pastoral leaders bring their own agendas; the spiritual coaches' task is to assure that it isn't lost from one session to the next.

Bringing the Two Together

Having been trained as a spiritual director in Chicago at the Institute for Spiritual Leadership twenty years ago, my initial concept of coaching was that it was a similar process. At the time, I directed an executive leadership program and thought it would be useful to learn more about this new idea. I expected that obtaining certification as an executive coach would simply reinforce skills I already possessed.

This was not the case. What I discovered during my co-active coaching program sessions in San Raphael, California, was that I would also be employing additional skills that held the client accountable to her own agenda. We would work together in "an alliance between two equals."¹³ I learned that of the five elements that constitute a comprehensive coaching model, listening, intuition, curiosity, and self-management are very similar to spiritual direction. The action/learning dimension, however, tends to be more directive than most spiritual direction.

The co-active coaching model outlines five elements that the coach brings to the session:

- **Listening.** The coach listens beneath the words to the deepest yearnings and the movement of the Spirit. This also includes attending to what blocks or stops this movement.
- **Intuition.** The coaches are attentive to hunches or to gut feelings in their attentiveness and may bring these up as questions or reflections to the ministers.
- **Curiosity.** “Curiosity is open, inviting, spacious, almost playful. And yet it is also enormously powerful.”¹⁴ This quality of non-judgmental presence opens conversations and allows further delving into the topic.
- **Self-management.** This is the work of the coach—to get out of the pastoral leader’s way and become almost invisible in the process. By leaving personal preferences, agendas, and ego behind, the coach reinforces the wholeness, creativity, and resourcefulness of the individual.
- **Action/Learning.** Emphasizing life giving, positive action with the support of accountability is one of the key distinctions of the coaching process. The deepening of learning is also powerful for growth and renewal. “Accountability is unique in the coaching relationship because it is completely judgment free. There is no shame or blame attached to whatever the client does. The objective is action and learning, not specific results.”¹⁵

By combining the focused work of coaching and the faith-oriented model of spiritual direction, the new model of spiritual coaching emerged. Each person in the PLP chooses a spiritual coach from the program and meets with that person monthly. Spiritual coaching serves as a catalyst for action and accountability. Leaders identify changes they want to make and become more aware of the steps they need to take to create healthy structures of support to reach their ministry goals.

Anticipated Improvement in Responsibility and Accountability

As a spiritual director, I was accustomed to listening with the directees for the movement of the Spirit in their lives. Often an Advent-like “waiting” motif threaded through our monthly sessions. We listened for where life existed in the issue at hand and tuned into the movements of “consolation or desolation” in a discernment process. In contrast, in the spiritual coaching scenario a more directive confrontation might be employed as can be seen in the following excerpt. Mary Lou was working on her doctor of ministry project and was deeply committed to finishing by May.

MARY LOU: I am so stuck with my DMin and I am not doing any writing these days, even though I know I need to in order to graduate in June.

COACH: What is holding you back? (curiously)

MARY LOU: Well, I don’t have a place to write. My husband doesn’t want me leaving my paper work on the dining room table.

COACH: What is holding you back? (curiously)

MARY LOU: I had created a space in the guest room for my writing but then we had company last weekend and we will have more over the holidays and so it just isn’t practical for me to keep moving everything in and out of that room.

COACH: What is holding you back? (inquisitively)

MARY LOU: (Exasperated and raising her voice) I have told you—I don’t have my own space and I can’t get to the writing without it.

COACH: What is holding you back? (calmly)

(Long pause)

MARY LOU: (Tears welling up) I am afraid! I feel so vulnerable putting myself out there in this writing, etc...

Although in spiritual direction we may identify that fear at some point, coaching begins with the agreement that the coach will hold the pastoral leader accountable to the leader’s agenda. This creates a different style of work.

The commitment to accountability clearly shows in follow-ups to the coaching sessions. In spiritual direction, a directee may say “I am ready to tell my pastor when I meet with him this week that I just cannot continue to fill the role of both youth director and religious education director.” As the spiritual director who helped this minister achieve clarity, I would affirm her resolve, work with her—perhaps role playing the conversation with the pastor—promise prayers for the confrontation, and express my eagerness to hear about how the conversation went.

Over the years in spiritual direction, directees have frequently returned to share that they just didn’t feel like it was the best time for confrontation or that they weren’t quite ready to take the big step. The additional step(s) that I would take as a coach extend an invitation to the pastoral leader to call or e-mail me following the meeting and perhaps even set up an immediate debriefing session. This added mutual accountability reinforces the individual’s resolve to take action.

CONCEPTS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Being Responsible for Our Shadows

While we learn how to live out of our strengths and manage our limits, we also find out about shadow aspects of our lives and ministries that are not in

our conscious awareness. Parker Palmer describes five shadows that plague leaders.¹⁶ Ironically, even as we develop spiritually, these shadows can diminish our joy and undermine our fruitfulness. By consciously attending to them, we can learn how to reduce their threat. Awareness of our shadows can keep us grounded in our own earthiness as leaders in churches struggling with their shadows as well. Robert Bly invites us, as leaders, to relate to, embrace, and befriend these shadows, acknowledging their potential to keep us honest and humble.

The first shadow Palmer discusses is a sense of “insecurity about identity and worth.”¹⁷ Many ministers coming into the program wrestle with this shadow. The status and privilege of priests and pastors has declined. When we nurture those in our program with lovely luncheons and a supportive environment, they are often surprised. Rev. Tom Smith summed it up: “This is such a contrast to how I am usually treated. I have always gotten the message as a pastor—‘pay him little and keep him humble!’” When identity and self worth are jeopardized, there is a tendency to cling to “productivity” or identify with work. Struggling against self-doubt, pastoral leaders feel constant pressure to meet expectations and prove their worthiness. Though some are bent low with poor self esteem, others lash out with arrogance, demanding special treatment, or rule with an iron hand.

The inner journey to make this shadow conscious brings the gift of knowing our true selves. As we grow in the sense of the deep self, we do not need to depend as much on the trappings of our role or the opinions of others. Our purpose and actions can emerge from a far deeper source: our relationship with God. We accept the responsibility for working within that relationship to increase our understanding of where and how we should be using our energy in ministry. We are accountable to God for responding, or failing to respond, to our call.

Also relevant in the pastoral leaders’ work is the shadow that Palmer identifies and characterizes as “functional atheism, the belief that ultimate responsibility for everything rests with us.”¹⁸ This unconscious motivator drives overwork, leading to burnout and wreaking havoc in personal and family relationships. This shadow disguises itself as selfless service and places us in the sacrificial role of victim when we feel like we are the only ones who can keep the ministry flowing. The gift generated by facing this shadow is that we can let God be God. We are responsible only for our small part. We recognize the gifts within the faith community and the responsibility that other church members also have to be accountable for offering their gifts.

Being Responsible for Awareness and Action

Cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien has researched the experience of indigenous peoples worldwide and come up with four principles that we utilize in the Pastoral Leadership program and spiritual coaching to increase responsibility and accountability. These principles are:

1. show up or choose to be present
2. pay attention to what has heart and meaning
3. tell the truth without blame or judgment
4. be open to outcome, not attached¹⁹

Showing Up and Choosing to be Present

This emphasis is on letting our “yes” be *yes*. At times the task in spiritual coaching is mirroring back to pastoral leaders that they may not be saying what they mean nor doing what they say. The hard work of rigorous honesty with self is ongoing. Choosing to be present is a painstaking discipline. When ministers check out or fail to be their authentic or best selves, the PLP provides a laboratory to check in on what is really happening.

Pay Attention to What Has Heart and Meaning

Spiritual direction and spiritual coaching have this at their core: We are concerned with finding out what has the “juice” or passion for each individual and helping them to follow that path. This is the path that allows pastoral leaders to engage whole-heartedly.

When ministers ignore the inner voice and pursue the path of “should,” they tend to become half-hearted. According to Arrien, “feeling like we should do something when we don’t want to is the breeding ground for half-heartedness.”²⁰ When we go about our lives half-heartedly, we are not being responsible to ourselves or to those who depend upon us. At such times, we horde our energy rather than open-heartedly sharing it with others.

Tell the Truth without Blame or Judgment

With ministers steeped in morality and ethics according to their own theological background, this principle often involves emphasizing nonjudgmental approaches to communication. How can the Pastoral Leader speak with radical honesty, integrity, and truth telling, while at the same time not judging or blaming oneself or others? How can a loving, open-ended question replace a more narrowly defined one? How can one stand on one’s own beliefs and values without superimposing them on another?

Be Open to Outcome, Not Attached to Outcome

As we work to create a climate of trust in the PLP, our intention is to allow the space for individuals to clarify what is muddled and discern their way forward. The discernment process is intrinsically concerned with responsibility and accountability to self, to others, and to God. Ideally, the discerner is faithful to acting upon the revelations of the Spirit, whether or not those seem likely to lead to a desired outcome. We encourage a sense of open-handed detachment as essential to the listening process.

Living with Authenticity

The invitation to these pastoral leaders to discover their deepest longings and their best gifts is first of all a challenge to live authentically. In the safe context of shared vulnerabilities, it is possible to shed any inclination to self-deception because everyone has shared failures. Being an authentic individual means being naked before God and transparent before others.

The point is not to become a leader. The point is to become yourself, to use yourself completely—all your skills, gifts, and energies—in order to make your vision manifest. You must withhold nothing. You must, in sum, become the person you started out to be, and enjoy the process of becoming.²¹

The goal cannot be to become invulnerable. Rather we need to live with an awareness of our vulnerability without self-deception and without being overwhelmed by what we know. Authenticity begins by embracing vulnerability and is fostered by a blend of uncompromising realism about individual shadows and unending confidence that each individual has gifts to give. That is ministerial authenticity.

Discernment of the True Self

Margaret Wheatley, in *Leadership and the New Science*, discusses the leader's need to self-reference, to listen within, and to follow his intuition.²² In the Christian world, the Ignatian practice of spiritual discernment invites this inner listening. Living a life aligned with our personal values and the movement of the Spirit is to live a life of radical personal accountability. Faithfulness to this practice is a daily, even hourly, choice of congruence and veracity.

At times this faithfulness to our convictions may not appear logical from the outside. Our choices may not coincide with the expectations of others and may even run counter to old habits of behavior. Nonetheless, as leadership author and educator Warren Bennis states, "Letting the self emerge is the essential task for leaders."²³ The skill needed by us, as leaders endeavoring to

embody our authenticity, requires commitment and intentionality. They are acquired only through time and fidelity to our inner journey.

In Bennis's research with twenty-nine leaders, he found that most of those in leadership do not start out intending to be leaders, but seek to be themselves.²⁴ In that process, their gifts and skills develop. His research identified three essential characteristics of a leader living with integrity: "self-knowledge, candor and maturity."²⁵ Just as the Greek oracle at Delphi admonished all people to "know thyself," this same theme surfaced repeatedly in Bennis's interviews. Four commonalities emerged:

ONE: You are your own best teacher.

TWO: Accept responsibility. Blame no one.

THREE: You can learn anything you want to learn.

FOUR: True understanding comes from reflecting on your experience.²⁶

All leaders interviewed agreed that no one could teach them how to become themselves. It is each person's unique journey.

ENDURING RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As the pastoral leader and spiritual coach work on discovering the next step in the leader's journey, spiritual coaching inculcates an ethic of enduring responsibility and accountability, both individual and mutual. The leader learns how to make commitments to becoming a whole self and the relationship between leader and spiritual coach can extend beyond the coaching session and program year.

The Story of Pastor Ruthann Carlson

This was the case with Ruthann. All her life she had been the class clown. She developed perfect timing to get a laugh. Going for attention rather than academics almost cost her ordination. But somehow the invitation to try out a new way of relating from her best self, hit a chord. Maybe it was turning forty. Maybe it was the critical comment from her board president about "humor." Or maybe it was the work with her spiritual coach; Ruthann felt more confident than ever about God's calling in her life and that pastoring fit her. She loved preaching, teaching, and worship. She also was eager for theological reflection. She wanted to be taken more seriously by her peers. This was her chance.

Ruthann began the year with an attitude of genuine engagement. She quickly gained respect from her peers as a leader among them and delighted

in both the learning and her new role. The group allowed her to risk positive change and have space for missteps as they happened. Not only did she have increased clarity about living authentically, she discovered how much she had used humor to keep people at a distance. Her deepening confidence allowed Ruthann to disclose more, trust herself, and be genuine in new ways.

Unfortunately, a few months into the program, Ruthann had a setback. Over the Christmas break, she spent time with college friends and slipped back into old patterns. When the January classes began, Ruthann showed up late, disrupted the class with wisecracks, elicited inappropriate laughter from the group, and shifted the energy from an atmosphere of support to a subtle climate of ridicule and sarcasm.

This became a moment of truth for Ruthann when her spiritual coach confronted her about her noticeable change of behavior and its impact on the group. Though this was painful for Ruthann to hear, she realized how easily she had slipped back into patterns that did not serve her well. Given time to reflect, she grudgingly recognized that the new set of behaviors she had embraced during the fall were actually bringing her the relationships, respect, and leadership she had longed to experience.

Two years after she completed the program, Ruth Ann returned to tell her spiritual coach that the challenge had been like a trim tab which changed the course of her life and ministry. A small course correction had led her in a new direction, bringing her greater fulfillment.

CONCLUSIONS

Coaching conversations are designed to help the religious leader move through the gap separating current realities and future goals, both immediate and long-term, by developing greater leadership capacity.²⁷

It's striking how similar spiritual direction and coaching are in some respects. The emphasis on the coaching environment and the skills of listening, intuition, and curiosity reflect elements of spiritual direction. For example, in discussing listening skills, Laura Whitworth, Henry Kimsey-House, and Phil Sandahl emphasize that the coaches remove their own agendas from the process. They place their focus on the other person, listening not only to words but to nonverbal expression and the unspoken feelings behind the words.²⁸

This makes coaching and spiritual direction compatible for melding into a process that combines deep listening with an action/accountability compo-

nent appropriate to a program design to support and sustain pastoral excellence. In our use of the process of spiritual coaching, we have discovered that pastoral leaders are able to move through the gap toward their future selves and the behaviors that support ongoing growth.

NOTES

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4. *Ibid.*, 48.
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8. Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1993), 119.
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14. *Ibid.*, 10.
15. *Ibid.*, 11.
16. Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000).
17. *Ibid.*, 86.
18. *Ibid.*, 88.
19. Angeles Arrien, *The Four-Fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer and Visionary* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1993), 7-8.
20. *Ibid.*, 50.
21. William Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1989), 111.

22. Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2006).
23. Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader*, 113.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 40.
26. Ibid., 56.
27. John P. Martinson, "Coaching Religious Leaders," *Reflective Practice* 26 (2006): 83–98.
28. Whitworth and others, *Co-Active Coaching*, 36.

"There are three types of accountability applicable to both laity and clergy, but applicable to the clergy to a *greater degree*. First, the minister is understood as accountable to an ecclesial community which has authority to interpret how her or his particular ministry is an appropriate expression of God's calling. Second, the minister, clergy or laity, is also accountable to his or her peers in ministry and sometimes to those specializing in a particular type of ministry in order to maintain standards of good practice in the same way that other professionals are accountable to their peers. A third accountability is the accountability of the minister to himself or herself to advance in the practice of ministry—to become competent in caring and in understanding the faith tradition he or she represents."—from John Patton, *Pastoral Care in Context*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. p 80.

Working to Prevent Clergy Sexual Misconduct

Christie Cozad Neuger

I focus this article on preventing clergy sexual misconduct by presenting four vignettes that together begin to indicate the scope of damage that occurs when clergy cross sexual boundaries with congregants. For this article, I am limiting the definition of clergy sexual misconduct to inappropriate sexual behavior (for example, sexualized comments and touch, various forms of sexually-oriented manipulation, acts of sexual intimacy including sexual intercourse, and so forth) between a clergy person and an adult congregant. I have focused on clergy-to-adult sexual misconduct because, in my experience, this kind of behavior seems to be viewed with the greatest amount of ambiguity and ambivalence by congregants, judicatory representatives, clergy, and the general public. Language like "affair," "misjudgment," and "mutual" get used instead of the language of "abuse," "violation," and "tragedy," which are used more commonly with clergy-to-child misconduct but are also appropriate in its clergy-to-adult forms. It is important to locate the starting point for this conversation in the context of

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Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry

the harm done by clergy sexual abuse because the ambivalence about the seriousness of clergy-to-adult misconduct seems to reside in the evaluation of harmful consequences.

CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IS WIDESPREAD

All of the vignettes described below have come out of my own experience as a seminary professor, as a pastoral counselor, as a consultant with clergy and congregations, and as a member of my denomination's congregational response team. The Congregational Response Team is a group of trained clergy who assist congregations after they have experienced a clergy betrayal of trust, most often because of clergy sexual misconduct.

Vignette: A man came to me after a congregational meeting because he wanted to express some of his struggle and pain at hearing the news of sexual misconduct by his pastor.

"My wife and I do not know what to do. This is our third church over the past ten years where there's been a problem like this. The first church had trouble for years keeping a pastor—lots of anger and mistrust and power struggles. We finally called a pastor that we liked and who fit well with the needs and values of the church. Everything went well for the first year or so until the Church Board was told he had been caught having sexual relationships with two women in the church. We learned there had been a series of pastors in the church's history who had done the same thing. We not only left that congregation but the denomination as well. We thought that there must be something wrong with the way that denomination trained its pastors."

"We really liked our next church. It felt like we'd found a home and we got quite involved. Five years later, the same thing happened. Even though we were sworn to secrecy, there were some leaks. There was a petition to fire the pastor, but the church leaders decided to "reprimand" the pastor but not fire him. We were disgusted with the whole thing so we left that church too. After a year of not attending much, we decided to come here. This is a really good church. We like it a lot, but now it's happened again. At least the truth is out in the open, and we're dealing with it as a congregation but I wonder if you can trust any clergy. Is it even worth going to church if this is what you get? God must be pretty frustrated. I know that I am."

Several things seem evident through this story. First, the pervasiveness of clergy sexual misconduct is visible in this man's experience. Over the past thirty years, there have been numerous attempts to measure the frequency of sexual boundary crossing by clergy. Most of the measures have come through

clergy self-reports about their own behavior. *Christianity Today* reported in 1988 that 23 percent of pastors surveyed admitted doing something sexual with someone other than their spouse.¹ A 1991 Fuller Institute for Church Growth study found that 37 percent of clergy questioned had been involved in inappropriate sexual behavior.² These surveys did not limit their questions to involvement with a congregant. However, a 1993 survey done for a Fuller Theological Seminary PhD dissertation found that 39 percent of the 300 clergy polled had sexual contact with a congregant and almost 13 percent reported sexual intercourse with a congregant.³

Since the published research regarding the frequency of clergy sexual misconduct is not uniform in terms of questions asked or methods used to evaluate, it is difficult to get a clear reading from the data. However, Francis and Stacks suggest from their reading of the literature that the reported frequency of clergy sexual misconduct ranges from 0.3 percent to 37 percent across the denominations.⁴ Most suggest it is probably in the 10 percent range. In a new study recently reported out of Baylor University, researchers surveyed a sample of the general population (over 3500 respondents) to see how many people reported that they had been the recipient of inappropriate clergy sexual behavior. They found that approximately 3.1 percent of women who attend religious services at least monthly reported being the object of a sexual advance by a clergy person or religious leader in their own congregation since turning eighteen, with 92 percent of the sexual advances made in secret and 67 percent made by married offenders. All but two of the offenders were male.⁵ In a congregation of about 400 people, there would be on average seven women who had been sexually approached by their clergy. This may miss the people who attended religious services in the past but stopped attending after they experienced clergy sexual misconduct. Stacey, Shupe, and Darnell found that over half the people they surveyed who had experienced intimidation, exploitation, or abuse from a clergy person stopped attending services and/or stopped giving money to the church.⁶ The inescapable conclusion from these various studies is that clergy sexual misconduct is widespread.

SECONDARY VICTIMS OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

A second point that comes from this first vignette is that there are always secondary victims in clergy sexual misconduct. Whether the misconduct becomes "public" or is kept "secret," congregational members and the congregational system itself suffer from the experience. The greatest damage

to congregations comes in the destruction of trust. Many congregants have to struggle with whether they should have trusted their religious leader or whether they can trust another one. They may wonder if the church can really stand for anything trustworthy if this kind of thing can happen and so they doubt their own shared commitments and mission. In situations where everything is hushed up and only a few know the “real story,” congregations often end up with factions or splits, a lack of energy, loss of hope and trust in one another, anger at new leadership, a loss of a shared future story, and a general malaise—all without really knowing why these things are happening in their community.⁷

Reports of clergy sexual misconduct have an impact on people outside of the congregation as well. Stacey, Shupe, and Darnell found that, an increasing level of public awareness from the media of clergy malfeasance is related to decreased voluntarism, decreased financial support, and decreased interest in religious instruction for the family at statistically significant levels.⁸ Other secondary victims include friends and family of the offending clergy and denominational workers who are responsible for investigating the situation and supporting victims, families, the pastor, and the congregation.

PRIMARY VICTIMS OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Vignette: The following representative statement happened at a congregational meeting that was discussing the finding of clergy misconduct by their pastor. “Don’t you people understand? The devil was in that woman. She tempted him beyond what he could endure. He’s only human, and he was weak. It was that woman who caused the trouble, and she’s gone now. The pastor’s sorry for his mistake, and we forgive him. If you’re Christian, you should forgive him, too.”

Vignette: The following is a summary quote from a minister who engaged in clergy sexual misconduct: “I’m sorry, but was it really as bad as you’re suggesting? It was just an affair, a mistake. She was very seductive. I was just trying to counsel her through a hard time when her marriage was ending and things got out of hand. We were both adults, and she was hard to resist. It won’t happen again. My wife has forgiven me; can’t the church?”

Vignette: In this last story, a woman who had been in ministry for several years came to talk to me, wanting to share the story of her experience but fearful to do so. (The woman whose story this is has given me permission to use it for the purposes of this article.)

“The pastor was very affirming of me and my gifts and encouraged me to step into leadership roles at the church. He frequently called me on the phone to ask questions and seek my opinions about church-related topics. Soon, he had me so involved that he made it necessary for me to have to meet with him many times a week along with the weekly counseling sessions. He even offered to come to my house, when my children were napping, so that it would be easier to talk. Eventually the prayers and hand-holding got longer and more intimate. After the prayers, he frequently embraced me for long periods of time, commenting on my physical attractiveness, the scent of my perfume, and stroking my hair. He would put his hands under my arms as he talked with me and rub his thumbs over my breasts. I was sucked in and flattered by his compliments and care, blind to the manipulation and damage he was doing to my spirit.

“When the trouble with the congregation got more intense, he pushed me away. I began to realize that I was being used by him, although I didn’t want to believe it. I was very confused and did not understand what was happening to me. He asked to leave the church, and I was left to struggle and live with what had happened to me. I felt betrayed by a man and by the church and felt incredible shame. The church was no longer satisfying or meaningful to me. References to Jesus and to discipleship repulsed me and made me think of the pastor.

“I am presently struggling with my relationship to the church. How can I be part of a church where sexism continues to flourish? This week I was holding my newborn granddaughter, and I couldn’t help but think about her faith and wonder, ‘Do I want her to go to church? Is the church going to be a safe and healthy place for her?’”

These three vignettes tell us about the harm that is done to the immediate victims of clergy sexual misconduct. The personal consequences of clergy sexual misconduct between a congregant and a trusted pastor are often extreme. Frequently, victims experience confusion, depression, and grief. Their healing process is often complicated by the isolation they experience in trying to heal. They usually leave the particular church in which they were harmed and may well have trouble both finding and trusting another congregation that will support their experience. Quite often, victims feel they cannot talk about their experience in a church context because secrecy about sexual abuse is normative in the Church. Because of all of these factors, the spiritual life of a victim of clergy misconduct is usually significantly affected by their experience. As the woman in the above vignette described, “References to Jesus and to discipleship repulsed me and made me think of the pastor.” Because the pastor is often some form of symbolic representation of God for a congregation, the victim may well find herself (or himself) unable to be in a mean-

ingful relationship with God as they try to process and heal from their abuse experience.

As we can see from the first two vignettes in this section, primary victims are often portrayed as the perpetrators or at least protagonists in the misconduct drama. When disclosure of clergy misconduct occurs, the most common reaction from many members of the congregation is to blame the “other woman.”⁹ There are several reasons why this may occur. As the congregation experiences anger at the events and the consequent disruption of their status quo, the anger has to go toward someone other than the pastor in order to keep the system as stable as possible. So, anger gets directed at the victim (or at the denomination, the personnel committee, and so forth). Since most clergy sexual misconduct victims are women, the theological tradition of blaming women for sexual temptation and sin makes it likely that the victim receives the congregation’s blame and rage. When a victim is blamed, her isolation becomes more profound and harmful. Although many denominational processes in the case of clergy sexual misconduct include providing advocacy and support for the victim, in reality the victim generally receives minimal support and maximum isolation for the reasons just named.

As the above stories and a survey of the literature demonstrate, the harm done in adult-to-adult clergy sexual misconduct is profound.¹⁰ Yet, despite the evidence about the level of harm done there has been surprisingly little research in how to prevent it. Part of the reason for this is the complexity of the problem. There are multiple and sometimes contradictory models that people have proposed to explain the occurrence, the frequency, and the consequences of sexual misconduct by clergy. It is important to look at these as to how they might help us craft a comprehensive plan for preventing clergy sexual misconduct.

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT BY CLERGY

Typologies of psychopathology profiles have been suggested as a way to understand clergy who engage in sexual misconduct. These include profiles of narcissism, general neurosis, sexual addiction, naïve need-meeting, and so forth. Yet, as Francis and Stacks state, “No one clear profile has emerged in the research ... Because no one clear profile has emerged, there is no single measure that can be used to screen potential perpetrators from the ranks of clergy.”¹¹ Although there may be characterological factors involved, it is just as common to find that particular psychological profiles do not predict or

explain clergy misconduct nor do they vary from clergy who do not engage in sexual misconduct.

A second focus is on the stressors of ministry and lack of adequate clergy self-care. There have been numerous studies that identify connections between stresses of various kinds and the likelihood of sexual misconduct. Thaddeus Birchard conducted a study using interviews and surveys with clergy that suggested that sexual difficulties, primary relationship problems, stress, and loneliness are all significantly correlated with occurrences of sexual misconduct (although the main correlations he found were with boundary ambiguity and absence of institutional accountability).¹² Ingeborg Haug also found that stress, primarily job stress resulting from ill-defined work parameters leading to workaholism, was a major factor in sexual misconduct.¹³ Perry Francis and James Stacks, in a study of Lutheran clergy, found that ministers who engaged in sexual misconduct reported lower levels of spiritual well-being than those who did not engage in misconduct.¹⁴ A study of Southern Baptist pastors also strongly correlated sexual misconduct with stress.¹⁵ The primary dynamic that seems operative in these studies is that clergy who are experiencing stress, loneliness, sexual difficulties, spiritual dryness, and burn-out may well turn to their parishioners for emotional support and nurture, particularly when primary models for ministry leave pastors operating in self-isolating ways. Seeking emotional support, friendship, or nurture from congregants blurs both the definition of their roles and the asymmetries of power in the relationships.

There are also studies of models and patterns in ministry that may make it more likely that clergy engage in sexual boundary crossing, particularly when engaged in pastoral counseling (where sexual misconduct often originates). Many researchers talk about the problem of clergy engaging in the kind of counseling that is relationally-driven rather than solution- or problem-driven. This can generate four different kinds of problems relevant to misconduct. First, most clergy are not trained to recognize or deal with the dynamics of transference and counter-transference, and they tend to identify the emergence of sexual attraction as authentic to a mutual relationship. Second, and related, when feelings of attraction emerge, clergy are often not well-prepared to understand or manage their own sexual desires. Donald Capps suggests the importance of clergy learning to “re-educate their sexual desires” as part of their self-care strategy.¹⁶ Third, relationally-driven counseling models tend to be longer-term, which may lead to more inter-woven relationships between clergy and congregant. And, fourth, these kinds of models of coun-

seling use the relationship as the vehicle of healing in ways that intensify that relationship.

Models that focus on the problem/solution tend to be shorter-term and oriented toward resources and actions rather than pastoral connection. The risk with problem-/solution- focused models is that, when clergy are not well-trained in them, they may use them in authoritative or advice-giving ways, which may have implications for increasing clergy power. When pastors operate with a more authority-centered style of ministry (especially in pastoral counseling), the idealization of and reliance on the pastor by parishioners is increased. That authority may make it less likely that parishioners feel empowered to hold a pastor accountable for (or even recognize) misuses of that power or the crossing of boundaries.

The discussion about models of ministry, particularly in terms of counseling, leads to an exploration of dual or multiple relationships that clergy have with congregants. In the codes of ethics of most counseling guilds, dual relationships between a counselor and a counselee (particularly focusing on the dual relationship of friendship or romantic engagement) are prohibited because of the counseling relationship dynamics named above. But prohibiting dual relationships between clergy and congregants is not realistic because, by its very nature, clergy and congregants interact with each other within a variety of roles. One may be in a counseling relationship with a parishioner at one time and interacting with them as members of the personnel committee of the church at another. And, parishioners expect their pastors (more or less depending on the context of the church) to be available, friendly, and even socially accessible. This makes clarity about the nature of the clergy/congregant relationship very difficult to establish and maintain. Yet, without that clarity, it can be exceptionally difficult for either the minister or the parishioner to interpret the meaning of their interactions. This can lead to romantic or sexual boundary crossing and to ignoring the power differences that exist by virtue of their roles.

POWER ASYMMETRY AND CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

This leads us to the most common dynamic identified in clergy sexual misconduct in contemporary studies: the dynamic of power asymmetry. Issues of power differences occur at both the professional context of ministerial practice and at the cultural context in which that ministry occurs.

We live in a culture that is ordered by the value of power and, thus, in terms of access to power. This is a complex and problematic ordering, which includes putting men over women, adults over children, and human beings over creation and grants access to power accordingly. Obviously there are many factors that influence these cultural value assignments—issues like skin color, sexual orientation, physical ability, class. The point: we live in a culture that has assigned power arrangements as an enduring aspect of the social order. Our theologies also participate in that ordering, especially in terms of gender. When we name God as male and with ultimate, unquestionable authority, we risk naming males (especially male ministers) as gods. This may help explain why, even though women clergy are subject to the same stressors, ministry models, and professional power dynamics, they are much more rarely perpetrators of clergy sexual misconduct than are clergymen. In fact, clergywomen are often victims of sexual harassment by their congregants.

It is in this context of cultural power arrangements that we locate the power that exists in the ministerial role and practice. Karen LeBacqz and Ronald Barton, in *Sex in the Parish*, describe two of the kinds of power that clergy have. First, they suggest that clergy have the power of freedom. Clergy engage in ministry without a great deal of supervision or observation by others. They also suggest that there is a power of access and accessibility. This is the power of having the right to initiate contact with another and of access to their lives because of the implicit contract of pastoral care and pastoral responsibility to the individuals and families of the parish.¹⁷ Don Capps identifies a third form of clergy power: the power of knowledge. This power includes knowledge about people's lives, their secrets, and their histories. The pastor has the power of both intimate knowledge and intimate environments.¹⁸ And, finally, there is the symbolic power of the clerical role. Whether or not clergy want to represent God, they do in some form stand as a personal and concrete representation of God's care or lack of it. These four forms of power that reside in the person and role of the clergy mean that no pastoral relationship can be understood without analyzing how these power dynamics are at work. Although many clergy say they do not experience themselves as having power (clergymen) or wanting power (clergywomen), they cannot walk away from it, and power that goes unclaimed is much more dangerous than power that we name and for which we are held accountable. Marie Fortune notes, "Power is not a feeling; it is a fact of life determined by what resources we bring to bear in the role we are asked to play."¹⁹ Donald Capps notes, in his discussion of the paradox of power that, the more clergy act in ways that deny their pow-

er, the more power they actually have.²⁰ When asymmetry of power exists between people, then the one with less power is always vulnerable to coercion, even in, or maybe especially in, sexual relationships between clergy and parishioner. By definition, then, that relationship should be seen as abusive.

A lack of ecclesial supervision and accountability is another factor related to the occurrence and frequency of clergy sexual misconduct. There is a general consensus in the literature that the Church, both local and denominational, has not acted in ways that adequately hold pastors accountable for their professional conduct, especially in relation to the maintenance of appropriate boundaries. Ken Wells discovered that 94 percent of the participants in his “listening conferences” believed that churches are “not doing all they can to prevent power structures that fuel clergy sexual abuse,” and 82 percent believed that “the veiled secrecy of clergy sexual abuse is exacerbated by the church’s interest in maintaining the proper image more than in providing justice.”²¹ Thaddeus Birchard found, in his study involving both extensive surveys and interviews with clergy, that one of the three principle causes of sexual misconduct is institutional inattentiveness (along with boundary ambiguity and personal neediness).²²

THE POSSIBILITIES OF PREVENT CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Where does this survey of factors in clergy sexual misconduct leave us in terms of working toward prevention? Although we have no clear consensus on what model best explains (or predicts) the likelihood of clergy sexual misconduct, we do have a substantial amount of literature looking at various causal factors. It has been my experience that among seminaries, churches, and judicatories creating a profile of “best practices” regarding the acknowledgement and prevention of clergy sexual misconduct has had a relatively low priority. Seminary training has often acted as though education in clergy power, boundaries, sexuality, and related models of ministry is optional at best. Churches continue to operate with an elevated or idealized understanding of clergy image and role and, thus, often fail to develop structures of accountability and “surveillance”²³ that might work against the occurrence of boundary violations. While these boundary workshops often address important issues around power, boundaries, and ministry, it is difficult to address the complex puzzle we have been discussing in a day-long workshop by itself.

I would like to end this article with a series of recommendations that are interlocking in terms of potential effectiveness at preventing sexual

misconduct and its damaging consequences.

Seminaries

- Research needs to generate a consensus-based “best practices” understanding for the maintenance of clergy boundaries and related models for ministry. There has been a tendency to present boundary decisions as being “up to the minister” without correlating those to asymmetrical power dynamics related to culture, theology, and ministry. Karen LeBacqz and Ronald Barton reported that the clergy they studied depended upon “feeling-oriented intuition” to make decisions related to appropriate/inappropriate sexual behavior.²⁴ Certainly the work done out of Marie Fortune’s FaithTrust Institute has gone a long way toward presenting educational and normative ideas about boundary maintenance, but those have frequently not been well-integrated into seminary curricula (or faculty knowledge).
- Foundational to education in the maintenance of boundaries is an understanding of power dynamics that operate in the culture, the church, and in ministry practice. Students need to be helped to understand the practical implications of theological sexism, for example, and how theological sexism plays out in sermon illustrations, worship liturgies, division of labor in the church, and in the pastoral counseling office.²⁵ Students also need to be helped to explore the power of the ministerial office and its implications for their own ministry practices. These educational agendas need to find their place throughout the seminary curriculum rather than being relegated to a particular discipline or class.
- Seminary students need to be helped to develop models of ministry, especially pastoral care ministry, that focus on short-term, problem-oriented, or solution-oriented approaches. As Howard Stone has pointed out, much pastoral counseling research has focused on providing models and practices for pastoral counseling specialists, not congregational clergy.²⁶ Consequently, parish clergy have had to modify long-term approaches for short-term work or use models that rely on the personal relationship between clergy and congregant (which risks deepening inappropriate attachment) or on catharsis models (which risk intensifying the emotional quality of the relationship) or on advice-giving (which risks intensifying the authority and idealization of the minister and is also probably ineffective). Part of this education in pastoral counseling needs to help students learn how to intentionally negotiate their way into and out of a counseling relationship. Seminary students also need to be educated in the potential dynamics of pastoral relationships like idealization, transference/countertransference, and dependency. Models of ministry that minimize these dynamics need to be generated and competency in dealing with the relationship dynamics when they occur need to be learned.

- Seminary students should be educated in sexuality, including their own sexual desires and how to manage them. In many seminaries, courses in sexuality are not available, and, when they are, they are generally optional. Given the level of sexual misconduct, to say nothing of other sexual issues that come to the pastor in counseling and education ministries, this is a central educational issue for seminary training.
- Seminary students need careful and thorough education in self-care strategies and practices. This is often a single class session in a semester course rather than a theme that runs through their entire seminary career. It is no wonder that many graduates leave seminary with the assumption that being overwhelmingly busy is both normative and a badge of honor (in other words, important people are overwhelmingly busy) and without any sense of the spirituality of authentic self-care.

Clergy

- It seems like the main thing that clergy need is to participate in some form of ongoing consultation group that helps them to: monitor their understanding and use of power and boundaries in ministry; assess practices of self-care; and encourage continuing development of their theory, theology, and practice of ministry. For example, I currently facilitate consultation groups for clergy that meet once a month in four-hour blocks for ten months. Each member of a group of eight clergy takes turns presenting case studies of their pastoral care ministries so that their peers can ask questions, offer feedback, and serve as a support system for them.

Congregations

- Congregations also need education about appropriate clergy boundaries. Congregations, especially personnel committees, should learn the warning signs of boundary violations (for example, excessive self-disclosure, impulsive touch, meeting with people at times or in places outside of the norm, engaging in secrecy, engaging in self-serving behaviors, and so forth).²⁷
- Congregations need to develop policies and practices that facilitate their ability to consult with clergy (and with denominational officials, when appropriate) about boundary and other concerns. Part of this would involve training personnel committees in effective methods of giving feedback and engaging in consultation.

Congregations also need to be helped to understand cultural and ministerial power dynamics and how those affect the church and its ministry.

Judicatories

Judicatories need to re-think the explicit and implicit models of ministry they see as normative. Questions for exploring these normative models of ministry might include: How do our faith groups understand religious leadership? What messages do we send about isolation, work pressures, and sup-

port systems? How do we communicate and demonstrate appropriately transparent power relationships, including those that are culturally-based?

- Judicatories need to make their values apparent by actively supporting healthy and ethical behaviors in clergy and by making the consequences for unethical behaviors clear and consistent.

Clergy sexual misconduct is not caused by any one thing and cannot be prevented by any one strategy. Seminaries, judicatories, congregations, and clergy need to work together to generate an understanding of best practices around role clarity and boundary maintenance and to hold each other accountable for putting those into practice. There is too much at stake for this to not be a top priority for the Church.

NOTES

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SECTION 4

NOT FAR OUTSIDE THE THEME

Twenty years ago, Margot Hover wrote an essay for this journal (then *The Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry*) entitled "Responsibility and Care in the Supervisory Community." It was a candid reflection on a moment when she was threatened with a grievance from the unit of CPE she intended to present to support her certification as a full supervisor. "Our story as a community of professionals involved in the teaching and learning of ministry informs our professional ethics, calling us to mutual accountability and responsibility."¹ Her observations about the importance of mutual accountability among supervisory colleagues in a fragile covenant of peers remain timely.

In this issue, Margot Hover has again examined a difficult topic. How do we identify and supervise students we regard as *too wounded to heal*? Using a composite case of "Elsie," Hover describes the traits and biographical features common to problematic applicants and then identifies behaviors that emerge after admission. Her aim is not necessarily to screen out all *too-wounded* applicants. Most supervisors have at one point or another accepted students they later regretted taking but could not, for one reason or another, easily dismiss. "It is difficult to distinguish between 'outside the norm' as creativity and a prophetic voice, on one hand, and pathology on the other" (p. 183). William DeLong's response to the essay raises yet another important question: Is CPE teaching or treating? If it is primarily learning, is CPE limited to a learning style requiring a particular psychological constellation?

One of the recurring themes in this volume of *Reflective Practice* has been mutuality in responsibility and accountability. When this focus on mutuality shifts to the relationship between supervisor and student/intern, it raises questions about authority. Because authority is formed in community, it relies on individuals acknowledging the need to be formed and shaped together in mutual accountability. Paula J. Teague explores the dynamic tension between authority and accountability in a CPE supervisory relationship using a model from 'system-centered therapy.' "Our functioning within a system," Teague proposes, "is determined more by our role as defined by the system than by our person" (p. 205). Within any system, each of us may have several roles defined by context, function, and goal. Because roles change, authority changes as it is shared. And when the authority of the role is shared, so is the accountability.



The case study from New Zealand by Joseph E. Bush Jr., and Twyla Susan Werstein reports on a ten-year exploratory program in formation for Christian ministry (1997–2007). They examine two issues that are critical in forming religious leaders. The first is finding effective frameworks for promoting the integration of academic study with every day practice and then adequate tools for measuring the depth of that integration. The second relates to nurturing the abilities to minister cross-culturally and in a variety of ministry contexts. I found the tutorial relationships and the synthesis project to be particularly intriguing and worthy of further consideration in settings far from New Zealand.

Neil Sims has provided a useful service for theological field educators by surveying handbooks on field education in Australia and in the United States in order to identify recurring goals in the formation for ministry. It is critical, Sims argues, that field education or formation programs are explicit about asking of themselves what institutions ask of students: accountability to clearly defined goals.

NOTE

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Herbert Anderson
Editor

Identifying and Educating the "Too Wounded to Heal" Student

Margot Hover

"Therapists are not crazy. Nonetheless, in terms of personality types, emotional weaknesses, and psychological motivations, a substantial majority of them may differ from the general population in ways more subtle than full-blown pathology yet more important than mere style."—*Thomas Maeder*¹

"Survivors may become fine caregivers...but not all survivors are so fortunate."—*Maxine Glaz*²

It has been many years since Henri Nouwen reframed the after-effects of very deep hurt in the lives and work of caregivers by coining the concept of the "wounded healer."³ Many pastors are particularly equipped by a painful past to empathize with and minister to the suffering. "Ministers are called to recognize the sufferings of their time and their own hearts and to make that recognition the starting point of their service." While this recognition allowed caregivers to reframe their own painful histories, it sometimes gave unfortunate license to use that pain to get care for themselves, sometimes losing sight of the needs of the care recipient in the process. Two decades later, Maxine Glaz confronted this issue again by asking if a healer may be

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too wounded to heal. The history of severe woundedness of some clinical pastoral education (CPE) students, Glaz proposed, may in fact prevent them from being able to learn how to care and provide pastoral care to others.

Reflecting on supervisory responsibility and accountability provides the impetus to consider how we might identify a "too-wounded" applicant during the screening process or how we can work with such students that we may not have identified earlier. Seminaries, too, struggle with this dilemma in their own system of selection and education. While the basis for this article is my work as a clinical pastoral educator, pastoral educators in other systems may recognize many elements of the profile of a too-wounded student as such a student surfaces in their own particular setting.

ELSIE: A COMPOSITE OF TRAITS OF THE TOO-WOUNDED STUDENT

As pastoral and theological faculty, we screen, assess, educate, and make decisions about our students that may have implications for their futures in or out of professional ministry. Their acceptance is a matter of contract. But we are also accountable to the institutions that provide the learning context, and we are responsible for overseeing the care of our patients and congregants while safeguarding the reputation of our programs as well. So how do we identify, supervise, and evaluate these students so that they and we can recognize their vocation and so that any potential gifts for ministry are channeled and enhanced? This is particularly difficult in a climate in which various kinds of litigation are often seen as a first resort when complexities and problems arise in supervisory relationships.

This article first describes a set of traits and biographical features that problematic applicants to a group of residency programs have exhibited during their admission process to CPE programs over a number of years. Secondly, there is a description of another set of behaviors that emerged post-admission in the course of a typical program. While some of these items may seem idiosyncratic and anecdotal, the frequency with which they occur in students suggests that they merit careful consideration both in the interview process and during supervision.

The final section of this article describes strategies for working with too-wounded students when they do surface in our programs and characterizes the factors that may have brought the supervisor and student together in the first place. It is worth noting that the cases that provided a basis for these reflections were all females with a female primary supervisor, drawn over

many years and from many programs. Male supervisors were part of interview teams and served as colleagues and consultants throughout. Obviously, the profile would vary somewhat with other configurations. Specific illustrations of the characteristics have been significantly altered in the interests of confidentiality.

It is very important to note here that this article should not be construed as advocating that too-wounded applicants be accepted into a program or that, once in a program, they continue in a program at all costs. I do suggest some concrete symptoms that may assist a supervisor in identifying those applicants during the selection process. Further, it is safe to bet that most supervisors have at one point or another accepted a student that they later regretted taking but whom for one reason or another they could not easily dismiss. This article suggests some basic ways to maximize the possibility of learning on all sides.

"Elsie" is a composite of traits exhibited by a number of too-wounded applicants and CPE students throughout my experience. Pastoral educators will recognize any one or all of these traits in students who may actually learn and perform well in a program. But while a particular student may not possess all of the traits described below, identifying one or two behaviors may alert a supervisor to a connection with many of the other traits that are less obvious. For example, we know that it is not uncommon for students to exhibit significant issues with authority. It is only when a constellation of traits surfaces, often after their acceptance into a program, that the significance becomes clear. Again, while the experiences on which this material is based are drawn from programs in CPE, seminary faculty, pastoral educators in other venues, and therapists will no doubt find similarities with their supervisees as well.

Pre-Admission

Elsie was effusive in her gratitude and excitement at the invitation to interview for a position in the residency group then forming. She was hyper-courteous, calling ahead to offer to bring pastries to the meeting with the interview team. Several days after the interview, each of the interviewing supervisors received a chatty, effusive thank you note, handwritten on flowered stationery. This was to be the first of many indications that what appeared initially as sweetly engaging was actually her lack of awareness of general appropriateness. No thank you note was required or expected; however, an acknowledgement in the form of a business letter on plain stationery would have been positively noted. In time, it appeared that her large

gestures of above-and-beyond or gratuitous hospitality barely concealed a free-floating anger that was much more difficult to identify and manage.

Elsie was insensitive to the usual social boundaries regarding personal space, particularly with authority figures. She was quite proud of the *entrée* she claimed to her pastor’s home, for example, and she often alluded to his and his wife’s reliance on her for support. She spoke of her recent seminary professors as though they were personal friends. In other words, she confused professional and personal settings, relationships, and protocols. Obviously, the accuracy of many of her claimed relationships would be difficult to verify, even if they raised red flags at this early juncture, unless Elsie listed them as references.

This difficulty with boundaries, even seemingly inconsequential ones, appeared in Elsie’s meticulously presented application materials, which were, nevertheless, incomplete. For example, her previous supervisor’s signature was missing from his evaluation of her, and the reason was never clear. At the time, Elsie’s explanations made some sense; it was only in retrospect and as part of an unfolding total profile that their meaning emerged. The significance of an absent signature (“The professor is never in her office.”) or incomplete seminary transcripts (“The professor went on sabbatical before he turned in my grade.”) is often difficult to determine prior to admission.

Elsie had a long, tangled, and very confusing history with denominational authorities. She had a laborious journey through the various ordination committees, but most of the supervisor interviewers could empathize with her as they recalled their experiences with committees or struggles with their own denomination. Elsie had changed religious homes a number of times. When asked about that, she claimed this as a plus, enabling her to “speak the language” of a wide range of patients. Would this help the department demonstrate religious diversity and balance the denominational balance of the CPE group...or was it an indication of grandiosity? Further, Elsie also had an extensive history of career changes, albeit with some evidently impressive accomplishments along the way. She was an excellent writer, for example, and several of her short pieces had appeared in trade publications.

Hidden Woundedness is Difficult to Identify in Advance

In brief, Elsie was very bright, articulate, and quick thinking, although the emerging profile hinted somewhat at self-sabotage—as evidenced in her refusal to complete a critical assignment or missing crucial deadlines. She had been doing very well in medical school, for example, but she “heard a

call” just prior to completing her medical education. Elsie herself had little awareness of possible meanings and linkages in her history. Subsequently, she showed no motivation or intention of exploring the patterns. This suggested an inability for, or at least a strong resistance to, self-reflection. Sometimes, similar applicants concealed past difficulties until new, similar ones emerged well into a program, thus creating turmoil for the student, supervisor, and group as well.

Applicants like Elsie frequently emit strange, hard-to-define sexual notes, which are or may be experienced as subtle seduction. Frequently, this involved a striking hairstyle, which, while not notably unprofessional, still drew attention. For example, a candidate might wear waist-length hair draped over one eye. It would be difficult, particularly for a male supervisor, to note this with a student, but it would inevitably draw attention of some kind. Many of the women I supervised that formed the composite of Elsie had in common a history of some kind of punitive, neglectful, or abusive family history, often but not always sexual in nature.

This last observation is important. Psychotherapist and clinical pastoral educator James Gebhart observes that “abuse” is a widely and sometimes indiscriminately used term that has come to carry sexual overtones. There are, however, many forms of intentional and unintentional neglect and hurt. At bottom, very few get through the formative years without some undeveloped areas remaining. Those may be unfinished dependency needs, unresolved problems with authority, sexuality, grief, shame, role sets based on birth order, psychological or learning disorders, troubled school experiences and/or adolescence, or a host of other issues. However, when those occur in clusters, they are more likely to constitute a personality disorder. High stress experiential learning like CPE becomes more difficult and may reveal fissures in one’s person. The complexity of such situation is outside the realm of pastoral education and more appropriately handled by a skilled therapist.⁴

It is difficult to predict when the demands of a supervisory experience or the intensive exposure to trauma will stretch the capacity of students for compassion and empathy or when it will trigger their unconscious anger and need for self-protection. Frequently, they reveal their history only some time after entering a program. Obviously, their resistance to self-reflection limits their ability to use their history as a resource in their learning. Further, as in the case of abuse of a sexual nature, they may only hint at past events, frequently in difficult-to-decode allusions to a “lesbian side,” “having hot flash-

es,” and “femininity,” or edgy joking. Other students might resonate with the allusions without understanding their full meaning for the wounded student.

Finally, applicants like Elsie nearly always developed physical limitations and disabilities after programs began. Sometimes these were concealed at the application stage and sometimes dormant medical issues resurfaced after admission. Ordinarily, a supervisor might not see a reason to inquire about an applicant’s medical history or might not be able to ask about medical history from an ethical standpoint. It is only later and in the context of the other traits described above that physical limits or chronic illness become significant. Many of these difficult students’ illnesses had a possible emotional component—asthma, back problems, debilitating headaches, allergies, and the like. Often, these offered an avenue for them to leave the program before completion. But if a student did manage to complete the unit or residency, it was important for the supervisor to keep the group’s attention and energy focused steadily on appropriate group tasks rather than have their attention diverted by assorted illnesses and absences. At best, group members would use their growing awareness of the dynamics and their feelings about them for important, solid growth in their own self-understanding. At worst, difficult students won sympathy, polarizing members of the group and, sometimes, even other department staff members.

Post-Admission

During the orientation phase of the residency, Elsie plunged herself into the program. She quickly became a leader in the group, appearing larger than life as she led her new peers through the hospital halls. She assumed the hospitality role in the peer group. For example, she was the first one to organize the celebration of group birthdays. Occasionally, this overflowed with cards and flowers to other members of the department for occasions not generally marked in this particular way. Of course, this placed those around her in a difficult position; who could deny her good will, for example. Only in combination with the other traits and with the passage of some time did a pattern emerge that could be addressed in some way.

Initially, at least, deeply hurt students often assumed a child-type stance with department authorities, particularly with their supervisor. Elsie asked permission often and made many unnecessary apologies during the first several weeks of the unit. At the same time, this behavior felt like an attempt to act as an administrative peer or close friend. Later, she frequently pushed at boundaries, claiming innocence of the ramifications of her actions. She be-

came skilled at leaving confusion in her wake. On one occasion, she told the residents to go to a Palliative Care Team meeting instead of attending a CPE program didactic seminar, misinterpreting a bulletin board memo meant for other staff. While such confusion could well be a function of students’ anxiety, the continuing pattern suggested more.

Early on, Elsie claimed that she was “greatly loved” by staff in her assigned clinical areas. For instance, she had introduced herself to the staff on her assigned units as “an expert in world religions,” and she flew to bedside of adherents of unusual faith groups. She moved with ease between claiming an obscure religious practice and pursuing a very traditional Christian inquiry. Until her supervisor reinforced existing boundaries around attendance at group seminars, Elsie typically said she needed to come late or leave early by special request of a head nurse or unit staff member to handle a situation that she alone could manage. It was important for the supervisor to challenge that dynamic promptly, directly, and calmly. As might be expected, group members watched carefully and learned much when the supervisor modeled how to maintain appropriate borders around group time and other scheduled curriculum events. Later, they learned to differentiate from Elsie while still caring for her and to trust their own skills and ability to confront and to maintain limits.

Avoiding Supervision by Being Overly Responsible

It was more difficult as a supervisor to track some of Elsie’s other behaviors. Taken together, this could frequently feel like putting out fires when they would eventually come to light. For example, Elsie routinely turned up on other students’ assigned units. “He was my patient until he moved to her area, and the staff asked that I follow him.” Or, “That patient had my card (After all, you told us always to leave our card at each visit), and he called the office to ask me to come by.” “But that patient was my ‘sister-of-soul,’” claimed Elsie, when the supervisor intervened. Another student who might be struggling to meet new patients on his unit might be only too glad to be rescued from that difficult task, even feeling cared for and supported—taken under wing—by his “helpful” peer. On one hand, the shyer student in that potential triangle might feel scolded, and that dynamic could be quite fruitful when explored with him in individual supervision. At worst, unhealthy triangulation and polarization could result.

The possibility of tangled relationships and blurred lines of authority is compounded in spiritual care departments that include a separate depart-

ment director and multiple clinical or staff chaplains. The supervisor and department director worked consistently with the clinical and denominational staff chaplains to achieve clarity among themselves about lines of communication and areas of responsibility. Elsie’s supervisor and the department director conferred frequently, and it was clear within the entire department that all issues, problems, and suggestions about the residents were to come to the supervisor. Because Elsie was so skilled at creating competing relationships, the supervisor had to be particularly faithful to the process of winning staff chaplains’ trust and in maintaining ties with them. And when students had questions or problems with other department members, they were encouraged to approach them directly and then process their learning from the interaction in individual supervision. Of course, this initially increased their anxiety, and the supervisor used this as an occasion to help them to look at authority issues and other learning goals, as well as to celebrate their growing sense of their own strength.

Difficult, challenging students routinely resist supervision, often in surprising or difficult-to-confront ways. For example, the department policy allowed students fairly unquestioned time off for their denominational rituals and holy days. Elsie claimed holy day exceptions to the program schedule with startling and intriguing frequency. While CPE students sometimes legitimately explore their denominational affiliation in the course of a residency, it quickly became apparent that Elsie was stretching the policy.

These women were greatly resistant to claiming any anger, and artful in their resistance to engaging in therapy. Individual supervision generally focused on Elsie’s behavior and on issues that she initiated. This allowed her to feel safe and facilitated as much learning as possible.

Finally, as noted above, these students either developed medical issues as the program progressed or revealed disabilities that were not apparent during the interview process. Elsie developed a skin condition that kept her awake at night and which required time away for assorted doctors’ visits and tests. Another too-wounded student said that she had suffered a serious back strain years ago that was again giving her pain. Ultimately, both students left the residency before the completion of the program in order to focus on medical treatment and self-care. Their decisions opened the way for the supervisor to shift her focus to caring for them in their leaving and embarking on new journeys.

Supervisory Strategies

As a supervisor, I was reluctant to rule out accepting these students across the board. The full constellation of their traits was invariably unclear during the interview process, and I didn’t always trust my hunches when I sensed potential difficulties in supervision. However, once I accepted a student, I was willing to “trust the process,” as the saying goes. I wanted to give the student a chance for learning. On the other hand, in order to facilitate a safe educational experience for these wounded women—and to maintain my own professional safety and integrity—it was vital to remain alert to the traits listed above. It was also important to look at my own “Achilles’ heel.” What led me to accept them in the first place and what supervisory stance and strategies would give them the best possible chance to learn skills for ministry? Or were they too wounded to learn how to care for others? The CPE model of pastoral education requires that the supervisor ride herd on her own issues as carefully as she gets to know the issues of her students.

In my case, I had to ride herd on my enthusiasm for potential “sisters in the ranks.” I am a Roman Catholic laywoman, and I treasure both my Catholicism and my niche in the ministry of supervision. Through the years, I have seen other women like me make rich contributions to parish, diocesan, educational, and health care systems, and I have been pleased and excited when the ecclesial structure has, bit by bit, opened some avenues to us. Thus, I am always particularly pleased when another Catholic laywoman considers chaplaincy and/or a unit of CPE or a residency. In putting together a profile of the too-wounded students and applicants that I had worked with over the years, one factor that emerged was that each one had some tie—even a distant one—with Roman Catholicism. At first, I was quite open with my enthusiasm for a potential colleague; later, it was crucial for me to temper that entirely. I suspect that a student like Elsie would feel crowded and frightened by my joining her too closely on any basis, including denominational affinity. I saw a similar dynamic develop with other supervisors and students, where apparent camaraderie and collegiality based on denomination, family configuration, race, or other commonality masked the student’s fragility and vulnerability. It is important for a supervisor to be honest about the many reasons for accepting and working with a student.

I also had to monitor my desire to help. Elsie needed a CPE residency for certification as a chaplain, and I wanted to give her a good chance to complete that process. Again, in retrospect and in reflecting on patterns exhibited by a cluster of these students, I see now that they generally couched their

motivation for applying to a program in terms of denominational or professional requirements, perhaps even general skills for a very specific ministry. "I think God is calling me to minister to dying people," for example. They very rarely cited self-awareness, even in general terms. In contrast, another applicant might say something like, "I'm uncomfortable visiting my congregants when they're in the hospital. I want to get better at that," or "I'm not very good at dealing with confrontation; I think I can learn more about that in this program."

Finally, the needs of hospitals often present competing demands to fill residency positions. If a position went unfilled, would there be enough for a valid group, and would the stipend disappear for the following year? Who would take up the on-call slack? While none of these needs would justify taking a less-than-marginal applicant, they still did constitute pressure to fill the program openings, sometimes at the last moment.

With all this in mind, I assembled a list of strategies and guideposts for the supervision of such a student, once I identified her. First, I had to find some one thing to like about the student, enough to engage me in a process requiring a good deal of my energy even while tempering my enthusiasm. Elsie was articulate, a really fine writer. And she was "gutsy," having volunteered in a women's prison while in seminary. I liked both of those qualities.

Second, we had to collaborate on an appropriate learning contract with very specific parameters. For example, Elsie wanted to "minister to all world religions." I helped her to come down to this: "To read and present a report on David Augsburger's *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*, and to apply what I learn in two verbatims presented in the group."

Third, the CPE program structure was my best ally. Adherence to the program requirements and departmental policies helps students to feel safe, and it helped me to deal with the persistent need of these students to be special. Of course, this assumes that the supervisor's own sense of authority is centered enough that she can implement the curriculum when she is regularly tested. Too-wounded students can be creative and persistent in challenging the structure. For example, soon after her acceptance into a unit, one student informed the supervisor that she had already paid tuition for a workshop that would entail her missing three days of the orientation week. Whatever the student's motivation may have been, it was clear to the supervisor that she could not begin the program unless she attended the orientation. Some women eventually used their inability to live within program structures as a way to leave the program. Others accomplished as much learning as they

could, once assured that the supervisor was strong enough to maintain those structures and boundaries.

In terms of the program, my handbook and the unit orientation process includes succinct descriptions of the program components that I can refer to when a too-wounded student attempts to wander afield. For example, I define the purpose of Covenant Group (IPR/IPG) as a place to focus on learning to give and to receive care, to work on ones learning goals, and to study how groups operate and grow. I combine that with didactic seminars on group process, systems theory, and other related topics. Too-wounded students tend either to be ingratiating or to fight with the supervisor on one or two issues while avoiding resolution. Eventually, other group members may feel used or manipulated, and it is important for them to learn how to confront their peers. Whether bound for parish or institutional ministry, students can accomplish important learning about how they deal with conflict and how conflict operates in a group context, but other issues and goals need to be considered as well.

At times, it would have been easy for me to express irritation or frustration with Elsie, particularly early in the unit when all of the students were sizing one another up and jockeying for position. Whenever I did that, however, it was difficult to get out of that role; the group could then see me as Elsie's persecutor. I learned that it was important for me to maintain a firm, non-reactive, non-angry, and neutral strength. From that stance, I could help the group members to focus on their own learning goals rather than on conflict between Elsie and me.

Fourth, as a unit progresses, too-wounded students can use revelations about past painful histories to draw the focus away from the learning of pastoral skills. An empathic stance is generally not productive. It was important to maintain clarity about the distinction between therapy and the educational goals for the CPE program, and to gently encourage them to engage other resources to supplement and support their education in CPE. I maintained my own focus on concrete aspects of their performance, carefully avoiding going to their feelings in the name of empathizing with them before/unless they were able. Dealing with feelings and close relationships was usually too threatening, however. Work in that direction was generally followed by the student's distancing in some ways that were counterproductive and disruptive to their peers' use of the group appropriately for their own learning.

Finally, the evaluation process. My rule-of-thumb for writing student evaluations is to report specific behaviors in the categories determined by the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education standards and student learning

goals. Focusing on specific behaviors and performance allows me to describe what this student may do well, and what this student neglected or avoided even after supervisory discussions with me. I carefully avoid therapeutic language as well as extrapolations from one behavior to larger or future situations that I cannot back up with examples. I do not make points in a final evaluation that I have not already discussed with a student in the course of the unit. For instance, it was clear that Elsie had difficulty with boundaries and with authority, and I supported those observations with examples about visitation on other students' units and completion of written assignments.

These guidelines are general practice, but they are doubly important for the safety of both supervisor and student when working with the troubled or too-wounded person. Hell hath no fury like a too-wounded student who focuses her anger on the final evaluation, especially after the unit. On the other side, a supervisor's frustrations—and they may come often—with a needy or difficult student may be taken to a supervisors' support group or to peer review but not to the written final evaluation.

I confess my surprise when a seminary does not require a student to submit both the self-evaluation and my evaluation if the unit is requisite for ordination or certification. Further, it seems obvious that both a seminary and a denominational endorsing agency *and* a CPE supervisor only have part of the picture of a candidate's person and performance. Closer collaboration would enhance ordination and certification processes. Because the population as a whole is more troubled, it should not be surprising that the number of people seeking to be ministers is also more troubled. Hopefully, dioceses or other ecclesial jurisdictions no longer resort to CPE as corrective or punishment for "problem" clergy, but all would benefit if they looked together at a candidate's preparation and qualifications.

CONCLUSION

So, one may wonder, why work with these students in the first place. Certainly, I hope to identify a too-wounded applicant during the initial screening process on the basis of the behaviors described above. But sometimes, I have missed the warning indications in the pre-admission screening and have second-guessed a selection when problems surfaced. Occasionally, there was denominational or institutional pressure to accept a marginal candidate into a CPE program combined with unfilled positions as a program opening date loomed. Through the years, I have felt more power to refuse

these applicants in those situations. But also through the years, I have been willing to give an applicant the benefit of a doubt, particularly as I developed a supervisory stance that might give them a good chance to learn. God knows that my own denomination's annals are replete with the icons of St. Christina the Astonishing, St. Simeon Stylites, and a host of other characters who accomplished great good from places significantly outside the norm. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between "outside the norm" as creativity and a prophetic voice, on one hand, and pathology on the other. I want to be open to an applicant's desire and potential for healthy caregiving. At the same time, it has been important to take seriously my reservations about a student's capacity to use the CPE curriculum and educational model for appropriate learning to give care. Organizing my experience with too-wounded into benchmarks and strategies has been a helpful guide for my work with them.

I should make special note here of how important it has been to rely on the community of supervisors for feedback, support, and peer review. Several colleagues in particular listened to my early travails in supervising a series of difficult students and reflected with me on the patterns in the process and the traits the students and their journeys appeared to have in common. That systematizing proved to be invaluable in my supervision, and I am grateful for their support and peer review. In 1990, I wrote in this journal on the importance of supervisors' collegiality and covenant with one another through the certification process.⁵ At that time, I emphasized the importance of honesty with one another. We can learn much about ourselves and our ministry of education by looking closely together at our work with the too-wounded students when they present themselves to us.

NOTES

1. Thomas Maeder, "Wounded Healers," *The Atlantic Monthly* 263, no. 1 (January 1989): 39.
2. Maxine Glaz, "Can a Healer Be Too Wounded to Heal?" *Second Opinion* 20, no. 3 (January 1995): 49.
3. Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), xiv.
4. J. Gebhart (personal communication, 8 December 2009).
5. Margot Hover, "Responsibility and Care in the Supervisory Community," *The Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 12 (1990): 170–174.

Looking Again at the “Too Wounded” Student: A Response to Margot Hover

William R. DeLong

In my supervisory practice over the years, I have appreciated articles that help make sense of applicants and the way they present themselves for a clinical pastoral education (CPE) residency. I am one of the supervisors that Margot Hover writes about who have accepted a student into a program and eventually regretted the decision.¹ In some ways, this is, as they say in master of business administration programs, the “price of doing business.” This very helpful article, however, raises important questions: What do we mean by “too-wounded”? How does this category frame the broader discussion of the nature and intent of Clinical Pastoral Education which, in my view, is a boundary question on the meta-level: the question of teaching or treating?

Margot Hover’s descriptions of Elise, a composite of several students who are believed to be “too wounded” to benefit from CPE, provide the focus for my exploration. I have relied for a long time on the distinctions about clinical

learning established by Eckstein and Wallerstein, namely the difference between problems about learning and learning problems.² I hope to show that what is considered a “too-wounded” student is, in fact, another clearly identifiable problem with learning—one that can and should be considered in the application process, but also one that, when reframed away from pathology toward an educational assessment, may describe a student appropriate for CPE.

I begin by looking at some of the descriptions Margot Hover provides to determine the degree of wounding this student has sustained. My intent is not to critique the descriptions, but rather to consider how we begin to see a student and how that can become the frame by which we make judgments about their psychological stability rather than becoming curious about a particular learning style that may be being presented. These observations are listed in no particular order:

- Elsie was effusive in her gratitude and excitement at the invitation to interview for a position in the residency group.
- Elsie was insensitive to the usual social boundaries regarding personal space, particularly with authority figures.
- Elsie had a long, tangled, and very confusing history with denominational authorities.
- Elsie also had an extensive history of career changes, albeit with some evidently impressive accomplishments along the way. She was an excellent writer, for example, and several of her short pieces had appeared in trade publications.
- Elsie was very bright, articulate, and quick thinking although the emerging profile hinted somewhat at self-sabotage.
- Applicants like Elsie frequently emit strange, hard-to-define sexual notes, which are or may be experienced as subtle seduction. Frequently, this involved a striking hairstyle, which, while not notably unprofessional, still drew attention.

This listing is sufficient to make my point. Although I acknowledge the inherent bias in presenting selected statements of a larger and clearly more balanced appraisal of Elsie, there is reflected a long standing preference to look at psychological dynamics in isolation from learning styles and learning objectives. I have no doubt that Margot is describing here someone whom she experienced as a difficult student. At the same time, it is important to note how much emphasis is placed upon psychodynamic aspects. I want to hear how this student approached her learning. How might we describe her learning style? In each of the instances provided above, there seems to be a decided

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emphasis on psychodynamics. As a question of boundaries in supervision, I wonder what it might be like to lead with an educational lens.

I do not intend to de-emphasize, or worse dismiss, the role of emotional stability in the evaluation of students and the readiness for learning. I do this to press the boundary question in our admission processes and supervision: What is the predominant lens that informs our acceptance of students? Margot Hover has contributed wisely to this discussion, as she always does. For our practice, it is about seeing the applicants clearly. As we continue to struggle as an organization to distinguish between teaching and treating, is there an assumption that certain psychological dynamics lead to particular learning styles that, in turn, lead to acceptance in a CPE program? Or is CPE devoted to a particular learning style that serves individuals who present with a particular and identifiable psychological constellation? For me, it is a question of boundaries.

NOTES

1. Margot Hover, "Identifying and Educating the 'Too Wounded to Heal' Student," *Reflective Practice* 30 (2010): 171-183.
2. Rudolf Eckstein and Robert S. Wallerstein, *The Teaching and Learning of Psychotherapy* (New York: Basic Books, 1958).

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Integrative Learning for Ministry: A Case Study of the Presbyterian School of Ministry in New Zealand

Joseph E. Bush Jr. and Twyla Susan Werstein

ORDINATION STUDIES PROGRAM: INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ) recently ended a ten-year exploratory program in formation for Christian ministry.¹ From 1997 to 2007, the School of Ministry for the PCANZ conducted a residential two-year "Ordination Studies Programme" (OSP) to better prepare ordinands for the exercise of Christian ministry. The primary emphasis of the Ordination Studies Programme was "integrative learning" as central to a student's formation for ministry. In particular, the program sought to help students to integrate four areas of formation: (1) cognitive learning, (2) emotional maturation, (3) the development of professional skills, and (4) the nurturing of Christian discipleship and spirituality.²

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The overarching methodological keystone was to encourage students' critical self-reflection in ministerial practice. This praxeological method informed the entire program, inclusive of but not limited to field education. Four pedagogical contexts were combined in this praxeological program: (a) academic courses in ministry taught in the classroom, (b) one-on-one tutorial relationships, (c) field education placements and supervision, and (d) weekly community programming. In this paper, we describe the pedagogical model of the Ordination Studies Programme with reference to each these four pedagogical contexts. More critical detail, however, is given to field education and to the role of the tutor, in particular, since the Programme developed these two aspects uniquely.

The paper concludes with an assessment of the Programme as a whole and its goal of integrative learning with attention being given to the four "pedagogies" discussed in *Educating Clergy*,³ sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, as well as to Jack Seymour's earlier typology provided in *Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education*.⁴ We believe the educational model represented by the Ordination Studies Program offers insight not only for the Presbyterian Church during a time of transition in New Zealand but also for other programs of ministerial formation that strive for integrative learning.

FIELD EDUCATION

With the keystone of the Ordination Studies Programme being reflection on practice, field education has figured prominently throughout the Programme's life. Moreover, a particular goal since the Programme's inception was to develop "more experience of cross-cultural communication" in order to supplement traditional foundational study in theological and pastoral disciplines.⁵ As a result, the Programme instituted a series of five different field placements for students during their two years of Ordination Studies. Because all Presbyterian ordinands at the School were paid a bursary by the national church, it was possible to change their placements frequently without disrupting their family income. As the Programme matured, this series of diverse placements was altered, but still with the goal of nurturing student's abilities to minister cross-culturally and in a diversity of ministry contexts as well as within their own cultures.

In particular, this series of diverse placements included semester-long placements in: (a) a congregation representing the student's culture; (b) a

cross-cultural experience of congregational ministry; (c) a unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE); and (d) a social service agency. Such service agencies included: Presbyterian Support Otago, Methodist Family Care, Methodist Mission, nursing home chaplaincy, university chaplaincy, prison chaplaincy, Women's Refuge, and others. Additionally, each student was given a summer intensive involving an experience of urban ministry in Auckland, as well as an experience with *Te Aka Puhao* (the Maori Synod of the Presbyterian Church). Aside from the summer intensive, which was full-time but could be as short as three weeks, these semester-long field placements were expected to be quarter time (ten to twelve hours per week). Students, other than those in a unit of CPE which has its own peer group and supervisory structure, were also required to participate in a concurrent three-hour field education seminar that was held on campus weekly.

This balance of placements kept the learning curve steep—both anticipated and unanticipated learning. Students constantly had to focus on their learning goals. They did so at the beginning of their program with a wide-angle lens, as they planned with the field education coordinator the types of placements that they might have. They would then have to refocus their goals more precisely each semester for each new placement. The variety of ministerial experiences—especially cross-cultural experiences and social service experiences—occasioned at least as much unanticipated learning as that which might be identified through the goal-setting process. Novel experiences stimulated new learning. Often the unanticipated learning became input for the next round of goal-setting.

In the field education seminar, constant comparisons were made between the different kinds of ministry that students were experiencing in different contexts. They became acutely aware of the different needs in the community and how various social service agencies were addressing these needs. They questioned the relationship between such agencies and congregations—notice the theology implicit in a secular agency, on the one hand, and notice how congregations might or might not be involved in addressing the needs of the community, on the other. They noticed as well how congregations of different cultures approached the various tasks of ministry among different cultural constituencies.

The order in which students progressed through the four semester-long placements varied. This flexibility with regard to the sequence had pedagogical and logistical advantages. The logistical advantage of a flexible sequence had to do with the number of placement possibilities within the small city of

Dunedin where the Ordination Studies Programme was located. There was only one CPE program in Dunedin, and there were only three Polynesian congregations. Students had to take turns taking advantage of these contexts as placements for ministry.

The pedagogical advantage was that, while the variety of placements necessarily pushed students out of their comfort zones, the flexibility allowed this to occur gently. Some students began the program with energy and excitement, ready to jump into new contexts of ministry and to embrace new experiences. Other students were much more tentative. Some were anxious even about having to be in Dunedin and away from their home and network of support. If students were nervous about new experiences, they could begin with a congregation most similar to their own culture and subsequently be nudged toward newer types of experiences. After a semester, these students usually started to request more challenging placements as they became increasingly familiar with Dunedin, with the School of Ministry, with the process of interning itself, and with their classmates who were engaged in other types of ministries. Learning in new contexts became enticing. Because the process was able to accommodate students' initial tentativeness and even defensiveness, it was able to calm rather than aggravate their anxieties.

A sizable minority of the ordinands in the School of Ministry were from the immigrant or first generation populations of Polynesians living in New Zealand. Within a field education seminar of typically six or seven students, one or two would usually be Polynesian with roots in nations such as Samoa, Cook Islands, and Niue. In the city of Dunedin, there were two Presbyterian congregations with a Polynesian constituency. In addition, there was a Methodist congregation with a Polynesian constituency from the nation of Tonga, which was open to having interns from the Presbyterian School of Ministry.

Pacific Islanders studying for ministry in New Zealand felt it necessary to have experience in a Pacific Island congregation because they understood that they would be expected to exercise leadership within the Pacific Island community after graduation. At the same time, however, these same individuals recognized that they would most likely be serving *palagi* congregations as well—*Palagi* is the Samoan word for the people and culture with roots in Europe—and that they needed ministerial experience within congregations of this culture. This was especially so for Pacific Island women whose ministry was often more readily accepted within *palagi* than Pacific Island congregations.

It was also important for students of European ancestry to have cross-cultural placements in ministry. Initially, these students tended to assume that they were studying the other culture when they were placed in these situations. As the placement ensued, however, it became apparent to them that they were not going to “understand” the other culture within this short span of time. As they were called to offer ministry among people of that culture, however, these students became more aware of their own assumptions, limitations, and resources. These encounters in ministry provoked puzzlement that eventually gave way to insight, as students first experienced their own de-centering and then allowed themselves to be reoriented within the cultural community receiving them.

The field education seminar provided the forum in which this insight often occurred as students engaged one another in conversation. Students in any given seminar would be fairly evenly divided between those serving in a congregation of their own culture, those serving cross-culturally, and those serving in a social service agency. This ensured that there was always a variety of experiences and material for case discussion that students would bring to the seminar from their respective contextual placements. Because all students were involved in cross-cultural ministry at some point in their program, they could all participate in the discussion that ensued about ministry in those contexts, and consequently, they could participate in each other's cross-cultural discovery.

Indeed, this dynamic proved to be something of an equalizer between *palagi* and Pacific Islander students. Pacific Islanders can be less assertive in class discussion especially if they are a minority within the classroom. Some of the reasons for this are cultural; e.g., Polynesian culture tends to be more deferential toward authority and also inclines people toward expressing agreement with one another rather than difference. Another factor has to do with being a member of minority, holding a different perspective than the majority, and being uncertain whether that perspective is welcome or not among the majority. When their *palagi* classmates were struggling to understand Pacific Island customs and expectations, however, these Pacific Islanders became the experts whose insights were esteemed. This equalizing dynamic became generalized within the seminar to the discussion of topics from contexts other than Pacific Island congregations. In other words, it promoted an egalitarian ethos of mutual respect and reciprocal acceptance that benefited the seminar as a whole.

In sum, the advantages of this system of diverse placements were: (a) the learning curve remained steep; (b) it necessitated that students move from their comfort zones but at a manageable pace; (c) it was an equalizer in classroom dynamics between Polynesian and *palagi*; (d) it ensured that a variety of experiences from a variety of contexts were brought into conversation; (e) it kept alive the question of how best to relate social service and congregational ministry in practice; and (f) more than an eye-opener to the fact of human diversity, it nurtured in students a respect for their diverse neighbors and facilitated their incipient ability to minister broadly in a diversity of cultural contexts.

It had some drawbacks as well. The drawbacks were largely lost opportunity having to do with the shorter duration of these placements. In a short placement, when the student was a junior member of a staff or a temporary “apprentice” to the pastor, the student never had opportunity to wear the mantle of responsibility and to bear the onus of that responsibility. During short placements, students also did not have to persevere through periods of boredom and routine, since everything was being experienced as both new and short-lived. Even more importantly, short placements did not challenge students to develop inner emotional boundaries, since the brief internship itself is so tightly bounded by time. Finally, in short placements, there was less opportunity for mentoring to occur between the student and the supervisor. It did happen, but not as frequently or as deeply as when student and supervisor work closely together over an extended period of time.

This last item, the lack of deep mentoring relationships, was not without some advantages as well. In such a situation, a student is not dependent on a single individual as mentor to ensure quality in the learning experience. Instead, they could experience a variety of models and compare them, picking and choosing from their respective styles as the student crafted his or her own way of being in ministry. The student was not prevented, of course, from establishing a closer relationship with one of the field instructors. But such closeness and mentoring was not required by the process. Instead, students were able to critically compare a variety of experiences within the overarching context of the field education seminar with the assistance of teachers and peers. Nonetheless, the relative lack of mentoring in this arrangement can be seen to be one of the drawbacks.

The greatest drawback, though, proved to be a variation of one of the advantages. Students were, indeed, broadly and ecumenically formed for ministry through this process. They were not, however, as deeply formed in loyalty to the Presbyterian Church in particular. Students were occasionally

siphoned off by other denominations or institutions after placement in their internships. Indeed, the rate of such attrition was estimated at 12 percent. This was a significant loss of students when the Presbyterian Church was investing approximately NZ\$120,000 for each one’s education. As a result, sadly, it was decided to require all internships to be served in Presbyterian congregations, officially cooperating ventures with the Presbyterian Church, or general chaplaincy positions.

Toward the end of the Ordination Studies Programme, then, students were still required to do a unit of CPE and a summer intensive. Instead of requiring the additional three part-time, semester-long internships, however, a single requirement was substituted. That requirement was for students to have one other full-time, eleven-week internship in a Presbyterian congregation, cooperating venture, or chaplaincy position. Students who had taken CPE before entering the Ordination Studies Programme could take advantage of two such internships in ministry. Under this system, the effort has been made to ensure cultural variety within the class of ordinands as a whole, if not for each individual to the same degree. The field education coordinator worked closely with students in crafting individualized learning goals and identifying placement sites. These sites included: Pacific Island congregations, *palagi* congregations, Asian congregations, school chaplaincy, hospice, industrial chaplaincy, Presbyterian Support Otago, and administrative placements with church officials. Some students were also able to take advantage of shorter, cross-cultural placements overseas (typically of six weeks duration), in countries such as Fiji, Samoa, Zambia, India, Thailand, Jamaica, and Cayman Islands. Most recently, these have been facilitated through PCANZ’s Global Mission Department or through the Council for World Mission.

This more recent evolution of the structure for OSP’s field education addressed some of the drawbacks that had appeared in the earlier structure involving multiple placements. In the newer structure, students have been more deeply involved in specifically Presbyterian contexts, contributing to the formation of their own identity as Presbyterian ministers. They have been challenged in these placements to immerse themselves more fully in the task of ministry, discovering to a greater degree the tedium and stresses as well as joys and rewards associated with it. Finally, students have been able to work more closely with field instructors during a full-time placement, allowing mentoring to occur.

Indeed, this newer system has depended to a greater degree on the role of the supervisor to assist the student in the task of integrative learning. Stu-

dents under the newer system have not met in field education seminars during the entire two years of the program, but only during those times in which they have been placed in internships. The field education seminar itself (more recently called a “colloquium”) has met fortnightly rather than weekly. Supervisors, though, have been included regularly (every second class session) in these colloquia, and they have had to avail themselves of supervisory training.

ACADEMIC COURSES

The academic side of the Ordination Studies Programme increased in both importance and rigor over the life of the program. As a rule, students were expected to take two academic courses per semester. Specific courses were chosen based upon both faculty expertise and their experience with the more typical lacunae observed in student preparation for theological study and the practice of ministry. Initially, this academic curriculum required eight courses over the two year period: (1) Worship: Liturgy and Music; (2) Theological Reflection; (3) Pastoral Care; (4) Mission and Many Cultures in New Zealand; (5) Hermeneutics in Homiletics; (6) Social Ethics in Christian Ministry; (7) Presbyterian Life and Practice; and (8) Communications and Group Dynamics. These courses were taught at the master’s level, and some of them were credited at that level through the University of Otago in a jointly offered master of ministry program.

Semester-long course offerings have continued to evolve over time reflecting changes in the faculty—their expertise and their assessment of students’ learning needs. The basic structure, however, remained. In the final two years of the residential program, these courses have been offered: (1) Christian Nurture; (2) Biblical and Theological Reflection; (3) Reformed History, Theology and Practice; (4) Mission and Many Cultures; (5) Biblical and Theological Preaching; (6) Practice of Worship; (7) Leadership in Congregations; and (8) Ethics for the Practice of Ministry. A constant throughout the life of this program has been to offer courses that encourage students to reflect theologically on the practice of ministry and on the practical realities that frame congregational life.

Outside of the semester structure, provision has also been made to offer a few shorter intensive learning modules. During a typical year, between four and six intensives were offered, with each being between two and five days duration. Topics have included workshops in Biculturalism; Youth Ministry; Pastoral Care in Situations of Sexual Abuse; PCANZ Polity and Legal Issues; Communications, Connecting the Church to the Workplace, PCANZ General

Assembly; Synod of Otago and Southland; Pacific Islands Issues; Asian Issues; Rural Ministry; and Ecumenism and Union and Cooperating Parishes.

These shorter, intensive learning modules have tended to focus attention on particular dimensions of being Presbyterian in the context of New Zealand, not only more formal aspects of Presbyterian polity and governance, but also the deeper relationships between different cultural constituencies within New Zealand, for example, the relationship between indigenous Maori and European-New Zealand culture or the relationship between longer established New Zealand communities and newer immigrants from the Pacific Islands. While of brief duration, these short intensives have played a key formational role in reinforcing and students’ identities as Presbyterian in a multicultural New Zealand.

TUTORIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND THE SYNTHESIS PROJECT

Each student’s academic advisor also served as an individual tutor for that student over the two-year course of study. The tutor conversed regularly (typically fortnightly) with the student in order to encourage the student to integrate the different facets of theological study, to deepen discernment of the call to ministry, and to articulate a sense of readiness for ministry. Particular expectations of the tutorial relationship have developed over the life of the program, but it has remained essential for the task of integration and deepening.

At the inception of the Ordination Studies Programme, the tutorial relationship carried considerable weight in many aspects of the overall process: (1) conversation to encourage and support the student through the processes of integration of learning, formation for ministry, and vocational discernment; (2) course advising and curriculum planning; (3) participation in the facilitation of placements for field education; and (4) tutorial instruction with students pertaining to a written “synthesis project.”

The synthesis project has been the written exit exercise for the Ordination Studies Programme. More than a thesis, its primary purpose is integration. It was conceived by two of the founders of the program (Milton Coleman, a certified CPE supervisor, and Simon Rae, a strong academician in the areas of missiology and church history) to combine and integrate the academic focus of the program with other dimensions of formation for ministry. Citing four dimensions of formation (cognitive learning, emotional maturation, professional skill, and Christian discipleship and spirituality), the 2006 Handbook explains: “In their synthesis, ordinands seek to integrate all of these four

dimensions together in exploring a topic which is personally significant for their life and ministry." Moreover, "It incorporates elements of personal, spiritual, professional, academic and ecclesial formation."⁶ Initially, as well, the synthesis paper served as the final project that students submitted to their Presbyteries as they were being considered for licensing and ordination upon completion of OSP.

The synthesis paper therefore served three functions. First, it was the heir to the notion of a thesis—that students should demonstrate competence and learning in their area of study at the conclusion of a program of higher education. Second, it attempted to provide the impetus and the framework to encourage students' deeper integration and formation for ministry. Third, it served a role beyond the school as the student presented it to the Presbytery for their scrutiny and decision-making concerning the student's readiness for ordination.

Three levels of tension also became apparent in the integrative exercise of the synthesis project. These had to do with (1) the four dimensions of formation, (2) the question of authority and scrutiny, and (3) the role of the tutor. First, apparent from the start and indeed part of the very justification for this exercise, was the tension between the academic expectations of the program and the other formational dimensions that were to be demonstrably integrated through the synthesis writing. Initially students were encouraged to write in an autobiographical fashion much as one might in a spiritual journal. At the same time, it was expected that a student would eventually identify an integrative theme for this work of synthesis and develop the academic as well as autobiographical dimensions of this theme.

Some students embraced this opportunity for integration, even if it caused them to struggle with the tension. One student, a male European-New Zealander who had received a more evangelical bachelor's education, entitled his synthesis "Toward a Golden Ontology."⁷ He took the opportunity to sharpen a philosophical acumen that had been latent for him and to find inspiration in philosophical reasoning to think faithfully about both his own existence and the ground of all being. Another student, a woman from the Pacific Island of Niue, took the opportunity to wrestle with her call to ministry and her traditional role as a mother. Her synthesis, entitled "Mother in Ministry" was embroidered with poetry allowing her to knit together these two forms of service and these two aspects of her identity.⁸ For all students, however, there was a struggle—hopefully constructive—to engage their own formation as they both widened and integrated the foci of their attention.

Second, a tension became apparent regarding the scrutiny and evaluation of the synthesis paper. As tutors, members of the faculty wanted to encourage students to explore and to make new connections as they approached this project—whether to approach it playfully unafraid of saying the wrong thing or to approach it seriously unafraid to encounter difficult areas of personal experience. Such openness to the synthesis project, however, was mitigated by students' awareness that eventually this paper would be scrutinized by others within their presbyteries, others who had been part of the conversation that had given rise to these thoughts but who would be exercising judgment regarding the student's fit with ordained ministry. It is to students' credit that they were able to set such concerns aside to the degree that they were in order to write constructively.

In the last few years' of the Ordination Studies Programme, the two tasks of preparing a synthesis paper and demonstrating readiness for ministry were still further separated. In addition to preparing a synthesis paper, students worked with their tutors on materials pertaining to "readiness" that were conveyed to presbyteries at the conclusion of each semester. These readiness reports were prepared by the students themselves along with their tutors before officially being forwarded by the Principal of the School of Ministry to the respective presbyteries. They made reference to a list of desirable competencies identified by the General Assembly in 2004 pertaining to: vision, facilitation of change, implementation of leadership, faith brokerage, awareness of context, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and personal character.⁹ The readiness reports took much of the pressure off of the synthesis project while simultaneously clarifying the process of student accountability to presbyteries. The tutor remained involved in both of these processes—synthesis and readiness reports; the distinction between them then facilitating the tutor's and the student's cooperative work in each respectively.

This led to the third area of tension: the tutor's role. For the tutor to serve well in the role of encouraging students to deepen their integration of all dimensions of their formation for ministry, the student needed to trust the tutor to be a safe conversation partner. The boundaries defining the relationship had to be clear and intuitively sensible in order to promote that sense of trust. During the initial phase of the Ordination Studies Programme, especially, such great reliance on the tutor could exacerbate a sense of vulnerability that a student might bring to the program. Since the tutors were also course instructors, students had very little respite from interacting with their tutors. Although tutors honestly thought of themselves as benign and respect-

ful in exercising power, students were not always placed at ease in the relationship—especially if needing to confront areas of their own formation that might touch on areas of anxiety.

Increasingly clear demarcations of responsibility within OSP helped to alleviate this tension and free the tutor to interact more constructively with students regarding their formation and integration. First, students have been encouraged to have a spiritual director outside of the School of Ministry through the School's partnership with Spiritual Growth Ministries, and students were required to do so for at least one semester. Second, with regard to field education, the responsibility for effecting students' placements became housed with the field education coordinator rather than with each student's own tutor. Finally, regarding the synthesis project, the synthesis process itself became more structured, with particular targets set for each semester's work during the two years.

Tutor and student met together for this ongoing project fortnightly throughout the two years. The synthesis project thus provided an "objective" focus for the important subjective work of each student during this two-year period of formation for ministry. It has allowed tutors to enter safely into this subjective process with the students, because it attends to that which the student has chosen to present in this objectified form for further reflection.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

Another component of OSP that was vital for encouraging the formation of religious identity in the context of community was the programming offered primarily on Wednesdays. This consisted of a public lecture called the "Wednesday Forum," a service of Holy Communion in the morning, a potluck meal at noon, and other meetings for fellowship or recreation occasionally held in the afternoon. While ordinands worshipped together every day the school was in session, the community as a whole celebrated a formal service of worship including Holy Communion every Wednesday. The Wednesday morning activities were open to the general public, but OSP students were required to attend. The community broadened on Wednesdays to include others from the nearby University of Otago, from the wider church community, and students' spouses and families.

Tutors met on Wednesdays with their advisees in small cell groups for the purpose of fellowship, spiritual encouragement, and informal worship. They typically met in the early afternoon following the community meal and the morning's activities of forum and chapel. These groups were sometimes

used for organizing corporate worship in the School, with advisory groups taking turns for each subsequent week of worship.

Importantly, though, students' spouses and their families were also invited and encouraged to participate in Wednesday activities and to share in leadership for worship. Spouses had their own organization, "School of Ministry Partners," which met regularly during the course of the year and held an annual retreat. The School of Ministry Partners and the Wednesday programming each helped to offer support to partners in their own formation as future ministers' spouses—whether in the home or the congregation. This attention to the families of ordinands was a strength of the Programme that is often lacking in other programs of ministerial formation.

While field education placed students from the School of Ministry into the church and surrounding society, the Wednesday programming invited the wider academy, church, and society into the School on a regular basis. This enriched the culture of the smaller community of students and faculty within the School itself, and it was a subtle incentive to hold themselves accountable in their formation for ministry to a larger constituency.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the thorough study on professional education of clergy sponsored by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the authors of *Educating Clergy* consider "the great challenge" for seminaries to be providing the integration between cognitive knowledge and every day practice. They note further that a normative sense of identity formation must be integrated along with such knowledge and practice.¹⁰ Moreover, they highlight four "pedagogies" that interact with each other in the process of educating clergy. They refer to these as "pedagogies of interpretation, formation, contextualization, and performance." They find that, indeed, this challenge of integration is being met through multiple models of educational practice employed by various educators of clergy. Regarding an educator's "inclination toward such integration," they write:

we found in that inclination a variety of pedagogical patterns, each emphasizing in distinctive ways the interdependence of the pedagogies of interpretation, formation, contextualization, and performance as well as a mutuality of the cognitive, practical, and normative apprenticeships that make us a professional education.¹¹

We would add that the Ordination Studies Programme of the Presbyterian School of Ministry in New Zealand provides another such model, which has

allowed educators to interact with ordinands in a manner conducive to integrative learning and professional formation for ministry. Through OSPs very design of balancing classroom learning with field placements, students enjoyed continual opportunities to interpret and reinterpret their performance in a variety of contexts for ministry. Deeper integration occurred as they allowed themselves to be formed for ministry spiritually and emotionally as well as intellectually and practically within a community bridging academy and church.

An older typology for Christian Education developed by Jack L. Seymour in 1982 further illustrates the integrative nature of the Ordination Studies Programme. In *Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education*, Seymour identifies five such approaches. He labels these: (1) “religious instruction,” (2) “faith community,” (3) “spiritual development,” (4) “liberation,” and (5) “interpretation.”¹² In the religious instruction approach, the teacher structures the learning environment in order to convey understanding and to enable learning; it is typical of more formal classrooms—including those used for academic courses at the School of Ministry. The faith community approach depends on enculturation into the values and identity of a community through participation in its practices; the Wednesday programming of the School of Ministry particularly promoted such enculturation, though it unavoidably occurred throughout the program. The approach of spiritual development often utilizes a spiritual director in assisting a person to realize the spiritual dimension of one’s total life; the School of Ministry increasingly moved in this direction and solidified its working relationship with Spiritual Growth Ministries. The liberation approach emphasizes critical reflection on social realities. In the Ordination Studies Programme, such liberationist pedagogy was served in two ways: (1) by requiring students to serve in ministries of social service and social advocacy, as well as (2) by providing opportunities for critical reflection on social praxis through courses incorporating dimensions of liberation (e.g. Hermeneutics in Homiletics, Theological Reflection, Social Ethics, and the Field Education Seminar) and through shorter modules incorporating social analysis in the context of New Zealand. Finally, according to Seymour, in the model of interpretation, the teacher serves as a “guide” to help students “connect Christian perspectives and practices to contemporary experiences.”¹³ This idea of interpretation as reflecting on experience and connecting with the Christian tradition embraced the entire Ordination Studies Programme, but it especially typified the Field Education Seminar which primarily asked students to reflect on experience.

The School of Ministry continued to employ these different approaches to education for ministry throughout its brief ten-year life. The result has been students formed in an integrative way for Christian ministry. Integrative learning was encouraged in each dimension of the program. Wednesday community programming allowed for the intersection of church, academy, community, and family to occur on a regular basis. Tutors assisted students in reflecting on the multiple dimensions of their learning through fortnightly meetings and by means of the synthesis project. Academic classes focused on areas of ministry and took advantage of students’ experiences in concurrent internships. Field education occurred as a constant component to the program—both with regard to the sequence of placements and to the provision of a weekly field education seminar. Field education thus provided: (a) a praxeological frame of reference for reflecting on academic learning, (b) a seminar in which multiple experiences of students could be brought into conversation with each other provoking the “ah ha’s!” of integration on a regular basis.

NOTES

1. Task Group, “Review of the School of Ministry Report of the Task Group” (conveners Peter Winder, until April 2006, and Murray Rae, from April 2006; PCANZ, Wellington, New Zealand, 2006), 1–20.
2. “Handbook 2006” (Dunedin, New Zealand: School of Ministry Knox College, PCANZ, 2006), 35.
3. Charles R. Foster and others, *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006).
4. Jack L. Seymour, “Approaches to Christian Education,” chap. 1 in *Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education*, ed. Jack L. Seymour and Donald E. Miller with Sara P. Little, Charles R. Foster, Allen J. Moore, and Carol A. Wehrheim (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1982).
5. Judy Allison and Dennis Povey, co-conveners, “Special Committee on Ministry Report,” in *General Assembly 1994 Reports of Committees and Other Papers* (Wellington, New Zealand: PCANZ, 1994), 194–214; see also Sarah Mitchell, “A Proposal for Consideration of the Ministry Training Board, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand” (September 1995, revised November 1997), 3.
6. “Handbook 2006,” 35, 54.
7. Jon Parkes, “A Golden Ontology” (synthesis paper, Ordinations Studies Programme, School of Ministry, Knox College, Dunedin, New Zealand).
8. Fieta Ikitaelagi Faitala, “Mother in Ministry” (synthesis paper, Ordination Studies Programme, School of Ministry, Knox Theological College, Dunedin, New Zealand, 1999).
9. “Handbook 2006,” 82–96.

10. Foster and others, *Educating Clergy*, 5.
11. *Ibid.*, 328.
12. Seymour, "Approaches to Christian Education," 16–33.
13. *Ibid.*, 32.

**Theme for Volume 31 of *Reflective Practice*
FORMATION AND SUPERVISION IN A DIGITAL AGE**

How we live has already been profoundly affected by digital communication and the rapidly emerging tools of social media are likely to change forever how we solve problems and create social renewal. Patterns of communication, revolutionized access to information, shifted the balance of power between experts and amateurs, expanded collaboration in solving problems, redefined the way that we think about membership, and created new possibilities for social intimacy. Digital technologies and the new media landscape are also transforming the church. This shift will accelerate in the coming years. As *Reflective Practice* begins its own digital era with Volume 31, it is timely that we focus on this theme: **Formation and Supervision in a Digital Age.**

- What needs to be done to form a new generation of pastors and supervisors for whom digital technology is natural?
- What might the success of distance learning teach us about digital supervision?
- Is it necessary to balance electronic meetings in supervision with face-to-face meeting with a supervisee?
- How will the fluidity of personal boundaries in social networks like MySpace affect the willingness to be vulnerable in formation or supervision?
- How will confidentiality be secured if the internet is the vehicle for formation and supervision?
- How will the specter of predators who use the internet to attract victims affect forming learning communities of trust?
- Although sharing may be more intimate online, how might the absence of in-person connections affect the sustainability of relationships limited by distance from the outset?
- How will digital formation/supervision affect people with different levels of skill and adaptability to the technology?

More than ever, it is important that young pastors, supervisors, and leaders in ministerial formation write about this topic at this time. Proposals are welcome any time. Articles should be submitted to Herbert Anderson, Editor, by December 1, 2010, for inclusion in Volume 31.

**Role, Goal, and Context within
System-Centered Therapy:
A Theoretical Perspective on Authority**

Paula J. Teague

"What you need is sustained outrage...there is far too much unthinking respect given to authority." Attributed to Molly Ivins¹

When our son Zac was a baby, we took him to a national Society of Friends (Quaker) conference. Zac was in a stroller still, not yet old enough to walk. One day, as we perused the conference wares, we came upon a t-shirt designed for the twelve- to twenty-four-month-old set that read "question authority." We chuckled out loud. At the time the joke seemed to be that this new life we had longed for held most of the power in our family; our schedules had been literally turned upside down to accommodate his feeding, sleeping, and diaper changes. We had no life of our own. "Zac question authority," we laughed. "Zac is the authority." Where did ours go?

The deeper meaning of the saying on that little t-shirt has registered again and again over the years. We did encourage our children to question authority and to explore shared models of accountability and authority. We hoped to nurture what Mollie Ivins called "sustained outrage" in our children

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hoping that, in the cause of justice and compassion, authority would be questioned. Our goal was to instill respect for another while trusting and claiming each individual's own authority throughout the developmental timeline.

I share this story at the beginning of this article to indicate that my belief about finding models of shared authority are deeply rooted in a theological understanding that we are called to participate with a power greater than ourselves whom I call God and with one another. In this relational context, we can embody the radical message of caring for all. My hope for sharing my understanding and work with the theory of System Centered Therapy (SCT) within the context of clinical supervision will serve the reader to teach and learn. Perhaps more importantly, this model seems to be one that can aid those of us in ministry to serve more fully.

THE ROLE OF AUTHORITY IN A SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

Question authority. Those of us in clinical supervision, often say to students, "claim your authority." How does that work in the clinical supervision arena? I believe that the exploration of authority begins with conversation between clinical pastoral education (CPE) supervisors and those who enter a learning process in which a supervisor functions as an authority. That exchange must include exploration of the use of authority in the role of pastoral/spiritual care provider within a context in which systems have assigned roles and defined goals. As CPE supervisors, we need to ask if we are creating the educational space in which a CPE intern might explore professional authority and if we are offering tools that students may use to examine the use of authority in their practice of professional ministry.

This emphasis is consistent with the following Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) Level One outcomes:

309.3 to develop students' ability to engage and apply the support, confrontation and clarification of the peer group for the integration of personal attributes and pastoral functioning.

309.4 To develop students' awareness and understanding of how persons, social conditions, systems, and structures affect their lives and the lives of others and how to address effectively these issues through their ministry.

309.7 to teach students the pastoral role in professional relationships and how to work effectively as a pastoral member of a multidisciplinary team.²

This essay explores the dynamic tension between authority and accountability in the relationship between student and supervisor in CPE and examines the implications of that experience with authority for the CPE peer group and

departmental interactions as well as ministry situations. The theory of SCT developed by Yvonne M. Agazarian will be used as a tool for understanding, intervening, educating, and evaluating authority in a pastoral role. Although my primary experience has been as a CPE supervisor and that is the context for these reflections, my hope is that this is the beginning of further dialogue for supervision in other contexts, including parish settings and seminaries.

Several years ago, I supervised a group of CPE students who especially pushed the system in which they and I worked. The group complained about processes and regulations as well as the culture of feedback and critique in CPE. I must admit that I had the thought, "Who do these folks think they are anyway? It is OK to have authority until you use it with me! Who gave these students the 'question authority t-shirt'?" I longed for someone else to hear what I perceived to be their endless moaning.

In consulting with a person skilled at SCT³ about this group that challenged all authority, it was suggested that the group was struggling with authority issues. That seemed patently obvious to me. The consultant also observed, however, that I, as their CPE supervisor, was uncertain about my own authority. That got my attention. This essay is a reflection on how I have benefited from participating in and reading about the SCT approach to the role of authority in supervision.

SCT provides a theoretical framework for understanding the use of authority in a pastoral role with parishioners, clients, patients, as well as with others in the professional environment, i.e. colleagues, senior pastors and rabbis, physicians and fund developers. SCT also has tools that students can take with them on their ministry journey as they exercise authority as members of multidisciplinary teams. There are two theories embedded in SCT which have aided my understanding of authority.⁴

WORKING IN ROLES WITHIN A SYSTEM

Our functioning within a system is determined more by our role as defined by the system than by our person. Within that system role, there is a clearly defined context, function, and goal. Furthermore, optimal functioning in a role requires that we be aligned with the goal of a given context.⁵ Susan Gantt and Yvonne Agazarian insist that "every system is a context in which work is done. Every context has a goal. And every context requires specific roles from its members to enable the system to move towards its goals."⁶

In a CPE program, the context is the educational setting focused on experiential learning. The roles and goals change throughout a day of seminars. In the CPE intern program where I currently supervise, we follow more or less seminar schedule in table 1 with goals and roles defined.⁷ In the seminars of a CPE unit, the roles and goals vary enough to warrant continued clarity about expectations of the group members within each group meeting. Students are coached about the appropriate role and function in the various groups. For example, there is a role for the CPE student presenting and a role for the CPE student hearing the presentation all in service to the overall educational goal of learning about participation in ministry.

It is also important to remember that each person brings to the role their own particular personality and ways of interacting. Part of the genius of CPE has been its aid to students to see how behavior lands on others and to better modulate interactions so that desired results occur. So for the student who is introverted or quiet in a group setting, role and goal can help to frame ways for that person to understand themselves and develop a member role that can assist them to challenge a tendency to refrain from participation. On the other hand, for a person who is more likely to function as an extravert, always contributing and easily interacting in group settings, the understanding of one's role as a group member to help the group move forward can provide a construction for making comments that contribute to group goals. Agazarian talks about groups as functional when members are able to set aside the personal for the member role thus focusing on the work of the group rather than a personal preference or style for relating.

Early in my CPE career, my peers challenged my quiet style of relating and labeled it as "controlling of the group." This was quite stunning to me and one of the most helpful pieces of feedback I ever received. This feedback helped me to understand how my hesitancy to speak impacted others. SCT adds to that understanding that my voice is needed by the group for the highest functioning of the group within my member role.

The simple act of taking each working component of the CPE student's day and putting in words the variety of roles and function in those roles in relation to established goals has been incredibly helpful for effective functioning of a CPE unit. In addition, I encourage CPE students to use this tool in their anticipation of ministry functions. This includes preparation for patient care, institutional care, urban ministry, the board meeting, one's management functions, collegial consultations, and so forth. Our aim as CPE supervisors is to enable students to use their authority to be intentional in ministry in order to

Seminar Context	Role	Goal
Theological Reflection	<p><i>Supervisor Role:</i> begin on time; ask about potential distractions from being present in the group; orient to the context; orient to the format of the seminar</p> <p><i>Peer Role:</i> listen and reflect</p> <p><i>Peer Presenter:</i> leads the group through theological reflection format</p>	<p>Learn to reflect theologically</p> <p>Normalize this type of reflection</p> <p>Create respectful space for theological difference</p> <p>Set tone for beginning of the learning sessions</p>
Verbatim Seminars	<p><i>Supervisor Role:</i> orientation to the verbatim and facilitation of process; boundary time keeping; offering feedback to both presenter and peer reflection; providing quality benchmarking in practice of spiritual/pastoral care</p> <p><i>Peer Role:</i> learn from peer's presentation and offer feedback that is relevant to peer presenter's learning goals and request for learning from the verbatims</p> <p><i>Peer Presenter:</i> brings thoughtful written verbatim that provides avenue for self-learning and for the group to learn from the presenter; identifies learning desired; asks for specific feedback; remains open to feedback on behalf of the group</p>	<p>Learn experientially about the practice of pastoral/spiritual care</p> <p>Experience presenting one's own work for critique and analysis</p> <p>Practice offering feedback</p>
Didactic/Inter-professional Seminars	<p><i>Supervisor Role:</i> defining topic and giving information to the presenter; presentation of topic and/or presenter; integration of topics with parameters of ACPE standards</p> <p><i>Peer Presenter:</i> provide information and create environment for dialogue about information</p> <p><i>Peer Group:</i> interact with information to assist the presenter to most effectively deliver information to maximize the group's reception of the information</p>	<p>Learn specific theory applicable to pastoral/spiritual care</p>
Unstructured Group (covenant group, interpersonal relations group, group process)	<p><i>Supervisor Role:</i> establishing goal of seminar; facilitating the group process</p> <p><i>Peer Group:</i> active participation so that each member can bring feeling and thought to the group—willing to claim one's own authority and to make space for the authority of others</p>	<p>Learn more about theory of SCT</p> <p>Learn more about one another</p> <p>Explore and develop peer relationships</p> <p>Practice SCT</p>

Table 1. CPE Intern Program Seminar Schedule

create environments that foster successful interactions. Gantt and Agazarian propose the following:

As members explicitly identify the array of contexts in which they work, and the goal of each context, they are able to identify the role changes they make as they change contexts...It is intuitively obvious that as the goal of the context changes, so does the role. Identifying and making these role shifts explicit, makes it easier not only for the person to deliberately change behavior to fit the role but also for those relating to this person to relate differently and to avoid treating the 'leader' as a member or the 'member' as the leader.⁸

It is an interesting and informative exercise to encourage a student to take a schedule of the day and to begin to delineate the different roles, goals, and contexts in that day recognizing that the transitions from each context boundary are times for recalibrating to the new role and goal. In some ways, the day will look a bit like the table above where the student moves from one setting to another. What is helpful is the attentive thinking related to one's intentions for the next activity. For example, my contribution to an individual hour of supervision is different than my role and contribution in a colleague's request for consultation or in a later team meeting followed by an ethics goals of care conference for a patient.

Recently a CPE student brought an example of a patient interaction where he had several roles at once. The student had a previous relationship with the patient, and a family member had been part of a painful work experience. So how to be a pastor in this situation where he knew the family and had an ambivalent if not negative experience?

The student and I began by outlining the current context and goals. For this patient and family the context was hospitalization, including difficult decision making and a period of transition to home or to a rehabilitation facility. Given the antagonistic history, the first goal seemed to be whether that previous relationship would preclude keeping the focus of the context. Was this chaplain the person who could be helpful? And then, if past history could be set aside, could the chaplain then take up his member role as spiritual care provider and be with this family in their pain and loss?

The student later reported to me that he had learned a great deal from the initial consult with me and subsequent interactions. What he had realized was that given the history, he was not the person who could provide spiritual support to the family. This was decided in a brief conversation with the family. What my student could do was to assure the family that he would help them find someone who was better able to be a "neutral" presence as he de-

scribed it. He reported to me that this was a hard call on his part; it was difficult for him to walk away and feel so unresolved with this family. The irony was that several months later the wife of the patient contacted him to say that she would like for him to visit them at the rehab location. His visit was an opportunity for healing, appropriate now that the crisis had passed. My student said to me that he doubted the later visit would have been possible without his taking his role as pastor seriously, setting aside his personal needs and allowing for the "functional" work of the family in their context of acute hospitalization. In essence, his ability to own that he was not the person for the early interaction helped the family to trust him more, and in turn he was later able to resolve some of the personal pain in their relationship.

In both examples—intentionality in one's daily work and determining ones appropriate member role—the minister is accountable to the context and to making each group interaction as functional as possible through one's focus on role and goal.

Authority in the role of member provides a resource for CPE student and supervisor alike. "Before one can take on the responsibility of being a member, one must first select from one's personal resources those that are relevant to membership."⁹ Before one can take on the CPE peer role, for example, one must first select from one's personal resources those that are relevant to membership in the CPE peer group. This means that the CPE intern must claim the authority of the peer role in the CPE setting. Doing so involves self-reflection and knowledge of the skills that one can bring to the CPE process. Accepting the role also means accepting the responsibility that comes with the role.

In the CPE groups that I supervise, the group makes a covenant for learning. In that covenant behaviors and attitudes are defined and agreed to by the group. A component of the covenant is the idea that each group member is, in fact, holding self and others to certain group norms and goals. That is, each member is responsible for the success of the work of the group. Another example of the responsibility inherent in taking one's role seriously is the negotiation of learning goals in a unit of CPE. Each peer presents personal learning goals. In that seminar, one's personal goals are just as important for the peer claiming the goals as for the peers listening to the goals. Each CPE peer is asked to aid the person presenting learning goals in learning. The responsibility for learning is shared.

The CPE student is also participating in a system of spiritual care in a context endorsed by the CPE center. In my case, it is an academic medical center that carries with it specific role expectations for the intern. Each setting

for CPE will have its own expectations for role functioning for both interns and supervisors. Additionally CPE students have other pastoral contexts and other roles in which they participate. The simple exercise of asking students to think of themselves in their many systems is very helpful. Once these systems are defined, the roles and goals we participate in within that context become clear. Were I to begin to draw the roles in my life right now, the diagram might look something like figure 1.¹⁰

It is often surprising for a student to be aware of the number of contexts and roles that each has, as well as the many ways we move in and out of these various settings in an hour or even within moments. As people we have learned to juggle and maneuver within these roles. CPE can help the ministry professional to become aware and to begin to consciously participate within one's authority of role. The implications of this awareness for leadership in a religious congregation are many and varied. Within the life of a community, a religious leader will have many roles. Rather than rejecting a role because it may, for example, be a "boundary violation," we can adopt this perspective on group functioning to emphasize the importance of being intentional as we move in and out of those roles.

By now you the reader may be thinking about how this might work in your own practice of ministry: institution, parish, community, and so forth. It is good for any one of us to decide to use this understanding of role and goal, but what about the others in our systems or in our sphere of education who

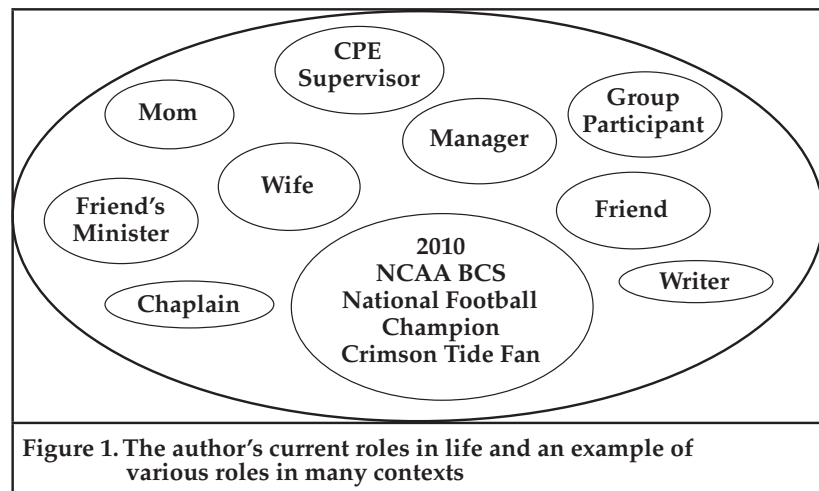


Figure 1. The author's current roles in life and an example of various roles in many contexts

may or may not be involved in an SCT way of thinking? How can we use this theory with others?

Let me give another example. I am part of a pediatric palliative group that had been working together for some time and moving from a grassroots committee exploring issues to a full-blown, financially supported consultation service. I was a relatively new member to this group, and, as I listened, it became clear to me that the underlying desire by most of the folks in the room was to move toward a consult service. It would serve patients, families, and the facility more effectively. There were lots of positive motivators to move forward. So, I said, "Looks like we are moving toward a consultation service." And there was a dead silence akin to the sort of social faux pas of dropping trash in a punch bowl. And I felt myself wither a bit in the silence. The group picked up the topic and moved on. I was able to engage my curiosity (rather than shame) and took initiative with the chair to ask about my suggestion after the committee meeting. I learned a great deal about previous history and how this suggestion touched some of the hopes as well as pains of the process. It was an instructive interaction.

As I have learned about SCT, I have begun to live into the idea that my contribution in this context did, in fact, move the group forward in an almost prophetic way. The key is that I continued to make contributions, create the space so that others felt free to make their contributions so that any differences could be fully explored. Even in this situation where no one except me had an idea of SCT, I could embody the idea of member contribution, not personal input, trust the group to work with the idea, and engage curiosity so that I could learn as much as possible about future contributions. I am still convinced that my early risk taking in the group has helped me in my member role to be a valued member of this committee and of the movement of palliative care services in the Children's Medical Center.

ROLE CLARITY IMPLIES AUTHORITY WITHIN THAT ROLE

The CPE supervisor's authority is to teach, facilitate, set time boundaries, orient to education paradigms such as verbatim presentations, communicate with speakers and presenters, and generally oversee the program. It is not the CPE supervisor's role and, therefore, not the parameter for authority to determine what a student's learning agenda is for a given learning setting or which verbatim to present. A CPE supervisor can coach a student

about giving feedback. However, the CPE student claims personal authority to give this feedback and is accountable for how the feedback is given.

Authority is not something that one person has and others do not. Authority within the roles, goals, and context of a particular system is shared and determined by the roles and goals. For example, the peer who does not present a verbatim is no less responsible for the activity of learning in a verbatim class. That peer is participating by offering feedback, sharing experiences, and listening to the learning agenda of the presenter. In this way, the presenter is also not solely responsible for presenting the verbatim. The peer group and supervisor assist, ask, and clarify, so that the presentation can reach its maximum potential. When the authority of the role is shared, so is the accountability.

From a SCT perspective, Susan Gantt has reflected that there are no perfect leaders, group members, or persons in roles. We get what we get. We are what we are: imperfections and good intentions altogether. Our job is to make the most we can of what we have. The supervisor's role within a group is to assist others to be the best that they can be within a given role.¹¹ This is a valuable insight for claiming one's own authority in a context. There is no perfect CPE supervisor, no perfect peer and no perfect context. It is the role and goal of all to make the most of what is given for the shared purpose of learning.

CPE students struggle with claiming authority appropriately. They often over- or under-claim authority and become involved in roles and context that are not appropriate. The example I sited of the earlier group that I supervised was very much in the over-claiming-authority category. This group of students needed me to claim my authority as CPE supervisor and set boundaries when roles were over-extended and not clarified. Shortly after I had been encouraged in consultation to reclaim my authority, a context presented itself when the intern group participated in a pastoral care team meeting. One member of the intern group decided that in this context, it would be appropriate to offer feedback and evaluation of a full-time professional chaplain who was not in the CPE program. The chaplain was startled by the critique given in this context.

As the supervisor, I was able to use this event with the group to illustrate role, goal, and context. In the context of the CPE program within the seminars as outlined, the CPE intern was, in fact, invited to offer feedback. In the context of a pastoral care team meeting, however, the role of the CPE student concerned the most effective function of the pastoral care department. To offer feedback that had not been invited and was not within that stated goal of

the context was inappropriate. This was a beneficial moment of shared acquired wisdom for the group as a whole. Furthermore, this student acted in a way that is common when we participate in ways that are not within our role or goal. So helping the student not to become personally wounded by the use of the example was another layer of learning both for the student and the group. This incident might also occur in parish supervision if, for example, a field education intern uses a staff meeting to offer uninvited feedback to the church secretary.

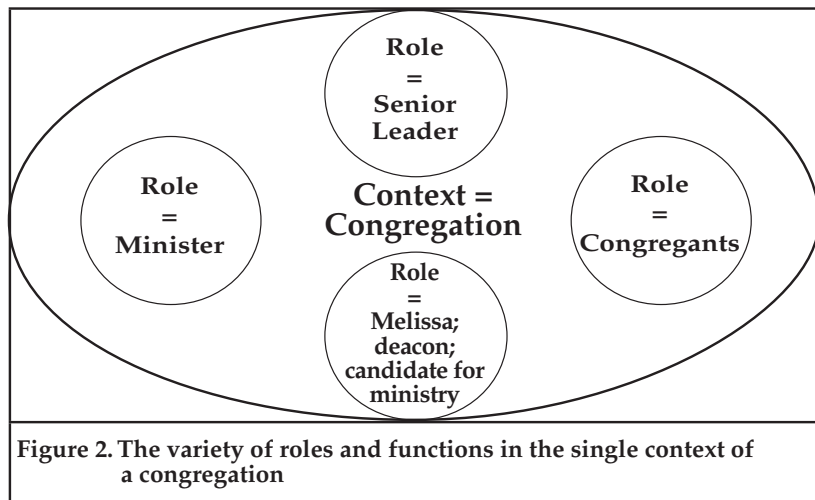
In parallel fashion, I have supervised CPE intern groups who are very hesitant to offer feedback as part of the learning process. They may even challenge the underlying value of such feedback. In the context of a verbatim seminar, offering clarity, critique, and affirmation is part of the goal for peers to offer to the presenter. A student must learn to claim authority and offer this feedback. And with authority comes the responsibility to offer appropriate feedback. It did not escape my notice that, in fact, the critique of my work with this particular CPE unit indicated I was not offering feedback as I might need to do so. In this sense, I could provide some real-time, shared experience of learning about the risks and benefits of offering feedback.

There is potential transfer of learning for either the more hesitant use of authority or the over-functioning authority into the world of pastoral or spiritual care delivery. The minister, rabbi, or clergy needs to be able to assess effectively the context, the role, and goal in that setting and, then, develop a strategy for using one's authority within those parameters while at the same time supporting the roles of others in the context.

CLARIFYING ROLE FUNCTIONING AS SUPERVISION

I had a student whom I will refer to as Melissa. She was a conservative Christian student within a spiritual community that had ill-defined role definitions. She was often in conflict in her local faith community, either having challenged the senior staff in some way or being called on the carpet for some omission. Finally and with some pain, she confessed her situation to me as her CPE supervisor. The following strategy illustrates another tool for developing appropriate professional authority within pastoral supervision.

Melissa had inserted a number of items into the order of worship service for the day. She felt that, if there were announcements to be made or a prayer request be made known, she should be able to let a secretary typing the order of service know and it would be included. This was clearly not working for



the senior leader or for the other ministers on the staff. When confronted, Melissa focused on her judgment that the senior minister did not want to pray for the congregant rather than the process of inserting this item into the agenda without his knowledge.

Step One: In our supervision, I drew a picture something like figure 2 to help illustrate the context, various roles in that context, and the function of those roles. This is similar to the exercise described above except that the variety of roles in a single context is the focus and not the particular student's various roles in many contexts.¹²

Step Two: Together, we defined the context, including where the boundaries lay. We discussed the actual data about a specific circumstance including the events, roles, and consequences. It was important to define what the established practice was, how it worked, and how Melissa interacted with that system. Melissa's role and the expectations of others about her role were explored.

Step Three: Together, we defined the different roles and goals of each category. It is important to differentiate role from person. So rather than focus on the person of the role and what that person had done to Melissa as person, we stayed focused on role and function in that role. So was it Melissa's function to do what she had done? What was the senior leader's role to give her feedback and direction?

Step Four: The roles and functions of those roles were clarified. In fact, the senior leader did not develop the order of worship. Rather, this had been delegated to a particular minister on the staff. It was clear that it was not Melissa's role and function. She was able to see that, if this was

not her role, then others could be confused and even upset about this. Additionally, the congregation would become confused about where these events originated so that in the end the effectiveness of communicating about upcoming events or personal spiritual needs would get diffused into the "noise"¹³ of how the process was supposed to work. Melissa began to see that, if her goal was to communicate effectively and create energy about an upcoming parish event or the need for a parishioner's spiritual support, using the appropriate role and function could in fact help her to reach her goal more effectively.

Step Five: We developed a new strategy. Melissa would give the announcements to the minister responsible for the order of service. She made many protests about how this might not work, what SCT would call a "negative prediction." We did not focus on them. It is a principle of SCT that we cannot predict the future.

Step Six: We also developed a follow-up to and evaluation of the strategy session. Melissa agreed to give the new strategy a try and let me know how it worked. If the negative predicting happened and the minister, in fact, would not post the announcements or requests, then what would be the next step? And in the mix was the focus of how to help both the minister and senior leader be the best ministry professionals they could be in this situation. After all, it was a shared goal of Melissa, the ministry staff, and the senior leader to communicate effectively and serve the congregation.

In this situation, Melissa was able to see how much more authority she had within her role. She could effectively request what she wanted from the appropriate role and function. She could manage the information she received about her request. She could develop a plan about the outcome when the results of her request occurred. She could rely on her authority to stay engaged in the system and to stay away from feeling as if the results were personal. Finally, she used her authority to seek consultation and to use the experience for her overall professional development.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

The development of professional authority is critical to pastoral and professional function in ministry. SCT provides theoretical frames that help support students to claim their authority and that help clinical supervisors in various settings to encourage appropriate use of authority. I have focused this article in my experience as a CPE supervisor. I believe strongly, however, that SCT is a significant theory and that it provides tools that are valuable in many settings. SCT has found itself to be instructive in corporate settings

as well as educational ones. My hope is that the work on using and claiming authority makes for a more competent pastoral/spiritual care provider and that SCT can be used effectively in the variety of settings where education for ministry takes place. Perhaps we can assist our students in sustaining their outrage.

NOTES

1. Writing for Social Change: Woman Journalists Web site, <http://www.goddesscafe.com/FEMJOUR/ivins.html> (accessed 8 January 2010).
2. CPE Inc., "2010 Standards" (Decatur, GA: ACPE, 2010), 13, <http://www.acpe.edu/NewPDF/2010%20Manuals/2010%20Standards.pdf> (accessed 1 March 2010).
3. See Web site www.systemscentered.com for further information.
4. Agazarian develops the idea of the "authority phase" in the developmental work of the group. I do not want my reference to the use of authority to be confused with her view of the authority of the group leader and the group membership dynamics around that group leader. See Yvonne M. Agazarian, *Systems-Centered Therapy for Groups* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 241ff. For additional reading on the subject: Yvonne M. Agazarian and Susan P. Gantt, eds., *Autobiography of a Theory: Developing a Theory of Living Human Systems and its Systems-Centered Practice*. (Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000). Yvonne M. Agazarian, "SCT in CPE Especially for IPG" (unpublished paper, Educational Event, Eastern Region of ACPE, 2000).
5. Susan P. Gantt, "Functional Role-Taking in Organizations and Work Groups," *The Group Psychologist* 15, no. 5 (November 2005): 15.
6. Yvonne M. Agazarian and Susan P. Gantt, *SCT in Action: Applying the Systems-Centered Approach in Organizations* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2005), 8.
7. Verena Murphy, "Role, Goal and Context in an Organizational Intervention" in Agazarian and Gantt, *SCT in Action*, 49–64. Murphy's chapter gives another example of how to think about roles and function in an organization.
8. Agazarian and Gantt, *SCT in Action*, 8.
9. *Ibid.*, 10.
10. From notes taken as part of training experience, 1 October 2007.
11. From notes taken as part of a training experience, 3 August 2009.
12. From notes taken as part of a training experience, 5 October 2008.
13. Agazarian and Gantt, *SCT in Action*, 13.

Reviewing Our Goals in Theological Field Education

Neil Sims

In 2008 I visited Andover-Newton Theological School near Boston. My purpose was to get an inside look at the school's field education program as a way of evaluating our own program at Trinity Theological College. When Sarah Drummond came to Andover-Newton as the new director of Field Education, she established the goal of providing "transformational, experiential education for ministry" and the objectives of "meaningful ministry experiences in settings that support learning, theological reflection opportunities that foster spiritual formation and vocational discernment, and courses that integrate theory and practice."¹

It is noteworthy that classroom courses were the place to foster integration. This mission statement provided a starting point for evaluating the existing program. The following questions were asked before assessing the current practices at Andover-Newton: "What outcomes do I want from the field education program at Andover-Newton? What goals are critical to me? What is at the heart of effective field education?" The assessment at Andover-Newton included a survey of the on-campus experience in field education at sixteen Protestant denominational seminaries. A report of this process appeared in volume 29 of *Reflective Practice*.²

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Students are regularly asked to set goals for their learning in ministry practice. However, field education programs often fail to set goals for themselves. My goals for field education at Trinity Theological College in Brisbane were hidden in the description of all the processes, but they were not intentionally presented in the Field Education Handbook. The focus of this essay is on goals in theological field education. I begin by looking at a sample of field education handbooks and then compare that sample with a number of essays in *Preparing for Ministry* edited by George M. Hillman Jr.³

A SAMPLING OF GOALS OF FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

My survey of about twenty seminaries or theological colleges in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia elicited some of the following goals.⁴

The primary goal in one field education program is to give students an experience of working with “an effective role model.” Students “experience the inner workings of outstanding ministries” and “interact personally with an effective Christian leader” as mentor.⁵ What is distinctive about this goal is its strong and almost exclusive emphasis on the power and influence of one individual. Most other programs depend on a number of partnerships for the formation of the student minister.

The Field Education Handbook of Princeton Theological Seminary gives five goals with associated intended outcomes. The five goals are self-awareness, relationship development, skills acquisition, testing of vocational call, and integration of academic learning with the practice of ministry.⁶ Relational competency and other skills are important here, but there is no explicit focus on spiritual formation and theological reflection.

At Malyon, the Baptist College in Brisbane, field education is seen as a partnership between the college (seminary), the student, the pastor-mentor and the congregational support team. There are goals then for each of these teaching or mentoring roles. The specific goals for students are to:

Acquire skills in ministry functions; determine purpose in ministry, becoming intentional rather than reactive; learn to evaluate experiences and to gain from the evaluation; learn to think theologically about the practical tasks of ministry and reflect theologically on everyday ministry experiences; and use the experiences gained as a basis for examining one’s call and vocation.⁷

There is a strong emphasis here on action-reflection learning—learning to monitor one’s ministry experiences as a resource for one’s ministry devel-

opment. In addition, personal devotions and relationship-building are two of the ten key competencies required as outcomes of their program.

The Supervisor’s Handbook of the Bible College of Queensland in Brisbane includes the following “aims of Field Education. Field Education begins with students’ experience in ministry, and by fostering reflection and learning, in an atmosphere of grace and trust, aims to:

Encourage growth in spiritual and personal maturity; help develop gifts and skills for effective ministry; nurture the ability to reflect theologically; assist in the integration of theological education with life and ministry experience; encourage continued professional development in ministry⁸

This is a broad statement where relational skills could be included under the skills for effective ministry, and the testing of one’s vocation could be part of one’s continuing professional development.

How field education programs are defined and valued by the educational institution differ widely. The scope of the field education program in relation to the rest of formation that takes place within a theological seminary also varies greatly. For example, some schools may incorporate spiritual formation, theological reflection, and the development of relationship skills within field education, while others may locate any one or all of these goals elsewhere within their total curriculum. Although Drummond and Aiello’s research is limited to schools in the United States, the goals for integrative seminars that emerged for them⁹ corresponded to many of the overall goals for field education programs I found stated in field education handbooks (see table 1).

Goals from Handbooks	Goals for Integrative Seminars
Theological reflection	Theological reflection (a significant teaching strategy more than a goal in the context of the integrative seminar)
Integration of theology and ministry practice	Integration of theory and practice
Vocation	Ministerial identity development
Education	Consolidating learning
Skills for ministry	Performance of ministry tasks

Table 1. Comparison of goals found in field education handbooks and goals for integrative seminars from research conducted by Drummond and Aiello.

GOAL AREAS EMERGING FROM FIELD EDUCATION HANDBOOKS

As a result of my survey of current manuals and handbooks, I have identified seven goal areas that frequently appear. I have summarized these goals with the mnemonic STRIVES. Ideally, each college or seminary strives to achieve many of these goals:

- S Spiritual formation
- T Theological reflection
- R Relationship skills
- I Integration of theology and ministry practice
- V Vocation
- E Education
- S Skills for ministry

My reflections after each goal area are drawn largely from Hillman's edited collection, *Preparing for Ministry: A Practical Guide to Theological Field Education*. The authors of particular essays in that volume are noted in the footnotes but not in the text.

Spiritual formation. Goals in the area of spiritual formation appear in roughly half the programs I studied although the focus varies widely. A Roman Catholic perspective will encourage developing "a personal practice of prayer," gaining "an understanding of the spiritual life of a parish community," and finding "balance between their prayer and their work."¹⁰ The Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City lists one competency that is an outcome of field education as the "ability to take responsibility for his or her own continuing spiritual development."¹¹ One objective of the ministry formation program at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Canada, is "to provide a context for spiritual formation through small-group reflection, accountability, prayer, feedback and support."¹² In one field education program, international students reported that their field education helped them to learn "utter dependency upon the Lord."¹³

Comment: The spiritual or Christian formation of students is a primary goal of theological field education. Mentors or supervisors are tour guides who keep pointing to where God is at work and where God still needs to work. The aim of formation is to be reshaped to the image of the Creator for the sake of others.¹⁴

Theological reflection. Theological reflection is a key skill to be exercised at the intersection of faith and practice. Many programs regard theological reflection as reflection on ministry experiences following an action-reflection model. Some programs seem to assume that all reflection on ministry

is theological. Queen's Theological College, Kingston, Canada, describes one of its general learning outcomes as seeking to develop "a habit/skill of interpreting, analysing and reflecting theologically on local and global contexts."¹⁵ Unification Theological Seminary in New York seeks this learning outcome: "Students will reflect theologically on their interfaith encounters in order to arrive at new insight and understanding about themselves and about the divine."¹⁶ St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana has its own way of expressing this: "Seminarists will learn how to interpret the life of God's people through the wisdom of the Gospel."¹⁷

Comment: Field education affords unique opportunities for learning to integrate theology with the practice of ministry. Through the disciplined practice of theological reflection, field educators can facilitate a symbiosis between the faith that we confess and the faith that we practice.¹⁸ "The difference between 'fifty years of wisdom' and 'one year's wisdom fifty times over' is theological reflection."¹⁹

Relationship skills. Although some colleges or seminaries do not separate out relationship skills from other ministry skills or competencies, there is no doubt about the centrality of this goal in field education programs. At Avondale College, Cooranbong, Australia, "each student will be expected to become progressively involved in six key areas of ministry formation," of which one is "building relationships."²⁰ One of the aims at St Francis' College in Brisbane has a relational dimension: "to determine how you (the student) either facilitate or inhibit ministry by your attitude and/or actions."²¹ Princeton Seminary affirms, "The rapidly changing global context demands that ministers relate to others with sensitivity, integrity and understanding, in and beyond the church."²²

Comment: "Ultimately, field education and ministry is about knowing God, knowing one's self and knowing others at an intimate level." Ministry is not just about being competent in pastoral skills but about "how effectively [ministers] relate to people."²³ From another perspective, being able to foster relationships is also a competence or skill. Kenneth Pohly has questioned the individualistic focus of many field education processes and instead highlighted the importance of the church as covenant community. A student in placement enters into the covenant relationships of the church.²⁴

Integration. It is not surprising that the integration of a student's theology and ministry practice receives major attention at a time when theological seminaries are sensitive to the criticism that they are too far removed from the congregational context. While the matters to be integrated may differ, generally the desire is to integrate theory and practice, or "learning with serving."²⁵

The mission of field education at Unification Theological Seminary includes the integration of one's "theological heritage with classroom learning and practical experience through a process of action-reflection in order to arrive at new insight."²⁶ St. Meinrad School of Theology aims to "integrate the human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formations for service in the Church."²⁷ Some programs suggest that theological reflection is the means by which the desired integration is achieved.²⁸

Vocation. A number of seminaries see field education as an important context for testing or clarifying one's vocational call. Princeton Seminary affirms, "While every Christian has a call to discipleship with a resultant ministry by virtue of his/her baptism, few are called to ordained pastoral ministry. Field education exposes students to different facets of ministry to determine which, if any, are suited for them."²⁹ Some schools speak more of ministerial or pastoral or professional identity. For instance, Acadia Divinity School in Nova Scotia looks for "growth in confidence in ministry based on an emerging clarity in pastoral identity and call to ministry."³⁰

Education. All programs of field education presume to be educational. However, some are more intentionally focused on the learning of the student. Knox College, Dunedin, New Zealand (seminary) declares that, "Theological Field Education is NOT field work. Field work is any experience in ministry that focuses on completing tasks for financial remuneration. Theological Field Education is the experience of ministry for educational purposes through completing learning goals."³¹ One of McMaster's objectives is "To develop as self-directed, collaborative learners through engagement in a learning network of field supervisors, seminar advisors, ministry support persons, peer group members, the Director of Ministry Formation, and other MDC faculty."³² Often there is a team of people assisting the learning of the student, both on campus and in the field. Malyon College affirms that "learning strategies in the Field Education program (both at the College and in ministry settings) should give due cognisance to the unique character of adult learning styles."³³ Later, Malyon endorses the action-reflection model of learning: "Placing a candidate in a local church is not sufficient in itself: it must be accompanied by reflection and feedback in such a way that the candidate learns from his/her experience."³⁴

Comment: Adult learning is at the heart of field education. "Each student is to be a truly proactive learner."³⁵ Holistic learning for potential shepherds of God's people includes developing their minds, strengthening their hearts and disciplining their wills. There are six types of behavioural outcomes that

come from holistic learning: knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, values, and interests.³⁶

Skills for ministry. Most students approach field education wanting to attain some specific ministry skills or competencies. Knox College School of Ministry has an objective "to stimulate a life-long goal of increasing competencies for ministry."³⁷ The list of competencies that are the desired outcomes of their field education programs are usually grouped. One grouping is care, worship, outreach, management and personal.³⁸ Another grouping includes preaching/worship, discipleship, pastoral care, administration/leadership, evangelism, and service.³⁹ Malyon is at pains to demonstrate that good professional or confessional practice as a minister involves much more than the performance of skills: "Developing a 'competency' in Field Education is not just a matter of learning 'how' to perform some aspect of ministry. It also includes knowledge, understanding, the ability to reflect on and assess what you did from both practical and theological viewpoints, and proactively to devise ways and means of improving what you did. The development of competency in Christian ministry requires an intentional balance between a 'hearts-on' Christian commitment on the one hand, and 'heads-on' understanding and 'hands-on' skills on the other."⁴⁰ Those who work with a competency-based approach would have a better idea of the experiential truth of this statement.

Comment: Of the seven goal areas we have looked at, the one that gets the most attention is that of ministry skills or competencies. "In an effort to get specific about what to evaluate, theological field educators have developed numerous lists of competencies...Likewise, certain denominations and judicatories have developed similar lists."⁴¹ In *Preparing for Ministry*, Thomas Fuller provides a list of seventy-two items in the categories of leadership, pastoral care, personal and spiritual issues, and proclamation and relational skills. He acknowledges that the list, on one hand, it is not exhaustive and, on the other, may contain items others would delete.⁴²

GOALS IN FIELD EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

I have organized the goals for theological field education into seven areas. However, they need to be seen as interconnected. Let me apply here a quote from the Association of Theological Schools Web site about the goals of the theological curriculum: "These goals, and the processes and practices leading to their attainment, are normally intimately interwoven and should not be separated from one another."⁴³ Thirty years ago, Doran McCarty de-

clared that field education programs needed clear goals consistent with the goals and history of their theological schools.⁴⁴ Denominational colleges or seminaries also need to take into account the ministry formation goals of their denomination. For example, the last two of six goals of the Uniting Church in Australia are to form ministers who “have skills for the practice of day-to-day Ministry, and the quality of being and awareness which gives integrity to the exercise of such skills; and are able to engage the tasks of Ministry with critical imagination, courage, theological judgement and self-reflection.”⁴⁵ A major North American report on educating clergy asserts that field education directors “structure programs to equip students to negotiate the huge shift between the culture of the seminary and the culture of the local congregation or ministry site.”⁴⁶

While I have named seven seemingly discrete goal areas, others go beyond a ministry focus to the whole of the student’s life. Some insist that personal growth goals need to include family relationships and ministry,⁴⁷ though I think most of us would give much greater priority to ministry growth goals and some of us would barely touch on family relationship goals. They see field education as a good time to practise setting boundaries around the family and to learn to negotiate the tensions among family, personal, and ministry expectations.⁴⁸

One holistic framework that appears frequently is “knowing, doing, and being”: ministry knowledge, ministry skills, and ministry character.⁴⁹ William M. Sullivan, in *Educating Clergy*, writes about professional education this way: “Professional education is a cognitive or intellectual apprenticeship, a practical apprenticeship of skill, and an apprenticeship of identity formation.”⁵⁰ He goes on to say that the reintegration of these three dimensions of professional life is a huge challenge. To accomplish that challenge, Queens Theological College has set these goals: “the development of capacities for leadership in church and world (doing); the formation of a habit of theological reflection on life and ministry (thinking); personal, spiritual and professional awareness and growth (being).”⁵¹

Similarly, Walter M. Jackson suggests that the mission of theological field education is to function as a partner with other theological disciplines in the task of preparing ministers for service. Theological field education has three overall goals:

- to encourage a maturing spirituality in each student
- to help students integrate educational and experiential fragments into a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the Christian faith

- to help students integrate spirituality with intellect in order to produce continued growth in ministry skill, theological learning, and overall competence in the practice of ministry⁵²

This description repeats the tripartite focus: spirituality is about being, understanding is about knowing, and competence is about doing.

CONCLUSIONS

Good goals for field education programs will take account of:

- the goals of the stakeholders, such as denominations, congregations, college boards, and potential students
- the place of the field education program within the theological education offered by the college as a whole
- the resources available, personnel and other
- the seven goal areas I have described and how the college’s whole ministerial training curriculum provides for these
- the three dimensions of human knowing, doing, and being

I agree with Ann M. Garrido when she insists “there is no single way to do field education at the present moment in the Church’s history, and this is not bad.”⁵³

My hunch is that the more a theological college (seminary) prescribes the outcomes desired through field education, the more it will tell students what their goals need to be and the less the student is engaged in a process of adult learning. Many of our ministry students are of a mature age. As such, they expect that prior learning will be recognized, and they value the opportunity for significant input into the learning process. If they develop their own learning goals in consultation with their supervisors and the director of Field Education, they are more motivated to work toward those goals. There are risks here, especially if the students’ goals are vague or too ambitious or not focused on core ministerial functions and meanings. However, these may be reduced if the processes are well articulated, if the student is held to account by the learning goals, if there is opportunity for later revision of the learning goals, and if there is good supervision.

My experience in my context is that students typically have about five goals for their field education year. They are often in worship, preaching, conducting special services (weddings, funerals, and sacraments), attending to their own spirituality/devotional life, pastoral care, teaching, mission, church councils, and time management. Their sub-goals often reflect the differences among the students. While they mostly begin with a focus on developing

ministry skills, by the end of the year, they are reflecting on what it means to be a minister and/or on developing a theology of ministry.

What are the risks of a competency-based program? There may be too many competencies to do justice to each of them in the time available. I realize that students may be working on more than one competency at the same time, but I sometimes work out how many hours are available per competency and estimate what level of competency can be expected in that time. Another risk is that the student becomes focused on the doing at the expense of the knowing and the being. Good supervision, theological reflection, and an integrative, holistic approach will help ground their competencies in their faith and being. For the less mature students, a set of prescribed ministry skills may be just what they need when they are unsure what will provide a foundation for their future ministry.

I have described two frameworks for goals in field education:

- A simple, holistic one
 - Knowing or cognition
 - Doing or skills
 - Being or character and/or pastoral identity
- A seven-point framework drawn from existing goals in a range of field education handbooks
 - S Spiritual formation
 - T Theological reflection
 - R Relationship skills
 - I Integration of theology and ministry practice
 - V Vocation
 - E Education
 - S Skills for ministry

How are the two related? Spiritual formation and vocation are centred on the being of the person. Theological reflection begins in the knowing of the person but will hopefully impact being and doing. While relationship skills are also part of the doing of the student, they give expression to the being of the student as well. It is hoped that education and integration will take place across all three: the knowing, doing, and being of the student. Skills for ministry belong in the doing of the student.

When students set clear goals for their learning in their learning covenants, recognizing where they are in their formation and where they need to be and taking into account their ministry context, better learning results. The

students have a clear focus for their ministry and learning. I dare to believe that the same will be true for us. Sharpening the overall goals for our programs will lead to better learning. Then, when we take time to evaluate how we are going, we will know where we want to be and if we have made it.

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THE ROOTS THAT FORMED ME AS A SUPERVISOR

AAPC THEORY PAPER

Trunkie Trees and Growing Branches: On Being Supervisors and Supervisees Together

Kathleen Weaver Kurtz

Recently, as part of staff training conference, I was asked to draw a tree that represented how I saw myself professionally. I have always loved trees. I remembered a time of spiritual searching and unsettledness when I lived in eastern Kentucky. I would stand at my kitchen sink looking out the window at the large old trees that lined “Cattern’s” Creek and dotted the bottom lands beyond—poplars, buckeyes, oaks, and giant sycamores with their smooth, peeled bark trunks almost white in the sun. The trees symbolized all I longed to be.

I drew my tree, branches reaching off the top of the sheet, roots running off the bottom. I did not add any blossoms, fruit, or wildlife but I took time to try to make the bark look as realistic as I could. When I was asked to tell the group what it meant, I began apologetically by saying “I guess I am feeling trunkie today.” I went on to observe that the trunk is the center of energy and gravity for a tree, connecting the roots and branches to each other. I understand my role as a supervisor as a “trunkie tree” providing a connection between past tradition and emerging practice.

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Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry

It was not until later that it occurred to me how truly I am connected to the roots of the pastoral counseling movement. The concept of providing pastoral care has existed for thousands of years, and I certainly am connected to those roots through the Christian tradition. More specifically, I realized that I was trained by persons only two generations away from Anton Boisen who pioneered the pastoral care and counseling movement. I am closer to the roots than I had thought.

I have had many excellent supervisors. Becky Gross was the one who was particularly formative for me. I learned from her a way of being with supervisees and clients. Even though I was a student, she always treated me as an equal, assuming that I brought valuable insight and gifts to my work. She listened to my ideas and let me know when I said or did something that enlarged her understanding. The approach that shaped our supervision was based on Bowen system’s assumption that what is going on in one system in a person’s life is also likely to be repeated in other systems, and that addressing an issue in any system will impact the other systems as well. All of my life was fair game in supervision. I found that broad view helpful. Having a place where I could bring my whole self and look at my work as an outgrowth of who I am in all times and places helped me to know myself better, and to gain confidence in using my whole self in working with the client.

My family was one of deep faith, lived out in practical, everyday ways. They were farmers, teachers, and preachers—nurturers of plants and students, bodies and souls, people who loved me and supported my growth. My Mennonite family is rooted in Anabaptist heritage, which gives shape to my theology. From this tradition, I learned about the centrality of community in the life of faith. It is in the gathered community where God’s word and will are best discerned, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Openness, respect, truthfulness, and equality are the hallmarks of such community, and hierarchy has little place. This way of viewing the church shapes my view of therapy. I see both therapeutic and supervisory relationships as a microcosm of the church, people gathered to discern God’s will in their lives and their larger worlds, a gathering where God is always present.

A THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

My role as a pastoral supervisor is to welcome supervisees into the world of pastoral counseling, to help keep them grounded and connected to the tra-

dition, and at the same time enable them to discover and develop their own voices as pastoral counselors. My aim is to help them reach deep and stretch high. Throughout the supervisory program, I work to create a safe, nurturing atmosphere where they are welcomed and supported in their growth. Such nurture is essential for healthy growth.

In its broadest definition, supervision is “an intensive, interpersonally focused, one-to-one relationship in which one person is designated to facilitate the development of therapeutic competence in the other person.”¹ More specifically, supervision is a formation process viewed through a relational, developmental lens in which “use of self” is a central focus and the goal is to enable supervisees to develop their own identity as many-faceted therapists.² In this model, the formation process and awareness of my own identity as a “pastoral person” are as crucial as the development of my supervisees. My identity is made up of my personal history, spiritual experience, personal therapy, theoretical perspectives, and experience as a supervisor.

While there are clearly didactic elements in supervision, a great amount of learning comes from the interpersonal interaction between supervisor and supervisee and the modeling supervisors do in the course of their work. As a pastoral counseling supervisor my focus includes an additional element. Not only do I offer my supervisees myself as an authentic, empathic, experienced guide, but also as one who represents God’s love, forgiveness, and grace. I believe that God is an active part of every encounter. When I sit with another, either client or supervisee, we are on even ground in terms of our humanity; God is present in each of our lives and can work through each of us.

Pamela Cooper-White describes a theological, relational paradigm for a pastoral therapist/client relationship that works equally well for supervision. She names the two players as “Helper” and “Person being helped.”³ The interaction that takes place in the space between the two carries great significance. Thinking of it as a supervisory model, the supervisor and supervisee each bring knowledge, both personal and professional, to the interaction. Ideas can come from either person and flow back and forth as new insights are developed and deeper meanings evolve. Interpretation happens jointly as each person’s perceptions and perspectives are shared and built upon. Both persons can take the lead at times and can, at other times, be the receiver of insight. In this respectful honoring of each person a dynamic “we” is created. Approaching supervision in this way provides a healthy model for interaction with clients since supervisees tend to interact with clients as their supervisors interact with them.

This way of viewing the supervisory relationship is consonant with my theological understanding of God’s presence in human interactions. While I believe God is present in each person, I see the rich interaction area of this model as the place where God can act even more creatively as ideas and experiences are heard respectfully, valued and built upon. It is the gathering of “two or three” where God is present and God’s will is discerned.

A developmental, formational supervision model includes the process of integration, a time when theories, techniques, and personal style become wedded into the emerging therapist’s own unique style. In thinking about that integrative process, I find Sharon Cheston’s paradigm helpful.⁴ She proposes three “ways” or categories in which students can think about their learning and their work: “a way of being, a way of understanding, and a way of intervening.” The “way of being” speaks to the counselor’s way of being present with the client in the room. The “way of understanding” refers to the body of psychological knowledge that exists, including personality theory, developmental issues, understanding of the conscious and unconscious, psychopathology, systems dynamics. It also recognizes the client’s strengths and resources. The “way of intervening” refers to the techniques used to enable a client to change unproductive patterns and begin to function in more healthy ways. This can include treatment plans and assignments, and the way the counselor uses these to encourage and give feedback as change occurs.

THE PROCESS OF SUPERVISION

The supervisory program for residents at the center where I work consists of two hours of co-facilitated group supervision per week, an hour of individual supervision with one of several staff members, and the opportunity to see clients in our offices. Our residency group is currently all Caucasian and all female. The diversity comes in religious perspectives, which range from very conservative Protestant to Reformed Jew to Mormon. Holding the group together and valuing this much diversity has been a challenge at times. We use the definition I learned in the STAR program at Eastern Mennonite University: We are a “multi-faith gathering with inter-faith sensitivities.” *Multifaith* is described as “a situation where many faiths are present in one setting,” and *interfaith* is defined as “activities that involve an interaction between different faiths.”⁵ This means that each person is invited to speak freely out of that person’s tradition and will be heard with respect. We seek to embody compassion and respect in all group interactions with residents.

In the residency program we use Stoltenberg's integrated, developmental model based on three levels of learning as a way to assess where residents are in their process of becoming.⁶ This model provides a helpful guide for knowing how to be with them in their learning as well as a concrete way to note the progress they make. Movement from one level to the next represents "irreversible structural change," meaning that once a skill is acquired, it cannot be lost; it remains as part of a person's skill set. However, faced with a new situation, supervisees may temporarily go back to former ways of functioning until they gain more comfort in dealing with the new situation.

Within each of the three levels there are specific domains—discrete areas where skills are needed for work with clients. The specific domains are intervention skills competence, assessment techniques, interpersonal assessment, client conceptualization, individual differences, theoretical orientation, treatment plans and goals, professional ethics. Growth in each of the domains does not necessarily proceed at the same rate, meaning that a person may be moving from one level to the next in one area while more growth is needed in another area.

At each level, there are three overriding structures that are the criteria used to measure change and growth in the various domains: (1) self and other awareness, (2) motivation, and (3) autonomy. I find these structures one of the most helpful parts of the model because they articulate clearly the dynamics in learning counseling, aspects I might not otherwise separate quite so specifically.

LEARNING TO LEARN AT LEVEL 1

Supervisees at Level 1 are new to the field and have limited experience in the skills needed, even though they may have considerable life experience. Their focus (self and other awareness) is usually on mastering techniques and doing well, which means they have little time to be aware of the client's perspective or the dynamics of their interaction with the client. Often there is anxiety over "doing it right," or "not making a mistake," which can limit their willingness to experiment or follow their own instincts. They are usually very motivated, eager to learn and to do well. At this stage, supervisees show relatively little autonomy. They depend a great deal on the supervisor's help and reassurance.

My task as a supervisor at this level is to provide structure in shaping both the therapy the supervisee is giving and the supervisory session. It is often important to break skills into their component parts to help the supervisee recognize all the skills that need to be honed. Level 1 often requires specific

directives and lots of encouragement to foster confidence and a willingness to risk new interventions by the supervisee. Level 1 supervisees should be encouraged to take seriously their role in the therapeutic process and challenged to take some risks. At the same time, levels of anxiety need to be monitored so that supervisees do not become so anxious they cannot function well.

A twenty-seven-year-old African American woman had sought counseling to deal with grief over losing her father when she was fourteen years old. Her father had been alcoholic and her mother emotionally abusive, but the client felt it important not to be critical of her parents. The deaths of mothers of several close associates had brought up loss issues again for this young woman, so she had come to counseling. The supervisee ended her case presentation by asking if anyone knew any good intervention ideas for helping her client deal with her loss.

This question is a frequent Level 1 concern. The resident was understandably eager to learn what would be helpful to the client. However, while the case was laden with significant emotional issues, she did not reflect on her feelings as she sat with the client and expressed little curiosity about what might be going on within the client. Her question at the end brought the presentation to a sudden halt, because it ignored the emotional content she had just presented. Instead of being self-reflective, she turned to us, the supervisors and her fellow supervisees, to tell her what to do. Several in the group gave suggestions. I talked about the value and power of her simply being able to listen to the woman's story. I also encouraged her to be curious about what it touched within herself. She listened politely but at the end solicited specific interventions again. Later in the session, as part of a theological reflection led by my colleague, I shared some personal, emotional responses to the exercise, in part to give the group an opportunity to model another way of being with someone experiencing grief. Even after a very effective listening process by the group, the resident asked once again for concrete suggestions of exercises to do, and I was reminded that learning takes time.

A second issue with Level 1 functioning is the ethical dilemma that can arise when a supervisee fails to see crucial pieces of a client's situation.

A forty-eight-year-old Caucasian woman, married to a "dry drunk" who is emotionally and physically abusive, described her life as walking on eggshells. She alternately placates her husband and flies into rages, neither of which really work for her.

The resident brought in a tape of a recent session in which the resident made a number of reasonable suggestions about the client being more firm with her husband and observed her ambivalence around leaving. The resident

saw individual pieces of behavior but had not seen the overarching situation of domestic violence of which these behaviors were a part. Therefore, she had not spoken to the client about a safe plan or explained the husband's behaviors as part of a pattern which the client could not change by her placating behavior. I was concerned for the client's safety.

To complicate matters, the resident's individual supervisor became extremely frightened in listening to the tape, and the supervisee came away from her supervision very upset, feeling that her ability to be a counselor was in question. The group had the double task of helping the resident move beyond the shame she felt about having "blown it" with the client and also being realistic in taking seriously the dynamics of her client's situation. The former required empathic listening, pointing out the gifts she had as a counselor. The latter I dealt with by providing material and resources about domestic violence and asking the resident to continue taping sessions as a way of monitoring her work. To me this case illustrated the ethical tension between allowing a supervisee to learn and grow while at the same time protecting the client

BEYOND BASIC SKILLS: LISTENING FOR THE ISSUES

The move into Level 2 begins as supervisees begin to feel more confident with their ability to use counseling skills. Level 2 supervisees have learned some basic skills and are now able to focus on issues beyond techniques. They are hopefully less anxious about themselves and their skills and ready to see the client's issues more clearly. They begin to notice verbal and nonverbal cues from the client and become intrigued with possible diagnoses. A possible pitfall at this stage is becoming so involved in the client's worldview that supervisees become stuck there with the client and have difficulty extricating themselves. Countertransference can also become an issue at this point.

The challenge at Level 2 is to begin to move toward greater awareness of client and awareness of the self of the therapist during the session. Motivation at this level is somewhat dampened by the realization that technique and goodwill are not enough to support change and that life issues are extremely complex. As they move toward more autonomy, supervisees want to do more on their own, and sometimes get into conflict with the supervisor. In my experience, those power issues are often subtle. A supervisee, for example, may come week after week, declaring that everything is fine with her caseload and that she really has nothing to discuss. On the positive side, supervisees are

willing to try more on their own and are interested in discussing how their interventions worked.

Supervision at this "adolescence" level calls for a delicate balance between giving supervisees freedom to learn and experiment, while at the same time following each case closely enough to insure that clients are receiving appropriate care. Supervisees are not yet ready to work completely on their own, even though they may want to do so; therefore, the supervisor has the responsibility to be aware of what is happening with each case. Empowerment is a goal at this level. One technique that promotes empowerment is to give multiple suggestions for interventions in order to present opportunities for choice and decision making on the part of supervisees. Supervisors can ask more about the rationale behind choices supervisees make and can nudge them toward more self-awareness in relation to clients and dynamics in the room.

One resident whom I met with individually as well as in group supervision is clearly at Level 2 in most areas. She was interested in the diagnoses of her clients, particularly an anorexic client who alternated between a meager compliance and intentional sabotage of her treatment plan. The resident would gladly spend an entire supervisory session going over the details of the case, listing all the initiatives she took in finding an in-patient program for the client, being frustrated at the lack of communication from staff of that program, describing the client's behavior, telling about interactions with the client and her family. She expressed appropriate concern about the long-term danger her client was in and we talked about setting boundaries for the therapy and ethical/legal issues.

At one point in supervision, I asked what buttons the client pushed for her and she "didn't know." She had talked about her anger over several situations where those in responsibility did not hold her client accountable for her non-compliance, and I wondered about the source of her anger. She attributed it to the obvious danger for the client but did not connect with her own life experience. She could offer no other feelings about being in the room with the client except to say that she liked the client. When I identified what the client triggered in me, the resident pleasantly acknowledged what I said but still could not make any real connections with herself. This was her clearest growing edge. I will continue to explore her lack of feelings. What she does have is an eagerness to learn and a willingness to try suggestions. There are moments when personal feelings break through and she is able to connect them to her past, so I trust that she will continue to explore and grow in this area.

FINDING BALANCE: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

Movement to Level 3 begins as supervisees find a place of balance. They begin to be more realistic about themselves, both their strengths and their weaknesses. They can move back and forth between what is happening in the room with the client and their own feelings and reactions, holding in their minds a plan or scheme of intervention while interacting in an authentic way with the client. This is the level where supervisees are able to make productive use of transference and countertransference. They are more realistic about motivation: supervisees accept the ups and downs of work and are ready to settle in for the long haul as therapists. They are now able to recognize the value that can be gained in the therapy process without over- or under-inflating its potential. Autonomy is comfortably realized. Persons have moved from being primarily learners to a comfortable assurance of their competence, knowing when to consult and interacting more as peers.

Since no one progresses at exactly the same rate through all the domains, Level 3 is the time for the final integration of all the domains. It is the time for making the profession one's own, forming a professional identity that is congruent with one's personal life. Motivation and autonomy are at a high level, and the person can handle most problems or emergencies alone.

At this stage, supervision becomes more collegial. Supervisees can be depended on to structure the supervision, asking for what they need. This is the time to focus on personal and professional integration. Together the supervisor and supervisee can evaluate suggestions made as helpful or not and work together at molding interventions to suit the style of the supervisee. Supervisees view supervisors more as senior colleagues than authority figures. It is important, however, for the supervisor not to make assumptions about supervisees' skills in all domains based on their competence in one area. It may take time for skills in all domains to be acquired.

Working in an organization where some supervisees become staff members and colleagues, I have had the opportunity to observe several supervisees as they move from Level 1 to a very comfortable Level 3. One such woman I supervised as a resident began as a very eager Level 1. She was full of questions that took most of our sessions to answer. Whatever suggestions I gave her she tried, and she came back to report the results. She was often able to see the humor in her less than perfect attempts. By the end of the year, she spent much more of the time reflecting on clients and her feelings about them, initiating more on her own. It was clear that she was at a solid Level 2 and be-

ginning to focus more on herself as part of the equation. She was concerned about the hectic pace of her life and how that impacted her work. I specifically remember her laughing at herself when she realized that trying to meditate in the car on the way to work was not real meditation, and that she needed to become honest with herself and set aside time every day for "real" meditation.

For the next two years, she worked for an EAP and then returned to work on our staff. She was invited to join a peer group of which I was a part, and it was a joy to see the growth she had made in the intervening years. She was always full of questions, but questions of a much deeper nature than earlier. She fearlessly tried many interventions and was open in discussing how they had worked. She used herself well with clients. In the peer group, she listened to others, asking penetrating questions, and offering kind, sensitive observations that made it clear that she was aware of both her responses and others' feelings. She took on leadership roles and intentionally developed her own unique style and niche in the counseling community. When she decided to move to another state, the peer group insisted on a leave-taking process. She participated freely and openly acknowledged how rich the experience was for her. It helped her to understand community in a deeper way than she had before.

Ethical considerations are an integral part of our work. Some of the issues that come up regularly in case presentations are questions about setting appropriate boundaries around time and interactions; confidentiality; record keeping; malpractice and legal issues, including subpoenas; when to report suspected or known abuse; how to deal with suicide threats; what is appropriate in self-disclosure; and how to avoid or manage dual relationships. Since we have persons working for different licensures, we emphasize the importance of each person knowing well the code of ethics for their particular discipline as well as the American Association of Pastoral Counselors Code of Ethics. While we do not have a formal process of risk assessment, we routinely remind residents of key questions to keep in mind as they work. For the past three years, the Center for Pastoral Counseling has offered an ethics workshop with an outside presenter, and we have strongly encouraged the residents to attend.

One interesting dual role relationship I live with is my dual role as supervisor and clinical coordinator. Most of the time, this dual role presents no difficulty. The part of my role that becomes sticky, however, is my role in the hiring of new staff members. That clearly came into play one day when I first did a supervision session with a resident and then moved on to an initial interview with her for a staff position. I had never done the two back to back, and it felt awkward to me. I was open in naming my feeling and stating a

clear ending of supervision and beginning of the interview. In the succeeding parts of the process, I asked another person to be in charge of the interview even though I was present. We were able to work our way through the process without difficulty, but the naming of the dual roles was important. Dual relationships cannot always be avoided, but when they are fully acknowledged by both parties they hold less power to create problems.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Theological reflection is at the heart of the work I do and plays a role in how I sit with others, whether or not I am actively thinking in theological terms. Killen and De Beer state, "Our capacity to comprehend and to live faithfully as Christians exists in direct proportion to our capacity to notice, describe, and discover the revelatory quality of our human experiences."⁷ Supervision is a human experience in which supervisor and supervisee sit together, using their human experiences and their knowledge to focus on the stories that comprise the lives of clients. In reality, there is never a time when I am not doing theological reflection: it frames and informs my reasons for being in the room with another. Psychological constructs, systems theories, cultural awarenesses, economic realities may all be used in understanding the person or couple under discussion, but for me, all these facets of life are encompassed by the awareness of God's loving and life-giving intention towards every person. Not only is every step toward health enabled by God but every desire to change and grow is the voice of God within, calling toward the wholeness intended by God.

When I speak of "God," I hold a very loose definition. Although I tend to use anthropomorphic terms in speaking about God, my image is not necessarily a human one. God can be Energy, Spirit, Process, Presence, Universe, The Unknown, Guide, Connection. God is the one who surprises at every turn, who sometimes frightens, sometimes reassures, sometimes remains totally hidden. The one belief I hold with certitude is that God is *in* and *a part of* every human experience. I may not be able to articulate how or where. However, my challenge is to look for and recognize signs of the presence of The Holy Other within myself, in my supervisee and her work, in the life of the clients being discussed, in the larger society, and in the world of which we are all a part.

I believe that God's voice comes to us first and most clearly from within ourselves, communicating through our gifts and deepest longings about who God created us to be. For this reason, I am always eager to hear from new resi-

dents their stories of how they have come to the work of counseling. Hearing their stories informs me about who they are and where their strengths will be as counselors. When little is articulated, I see it as part of my work with them to help them discover and value those stories. Because such stories can be embedded in painful experiences it may take some time to fully appropriate them as "redeeming" rather than "bad" or irrelevant.

A resident came to group supervision, reporting that she was up most to the night reading a book we had assigned. Based on a list of unethical therapist behaviors in the book, she had remembered a school counselor who acted inappropriately with her from ages fourteen to sixteen in the years just after her mother died. She reported that she had become very angry as she remembered everything that occurred when she was so vulnerable. However, in her recounting of it, she laughed as she spoke. Our responses brought more details and more laughter on her part. Finally, I questioned her affect, and she became teary—the first time in more than a semester when she allowed her vulnerability to show. She acknowledged that she had never before let herself face the impact of this experience, but that it was from it that she decided to become a therapist. She went on to wonder if she had made the choice for the wrong reason. The discussion which followed with the group brought forth more "calling" stories and allowed her to begin claiming her experience as having meaning in her life.

Intentional theological reflection happens in many ways in our residency program. At times, it is simply asking the question, "Where is God in this person's life?" or "How do you experience God as you sit with this client?" or "What faith resources are available to the client?" We also explore personal life experiences of residents as they come up in the course of their work, using similar questions. There are times when we explore the theological world of the client, especially when that world includes beliefs that the resident views as being detrimental to the client. We have used Karl and Ashbrook's model for theological reflection, as well as one proposed by Killen and de Beer.⁸

Killen and de Beer name four positions from which theological reflection can begin: *tradition*, which includes scripture, doctrine, historical background, current practices; *culture*, which includes social structure, physical environment, ideas, and expressive arts; *positions* or one's individual viewpoints, beliefs, and convictions; *action*, which is the feelings, thoughts, and stories of one's own life. It is possible to enter into theological reflection from any one of these points. In group supervision, we have used the suggested format, starting at different points, and found the structure helpful, both in bringing ourselves imaginatively into the client's world and struggle, and accessing

the spiritual resources available to the counselor and client. The following is a case using the "Beginning with a Life Situation" model.

- Step 1. *Narrate the story.* Mike is a ten-year-old boy from a very convoluted family system. He was born to unmarried parents who lived together until his birth. Shortly afterward his mother took him and left the father. She married a man who turned out to be a sex addict, and they had a child together. Currently the biological father and his current wife live across the street from Mike, his mother, stepfather, and stepbrother. Mike is depressed and has behavioral motor tics and enuresis. Mike's biological father is verbally and physically abusive to him and refuses to come to counseling either individually or with his son. Mike's mother and stepfather have come in with Mike. Child Protective Services became involved with the family and seemingly botched their interventions, making the situation even more stressful. The current crisis developed when the mother wanted to move, and Mike was caught between his two parents.
- Step 2. *Listen, attending to one's own feelings.* After hearing the case, the group came up with their feeling reactions: frustration, confusion, a sense of injustice, discouragement, anger, tenseness, helplessness, outrage, distress.
- Step 3. *Let the feelings evoke images and choose one on which to focus.* Group members named as images an inner child in a tug of war, Solomon deciding to cut the baby in half, Jesus carrying his cross up the hill, Jesus at his trial, Mike in complete armor with a sword and the resident with no armor but with a sword, a ten year old boy with wild emotion. The image that held the most power was that of an inner child in tug of war, being pulled in many directions, his injuries not attended to.
- Step 4. *Sit with the image. Listen for where God is present. Notice what is broken. What are the possibilities for newness, for healing?* The reflections that followed included the observations that everyone is broken, that no one is attending to self-brokenness, and that fear has overtaken love.
- Step 5. *Where do the images take us in our Christian tradition?* A number of biblical references were made. One person spoke of Jesus on the cross saying, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Another person remembered Jesus saying that if anyone hurts one of "these little ones," it would be better if a mill stone were hung around his neck and he be drowned. A third connection was to Jesus' warning against judging and the importance of taking the "beam" out of one's own eye before helping to remove the speck from another's eye.
- Step 6. *Pick one piece of the tradition and explore that in the same way the image was explored.* We focused on the theme of love and God's care for "the little ones."
- Step 7. *Have a conversation between image and tradition.* It was observed that, in a real sense, every person in the family was "a little one," everyone was in need of experiencing love. However, the parents also had power for

which they needed to take responsibility. One of the ironies of the family is that the true "little one" was a parentified child.

- Step 8. *Organize the results of the reflection. What questions or insights arise? What concrete actions are called for? What learning will you take to new experiences?* The group again focused on the dynamics of love and the ways it needs to be expressed and experienced by each player in this story, including the resident/therapist. Since the resident had been subpoenaed in this case and was facing a court appearance, she also felt like a "little one," rather apprehensive about the experience and overwhelmed.
- Step 9. *How will you take these learnings into your own life?* The resident observed that this process had been very helpful and that she would use it again either on her own or with the group when a challenging case arose. At the end of our process she felt much less anxious and more connected to her own resources, both intellectual and spiritual. She stated that she would take the image of our supportive circle with her when she appeared in court, knowing she is connected to our strength and love and empowered by our reflection process.

One of the strengths of this model is its use of imagery and imagination. Imagination is the catalyst that brings theological resources to life, giving flesh and bones to abstract truths, taking the grim realities of people's troubled lives and breathing new meaning into them. As Barbara Brown Taylor states, imagination provides "a shocking gift of new insight."⁹ Imagination helps us enter a client's world, and it is also essential in theological reflection, as demonstrated in the above case. Imagination is the liminal playground in which intangible realities give birth to new images, transforming the facts of our existence. Imagination frees us from our old, tired ways of seeing, to enter and inhabit larger, more spacious worlds where we can live more freely and fully.

So I end where I began, with an image of myself, a "trunkie tree," deeply rooted in tradition and watered by many teachers and supervisors, family members and clients. The "trunkie tree" has grown branches that extend in many directions. Now it is my turn to support the growth of new trees, new pastoral counselors, as they explore their roots, develop healthy trunks, and spread their branches to shade and protect those who come to see them.

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ACPE THEORY PAPER

Supervision and Mutual Vulnerability

Mary Christine Mollie Ward

And God saw that it was good . . . God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. – Genesis 1:25b, 31a¹

Although I have been a Christian all my life and an Episcopal priest for more than seven years, it has taken me nearly four decades to claim those words from the opening pages of the Bible as my own. My experiences in clinical pastoral education (CPE) not only have been life-giving to me as I have re-discovered my "true self," but the CPE process has been a model for the life I want to lead. Moreover, understanding of oneself as "good," indeed "very good," is the underpinning for not only my true self but also the theme that ties together my supervisory theory of mutual vulnerability: the idea that authentic relationship is both the means and the end to the nurture of pastoral caregivers.

I believe that God calls each of us to risk mutually vulnerable relationships with self, God, and others. From a theological perspective, I believe that

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God values each of us just as we are, so much so that God is willing to risk God's own true self being known, rejected, and even transformed for the sake of authentic relationship. From a personality-development perspective, I believe that true selves are created, re-created, and sustained in the holding environment of authentic relationships. Without authenticity the true self withers and dies. From an adult-education perspective, I believe that we recognize and remember the wisdom of our true selves when we see authenticity in the faces of educators who are willing to risk letting us kick around in those holding environments as we grow and learn.

The opening chapters of the book of Genesis provide a metaphor of the ongoing struggle on the part of both God and humanity for authentic relationship. Through all of their struggles, they thrive when they stay in authentic relationship with one another, sometimes joyfully, sometimes angrily, but always authentically. It is only when they try to be what they are not, when they try to make their relationship something it is not, that they run into trouble. God tells Moses, "I am who I am" (Ex 3:14). Moses and the rest of us essentially make the same statement whenever we covenant to live in authentic relationship. And that is good enough.

A THEOLOGY OF MUTUAL VULNERABILITY

As a woman, mother, and priest, and as this particular woman, mother, and priest, I experience the world from a place of both power and powerlessness. I embrace both of these, for they are a part of who I am and, I believe, part of the God in whose image I am created. The much-loved, youngest child of their blended families, I grew into adolescence with my parents' marriage intact, carefully sheltered from the reality of family indiscretions and broken relationships. My parents, a war-refugee mother and a soldier father, structured their lives on the ideas that order and hierarchy provided security and that security, however illusory, was what provided life with meaning. To speak the truth openly and directly in my original family—that is, to show one's true self—was likely to get one at best reprimanded and at worst shamed verbally or abandoned emotionally. Better to take pride in using what power one did have manipulatively than to be humiliated by one's ultimate powerlessness.

For that which was supposed to have been trustworthy was, in fact, not trustworthy. Class hierarchy did not protect my blue-blood German Catholic mother from a childhood of abuse and poverty as her own mother was led off

to a concentration camp for resisting the Nazis during World War II. Following orders did not protect my Oklahoma cowboy father from the nightmares that continued to awaken him screaming in the darkness nearly forty years after earning a chest full of medals in Vietnam. Nor did my parents' silence about their own skeletons shield me from the structures that supported, indeed required, their orderly, hierarchical view of the world. Those structures dictated my childhood playmates, who I could love, and my first views of authority, including God.

My early experiences with hierarchy inform my struggle to challenge the very structures that have formed me, and, after many efforts to "slap at authority" during CPE training, the dualistic paradigm from my youth no longer satisfies me: the idea that for one person to "win" someone else must "lose" no longer makes sense to me. Instead, I find that the paradox and ambiguity and mystery that characterize authentic relationships provide meaning to my life even as they diminish false security. As I live and move and have my being in authentic relationship with God, neighbor, and self, my supervisory work is based on a theology of mutual vulnerability: that is, the idea that God risks God's self to be in authentic relationship with us and that each of us is similarly called to risk self in order to be in authentic relationship with God and each other.

The Triune God: A Circle of Authentic Relationship

This theology of mutual vulnerability is most fully expressed in the concept of a Triune God. In using "triune" rather than the more traditional "trinitarian," I consciously claim the mystery of understanding God as a "tri-unity" rather than simply a trinity or simply a unity. This distinction has its roots in my many conversations, and often heated arguments, with teachers of theology. Sometimes I experienced affirmation of my ideas, but, at other times, I was devastated by a sense of being silenced and shamed. The understanding of God that emerged from these struggles is of one who values not only the good of the community but also the inherent goodness of each person and of one who is willing to take risks to be in relationship with humans. As Creator, God continues to endow humanity with freewill and, in doing so, risks rejection, glorying not in blind obedience or empty praise but in authenticity and integrity. As Christ, God experiences our incarnate humanity and risks being known as one who is most powerful in vulnerability. And as Holy Spirit, God establishes relationship between self and others and risks transformation of self as well as other.

St. Augustine of Hippo and the Episcopal priest Carter Heyward both offer images of God as triune that are less like a group of persons than a group of relationships.² Being able to bring together two such diverse theologians represents for me a healing of a split. Some four hundred years after the articulation of what came to be known as the three-legged stool that supports the Anglican understanding of faith, the Episcopal Church in which I was raised and find my spiritual home continues to be wracked by battles over the primacy of scripture, tradition, or reason.³ Both Augustine and Heyward have been painted as heretics by their opposition, and yet both help me to find the words and images to enrich and express my theology—a theology that neither accepts without reason the “orthodoxy” of a literal interpretation of scripture nor breaks ties with a tradition that continues to be life-giving to me.

Russian iconographer Andrei Rublev’s image of the “Old Testament Trinity” portrays Abraham’s three divine visitors at table under the oaks of Mamre (Genesis 18).⁴ In the icon, none of the figures is subordinated to either of the others, and yet each of them is self-differentiated. They draw near to one another, but their faces are fully visible. Their circle and the possibility of relationship are not closed to us. In sitting around Abraham’s table, they accept his hospitality and the risk that this might incur an obligation.⁵

I am reminded of a conversation in the IPR group in the first internship that I co-supervised. For some time, I had felt that the process-group sessions I led rarely moved to the emotional, inter-relational plane but rather stayed on a very heady, disconnected level. This was borne out in the feedback I received from my training supervisor. One day, after struggling yet again with my role, I finally owned up to the group about feeling insecure and uncomfortable with my leadership, and then I took the risk of asking for feedback about how this admission made the group feel about me. Almost immediately the tone of the session changed. The group’s feedback ranged from reassuring (“It just shows that you’re human”) to stinging (“If you don’t know what the hell you’re doing, I’m really in trouble!”), but it certainly could not be described as heady or disconnected.

Rublev’s image and my IPR group experience are not a hierarchy that places God/supervisor at the top and humans/interns at the bottom but a truly mutual relationship that allows each to be nourished and, albeit, potentially hurt by the other.

I have learned painfully that I cannot automatically expect the kind of hospitality that Abraham extended to the angels of the Lord.⁶ In the story of Abraham’s hospitality, his openness to the strangers in his midst is what

brings him into such intimate relationship with God that they latter are described as talking and arguing as if they were the closest of friends. But there is another darker story in the canon. As Abraham’s visitors continue their journey, they travel to Sodom, where they encounter Abraham’s nephew Lot, who also extends hospitality to them (Genesis 19). In this story, the vulnerability of both Lot and the divine visitors becomes apparent as Lot’s neighbors seek to abuse them. This relationship stuff is risky business, apparently. It also is messy business that rarely produces clear victims and perpetrators, as the sordid epilogue of Lot’s daughters illustrates. And, yet, I still believe we are called to live into our creation, to be open to authentic relationship through mutual vulnerability.

I see the goal of the transformation that I am trying to effect in supervision as authentic relationship: relationship that allows each person to be in covenant both to self and to the other. Thus, my idea of transformation is not becoming what one is not. Rather transformation is becoming aware of and blessing what one is—past, present, and future.⁷ The idea is that we are good by our very nature, not by anything we do but simply by being true to ourselves. I am convinced that “sinfulness” (that is, separation from God) is not our nature at all. Rather, sinfulness is not being true to our nature—our nature as relational and vulnerable beings created in the image of a relational and vulnerable God. A life of sin involves a conscious choice to do or, as the words of the Confession say, to leave undone.⁸ The good life, on the other hand, is a state of being, and we are “good” simply by merit of our existence as relational, vulnerable beings.

Closing the Divine-Human Gap: Mutual Vulnerability

As a Christian and a priest, the priestly image of the second of the Triune circle of relationships resonates most deeply with me.⁹ The integration of Christ as fully human and fully divine prevents me from splitting off parts of myself or another that make me uncomfortable. In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, I experience the Christ as the embodiment of the kind of relationship of mutual vulnerability that invites us to a feast where human and divine can sit at the same table without pretense or shame. God’s interaction with humans is an invitation to a place where the vulnerability of God and the sliver of the divine in the human soul can meet, where “there is no in between,” to use Dame Julian of Norwich’s phrase.

In the supervisory context, my encounters with Jack, an intern who was struggling hard to articulate his spiritual identity, stressed for me the importance of integrating both the human and divine natures of Christ. Not

yet twenty-five years old, Jack had been raised a Roman Catholic but had moved from one Protestant denomination to the next, with brief forays back into Catholicism in between, as he tried to make sense of what he perceived as a mutually exclusive call to ordained ministry and authentic manhood. Jack seemed intent on splitting the human and divine natures of Christ, leaving himself without a way to embrace both the human and the divine in himself or others. My supervision of Jack centered on encouraging him to find ways of relating to God, himself, and others that were not “either/or” but “both/and,” inviting him to image a “third way” of being.

For it is my belief that God interacts with humanity by being human and, in being so, dares us to be divine. As God experiences Godself as Jesus, the human carpenter from Nazareth, and as we experience ourselves as the Body of Christ, the hands and feet of the Risen One, the gap “between” divine and human is closed. In that shared relationship of being, not doing, God and humanity connect. As they connect, a relationship is established between beings who in themselves are inherently relational and who have no existence outside of relationship.¹⁰ Such beings, to exist, must put their relationship first. They must be willing to risk self for the sake of being in relationship because only in doing so can they encounter what is truly precious and life-giving to and in each other.

The Transformative Power of Mutual Vulnerability

In my experience, mutual vulnerability, far from undermining authority, creates a safe environment and models a trustworthy relationship that is constant as well as open to the other. When a relatively “powerful” person (like a chaplain or a supervisor) shows vulnerability to a relatively less-powerful person (like a patient or a student), it gives the less-powerful person permission to also show vulnerability.

I remember an encounter in same-day surgery with a woman who was having a miscarriage. She told me her story rather matter-of-factly and with little emotion. I offered to pray with her and, as I prayed, tears filled my eyes and began to roll down my cheeks. When she saw me weeping, she also began to weep.

In seminary, I confessed to a priest I greatly respected that I sometimes had doubts about God’s existence. Rather than judging me or trying to convince me otherwise, he simply said, “Me, too.” That admission did much for my faith—in God as well as the priest. I realized that, if this notable cleric and author could have doubts and still be a person of faith, so could I.

In the supervisory context, the more I tried to convince an intern named Sean that he should not mistrust the group or me, the more I used my relative power in a hostile way and the more defensive he became. But when I began to approach him on a vulnerable level, letting him know not only that I and the group had been hurt by him but also that I grieved the injury he was doing to himself, he began to lower his defenses, talking and weeping about his sense of betrayal. As I opened my heart to him, he saw my most authentic self—someone who valued him and our relationship enough to risk the possibility that my heart might be broken—and he received permission to be his most authentic.

Allowing myself to be vulnerable to another allows that person the freedom to accept or reject my love, and when I do so, I act in the image of the God who showed vulnerability to me by giving me the capacity to accept or reject God’s first love to me. It’s also my declaration that relationship in and of itself is worth taking a risk for. If a relationship is worth taking a risk for, it follows that I, in and of myself, and You, in and of yourself, also are worth taking a risk for.

Being deemed worthy of another’s vulnerability and openness is profoundly transformative and profoundly healing, which, after all, is the point of pastoral care. Mutual vulnerability takes relationships to a feeling level, where people are empowered to be their most authentic selves and, thus, more able to cope with the painful realities of life.¹¹ When I approach my patients and students on a heady level, our relationships often are characterized by mistrust and intellectual sparring. But when I approach them on a feeling level, I allow them to see my most authentic (i.e., vulnerable, undefended) self and create an atmosphere in which they also can be authentic. It is on this vulnerable, feeling level that I believe that human beings are able to speak the language of God and that God is able to speak the language of human beings. It is on this vulnerable, feeling level that authentic relationship is created and transformation occurs. And that is good enough. Indeed, very good enough.

A PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THEORY OF MUTUAL VULNERABILITY

As I articulate my understanding of the development of personality, I begin with myself, Mary Christine Mollie Ward. I know myself primarily as “Mollie,” my family’s nickname for me. Being “Mollie” created significant confusion when I began school since my birth and baptismal certificates identify me as “Mary Christine Ward.” “Mary” was my paternal grandmother, and “Christine” is my own mother. When, as a small child I behaved contrary to my family’s expectations. My German godmother tagged me *böse Christine*,

or “mean Christine,” the message being that I (Mollie) disappeared when I misbehaved. As I began my professional career as a journalist, I thought to resolve the Mary-Mollie confusion by using the byline “M.C. Ward,” only to encounter assumptions that I was trying to disguise my gender. When I married and chose to keep my own last name, my parents expressed anxiety that people might think I was “living in sin.” At age 35, the same year I began my CPE residency, I finally asked my bishop to say, and bless, all of my names—Mary Christine Mollie Ward—when he called on God to make me, first, a deacon and, later, a priest in God’s Church.

The Holding Environment: Womb of the True Self

Claiming—that is, saying and blessing—those names has been a lifelong struggle to claim my true self. Alice Miller describes people who throughout their lives have been “praised and admired for their talents and achievements,” people who “should have had a strong and stable sense of self-assurance,” and yet struggle with a lurking “feeling of emptiness and self-alienation.” Miller’s description resonates deeply with me, especially when I consider her definition of the true self as the “integrity” of the small child before it begins to defend itself in order to survive.¹² Throughout my childhood and early adulthood, I felt forced to choose between the needs of my true self and the needs of my parents and siblings. Sometimes, I have clutched desperately at the idea that I am just a poor, helpless victim of thoughtlessness and envy. At other times, I have seen my loved ones as the innocent victims of abuse and neglect.¹³ As a supervisor, becoming aware of my true self and her needs has been crucial for my efforts to create a holding environment in which my students can recognize and bless their true selves.

I am a product of the post-modern era and an advocate of intersubjectivity. Although expressions such as “holding environment” and “true self” are the language of object relations theory, I find it to be not only impossible but bad theory to limit my supervisory practice to the tools of only one theoretical framework. As described by Robert Stolorow and others, intersubjectivity favors process over content. It is “both experience-near and relational . . . offering broad methodological and epistemological principles for investigating and comprehending the intersubjective contexts in which psychological phenomena arise.”¹⁴ As such, intersubjectivity lends itself to the use of tools from a variety of relational theories, particularly object relations and self psychology, and I draw freely from them in my work.

With that said, I base my theory of personality development on the idea that not only are human beings created in the image of a fundamentally relational God, but that authentic, mutually vulnerable relationships are the holding environment—indeed the womb—in which our true selves are created, re-created, and sustained.¹⁵ Rather than looking at personality as an individualistic mechanism aimed at the fulfillment of drives, relational theory paradigms posit that there is no such thing as an isolated individual and that the relationship between parent (usually mother) and child is foundational to the development of personality.¹⁶ Even after a child is born, the parent ideally continues to create a holding environment as the child transitions from infancy to adulthood. In this holding environment, the parent helps the child to make sense of its world and develop means of experiencing the soothing relationship of the parent when the parent is absent. CPE has been such a holding environment for me.

My own motherhood has coincided with much of my CPE journey, from internship through residency and supervisory training, and my children have provided me with a window on the earliest stages of human development. For example, as I was writing this paper, I attended a CPE regional conference with my husband and children. During some free time one afternoon, I spent a couple of hours with my children at the hotel swimming pool, and I was struck by the contrast in their attitudes toward the water. As I held him loosely, my toddler son Ian floated on his back or his belly in what seemed like absolute relaxation, even after I once lost my grip and he momentarily slipped under the water. By contrast, my pre-school daughter Fiona anxiously clung to me and begged me to support her whenever I even suggested she try to float, though we often were in water shallow enough for her to stand. At just over two years of age, Ian seemed fearless. Without the benefit of knowledge, he plunged blissfully from one experience to another. On the other hand, “brave” seemed the better word to describe five-year-old Fiona. She entered the water with fear and trembling but begged to return again and again. As their mother, it was my job to hold them both, loosely enough that they could breathe and splash, securely enough that they could relax and float. Eventually, I believe, this combination of breathing, relaxing, splashing, and floating will become swimming.

Although the parent-child relationship is for many people the first holding environment that they experience, holding environments are necessary for transformational learning throughout the lifespan. Just as I see my primary job as a mother to create a unique holding environment for each of my children as

they grow into themselves as human beings, I see my job as priest, chaplain, and pastoral educator to create holding environments for my parishioners, patients, and students as they continue their process of becoming.¹⁷ As a priest and chaplain, I help patients negotiate the transitions of life, including birth, illness, and death, particularly through the sacrament of the pastoral relationship. As a pastoral educator, I help students transition into their pastoral identity, individually and as members of a group, particularly through the sacrament of the supervisory relationship. So, for example, in the first unit that I solo supervised, when my students began to negotiate authority by challenging what they had identified as the “power” of the system (i.e., me the supervisor), some clung to me, some thrashed about and some seemed to bob along unaware of what was happening. As their supervisor, it was my job to hold all of them, loosely enough so that they could breathe and splash, securely enough so that they could relax and float. In the process, true selves began to emerge.

Holding environments encourage the development of the true self in two main ways. One is by allowing people to make meaning of their experiences and relationships. Meaning-making is how we integrate our experiences into our lives, the “reflection” portion of the clinical model of learning. I believe that transference is a natural and significant part of the meaning-making process. Although classical theory views transference as a pathology that must be overcome, intersubjective theorists see transference simply as the way people “organize” or make meaning of their experiences: “From this perspective, transference is neither a regression to nor a displacement from the past, but rather an expression of the *continuing influence* of organizing principles and imagery that crystallized out of the patient’s early formative experiences.”¹⁸

Because the holding environment is not the end in itself, the other way that the holding environment functions is to provide a place for people to craft means of soothing themselves when they inevitably encounter crisis.¹⁹ Ideally, young children learn through ordinary experience not only that their parents don’t cease to exist when they are absent but that, even when they are absent, the children can draw on these internalized “selfobjects”²⁰ to sustain them when they are uncertain or fearful.²¹ Even in adulthood, as people experience fragmentation of the self, either because of derailments in early childhood or situational stress as adults, they need a re-charging, as it were, of their selfobject batteries. The holding environment that I created with a group of students when they challenged my authority shortly after mid-unit served those two purposes. By allowing them to voice their feelings without judgment or criticism, I fostered the holding environment. By educating them

about the process of group development, I helped them to make meaning of their experiences and to develop means of soothing themselves the next time they encountered conflict.

Empathy, Mutuality and Curiosity: A Foundation for Supervision

In my view, empathy, mutuality, and curiosity are the three primary and interconnected ways in which a holding environment is created. Lee and Martin describe empathy as “a mode of gathering subjective data about another self through vicarious introspection. It is the process of exploring what another thinks and feels by placing oneself in another’s shoes.” In other words, empathy is the capacity to feel with, rather than to feel for.²² Although I believe that human beings are hardwired to have the capacity to be empathically connected with one another, I think it is a rare person who emerges from childhood without scars from faulty attunement, and those scars in turn influence our capacity to be empathically attuned with others. Indeed, I believe that patriarchal society and religious traditions, including my own, have created whole structures that inhibit the capacity for empathic attunement.²³

In contrast to the idea that empathy is synonymous with support and affirmation, I believe that empathy is always confrontational (literally, “with face”) and many times is challenging and even uncomfortable. I establish empathy with my students when they experience me as someone who will tell it like I see it. This was particularly so with Gene, a congregational intern who had experienced the childhood trauma of discovering the dead body of his mother.

Gene’s family and friends’ response to his grief was to advise him essentially to “grin and bear it.” He carried that advice with him into adulthood, consistently sporting an upbeat attitude and often reflecting on how the smiles of his patients made the stresses of his job worthwhile. Shortly after mid-unit, I confronted Gene about how his “happy face” attitude left his patients reluctant to disappoint him with unhappy feelings. This led to a very important awareness on his part regarding what he came to see as a life organizing principle of marching past, rather than through, grief.

In confronting him, I refused to play along with his false self by putting a happy face on the visit itself. Instead, I was empathically attuned to him by looking his true self in the eye and seeing the little boy who needed a holding environment, not a happy face, to feel and explore his grief.²⁴

The second key ingredient to establishing a holding environment is mutuality, which starts with the understanding that there is no such thing as ob-

jectivity. Inevitably, just as two heavily laden travelers meeting on a narrow rope bridge have to negotiate their conflicting needs, I bump into someone else, and we have to negotiate what happens next.²⁵ In the context of an “inter-subjective” milieu characterized by authenticity, I am required to acknowledge that I bring my own baggage, as well as insight, into any interaction, whether it is with my children, my patients, or my students. For example, when I experienced myself not only tuning Gene out when he went off on one of his lengthy tangents but fearing to hurt his feelings by telling him so, I realized that I was responding to him in much the same way that I do to an elderly relative. Understanding that my subjective reality had an impact on his subjective reality as well as on the space between us allowed us to create a holding environment in which to make more sense of our own relationship. Mutuality also involves willingness to model risk-taking: I cannot ask of others what I am not willing to do myself.

In my view, the final significant ingredient to the creation of a holding environment is curiosity, which I see as essential to the healing of the good-bad object splitting that characterizes early childhood and that follows many people into adulthood. Initially, of course, we are literally connected to our mothers, and, object relations theory suggests, the newborn cannot even conceive of the mothering one as “other” to itself, much less as part of a relationship. Soon, however, the infant begins to differentiate, and the first attempts at this are to identify its experiences as “good” and “bad” (e.g., warmth versus cold, satiation versus hunger). As this splitting occurs, the infant also is confronted with the reality that the mothering one—upon whom the infant is dependent for life itself—sometimes is experienced as “good” and sometimes as “bad.” Although unsettling, the realization that “good” and “bad” not only exist within the mothering one but also within the child’s own self is a move toward maturity. Ideally, splits begin to heal with the awareness that what Winnicott describes as the “good enough” mother (and by extension the good enough child) contains elements of both “good” and “bad.”²⁶

Being curious rather than condemning, inquisitive rather than assuming, has been essential to creating a holding environment for my students. As suggested earlier, when integration does not take place early on, people develop defenses in order to survive.²⁷ The supervisor’s role is to encourage exploration and understanding of these defenses with the aim of making the student a better pastoral caregiver.

John grew up with the idea that not having the “right” answer was to be condemned. John’s father taught him that the way to the right answer

was an orderly, linear progression and expressed frustration with John’s imaginative thought processes, which John learned to condemn as illogical and rambling. Even though John achieved success and respect in his engineering career, he became frantic whenever he assumed he had given the wrong answer, no matter whether the information being sought was new to him or not. When I suggested that the goals for his CPE internship that he had listed as professional and skill-development sounded more like personal goals, he became visibly flustered—shuffling papers, darting eyes, stammering. He was amazed when I invited him to be curious about what was happening, particularly about his anxiety. For the rest of the quarter, curiosity was a theme for John and served him well as he reflected on his experiences, both affirming and challenging, with patients and peers.

In the language of family therapy, the aim of the holding environment is to “contain the emerging family anxiety so that the family has a place to hold it while they look at it and learn about it.”²⁸ In my view, the creation of a holding environment not only allows a person’s true self to emerge (or re-emerge, as the case may be), but it also sets up the necessary condition for healing and learning to take place. I believe that holding environments that allow for the emergence of true selves are created by those who, themselves, have been held. As the writer of the First Letter of John puts it, “We love because [God] first loved us” (5:19). The authentic relationships that I have experienced have helped me to create such a holding environment. Throughout my childhood, even while flooding me with praise and attention for intellectual and artistic achievements, my family emphasized my basic helplessness and ineptitude concerning practical things. “Little Mollie couldn’t possibly take care of herself” was the refrain. While I was pregnant with my first child, I told my mother and my closest sibling that I did not want them to visit for at least a week after the baby’s birth. In creating for myself a holding environment, I allowed myself the chance to internalize a mothering one who was confident and competent enough to also be open and accepting of help. By contrast, just a day or two after my second child was born, I remember awakening from an afternoon nap, my son nestled in the crook of my arm, to the sound of my mother vacuuming downstairs. Rather than feeling anxiety about my mother’s opinions about my standards of housekeeping, I found myself filled with an overwhelming sense of warmth and well-being. My true self could welcome my mother’s visit in ways that Little Mollie never could. From these experiences has developed a deep determination not only to recognize and bless *my* relational, vulnerable self but also to invite students and patients to begin their

own processes of healing and learning by recognizing and blessing them for what they are: precious children of God.

AN EDUCATION THEORY OF MUTUAL VULNERABILITY

I began to give up childish ways of learning the day my seminary professor directed me not to disagree with him in class anymore.²⁹ My disagreement, he said, made him feel like a failure as a teacher because if he were a better teacher he would be able to convince me of his position. Although I finished seminary first in my class,³⁰ I graduated convinced that I just did not have the intellect to “do” theology. About a year later, in the midst of my CPE residency, I found myself dreading the day when I would have to present my pastoral theology paper to my supervisor and peers, preferring to silence myself before my supervisor could do so (as I was convinced would happen). To my utter surprise, my Ivy-League-educated supervisor not only tolerated my theology, he actually encouraged it. The reaction of my professor (with whom I actually aligned theologically more closely than almost any other professor) hurt me, but it didn’t really surprise me. As I eventually realized, it fit in quite neatly with the dualistic worldview I had learned from my parents as they dealt with conflict either with shouting or with silence. I was as used to that way of being as an old pair of shoes. What did surprise me was the support of supervisors and mentors who refused to accept my claims of ineptitude and, in retrospect, the support of other educators and seminary classmates who refused to be silent about the obvious tension between my professor and me. *That* way of being challenged and perplexed me.

As I wrestled in supervision and therapy with feelings of anger and curiosity, I not only began to want to heal but also to learn. In my view, the primary goal of therapy is self-awareness for the purpose of healing and living life, while the primary goal of CPE supervision is the practical application of self-awareness for the purpose of establishing pastoral relationships. The two are intimately related because, without awareness, learning cannot take place.³¹

Joshua, an intern in a hospital-based CPE unit, began the summer with the belief that he should see every patient on his large surgical floor every day, logging upwards of twenty brief visits a day but doing little pastoral care. As Joshua began to explore family-of-origin issues around scrupulosity, he began to see a pattern among current dynamics, such as driving himself to visit every patient, arriving a half-hour early for every appointment, and anxiously inquiring about reading assignments months before

the start of the unit. Similarly, as he began to explore his family of origin’s ways of dealing with conflict, he began to make connections with his tendency to swing between superficial, friendly visits and heady, theological debates. The result was not only a much deeper ability to bless his own feelings but also to validate the feelings of his patients and thereby attain to deeper pastoral relationships. With the support of supervisor and peers, he not only began to heal himself but to learn.

The support that I refer to is the idea of mutual vulnerability—that is, the willingness to risk authentic relationship. Socrates referred to the educator as one who reminds rather than teaches.³² Through the twentieth century, education theorists refined the role of the educator as a facilitator rather than an expert. For example, Lindeman writes of “teachers who are also searchers after wisdom and not oracles” and Palmer writes that, “by Christian understanding, truth is neither ‘out there’ nor ‘in here,’ but both. Truth is between us, in relationship.”³³ An adult education theory of mutual vulnerability requires a supervisor who is willing to show an authentic self and begins in the subjective reality of a student’s experience and learning style.

Authenticity as Boundary

Just as the boundary between teacher and learner is semi-permeable, the boundaries between truth and untruth, safety and risk, are more a membrane than a solid wall. As a supervisor, the primary boundary that I set is a pledge to authenticity—to risk saying the things that need to be said, taking ownership of my feelings, and covenanting to stay in relationship. Healthy boundaries are established by authenticity. The educator’s most basic job is simply to be an authentic self because authenticity is essential to the establishment of the holding environment necessary for learning. Clinical psychologists such as Rogers emphasize the importance of safety in the learning process, arguing that “significant” learning can only take place when the self is maintained or enhanced and that the self must be relaxed and free from threat for experience to be assimilated.³⁴ In my own experience, authority figures often used silence as a weapon to keep me wondering if I had made a mistake, and they almost never acknowledged their own mistakes. This created a person who was hyper-vigilant and far more concerned about right answers than right relationships. During my residency, it was only after I began to trust my supervisor’s authenticity (his willingness to claim his part in a break in empathy, for example) that I could relax enough to hear his legitimate critique of my halting attempts to articulate my pastoral theology. As I have entered supervisory work myself, I have found that a central task

is to let my students see me for who I am, as a means both of creating safety and of modeling authenticity.

The supervisor's role in creating safety and modeling authenticity also affects the evaluative nature of the CPE process. I regard the evaluation of students as an ongoing, mutual process rather than a one-time, top-down event. There should be no surprises when I present a student with my final supervisory evaluation. Thus, if I have not voiced an issue with a student previously, I do not use the final evaluation as a forum to present new concerns. Along the way, I treat silence with great respect and even caution in the supervisory process.

From a subjective standpoint, throughout the quarter, I take care in crafting my comments and recommendations with an eye to speaking the truth in love, both in terms of content and of process. Grammatically, I make a point of offering affirmation before critique, and I temper critical remarks with phrases like "it seems" and "in my experience," rather than making universal pronouncements. In my formal, final evaluation, I address the student's own learning goals. And I make a point of finishing writing my evaluations before the students present their final self evaluations to give them freedom to express themselves without fear that their statements will influence the "stuff" that I inevitably bring into the supervisory relationship.

The objective portion of the evaluations is characterized by a numerical score for each of the objectives outlined in the *ACPE Standards* and a yes/no achievement of the outcomes. Obviously, there are many subjective elements to even this portion of the evaluation. The numerical scores, for example, are based on my observation rather than a multiple choice test after all. However, just as using a lectionary cycle of scripture readings keeps me "honest" in my preaching, systematically addressing the objectives and outcomes of the *Standards* helps me to check my expectations against those of the larger community.

Group Authenticity: Making a Safe, Womb-like Space in which to Learn

I see the holding environment as the womb in which not only the true self but also the group's self is created, which, in my view, is the overarching project of a process group.³⁵ The group's first task is to create a holding environment in which the group can wonder about its purpose, its norms, and its willingness to take risks. So, for instance, when I am working with a new group, we begin telling our life stories only after we have had a formal conversation about group norms—a conversation in which students and super-

visor alike take active roles. However, creating safety involves more than a list of rules: it requires someone to model risk-taking. I begin that process by sharing my own life story and continue as we move into didactics, when, for example, I use my own family system to discuss genograms. As I provide a model for the students of an authentic self, I show them that it is acceptable and possible both to be vulnerable and to set boundaries.

As others begin to take risks, the group moves into the second stage of its development, in which the group begins to interact authentically, that is, confronting by supporting and challenging. In this stage, the group wrestles with issues of who is in and who is out, negotiation of authority, and maintenance of the holding environment. For example, in the first unit of CPE I supervised by myself, the group began in earnest to negotiate my authority, and its own, when one of the intern's view of authority ran headlong into my view of shared authority.

The last, leave-taking stage of group development is the most reflective, although action and reflection flow through all of the stages. The group begins to form transitional objects and, in a sense, becomes one. The group begins to make meaning of its experiences by wondering about its legacy and how to take leave of one another. For example, just as many families begin to tell humorous stories about a loved one who has just died, in the final weeks of the unit, students often begin to tell stories about their experiences in the context of "remember the time when ____?" I formalize this process by asking members to reflect on how they will say goodbye to one another and in the graduation service, when I not only give a "charge to students" but invite them to speak as well. In these ways, the members of the group leave the holding environment with "something to carry away" and inform their future actions.

The student's job, at its most basic, is to experiment with what it feels like to interact authentically in the holding environment—to kick around in the womb, as it were. Thus, the experience of the student is primary in adult education. To educators like John Dewey, all genuine education comes about through experience. Moreover, each student brings into the CPE learning process a lifetime of experiences upon which to build. "Every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after."³⁶ In my own story, for example, it was my experiences with risk-taking that led me to my theology of mutual vulnerability. As I experienced vulnerability, I sought to make sense of my experiences and, in doing so, clarified my theology.

Experiential Learning, Receptivity, and Resistance

When learning is rooted in experience, it gives voice to those who are not heard.³⁷ Feminists point out that what the dominant culture has taken for granted about how people learn has tended to focus strictly on European-American men's experience to the exclusion of just about everyone else.³⁸ In discussing the concept of "caring" as a feminist approach to moral education, Noddings emphasizes that the response of the caring-one to the one-who-is-cared-for is based in receptivity to the experience of another. Noddings contrasts a "peculiarly rational, western, masculine way" of looking at empathy with a "feminine" model, noting that "the sort of empathy we are discussing does not first penetrate the other but receives the other."³⁹ This model of receptivity seems particularly suited to the richness of a multicultural learning environment, which, in my view, depends on mutuality and safety.

Suzanne, a hospital-based intern, asked me during her admission interview whether BroMenn, located in the corn and soybean fields of central Illinois, would be accepting of her as an African-American seminarian from the Southside of Chicago. As I assured her that the center and I would indeed welcome her, I showed her pictures of previous (integrated) groups, but I believe it was my respect for and openness to her life experience that cemented our relationship. Thus, for example, as she hesitated to voice her concerns about the treatment some of her patients were getting, I helped her to draw connections between ways in which she herself had not been heard.

My response affirmed the wisdom of her perceptions, even when voicing those insights conflicted with the power structure of the hospital. This seemed to mark a profound shift in Suzanne's view of authority and, in turn, seemed to bolster her understanding of her own authority and led her to advocate more vigorously for her patients.⁴⁰

Experiential learning also helps to ensure that students take ownership of their learning.⁴¹ In my view, the best learning is motivated by what Malcolm Knowles and others describe as "the individual learner's own perception of what he or she wants to become, what he or she wants to be able to achieve, and at what level he or she wants to perform."⁴² If experience helps students to make meaning, learning styles offer clues as to how they might craft future actions. In my view, learning styles move the conversation beyond "right" and "wrong" ways of learning and toward meeting students at their points of need. Howard Gardner and others theorize that people use "multiple intelli-

gences" to learn.⁴³ Each student's experiences and styles combine with those of the supervisor to create a unique relationship and learning opportunity.

Not every opportunity for learning is captured, of course. Sometimes the student seems to actively resist learning. In thinking of resistance, I find it helpful first to distinguish between a "problem about learning" and a "learning problem."⁴⁴ Ekstein and Wallerstein describe learning problems as skill-development issues, while problems about learning are a matter of deeper self-awareness. In my view, resistance indicates there is a problem about learning and is addressed most appropriately by helping the student to become aware of the unconscious. I believe much of "resistance" is an adaptive stance aimed at avoiding pain.⁴⁵

John, the congregational intern described in my personality paper, scrupulously made sure he did not deviate from authority figures' expectations as a way of coping with his father's constant attacks on him for drifting off in pursuit of his own interests. That John's scrupulosity did not work in the pastoral care setting was not so much a sign that scrupulosity was "bad" (it made sense in the context of his childhood) but that John was wandering bewildered in territory that he no longer recognized (where curiosity about one's feelings was not only tolerated but encouraged). Eventually he had to resolve the conflict between his father's expectations and mine. It was difficult for him to be curious about his feelings, even though this was a natural way of being for him as a very young child.

If learning requires as a backdrop the safety created by an authentic supervisor and begins with the subjective world of students' experience and learning style, what does the learning process look like on a practical level? Moon suggests an eight-stage model that combines both experience and reflection and fits with the "action-reflection-action" of the clinical method of learning: "the 'having of' the experience; recognition of a need to resolve something; clarification of the issue; reviewing and recollecting; reviewing feelings/the emotional state; processing of knowledge and ideas; eventual resolution, possible transformation and action; possible action."⁴⁶

John, for example, grew up in a home where his father saw John's tendency to wander "off track" in pursuit of butterflies not as the spontaneous curiosity of a bright, inquisitive little boy but as an early sign of deviation that had to be curbed. When John arrived at BroMenn, he assumed I would behave just as his father did and was perplexed to find that I encouraged his curiosity rather than condemning it. Based on these experiences, John began to "recognize a need to resolve something"—that is, the conflict between his

father's expectations and mine. As he began to clarify the issue, he also began to see how difficult it was for him to be curious in general but particularly about his feelings, even though he recalled this as a natural way of being for him as a very young child. In supervision, John began to review and recollect other instances when he had been discouraged or encouraged for showing curiosity and the feelings surrounding these experiences. He began to combine those subjective experiences and feelings with objective facts (e.g., watching patients respond positively to inquiries about their feelings, getting feedback from the group about their perceptions of him). Eventually, John began to see a disconnect between two very different images of himself, compelling him to decide which to accept.

In my view, "re-cognition"—that is, bringing back to mind—of the bits and pieces of authenticity that form the true self is both the goal and the method of the andragogue. This is what I believe Socrates had in mind when he talked about there being no such thing as teaching, just reminding. "The soul has learned all things; there is no difficulty in her eliciting, or as men say learning, out of a single recollection all the rest, if a man is strenuous and does not faint; for all enquiry and all learning is but recollection."⁴⁷ In likening the educator to a midwife, Socrates stands on its head the idea of an "expert" understanding of education that crafts the teacher in the image of an omniscient god. Over and over again, I have seen students defer to the "experts" at the expense of voicing their own wisdom and common sense. In much the same way that I tell my screaming toddler to "try to use your words" when he is upset about something, I think voicing our needs in prayer allows us to practice using our words and, in the very act of making ourselves understood, healing occurs. I believe that learning takes place in a similar way. Just as the point of walking a labyrinth is not so much about reaching a geographic goal as it is about the experience of the walk itself, when I muddle around in the wilderness trying to articulate myself, I hear and see myself and experience others hearing and seeing me, and learning occurs.⁴⁸ That process allows me to recognize the elements that ultimately become my relational, vulnerable, true self and my best tool as a pastoral caregiver: me.

NOTES

1. NRSV.
2. Augustine describes God as the lover, the beloved, and the love between them. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, trans. Gareth B. Matthews and Stephen McKenna (Cambridge,

UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Heyward writes of: "She who, from the beginning, has been the source of all loving, dying, and letting go throughout and beyond the cosmos; He who—at the same time, in every moment—is embodied through us in our fur and paws, our hands and hearts; The same Holy Spirit connecting our lives, celebrations, and griefs to those of persons and creatures in all times and places, strengthening us through the real presence of those who've gone before and those who will come after us." Carter Heyward, *Saving Jesus From Those Who Are Right* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 75.

3. The Anglican divine Richard Hooker argues that faith must be based on scripture, tradition, and reason. As articulated by further generations of Anglicans, an unequal emphasis on any of the three would produce a shaky faith in the same way that a three-legged stool begins to wobble and tilt when the legs are uneven. Richard Hooker, *The Works of That Learned and Judicious Divine Mr. Richard Hooker*, arranged by Jon Keble, 7th ed., rev. by R. W. Church and F. Paget (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1888), 3 vols.
4. The Roman Catholic monk Henri Nouwen describes the icon this way: "As we place ourselves in front of the icon in prayer, we come to experience a gentle invitation to participate in the intimate conversation that is taking place among the three divine angels and to join them around the table." Henri Nouwen, *Behold the Beauty of the Lord* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1996), 20.
5. The obligation at risk here is not a contractual or material one but a covenantal and relational one: in accepting the openness of another, one is obliged to be similarly authentic.
6. Growing up as a member of a military family that moved every few years left me often feeling rather lonely and out of place in my childhood. One of my first conscious attractions to the Episcopal Church was comfort in the familiarity of the liturgy no matter where I went; an ongoing grief for me is the well-earned reputation of the denomination as an exclusive club. As a woman, I have encountered the sexism of male-dominated vocations. My life experiences and faith traditions have given me a keen appreciation for hospitality and compassion for outsiders—what I have understood as "radical hospitality" and the Episcopal theologian Timothy Sedgwick describes as openness to strangers. Timothy Sedgwick, *The Christian Moral Life: Practices of Piety* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999).
7. St. Paul touches on this idea in his letter to the Ephesians (2:10): "For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." British psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott does so too in his idea of the "good enough" mother. D. W. Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena: A Study of the First Not-Me Possession," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* vol. XXXIV (1953, part 2): 94.
8. *The Book of Common Prayer 1979* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 41.
9. The Christ as the High Priest, the one who closes the gap between human and divine. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., s.v. "Priest."
10. The Mother-Child relationship, with all its flaws and imperfections, is another important image of the integration as well as risk-taking inherent in a theology of mutual vulnerability. I am both "Mother Mollie—the priest" and "Mollie—Fiona and Ian's Mama," and neither of those parts of myself needs to be set aside in favor of the other. This understanding has helped me to broaden my view of my priestly vocation and

my role as a CPE supervisor, and, insofar as I embody these relationships for my students, they make my supervisory work as sacramental as celebrating baptism and communion. Moreover, the Mother-Child relationship reminds me of the inter-connectedness of the supervisory relationship. From at least the moment of our physical creation, each of us is in relationship, whether we are aware of it or not, and the mutuality of relationship is evident from before we are fully knit together in the womb (Psalm 139). What pregnant woman has not been admonished to take care of herself because in doing so she is taking care of the child she carries?

11. Chaplain Dick Millspaugh writes of the importance of “a clear sense of an inner self” for one’s ability to make sense of and cope with pain. Distinguishing between suffering (i.e., spiritual pain) and physical or even emotional pain, he describes a woman experiencing the intense (physical) pain of childbirth but notes that “the degree that she suffers may be the degree to which she finds a purpose for which to endure or even embrace the pain,” depending on the circumstances of her pregnancy and labor. Millspaugh links a “loss of self” to the breakdown in meaning-making that turns pain into suffering: “Anything that threatens one’s existence or brings significant changes in one’s relationships may result in the loss of one’s ‘is-ness’ or sense of purpose and may readily be experienced as spiritual suffering.” Dick Millspaugh, “Assessment and Response to Spiritual Pain: Part I,” *Journal of Palliative Medicine* 8 (2005): 919–923.
12. Alice Miller, *The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997), 2–7. Scharff and Scharff write: “Unempathic mothering can cause the baby to try to mold itself to its mother’s needs, when its mother cannot respond flexibly to her baby. This leads to the infant’s suppression of its ‘true self’ in favor of the development of a ‘false self’ that is apparently compliant, while the true self dwindles or is nourished secretly inside the self.” David E. Scharff and Jill Savege Scharff, *Object Relations Family Therapy* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1987), 45.
13. Being a life-long Episcopalian, I’m not used to speaking in the language of conversion experiences, but, on 12 February 12 2003, I was born again. That day, during a CPE residency didactic seminar on personality theory, I asked my supervisor if it was possible to receive too much mirroring as a child. After all, I told Bill, I could understand how my siblings could claim to suffer from a lack of mirroring, but that hadn’t been my experience at all. If anything, I often cringed with shame at how little I seemed to have to do to garner my parents’ adoration. “That would be ‘false mirroring,’” Bill replied, and, for the first time in my life, I caught more than a fleeting glimpse of my true self. Fast forward almost exactly three years. I’m again sitting in a seminar with Bill, this time presenting a video tape of an individual supervision session from my first solo unit as a CPE supervisory candidate. As we discuss why it is so important for me that the intern in the video succeed, I begin to realize with profound anger and grief that my parents were every bit as oblivious of me, my true self, as they were of my siblings.
14. Robert D. Stolorow and others, *The Intersubjective Perspective* (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1994), x.
15. Kegan states this idea elegantly: “Evolutionarily there is a sense in which the infant (and the person throughout life) climbs out of a psychological amniotic environment. Some part of that world in which the infant is embedded nourishes his gestation and assists in delivering him to a new evolutionary balance. I call that part the embeddedness culture, the most intimate of contexts out of which we repeatedly are recreated.

I suggest that it serves at least three functions. It must hold on. It must let go. And it must stick around so that it can be reintegrated.” Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 121.

16. Sheldon Cashdan, *Object Relations Therapy* (New York: Norton, 1988), 20.
17. In my view, the character of holding environments differs primarily based on the unique development levels and issues of the various groups, but the broad principles are the same.
18. Robert D. Stolorow, Bernard Brandchaft, and George E. Atwood, *Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach* (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1987), 36.
19. Self psychology would include among these the “crises” moments of optimal frustration, which involve the inevitable empathic breaks that naturally occur in relationships. “The vulnerable infant frequently requires the help of caregivers to meet his physical and psychological needs. Through the caregiver’s intercession, the infant eventually learns to perform for himself the functions that previously he could not carry out—this process Kohut called transmuting internalization.” Michael Franz Basch, “Are Selfobjects the Only Objects? Implications for Psychoanalytic Technique,” in *The Evolution of Self Psychology: Progress in Self Psychology*, vol. 7, ed. Arnold Goldberg (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1991), 3–4.
20. Kohut refers to a selfobject as “that dimension of our experience of another person that relates to this person’s shoring up of our self.” This contrasts with the object relations understanding of self-object relationships—i.e., relationships between self and other. Kohut suggests that the development of personality is related to the meeting of three primary selfobject needs: mirroring, idealization, and twinship. If one or more of a person’s selfobject needs is not met, the self-formation process (i.e., the maturation of narcissism from archaic to useful forms) is derailed, and the person spends all of life trying to fill that need. In the view of self psychology, the therapeutic response to narcissistic wounding is to assist the person in meeting those needs. Heinz Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?* ed. Arnold Goldberg (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 49.
21. Often, of course, people need concrete objects to help them soothe themselves. A favorite blanket or teddy bear serves as such a transitional object for many children. Transitional objects need not be inanimate, however. For example, when I was providing pastoral care to the mental health unit at my hospital, a patient acknowledged in a group setting that she was feeling anxious about a meeting she was to have with her estranged husband and a social worker. Although the patient had taken strides in coping with her illness, she felt certain that her anxiety would take over and she would come across as unfit to care for their children. The meeting was to take place in the same room that we held our Faith Journey group sessions. I suggested to her that she need not be in that meeting “alone” but that when she felt her anxiety rising, she might imagine me and her fellow patients sitting around her in our usual places, and I invited the group to voice to her our support and the prayers that we would be offering for her during her meeting. In this sense, the holding environment itself (i.e., our Faith Journey sessions) served as a transitional object for her.
22. Ronald R. Lee and J. Colby Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut: A Textbook of Self Psychology* (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1991), 123. So, for instance, I was ordained to the priesthood around the same time I began to question, both in terms of theodicy and in terms of human beings as imago Dei, the idea of an omnipotent God. Yet there I was,

Sunday after Sunday, leading my congregation in prayer to the “Almighty and everliving God” or the “God of all power, Ruler of the Universe” (*The Book of Common Prayer* 1979, 363–370). It was only when I came to see the need of many of my congregants to idealize God that I let go of my (unempathic) desire to disabuse them of that notion. Similarly, I am reminded of several conversations I had during my residency in which a peer and I contrasted our views of God. My fellow resident, an African-American, spoke of a fatherly God who is mightier than the dominant power structures of the world she lives in, while I, a European-American, tended to yearn for a more companionable relationship with a God whom I could relate to as a friend. Not surprisingly, my fellow resident has experienced first-hand the abuse of the dominant power structures of our society as well as the nurture of a loving father, while I have experienced the benefits of my position within the dominant power structure as well as the volatility of my father’s unresolved anger. In deciding that neither of us needed to destroy the other’s experience of God, we created a holding environment in which we could explore not only our respective understandings of the Holy but also our true selves.

23. I believe differentiation, rather than relationship, is what is learned. Stern describes babies’ built-in capacity for attunement with their mothers. Daniel N. Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology* (New York: BasicBooks, 1985.) Beebe and Lachmann “call this capacity for mutual influencing...a precursor to empathy” (quoted in Lee and Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut*, 123). The work of Chodorow and Gilligan challenges the notion that a “feminine personality [that] comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people” is necessarily a problem, or that boys’ separation of “their mothers from themselves, thus curtailing ‘their primary love and sense of empathic tie’” is either a universal norm, much less necessarily desirable Chodorow, as quoted by Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). Similarly, Lee and Martin note, “The educational processes of Western culture are designed to replace this ‘inferior’ narcissistic capacity with unempathic forms of cognition that foster an objective, materialistic, and mechanical view of life. In Kohut’s mature person, the primitive capacity for attunement has not been expunged but is transformed into vicarious introspection for appropriate utilization in adult personal relationships” (Lee and Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut*, 123–124).
24. In the language of self psychology, Gene was narcissistically wounded. “According to Freud, there is a totally narcissistic libido in the newborn, and as the infant becomes a child and then an adult, there is a shift toward all libido being invested in objects and none in the self. Using Freud’s theory, the therapist tries to replace the patient’s narcissism with object love, an aim Kohut thought not only difficult—if not impossible—but very undesirable. Kohut challenged the assumption that narcissism had to be eradicated” (Lee and Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut*, 122).
25. In my experience as a child and younger adult, bumping into the other usually meant confronting two unappealing possibilities. I would either have to back across the bridge or have to jump into the stream or, worse yet, the other would have to retreat or take a dive. The solution I typically found to this dilemma, particularly when the other looked like an elephant, was to transform myself into a mouse who nimbly dodged the feet of the on-coming traffic while sidestepping the abyss altogether. Whether dealing directly with my family members or with others whom I perceived to be victims of oppression and abuse, I avoided causing them even more pain by shielding them from the “pain” of my confrontation. While this seemed to secure my

place on the bridge, it also ensured that I would have to leave my treasure behind and that eventually I forgot that I was not a mouse.

26. In my own story, good-bad splits are reawakened for me around issues of attention and competence. Being the center of attention was to be “loved” by my parents and “hated” by my siblings. Being competent meant being “loved” because of my achievements and being “hated” for attracting attention. Becoming a parent myself has forced me to face that the difference between the “good guy” and “bad guy” (inside of me as well as my parents, siblings, and children) is rarely an either/or proposition. One morning, hearing screams from my children, I ran into the living room just in time to watch my son lunge with teeth bared at his bigger sister. “What’s going on?” I asked as I separated them, and Fiona tearfully acknowledged that she had just snatched a toy from Ian. It was startling to realize that, even in the midst of my horror at Ian’s aggression, I wanted to cheer him on for asserting himself and that, even in the midst of my anger at Fiona’s bullying, I wanted to protect her from injury. As I reflected on that mixture of emotions, I realized that I had begun to heal an important split.
27. I have come to understand one of the defenses that I have constructed as ingratiation. I have not only been the “steady” daughter who can be counted on to make her parents proud but also the steady student, writer, chaplain, and supervisory candidate who always can be counted on to get the job done. Specifically, I have created an image of such responsibility and reliability that people often make excuses on my behalf. Thus when I consciously rebelled against the hospital dress code early in my supervisory training, an administrator asked another chaplain to “remind” me of the standards because surely Mollie wouldn’t knowingly break the rules. (He obviously had never met mean Christine.) See Stolorow and others, *The Intersubjective Perspective*, 51.
28. Scharff and Scharff, *Object Relations Family Therapy*, 156.
29. 1 Corinthians 13:11–12: “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.”
30. This, despite the facts that I gave birth to my first child during my middler year and commuted 150 miles to school.
31. Frawley-O’Dea and Sarnat, who write from the perspective of psychoanalytic supervision, argue that “the ‘teach/treat’ dichotomy is no longer a meaningful distinction” for this very reason: “We need a model of supervision as a fully analytic process that, because it encompasses exploration of relational patterns alive in both the supervised treatment and in supervision, includes some blurring of teaching and ‘treating.’” Mary Gail Frawley-O’Dea and Joan E. Sarnat, *The Supervisory Relationship: A Contemporary Psychodynamic Approach* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001), 138.
32. In his commentary on the classical Greek philosopher, Boeree notes that “philosophy, the love of wisdom, was for Socrates itself a sacred path, a holy quest—not a game to be taken lightly. He believed—or at least said he did in the dialog Meno—in the reincarnation of an eternal soul which contained all knowledge. We unfortunately lose touch with that knowledge at every birth, and so we need to be reminded of what we already know (rather than learning something new). He said that he did not teach, but rather served, like his mother, as a midwife to truth that is already in us! Making use of questions and answers to remind his students of knowledge is called maieutics (midwifery), or the Socratic method.” C. George Boeree, “The Ancient Greeks, Part

- Two: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle," C. George Boeree Web site, <http://webpace.ship.edu/cgboer/athenians.html> (accessed 21 March 2010).
33. Lindeman is quoted in Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton III, and Richard A. Swanson, *The Adult Learner*, 6th ed. (Burlington, MA: Elsevier, 2005), 37–38. Parker J. Palmer. *To Know As We Are Known*. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993) 55-56.
 34. Quoted in Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, *The Adult Learner*, 49–50.
 35. Sigmund Karterud and Walter N. Stone, "The Group Self: A Neglected Aspect of Group Psychotherapy," *Group Analysis* 36 (2003): 10–12. Marianne Schneider Corey and Gerald Corey, *Groups: Process and Practice*, 7th ed. (Belmont, CA: Thompson Brooks/Cole, 2006), 102–287.
 36. John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 35.
 37. "No one is silent though many are not heard." Quote from "How to Build Community," a poster distributed by the Syracuse Cultural Workers.
 38. In my view, the idea of "turning away" has its roots in the masculine experience of leaving mommy in order to establish one's independence and discounts the feminine experience of community and intradependence. I believe the portrayal of the masculine experience as the norm weakens both men and women spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally.
 39. Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 30–31.
 40. At mid unit, Suzanne gave me some of the clearest, most direct, and important feedback I had ever received about the message that I send when I do not model self-care—quite a step for a woman who had swallowed the idea that she was too pushy.
 41. During my years as a Peace Corps volunteer, ownership was a basic principle of development work, for we knew that no matter how great the need, no matter how worthy the project, it was doomed to failure unless the local people embraced it as their own.
 42. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, *The Adult Learner*, 124.
 43. Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 73–276. Even though the dominant culture tends to focus primarily on verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligence, Gardner adds musical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, and personal styles and argues that they all are equally important. Thus, for example, Jane, another hospital-based intern, was a gifted artist whose theological reflection was most powerful when she used her non-dominant hand to draw and paint—combining both spatial and bodily intelligences in ways that allowed her to express herself even when confronted with the unfamiliar.
 44. Rudolf Ekstein and Robert S. Wallerstein, *The Teaching and Learning of Psychotherapy*. 2nd ed. (New York: International Universities Press, 1973), 139.
 45. Corey and Corey argue against even using the term "resistance," noting that using more "descriptive and nonjudgmental terminology" creates a self-fulfilling prophecy: "As you change the lenses by which you perceive members' behaviors, it will be easier to adopt an understanding attitude and to encourage members to explore ways they are reluctant and self-protective." Corey and Corey, *Groups*, 179.

46. Jennifer A. Moon, *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge-Falmer, 2004), 115.
47. As quoted by Plato, *Meno*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Project Gutenberg EBook, 2008), <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1643> (accessed 21 March 2010).
48. Vanessa Compton, "The Labyrinth: Site and Symbol of Transformation," *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning*, eds. Edmund V. O'Sullivan, Amish Morrell, Mary Ann O'Connor (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 103–119.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Catherine F. Garlid, Angelika A. Zollfrank, and George Fitchett, eds., *Expanding the Circle: Essays in Honor of Joan E. Hemenway* (Decatur, GA: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications Inc., 2009), 292 pp.

How do we honor those who have gone before us? This festschrift—a collection of articles and essays written by Joan Hemenway during her life and additional articles written by her pastor, colleagues, and former students, who build on Joan’s ideas and life work—is an excellent tribute to her; but also a valuable resource for our ministry, teaching, and supervision.

Part I focuses on Joan’s work and ministry. In “Four Faith Frameworks,” Joan describes four authentic ways of being faithful and their implications for pastoral care (with case study examples). Another essay asks ten hard questions concerning the future of pastoral supervision and the pastoral care movement. Joan also writes the prayers, poems, and scripture readings she found helpful for ministry and during her hospitalization.

Joan reflects on how we can use diverse faith beliefs as a unifying rather than a dividing force for group formation and cohesion. She critically looks at storytelling and illuminates its dangers and offers a different approach across time (rather than the large block of time often done in orientation) to discover the stories that formed us and our students. She shows us how to teach clinical pastoral education (CPE) students to do a one short twenty-minute initial pastoral visit in seven steps.

Joan takes on the hard questions that continue to confront us even after years of supervision: How much difference is too much difference? What are the two essential needs of small group members? Does the authority issue ever go away?

Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry

Part II is focused on systems-centered training and CPE supervision, which Joan integrated into her small group supervision. This section is rich in a systems-centered approach to group work, illuminating boundary permeability, the process of discriminating and integrating information, functional sub-grouping, and phases of system development. It includes examples to differentiate between functional and non-functional use of personal storytelling and functional sub-grouping.

Part III, “Reflections on Supervision,” contains essays by colleagues on faith development theory; important considerations when working with African-Americans; and the important place of apology in the supervisory relationship, including five steps to craft a supervisory intervention in order to reclaim the lost art of apology. Teresa Snorton, building on Joan’s diversity questions, asks: “as CPE becomes more diverse, are the values and interpretations of CPE congruent or incongruent with world views of diverse backgrounds?” This essay includes concrete suggestions for reflective processes in addition to the written tools of verbatim and case study.

A real value of this collection is the short pieces that can be read and digested in a short amount of time. How many great books are on your desk with the hope you will read them, but there is never enough time? Here you can take fifteen minutes and read a piece in this collection that speaks directly to a question you are pondering in your faith, your pastoral counseling, or your supervision. Also, reading the whole book is worth your limited and valuable time.

Rev. Sandee Yarlott
Retired ACPE supervisor



William R. DeLong, ed., *Courageous Conversations: The Teaching and Learning of Pastoral Supervision* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 306 pp.

Purchase this book if you wish to keep abreast of the current practice and future directions of pastoral supervision. Throughout the sixteen chapters, continual attention is given to an effort to relate the “why” of theory to the “what” of clinical practice. While an attempt is made to relate to the disciplines of field education, spiritual direction, and clinical pastoral education,

of the fourteen authors (including the editor, DeLong), I believe twelve are Association for Clinical Pastoral Education supervisors, one is listed as faculty in pastoral care and counseling, and one is a diplomat in American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC).

DeLong underscores the timeliness of this book by declaring, "Today there are a myriad of books about pastoral care and counseling and there are numerous books which approach supervision from the perspective of training psychotherapists. There are an equally large number of books on adult education and group process. Yet, there are few books that speak to the specialized practice and profession of pastoral supervision, which I partly see as the integration of each of these areas. This book is an attempt to fill that gap" (p. xii). The challenge in assembling a work of this nature (with fourteen authors in sixteen chapters) consists of how to balance diversity with unity of theme while avoiding repetition. Overall, I believe the authors accomplished their goal, and the finished product might be described as something of a rich buffet on pastoral supervision.

While it is not possible to speak to all sixteen chapters, a few samplings will give a sense of the nurturing fare in store for the reader. Mark Hart begins with a fascinating analogy for pastoral supervision, derived from his carpenter father, which consisted of four key lessons: (1) "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right" or passion for the work, (2) "We'll figure out a way to make it work" or improvisation in the face of impasse, (3) "That's okay, just get another board" or grace in the face of failure, and (4) "You can do that" or confidence in the learner (p. 2). In the third chapter, Carrie Doehring provides a helpful delineation of pastoral supervision from a field education perspective.

In chapter five ("Teología de conjunto: Not Just for Latinas/os Anymore," p. 58ff), Francis Rivers Meza, gives a marvelous little exposition on relating liberation theology to pastoral supervision. I especially appreciated her quote from María Pilar Aquino, "The theological significance of daily life as source and locus of U.S. Latino/a theology is grounded in the fact that it is here where the real life of real people unfolds and where God's revelation occurs. We have no other place but *lo cotidiano* [the everyday] to welcome the living Word of God or to respond to it in faith" (p. 60). The words reminded me of the moment of grace CPE students experience when they are relieved of the burden of feeling they must bring God to the patient, as they discover that it is in the interaction with the patient that God is revealed to both of them.

M. C. Ward, in chapter eight, "Power and the Supervisory Relationship" (p. 97ff) gave me the best resource I have found to date to assign to supervisory education students (SEs) as required reading. The issue of "power" invariably emerges for every supervisory trainee. Ward's writing is clear and to the point, as she produces effective clinical examples of relating theory to clinical practice. Upon completing this article, I associated its "freshness" with the possibility of her being the most recently certified supervisor of all the ACPE supervisor authors. It would be interesting to know.

In terms of "Looking Toward the Future of Pastoral Supervision," I would refer you to the chapter (p. 119 ff) written by Teresa Snorton. What better source than the executive director of ACPE? She identifies three necessary concepts for maintaining the relevancy of pastoral supervision in "tomorrow's world: transformational/adult learning as a central educational theory, cultural bridging as a central component of personality theory, and liberation as a central theological construct within the supervisory alliance" (p. 122).

The perennial topic of the role of sexuality in supervision, which has undergone so many permutations since the founding of CPE in the 1920s is given a nice contemporary update by Gordon Hilsman. His excellent clinical examples truly enrich his exposition of the contemporary scene in supervision.

Judith Ragsdale addresses the history of pastoral supervision in her chapter (p. 225ff), "CPE Supervision: Part and Present." While she demonstrates a good use of sources, written and oral, I was surprised her bibliography did not include Allison Stokes' sterling *Ministry After Freud*.

Hopefully, these vignettes will provide a flavor of the many engaging resources to be found in *Courageous Conversations*. Several of the authors provided extensive and helpful bibliographies for further reading. The one prevailing theme for me that wove through many of the chapters had to do with the concept of mutual vulnerability in pastoral supervision, which led me to reflect on how much the times have changed since I was certified in 1971. The certification rubric for that era might well be described as "stick it" or "up yours."

This was a tricky book for me to review, as I assumed from the title, *Courageous Conversations*, that there would be compelling clinical examples and explications of tough conversations: for example, dealing with strong confrontations, expelling a student (or students) from a program, engaging

a non-motivated student, taking a prophetic stand on a hospital ethical issue, and so forth. So much for assuming. There were several excellent and helpful clinical examples related to theory, but, except for a couple of instances by Gordon Hilsman, I would hardly describe them as “courageous.” In essence, the subtitle, “The Teaching and Learning of Pastoral Supervision,” more accurately conveys the strength and substance of this book.

The most significant flaw in the book for me was the fact that all the authors were Christian. At this stage of pastoral supervision, how could such a book be written without at least one Jewish or Buddhist author—and, hopefully, not too far down the road a Muslim author as well? Another factor, less a flaw than an irony or distraction, has to do with the theme of postmodernism. In his preface, DeLong states, “One theme that is explicitly and implicitly dealt with is postmodern perspectives in supervision” (p. xii). Well, each author proved to be a true believer, and every chapter has at least one reference to being “postmodern.” As this was mandated as a presumed frame of reference, it would seem reasonable that, at the outset, an agreed-upon definition of postmodern(ism) would have been provided, especially as it has become such a buzzword (like “paradigm shift”). What is “postmodern?” When did it begin? With World War I (the war to end all wars)? With Picasso (as some artists insist)? With Einstein, Wittgenstein, and logical positivism or existentialism? The work of Freud and Jung? With Boisen and Cabot (as they are frequently referenced by the authors in the book)? Or by all the above? In fairness to DeLong, he does, in the final pages of the book, cite an earlier article in which he addresses “further understanding of the postmodern perspective” (p. 268). Perhaps this article should have been republished in this book, as at least one of the others chapters were.

In keeping with the *Reflective Practice* disclosure policy, I have already ordered copies of this book for my SESs with the intention of having us read and discuss one chapter a week as a part of our supervisory sessions. Who knows, this may become the new secret weapon for making it through the certification process.

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Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, eds., *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 380 pp.

ATS’s commitment to outcome-based assessment finds an ally in Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra’s *For Life Abundant*. The book is the culmination of over a decade of careful thinking and publishing grounded in these theological convictions,

God in Christ promises abundant life for all creation. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the church receives this promise through faith and takes up a way of life that embodies Christ’s abundant life in and for the world. The church’s ministers are called to embrace a way of life and also to lead particular communities of faith to live it in their own situations. To do this, pastors and other ecclesial ministers must be educated and formed in ways of knowing, perceiving, relating, and acting that enable such leadership (p. 1).

This book takes up the serious question of how theological education forms persons called by God to leadership and the practical theologians’ role in the formation process. To do this, four angles of engagement are explored: envisioning practical theology, practical theology in the classroom, practical theology in the wider academy, and practical theology in ministry.

First, practical theology is envisioned as a field of scholarship with a commitment to ministerial formation. Dorothy Bass begins by asserting that the grace of God in Christ that frees is also a grace that forms. This formation is best nurtured and sustained by intentional practices. “A theological and normative understanding of practices...interprets practices, in short, as forms within and through which a Christian way of life takes shape” (p. 32). As a consequence, practical theologians are encouraged to instill in their soon-to-be-ministers a grace-grounded habitus that is biblically rooted, imaginative, contextually sensitive, community-oriented, and intentional.

Craig Dykstra snares his readers with this opening sentence: “It is a beautiful thing to see a good pastor at work” (p. 41). Thus “the point and purpose of practical theology are to nourish, nurture, discipline, and resource both pastoral and ecclesial imagination” (p. 43). Dykstra pictures a lively engagement between pastor and congregation in which each cata-

lyzes the other and ministry energy is released. The challenge for seminarians, he acknowledges, is that the pastoral imagination “emerges over time...[and] it is always forged...in the midst of ministry itself, as pastors are shaped by time on the anvil of deep and sustained engagement in pastoral work” (p. 42).

In a third essay, Kathleen Cahalan and James Nieman complete the visioning of practical theology by commending their map of practical theology as a field. Their map is grounded in the conviction that, “The basic task of practical theology [is] supporting and sustaining lived discipleship. Rooted in Christian tradition, practical theology focuses on a called people who manifest a particular faith through concrete ways of life” (p. 67).

One consequence of this grounding perspective is that practical theologians will hold discipleship as the North Star that guides their research and teaching. This will, they assert, keep practical theologians from abstracting the arts of ministry from “particular communities, settings, or traditions” (p. 70).

The second conversation draws back the veil to see master teachers at work. Kathleen Cahalan discloses the route she took in constructing the introduction to ministry course and the capstone ministry course (formerly described a “catch-all”), each with an eye towards integration. She shares in detail how she creatively cultivates in her students the capacity to connect the dots between what they know and have experienced of the Gospel with how it informs their ministerial practice in appropriate ways.

John Witvliet chooses to describe an approach rather than a syllabus in addressing the teaching of worship. “Walk into a worship service on any given Sunday morning, and you will encounter a world that even a lifetime of study cannot fully comprehend” (p. 117). Witvliet then describes the various interpretive angles that anthropologists, psychologists, artists, and theologians might employ with each only capturing a portion of what is really going on. Witvliet’s conviction is that participation is the key. Not producing worship professors but worshipers and presiders or worship leaders is the goal (p. 119).

James Nieman draws upon the action/reflection theory in the work of Donald Shon to explore how ministerial leaders are formed in the practice of the ritual they are called upon to enact. Nieman provides examples of his own pedagogical strategies: engaging students own experience of meaningful ritual events, funerals for example, and drawing out the deep

implications for these soon-to-be-pastors who would enact the rites that had impacted themselves so deeply.

Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore seeks *phronesis* on behalf of her students: “an unspoken rule or movement or litany guides practical theological pedagogy: Experience the practice, practice it, tell about it, ask questions about it, read about it, write about it, practice it, do it, empower others to do it” (p. 178). Miller-McLemore understands the challenges faced by those entering ministry and the need for them to cultivate an embodied wisdom that is more than one knows or can describe.

The third conversation engages the role of practical theology within the larger academy. In drawing larger connections, each envisions a more vibrant seminary experience. Serene Jones in a chapter rich with metaphor explores the tension between theology as academic subject and lived theology: “Isn’t it obvious?—the faith we teach is through and through a practical faith. It lives only insofar as it lives in the tissue of our everyday comings and goings...in all their complex, messy, graced fullness” (p. 197). In other words, can theology be “impractical?”

David D. Daniels and Ted A. Smith share their pedagogical convictions as historians who understand their discipline’s formational power. Smith demonstrates how the richness of human experience in its socio-cultural dimensions alerts ministers to see these clues in their ministry context. Daniels demonstrates how practices can be lifted up in the teaching of history (preaching, for example) for the sake of ministerial formation, providing seminarians with alternative perspectives on these practices.

Tom Long makes the case for university-based PhD programs in practical theology. He employs Emory University as a case study. Long commends the university model imagining scholars on the Quad who are both “good citizens of the university and...who speak of their deepest religious commitments with clarity, zest, and passion” (p. 260).

In the final section, ministers reflect on practical theology and their own ministerial formation and practice. This section is rich in pastoral wisdom: veteran voices to feedback into the curriculum questions that faculty wrestle with. Christian Scharen reflects on his own formation and growth from reliance on “rules of thumb” to a professional proficiency—developed through practice—that is intuitive action. This is pastoral “know how.”

David J. Wood imagines a reconceiving of the boundary between seminary and ministry through the effective Lilly-funded Transition into Min-

istry residencies. Wood describes the programs assumptions and structure of the program utilizing trained mentors, peer reflection groups, selected readings, and a welcoming congregation.

Peter Marty considers formation through the challenge of shaping communities: "Reading the consecrating words of the Holy Eucharist is one thing; remembering that there are spiritually hungry people right on the other side of the chalice and bread is another. And they're not just 'people.' They're friends" (p. 322). Marty makes a number of practical suggestions that would benefit all seminarians by cultivating pastoral instincts that would guide them toward "fostering a community that is in love with the possibilities of togetherness in Christ and its responsibility of being available to the needs of others" (p. 325).

Finally, Gordon Miskoski reflects on the fascinating pilgrimages that his youth group took to the Holy Land. The pilgrimages "helped me to see that spiritual practices and worship should, whenever possible, be connected with social and political challenges posed by contemporary life" (p. 346).

This book commends a powerful vision of practical theology in service of the Kingdom of God. We can be grateful once again for the collaborative efforts of Bass and Dykstra. Here are three, among many, discussions the book might prompt among seminary faculty.

- "What if our teaching of ministerial practices and scholarship in practical theology always had as its horizon...public consequences?" (p. 167)
- Given the length of time and ministerial practice it takes to move from novice to competency, might the church partner more effectively with the seminary to forge a better pathway to competency? The Lilly-funded transition-into-ministry residencies are effective, but expensive. Are there other equally effective strategies?
- Each writer expresses concern for a place to practice ministry under capable supervision and space to reflect on the practice. How might practical theologians work more closely with field education directors to leverage the learning laboratories of internships?

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James W. Green, *Beyond a Good Death: The Anthropology of Modern Dying* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 272 pp.

After years of studying about death and dying as a thanatologist and working as an ACPE supervisor for more than 20 years in trauma, intensive care, bio-ethics, and palliative care, I found it delightful to read and review a book about death that includes a plethora of well-documented historical data with narratives that add exponentially to the understanding of how a good death has changed over time. Green weaves together aspects of history, philosophy, theology, and bio-ethics. He has a unique gift that drew me into his narratives and had me wanting to read his end-notes—that was a rare pleasure. He manages to give an historical trajectory to innumerable understandings that range from why some bodies were buried, why some were boiled, and why some were burned. This is presented with historical fact, mythic narrative, and some tongue in cheek humor as well. The chapter titles are each examples of his pithy creative etymology, for example, "Getting Dead," "Exit Strategies," "The Body as Relic," "Soulsapes," "Passing It On," "In Our Hearts Forever," and "The Future of Death." I probably learned the most from "The Body as Relic" and have gained an appreciation for ritual that makes use of bones for a number of years^{0.319}...in perpetual. This would be an ideal book to read while studying family systems and/or the origins of rituals both cultural and religious.

James Green did a superb job of introducing the reader to death practices (relationships) that exist among the survivors, the corpse, and the postmortem experience. He refers to the Hertz Model, which one might explore in more detail. The model forms a triangle with each of the italics above represented by a point of the triangle. However, it is the relationship(s) that exist from point to point that provided for me a new way of reflecting on the ways families grieve prior to a death, how the body is handled at the time of death until burial or cremation, and how a person is memorialized after their death.

There are many ways the author compares and contrasts the mega narratives as texts/narratives that are reworked in the midst of or after historical change. This occurs in all traditions/faith experiences. Nevertheless, the author's premise (task) was to give a historical trajectory that included the impact of time, culture, the advancement of medical science, and the decrease of the attention now given in North America to "getting

dead” despite the end-of-life, palliative care, and hospice movements. Any person who has been drawn toward the mystery of meaning making, or the lack thereof, could find this book invaluable. It acknowledges a myriad of ways that history and narrative assist in assessing how, what, and when (if at all) individuals, families, faith-based or cultural, and/or religious communities need care.

This book has provided me a more comprehensive framework for assessment of pastoral, religious, and spiritual care. I have been prompted to delve into the pioneer or frontier influences on a good death. How has a focus on the rugged individual as unique and fringe contributed to being spiritual and not religious? Do communities “celebrate life” because they no longer have religious rituals that reflect with integrity what it is that they (we) believe about death and that which follows? Perhaps in many parts of North America, being at home with nature has superseded being with family or a faith community. Green suggests that there are now rituals and families that grieve common losses with on-line internet families and in spontaneous shrines on street corners.

I am imagining peers and colleagues may gravitate toward a more individualistic, private spirituality and away from the powerful rituals that mythical creation narratives in all traditions set as standards that bound the community together as a grieving community that would dismember and re-member the body as beloved for many years to come...the anniversaries of heartfelt death. There is much to be remember and reflected upon after reading and attempting to integrating *Beyond a Good Death* by James W. Green.

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William A Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, rev. and updated ed. (New York: Harper One, 2009), 224 pp.

When it was published in 1982, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* was groundbreaking. It was based on more than a decade of experience in the training of spiritual directors at the Center for Religious Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and their unique preparation and setting. The authors, Jesu-

its William Barry and William Connolly, produced a book that quickly became a classic and is still well worth reading. What it brings home continues to be important—perhaps more so than ever: spiritual direction, at its best, is about accompanying seekers in their unique relationships with God; spiritual direction is essentially contemplative listening, whatever else it may be on occasion; supervision is key to the development of good spiritual directors; and transference and counter transference occur in particular forms within the spiritual direction relationship.

However, even classics eventually become dated. In this “revised and expanded” edition, the original work is still there almost paragraph by paragraph. The language for God has become inclusive (at least where the authors speak in their own voice; directees still often speak of God with the masculine pronoun). There is more awareness that spiritual direction now regularly takes place outside Catholic or even Christian contexts. But perhaps because of its classic status, the authors missed an opportunity to do a more radical updating even while preserving their original ideas. The examples still reflect a Catholic assumptive world. The case dialogues still have a preponderance of male professionals (directors or supervisors), though the ministry itself has shifted towards a preponderance of female professional persons. For those who teach with this book, the revised and updated version will be more palatable to your students. For those who do not teach it and who can tolerate the non-inclusive language, your old copy has everything in it you need.

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E. Justes, *Hearing Beyond the Words: How to Become a Listening Pastor* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 115 pp.

A student approached me, book in hand, asking, “Why didn’t you assign this for our class? It’s great. I’ve handed it to my friends to use in the church.” Published in 2006, the book had not yet appeared in print when the student was in my class. The student’s enthusiastic recommendation echoes my own sentiment about Emma Justes’ book *Hearing Beyond Words*. This book brims

with useful ideas and practical suggestions. In my years of seminary teaching, I have come to listen intently to students because they know a good resource when they read it. This is a book for clinical supervisors, spiritual directors, pastoral theology and field instructors, pastoral counselors, seminarians, chaplains, pastors, and all people of faith who want to develop the practice of listening.

Dr. Justes grounds her writing in the scriptural theological practice of hospitality that “bespeaks the kind of relationship best suited for listening and hearing” (p. 1). Throughout the book, Dr. Justes draws together insights and discoveries that can deeply inform pastoral listening. The first chapter of the book develops listening as Christian hospitality and draws on resources from both testaments of the Bible. Dr. Justes here outlines four elements of hospitality that order each of the book’s following chapters and give a distinct theological contour to listening: (1) humility, (2) thoughtful availability, (3) vulnerability, and (4) reciprocity. The pairing of listening and hospitality helps the author to draw out unusually generative insights and practices for pastoral leadership and care.

Dr. Justes demonstrates her effectiveness as a teacher of pastoral listening in the book’s unfolding pages. Exercises at the end of each chapter teach the reader how to engage in meaningful and effective listening. These exercises are easily adaptable to a variety of contexts: field education and pastoral care classrooms, CPE learning groups, clergy training seminars, among others. Several exercises follow a beneficial section on silence and listening in ministry, including allowance for periods of silence in conversation with a partner and direction to “monitor how you feel in these moments” (p. 65). Another exercise asks participants to listen to a speaker without asking questions, a practice that helps cultivate listening through other means of attending without bombarding the speaker with questions (pp. 66–67). Dr. Justes offers wise counsel in helping readers with practical issues, such as working through conflict and criticism (p. 34), listening “beyond the non-verbal” (p. 57), delineating the limits of confidentiality (p. 76), and discerning when to refer (pp. 78–79).

Emma Justes is a wise colleague and friend. Her years of ministry and teaching inform every page of this valuable book. I especially appreciate her bold proclamation: “The church stands in need of pastoral leaders who are clearly self-aware, humble, and able to tolerate vulnerability in relation to God and others...The church is not always open to these leaders because they tend to make the church more dangerous. They tend to get into the

business of enabling the church members to grow in their faith and change from the past limitations of their faith” (p. 109). On the topic of pastoral listening as a transformative practice for ministerial leadership, Dr. Justes knows what she writes about. In a course with my students, I recommend Dr. Justes’ book for use in classrooms, clinics, and congregations, and in all places where leaders and lay people yearn to grow in Christian faith as dangerously hospitable speakers and listeners.

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Susan E. Myers-Shirk, *Helping the Good Shepherd: Pastoral Counselors in a Psychotherapeutic Culture 1925–1975* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2009), 301 pp.

In this volume, Susan Myers-Shirk, professor of History at Middle Tennessee State University, has chronicled the history of the early pioneers of the pastoral counseling movement from 1925 to 1975. I found *Helping the Good Shepherd* to be a fascinating collection of stories about the key people who have shaped the pastoral counseling movement, its identity, current struggles, joys, and limitations. There are many stories and bits of new information about Anton Boisen, Seward Hiltner, Rollo May, John Sutherland Bonnell, and Carl Rogers among others. Yet, the author has done more than offer us a collection of stories about our founders. She also discusses many of the underlying themes, philosophical assumptions, and cultural changes that influenced and interfaced with the emerging pastoral counseling movement. The profession is in debt to Myers-Shirk for her painstaking research and extensive review of the journals of *Pastoral Psychology* and *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, which served as the primary sources of much of her book. This volume can be studied by pastoral counseling students and those wishing to understand the interface of religion and counseling in the twentieth century.

She begins her volume with a discussion of Anton Boisen, who is largely presented as the father of both the clinical pastoral education and the larger pastoral counseling movement. Besides presenting his fascinating

personal story, the author sees Boisen as a part of a larger attempt to “find a rapprochement between religion and science, one of the most important duties facing clergy in the twentieth century” (p. 7). Boisen’s passion was to help clergy understand religious experience and its role in mental illness from a scientific perspective and thereby to help us all become equal players in the interdisciplinary health team approach to treatment. She shows how the case study method and the use of verbatims, which are so central to CPE, are an outgrowth of this desire to study “living human documents” from a scientific, professional perspective.

After chronicling the early formation of CPE, the author moves on to consider the larger pastoral counseling movement. She recounts the unheralded influence of the New York City preachers Normal Vincent Peale, John Sutherland Bonnell, and Harry Emerson Fosdick, and their respective radio programs, as part of this attempt to merge religion and emerging psychology. She describes the influence of Rollo May, citing his *The Art of Counseling*, as an early “standard for pastoral counseling.” She describes the work and career of Seward Hiltner, who she feels practically coined the term “pastoral counseling” with his 1949 book by the same name. She also touches on the other members of the New York Psychology Group, Paul Tillich, Erich Fromm, and, of course, Carl Rogers.

Myers-Shirk discusses the tremendous influence of Carl Rogers whose non-directive method moved clergy away from the preaching and advice giving modes that had colored pastoral counseling in earlier generations. Further, Rogers and the humanistic approach to counseling redefined the goal of pastoral counseling from adjustment to “autonomy” and then to “self realization.” She notes how this shift reflected the larger cultural concern at the time for the strengthening of democracy in a post WWII era. She gives less attention to Freud and the neo Freudians who also influenced pastoral counseling, but stood in contrast to and in tension with the humanistic presumptions.

The author sees the pastoral counseling movement not as a uniform entity, but as a dynamic movement in constant tension within itself and the surrounding culture. For example, she shows how embracing the goal of autonomy as the goal of pastoral counseling stood in tension with the church’s long standing affirmation of family unity. The same tension emerged later as gender issues became a concern in the culture at large and among pastoral counselors. The movement struggled within itself to find the place and role of moral authority in pastoral counseling. She notes how pastoral counsel-

ors first unquestionably embraced the language and norms of psychology, and later came to rediscover and revalue the language of theology and spirituality. Another perennial issue was how pastoral counselors should blend their concern for the individual’s growth with their concern for ethics, justice, and social change.

In the latter chapters of this volume, she discusses the Christian counseling movement, describing many of its early pioneers, themes, and formative events. She understands the Christian counseling movement to have grown out of the same fertile soil as CPE and pastoral counseling, but having a different “moral sensibility.” From Myers-Shirk’s perspective both movements were and are “trying to map the territory between faith and science” (p. 239).

This book ends with an epilogue that summarizes the personal reflections of Howard Clinebell, the first president of AAPC. Clinebell represents a leader from the 1.5 generation. He was not one of the pioneers per se, but was close enough to know and work with many of the pioneers. In some ways, Clinebell’s remarks also set the agenda for the second generation of pastoral counselors, particularly heightening the growing internationalization of pastoral counseling.

The book could serve well as an introductory text for supervisors, clinical pastoral education students, and pastoral counselors in training. A clearer understanding of our common history will help us chart a brighter and hopefully a common future. When Myers-Shirk’s story of the pastoral counseling movement comes to an end about 1975, I found myself thinking of the words of Paul Harvey, “and now for the rest of the story.” How will this great journey, this noble experiment to bridge religion and science play out in our generation?

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Robert J. Wicks, *The Resilient Clinician* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 255 pp.

Within the guiding standards of professional associations that certify spiritual caregivers and educators in North America, members exhort themselves to demonstrate “emotional and spiritual maturity” (ACPE, Spiritual Care Collaborative), “attend to one’s own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being” (National Association of Catholic Chaplains, Association of Professional Chaplains, National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC)), “manage our personal lives in a healthful fashion” (AAPC), pursue “a constructive practice of self-care” (NAJC, Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE)), and set appropriate “boundaries between personal and professional life” (CAPPE, NAJC). These reflect much wise counsel, and yet sustaining a life and a career that fulfill the intent of these standards—while serving people in crisis-laden circumstances—can feel daunting and on occasion unattainable. A response to this dilemma is *The Resilient Clinician* by Robert Wicks, a professor of pastoral counseling at Loyola College in Maryland. His guiding question for clergy and other helping professionals is: “What do I need to put into place in my own life that will enable me to reap the most out of having the privilege to participate in such a noble profession and, in turn, experience a more meaningful personal life in the process?” (p. 10).

This question leads Wicks to explore issues of chronic and acute secondary stress (including burnout and post-traumatic stress disorder); how to nurture resiliency through an intentional and active self-care regimen; cultivating solitude, silence, and mindfulness in one’s interior life; and drawing upon the insights of positive psychology to balance the awareness we gain from facing our limitations and challenges. Throughout this almost pocket-sized text, he sprinkles many suggestions, pithy quotations, lists of questions, and provocative stories.

Wicks is neither a prophetic revolutionary, a poetic mythologizer, nor a folksy raconteur; his authorial stance is as a veteran colleague giving practical advice. Admirers of Thomas Moore or of Parker Palmer might find Wicks’s prose slightly lacking in inspiration, yet consistently he is clear, well-informed, and insightful. Further, his book provides seven appendices that are good self-diagnostic tools for assessing burnout and stress. He also includes two bibliographies which list numerous helpful resources but at times are overlapping and a little confusing.

After reading this book, I did not sense that Wicks had led me into undiscovered territory; rather, I perceived that he was reminding me (and himself) of truths we already knew or intuited. Beyond all of the helpful suggestions, Wicks’s voice is that of a fellow struggler who calls us to remember that we are not alone in our work. The struggles and rewards we encounter in our spiritual caregiving are known and shared by others. That reminder of presence is worth the cost of this book.

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MOVIE REVIEW: *In Good Conscience*, DVD, directed by Barbara Rick (New York: Out of the Blue Films Inc., 2006), 82 min.

Barbara Rick’s documentary, *In Good Conscience*, fits right in the middle of the theme of this volume of *Reflective Practice* on responsibility and accountability. The film follows the journey of conscience of Sr. Jeannine Gramick, a Roman Catholic woman religious, in her ministry with gay and lesbian people within the Roman Catholic Church. The film begins with letters of censure from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, when he was head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to the General Superior of the School Sisters of Notre Dame essentially forbidding them to continue in this ministry. Father Nugent, with whom Sr. Gramick has written a book about building bridges when difference separates people, complied with the Vatican’s edict. Sr. Gramick did not. She continued her work in New Life Ministry on behalf of gays and lesbians.

The documentary introduces Sr. Gramick on her fifty-eighth birthday as she celebrated forty years in religious life. The film documents her transformation from early childhood in a traditional Roman Catholic family as she evolves into a strong spokesperson for respect and full inclusion of gays and lesbians. Sr. Gramick is a gentle, friendly, caring presence who clearly articulates the issues. She expresses the needs and desires of many gay and lesbian people who want to participate fully in the life of the Roman Catholic Church, but who feel excluded by the constrictions placed on congrega-

tions, people of faith, clergy, and religious by the ruling principles of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The Church, she reminds us, is the people of God, not the hierarchy; and at the core of all our decisions is the primacy of conscience in decision making.

This film quietly portrays how one person courageously put into practice her own sense of responsibility and accountability informed by her faith and religious beliefs. It is a powerful journey of conscience that demonstrates how a person of faith transformed herself and her ministry to champion the rights and lives of people who had been relegated to the margins of the Roman Catholic Church. This would be an excellent film to show to people who would like to explore how one's faith informs taking on responsibility in our society and being accountable to those who are excluded by organizations and institutions.

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Douglas Purnell, *Being in Ministry: Honestly, Openly and Deeply* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 167 pp.

"Finding light in darkness" is the underlying theological theme that flows through the pages of this book. Douglas Purnell entered his own deep darkness when a financial crisis at his institution caused his teaching position to be found "redundant." Purnell invites the reader into his dark journey of grief, self-doubt, and anger and in the process continues his theological teaching through this book rather than the classroom. As a result, he is not only reaching students of pastoral care, but also students and pastors in supervised ministry, and as well as anyone engaged in ministerial formation and spiritual reflection.

Returning to the vocation of parish pastor, Purnell invites us into his private life of "being in ministry." He writes, "Ministry is about being and not just doing, and the former is harder to grasp" (p. 14). Purnell helps us grasp the idea of "being" by allowing us to delve into his practice of ministry. That practice is not limited to the "doing" but rather includes the integration of his roles as family therapist, professor, pastor, artist, spouse, par-

ent, and child. We are invited to join his whole human *being* as he explores hidden corners of being human and being a minister.

But the book is not just about this man's personal, vocational, and spiritual journey. It is filled with the witnesses of many people. Purnell weaves their stories into his story. The reader learns that Purnell finds his true self, as well as God, through his "being" in ministry with parishioners, artists, family members, and strangers. In his introduction he writes: "The dark places are so much a part of life. The surprise, perhaps, is that when with integrity we enter the darkness, we find God hiding there" (p. xviii). The reader may also be surprised by the places where Douglas Purnell finds God is hiding.

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INDEX VOLUMES 21-30

Articles

- Aleshire, Daniel**, ACPE History Workshop: The Changing Landscape of Theological Education and Clinical Pastoral Education, 25 (2005): 68–82.
- Ansari, Bilal**, Seeing With Bifocals: The Evolution of a Muslim Chaplain, 29 (2009): 170–177.
- Apprey, Maurice**, Identity and Difference: Race, Racialization, and Otherness in the Intersubjective Field in Clinical Practice, 29 (2009): 38–55.
- Banks, Osofo**, Reflection on Supervisory Process, 24 (2004): 179–181.
- Becker, Therese M.**, Individualism and the Invisibility of Monoculturalism/Whiteness: Limits to Effective Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisors, 22 (2002): 4–20.
- Berger, Charles**, The Impact of September 11, 2001, on My Life and My Supervisory Style, 23 (2003): 40–47.
- Blodgett, Barbara J.**, Field Education and Critical Pedagogy: A Conversation, 28 (2008): 179–191.
- Blodgett, Barbara J.**, Trustworthy or Accountable: Which is better? 30 (2010): 34–45.
- Bush Jr., Joseph E. and Twyla Susan Werstein**, Integrative Learning for Ministry: A Case Study of the Presbyterian School of Ministry in New Zealand, 30 (2010): 187–202.
- Boos, Werner K.**, Personal Reflections on the Formation of a Pastoral Counseling Supervisor, 24 (2004): 44–52.
- Brouwer, Rein**, “The Zeal of Thine House Hath Eaten Me Up:” Practical Theological Reflections on Burnout Among Pastors, 27 (2007): 162–174.
- Brown-Daniels, DeLois**, Eros and Agape, 21 (2001): 113–116.
- Bucchino, John**, Martha and September 11, 23 (2003): 152–153.
- Caldwell, Joyce A.**, Faith Practice of Shaping Communities of Welcome and Justice, 26 (2006): 21–34.
- Childers, Melanie**, The Sound of Sheer Silence, 27 (2007): 227–228.
- Click, Emily**, Supervising Supervisors: Challenges in Theological Field Education, 27 (2007): 30–42.
- Click, Emily**, Transformative Educational Theory in Relation to Supervision and Training in Ministry, 25 (2005): 8–25.
- Connors, Michael E. and Mark L. Poorman**, A Case Study Method for Theological Reflection in Field Education, 22 (2002): 131–146.
- Cooper-White, Pamela**, The “Other” Within: Multiple Selves Making a World of Difference, 29 (2009): 23–37.

- Cozad Neuger, Christie**, Working to Prevent Clergy Sexual Misconduct, 30 (2010): 155–168.
- Cram, Ronald Hecker**, Reflections on Field Education: An Informal Review of Dominant Trends In Contemporary Field Education, 21 (2001): 193–205.
- Cruz, Faustino M.**, Ministry for a Multicultural Church and Society, 27 (2007): 43–60.
- Cutting, Marsha**, Clinical Supervision Research in Psychology: Possible Contributions to CPE Supervision, 27 (2007): 120–134.
- Davis, Nina C.**, Zen Buddhist and Christian Co-Supervisors: A Reflection on CPE, 23 (2003): 60–65.
- Davis, Patricia H.**, Supervision and Sexuality, 21 (2001): 126–131.
- de Jong, Jan**, Toward Indigenous CPE: A Mini-CPE Program at Grey’s Hospital, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, 27 (2007): 175–186.
- DeLong, William R.**, Looking Again at the “Too Wounded” Student: A Response to Margot Hover, 30 (2010): 184–186.
- DeLong, William R.**, Supervising the Spiritual Self: The Use of Sustained Empathic Inquiry in Pastoral Supervision, 25 (2005): 99–115.
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- Larsen, David J.**, Zen Buddhist and Christian Co-Supervisors: A Reflection on CPE, 23 (2003): 54–59.
- Law, Eric H.F.**, Fear-Conqueror, Fear-Bearer, Fear-Exploiter, and Fear-Miner, 28 (2008): 48–61.
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- Marshall, Joretta**, Formative Practices: Intent, Structure, and Content, 29 (2009): 56–73.
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- Parker, Duane**, Sexuality and Supervision: A Complex Issue, 21 (2001): 37–45.
- Peachey, Kirsten**, Watch with Me: A Parable for Faith Practices in Health Ministry, 26 (2006): 43–51.
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- Snorton, Teresa E.**, Ministry as Soulful Leadership: Implications for Supervision, 27 (2007): 150–161.
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- Anantharaj, Inbarasu**, review of *Trust the Process: A History of Clinical Pastoral Education as Theological Education*, by Stephen D. W. King, 28 (2008): 275–277.
- Anderson, Herbert**, review of *Disaster Spiritual Care: Practical Clergy Responses to Community, Regional, and National Tragedy*, ed. Stephen B. Roberts and Willard W. C. Ashley, 28 (2008): 278–280.
- Bush Jr., Joseph E.**, Review Essay of Niebuhr’s *The Responsible Self (The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy)*, by H. Richard Niebuhr, 30 [2010]: 59–63
- Cary, Charles M.**, review of *Pastoral Visitation*, by Nancy J. Gorsuch, 21 (2001): 289–290.
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- Clark, Peter Yuichi**, review of *The Resilient Clinician*, by Robert J. Wicks, 30 (2010): 289–290.

- Conrad, Susan**, review of *Theological Reflection: Methods*, by Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Francis Ward, 29 (2009): 292–293.
- Docampo, Isabel N.**, review of *Claiming New Life: Process-Church for the Future*, by Lisa R. Withrow, 29 (2009): 308–309.
- Duensing, Donna**, review of *Being in Ministry: Honestly, Openly and Deeply*, by Douglas Purnell, 30 (2010): 292–293.
- Durston, Deryck**, review of *When Sickness Heals: The Place of Religious Belief in Healthcare*, by Siroj Sorahhakool, 28 (2008): 272–273.
- Fitzgerald, C. George**, review of *Courageous Conversations: The Teaching and Learning of Pastoral Supervision*, ed. William R. DeLong, 30 (2010): 273–276.
- Fitzgerald, C. George**, review of Staring at the Sun: Overcoming the Terror of Death, by Irvin D. Yalom, 29 (2009): 304–306.
- Floding, Matthew**, review of *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, 30 (2010): 276–280.
- Garrett-Cobbina, Laurie**, review of *Learning to be White: Money, Race, and God in America*, by Thandeka, 29 (2009): 299–301.
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- Gunn, James H.**, review of *Understanding Clergy Misconduct in Religious Systems*, by Candace R. Benyei, 21 (2001): 296–297.
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- Kleingartner, Connie**, review of *Counseling Families Across the Stages of Life: A Handbook for Pastors and Other Helping Professionals*, by Andrew J. Weaver, Linda A. Revilla, and Harold G. Koenig, 24 (2004): 189.
- Kleingartner, Connie**, review of *Healing Bodies and Souls: A Practical Guide for Congregations*, by W. Daniel Hale and Harold G. Koenig, 24 (2004): 186–187.
- Kleingartner, Connie**, review of *Reflections on Forgiveness and Spiritual Growth*, ed. Andrew J. Weaver and Monica Furlong, 24 (2004): 190.
- Koppel, Michael S.**, review of *Hearing Beyond the Words*, by E. Justes, 30 (2010): 283–284.
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- Lescher, Bruce H.**, review of Supervision of Spiritual Directors: Engaging in Holy Mystery, ed. Mary Rose Bumpus and Rebecca Bradburn Langer, 27 (2007): 282–283.
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- Liebert, Elizabeth**, review of *The Hidden Lives of Congregations: Discerning Church Dynamics*, by Israel Galindo, 27 (2007): 279–281.
- Liebert, Elizabeth**, review of *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, by William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, 30 (2010): 282.
- Lubbers, Douglas B.**, review of *Becoming a Healthier Pastor: Family Systems Theory and the Pastor's Own Family*, by Ronald W. Richardson 28 (2008): 267–269.
- Matson, Viki**, review of *Finding Intimacy in a World of Fear*, by Eric Law, 28 (2008): 277–278.
- McKinley, Steven L.**, review of *Shaping Spiritual Leaders: Supervision and Formation in Congregations*, by Abigail Johnson, 28 (2008): 273–275.
- McNair, Clinton D.**, review of *The Formation of Pastoral Counselors: Challenges and Opportunities*, ed. Duane R. Bidwell and Joretta L. Marshall, 29 (2009): 297–298.
- Murphy, Patricia**, review of *Faith and Health: Psychological Perspectives*, ed. Thomas E. Plante and Allen C. Sherman, 23 (2003): 160–161.
- Rhodes, Lynn**, review of *Theological Reflection and Education for Ministry: Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology*, by John E. Paver, 27 (2007): 286–288.
- Ruffing, Janet K.**, review of *The Way of Discernment: Spiritual Practices for Decision Making*, by Elizabeth Liebert, 29 (2009): 301–302.
- Sears, Robert**, review of *Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy*, by Froma Walsh, 21 (2001): 298–300.
- Seeger, Rod**, review of *In Good Conscience*, DVD, directed, by Barbara Rick, 30 (2010): 291–292.
- Seeger, Rodney W.**, review of *Interfaith Spiritual Care: Understandings and Practices*, ed. Daniel S. Schipani and Leah Dawn Bueckert, 29 (2009): 291–292.
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- Sullender, Scott R.**, review of *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*, by Peter L. Steinke, 27 (2007): 284–285.
- Sullender, R. Scott**, review of *Helping the Good Shepherd: Pastoral Counselors in a Psychotherapeutic Culture 1925–1975*, by Susan E. Myers-Shirk, 30 (2010): 286–288.
- Tortorici, Joseph**, review of *God's Tapestry: Understanding and Celebrating Differences*, by William M. Kondrath, 29 (2009): 302–304.
- Tribe, Roy**, review of *Shared Wisdom: Use of the Self in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, by Pamela Cooper-White, 27 (2007): 276–278.
- Yarlott, Sandee**, review of *Expanding the Circle: Essays in Honor of Joan E. Hemmenway*, ed. Catherine F. Garlid, Angelika A. Zollfrank, and George Fitchett, 30 (2010): 272–273.



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- Bonner, Connie M.**, Dialogical Encounter: Being Present “At the Edge,” 24 (2004): 139–175.
- Briegs, Patricia R.**, What it Takes to Develop and Challenge Pastoral Counselors in Supervision, 27 (2007): 257–272.
- Clark, Peter Yuichi**, **Tending to Trees of Life...and Hope**, 26 (2006): 103–132.
- Evans-Tameron, Jessica**, Relationship and Story, 29 (2009): 267–290.
- Finson, Shelley Davis**, Systemic Injustice of Heterosexism in Theological Education, 23 (2003): 95–107.
- Goldberg, Nathan**, Utilizing Myth to Facilitate Growth in CPE Relationships, 27 (2007): 229–256.
- Greene, Amy**, Position Papers for Certification in Supervisory Clinical Pastoral Education, 23 (2003): 108–134.
- Johnson, Abigail**, With All Your Heart, Soul, and Mind: Deepening Theological Reflection, 23 (2003): 70–83.
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- Thorpe, Douglas M.**, Learning to Sing in the Key: Learning to Counsel on Key, 29 (2009): 249–266.
- Ward, Mary Christine Mollie**, Supervision and Mutual Vulnerability: ACPE Theory Paper, 30 (2010): 245–271.
- Weaver Kurtz, Kathleen**, Trunkie Trees and Growing Branches: On Being Supervisors and Supervisees Together, 30 (2010): 230–244.
- Zollfrank, Angelika**, The Work of Care. The Evolving Psychological System: A Personal Theory, 25 (2005): 156–175.

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