

## *Some Implications of Pauline Anthropology For Contemporary Pastoral Care*

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That one's view of man is crucial to one's approach to pastoral care almost goes without saying. From the observation that all pastoral care involves relationships that are inescapably personal, or rather interpersonal, Elford concludes that 'Pastoral theories and practices are... only as good as the notions of the personal that they presuppose.'<sup>1</sup> Similarly Adams points out the folly of entering into a relationship which presupposes 'the desire that the counsellor change, without first asking the fundamental questions 'from what?' and 'to what?'.'<sup>2</sup>

Because of the immediate and far-reaching consequences of one's assessment of the human condition, the pastoral theologian needs to ensure that in arriving at that assessment the voice of Christian theology is heard 'loud and clear', otherwise the clamour of competing anthropologies will lead the Christian carer to adopt a theologically naive eclecticism or else to simply accept whichever view is dominant or appeals to him most<sup>3</sup> irrespective of its compatibility or otherwise with Christian faith.<sup>4</sup> This is not, of course, to suggest that the Christian doctrine of man should remain aloof from the market-place of competing ideologies, or that our pastoral practice can simply be read off from our theology without reference to other relevant disciplines such as psychology and sociology. Rather, the Christian carer should listen carefully to what is being said elsewhere than in specifically Christian circles, recognise that other disciplines have distinctive and worthwhile contributions to make, and then be ready to welcome that which is of value, providing it is compatible with his Christian, theological presuppositions.<sup>5</sup>

So far we have talked of the importance of a Christian view of man. Needless to say it is way beyond the scope of the current piece of work to give a comprehensive analysis of Christian anthropology in toto. We must narrow down the focus of our attention. Having stressed the importance of the pastoral theologian working from the sources of the Christian faith, it surely

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<sup>1</sup> J. R. Elford, 'Pastoral Care and Anthropology I' *Expository Times*, 94, no 5 (Feb. 1983) 138.

<sup>2</sup> J. E. Adams, *More than Redemption: a Theology of Christian Counselling* (Grand Rapids, 1979) 102.

<sup>3</sup> A. V. Campbell points us to the way that the psycho-analytical approach has become dominant. A. V. Campbell, 'The Politics of Pastoral Care' *Contact*, 62 (1979) no 1, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Thankfully there seems to have been what might be described as a recovery of confidence in traditional Christian sources: cf eg M. H. Taylor, *Learning to Care* (London, 1983) and especially A. V. Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care* (London, 1981).

<sup>5</sup> Of course the big question to be answered here is, 'How precisely should one set about relating Christian and non-Christian views of man?'. For examples of how this has been done see M. A. Jeeves, *Psychology and Christianity: the View Both Ways* (Leicester, 1977). Jeeves adopts an essentially integrative approach, arguing that the Christian approach to man and that of the main schools of psychology are different but complementary ways of dealing with the same reality. A similar approach but putting more stress on the primacy of the Christian anthropology is that of F. Minrith and P. Maier, *Counselling and the Nature of Man* (Grand Rapids, 1981). M. P. Cosgrove and J. D. Mallory, *Mental Health: a Christian Approach* and especially M. D. Enoch, *Healing the Hurt Mind* (London, 1983), while still wishing to make extensive use of the human 'sciences', stress the inadequacy of such approaches on their own, arguing that compared to an approach to healing based on a Christian foundation, the help they can offer, though real, is essentially superficial. For a largely negative assessment of the value of the human sciences see J. E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids, 1977).

goes without saying that the most important of these sources is the Bible.<sup>6</sup> Since the task of covering the whole range of biblical anthropologies is beyond us, we shall concentrate on the writings of Paul who, as the earliest writer to interpret and apply the gospel message and its implications, has had—via the likes of Augustine

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and the great reformers—the greatest impact upon Christianity of any theologian.

However, once we try to isolate from the rest of the Pauline corpus, the apostle's teaching about and understanding of man, we immediately run into a problem. It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that everything that Paul wrote was about man. Paul, the pastoral theologian par excellence, was no systematist interested in the interrelations of abstract concepts; still less was he a psychologist interested in drawing up a scientific anthropology as if to describe man as a phenomenon in the realm of the objectively perceptible world. No, Paul's theme and passion is man seen in relation to God. To turn a well known aphorism on its head, for Paul all anthropology is theology.<sup>7</sup> Or in the words of Bultmann, 'Every assertion about man is simultaneously an assertion about God and *vice versa*.'<sup>8</sup>

We will therefore narrow our focus still further and concentrate on an investigation of what has come to be known as Paul's anthropological terms. Not only does such an approach give us a clear and manageable way into most aspects of the apostle's anthropology, it is also a time-honoured approach which has long been at the centre of Pauline research.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless there will be much of importance that will have to be left out, such as Paul's Adam-Christology and the associated issue of corporate solidarity, and indeed, the whole issue of the corporate versus the individual in Paul's understanding of man.

On the basis of an investigation of the biblical material in its own right which must here be taken as read, we will seek to work out the pastoral implications of some of the main themes, elements and characteristics of Paul's view of man. It is probably worth mentioning that those aspects of Paul's anthropology that will interest us as a pastoral theologian may well diverge from those that would command our attention were we writing as a biblical scholar *toute simple*. Our eye will be open for that which has important implications for Christian caring.

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<sup>6</sup> Clearly the extent of authority that one allows for the Bible, and the relation of that authority to subsequent Christian tradition, will vary from person to person depending, amongst other things, on his doctrine of scripture. At the very least one can say that the Bible is clearly an important source because it is the very first written record and interpretation of what all Christians agree to be God's supreme revelation, the Christ event. The position of the current writer is that, although there is clearly the need for a certain bridge-building exercise between cultures separated by nearly two millennia to allow biblical insights to speak clearly today, and although that will of course require both demythologising and remythologising, in the end the Bible's authority is second only to that of Christ himself, and therefore is that standard by which both subsequent church tradition and contemporary insights must be judged.

<sup>7</sup> This fact in itself, as we shall see later, has some important implications for our pastoral theologies.

<sup>8</sup> R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* ET (London, 1956) I. 191.

<sup>9</sup> Cf R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms* (Leiden, 1971) I.

A number of the features of Paul's understanding of man would pay dividends to the Christian carer were they examined for their pastoral implications.<sup>10</sup> We shall concentrate on just three. First we shall consider the reality and extent of sin in man's make up. Second we will look at the other side of the coin, the fact that the sinfulness of humanity is not the last word for humanity but rather that there is always room for hope. Finally we will examine the crucial importance of a man's relationship to his God for the prognosis of his condition.

### SIN IN MAN'S MAKE UP

It is quite clear that Paul recognised the extent of the ravages of sin in human nature. Classically of course this is seen in the way in which *sarx*, that essentially neutral description of man's corporeality, comes to

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represent not only man as merely human but also man as frail, weak, corruptible and man as sinful, even, humanly speaking, inescapably sinful. That such a basic anthropological term should become one of the apostle's most often used, technical, hamartiological terms is evidence indeed of the fundamental hold that sin has on the life of man. Not only *sarx* but *soma*, the vehicle for the expression of human life, which was designed to be dedicated to God, thus becoming an instrument for the Holy Spirit, becomes so dominated by the sin-principle that it can be referred to as a body of sin, the deeds of the body becoming to all intents and purposes equivalent to the deeds of the flesh. In the same way the *nous*, the very faculty of man designed to accurately apprehend and correctly respond to divine revelation, thus leading to a godly way of life, has become hardened and futile. And so we could go on: the *psuche*, man's God-given vitality, becomes a term to describe the unspiritual man; *kardia*, the core of man's being, the seat of both emotion and mental processes, has become hardened; *suneidesis*, that painful reminder to man that he is morally responsible to God, becomes weak, misinformed, even seared; even *pneuma*, the term that reminds us of the Godward side of man, talking as it does of man open to God, in relation to God, motivated by God, can only be applied in a most truncated way to unredeemed humanity. In every corner of man's being and every aspect of his living, sin has taken its ruinous toll. Although, as we shall see later, Paul would not have thought of man as totally and inescapably evil, he would have been the first to recognise that, as a creature, man, though essentially good, is radically flawed and thoroughly spoiled.

So then, what are the implications of this thoroughgoing sinfulness for the Christian carer? First any of the anthropologies from the fields of human/social sciences which the Christian seeks to make use of must be capable of taking the fact of sin into account. This is precisely what a number of such anthropologies fail to do. Cosgrove and Mallory, for example, point out the inability of such 'humanistic psychologists' as Maslow, who holds to the basic goodness of man, to account for the way in which man in such a consistent way, whether we speak historically or geographically, tends toward evil rather than good.<sup>11</sup> Similarly Elford shows up the same shortcomings in the biological/evolutionary view of man.<sup>12</sup> But it is not

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the implications of Paul's understanding of man as a unified duality for the way in which the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of man affect each other. For some insight into this see Minrith and Maier, *Counselling*.

<sup>11</sup> *Mental Health*, 27.

<sup>12</sup> Elford, *Expository Times*, 94, no 5 (1983) 139.

only those anthropologies that see man as good at heart, needing only to be set free to be himself in order to flourish, which fail to grasp the fact of sin, but also such theories as behaviourism which hold man to be basically neutral, open to be influenced for either good or evil according to the stimuli from his environment that are brought to bear on him. Although they have definite positive insights to offer, such theories cannot answer why 'man's problems have defied environmental boundaries. He commits crimes, gets divorces etc., in all segments of society; that is from both good and bad environments.'<sup>13</sup>

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In addition, behaviourism is sociologically naive in the sense that it fails to take account of the way that reality is created by a dialectical process involving the creation of the environment by the individual as well as the creation of the individual by the environment.<sup>14</sup> The implications of human sinfulness for our assessment of the human sciences is even more profound than we have noticed thus far. The doctrine of total depravity does not tell us that man is as bad as he possibly could be, and therefore ought not to be used to rule out the possibility of great improvements being made through the use of the human sciences. But it does tell us that we are affected at every level of our being by our sin, and so it should always stand as a warning against naively expecting too much from such sources alone. Sin affects our ability to come to a correct assessment of our own condition let alone find wholly adequate solutions. Murphy-O'Connor even goes so far as to suggest that 'The phenomenological approach is vitiated in its very essence. It cannot tell us what authentic humanity is because its subject matter is inauthentic humanity.'<sup>15</sup>

So far we have concerned ourselves with the implications of radical human sinfulness for our assessment of the Christian carer's approach to the various 'scientific' anthropologies which he might consider using alongside the insights that he will derive from distinctively Christian sources, as tools for the job. Clearly though, as well as these second level implications, the fact of human sinfulness will also have more immediate consequences in the actual job of caring. The carer will always have to bear in mind the innate sinfulness of the one(s) cared for. This should not lead to a sense of cynicism, desperation or the like, but hopefully it will lead to an injection of a healthy dose of realism into any pastoral relationship. This realism needs to be two sided. On the one hand, the sinfulness of the other person(s) should be identified, acknowledged and faced up to. This will mean that, although always offering love and acceptance to the other person, the carer will never be able to simply affirm them. Our love of the sinner must never be at the expense of ignoring the sin. In this sense at least, the caring Christian will always stand as a symbol of the judgement of God. On the other hand, precisely because he is so uncompromising about sin, the pastor<sup>16</sup> should never be unreasonable in his expectations. He will always be aware, in the words of Smail, that 'there is an inevitable ambiguity about all human enterprises'.<sup>17</sup> So while never watering down God's standards, the Christian carer will always expect, prepare for and allow for human failure. There should never be any room in Christian pastoral care for that most debilitating of

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<sup>13</sup> Cosgrove and Mallory, *Mental Health*, 27.

<sup>14</sup> Cf P. Berger, *An Invitation to Sociology* (Harmondsworth, 1966).

<sup>15</sup> J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Becoming Human Together; the Pastoral Anthropology of St. Paul* (Wilmington, 1982) 40.

<sup>16</sup> By 'pastor' we do not mean a clerical professional but simply a Christian carer. It is one of the sad consequences of the hegemony of the clergy that this richly evocative word is now reserved for the 'full-timer'. We need to recover the concept of the pastorhood of all believers.

<sup>17</sup> T. Smail, 'The Theological Presuppositions of Pastoral Practice', *Theological Renewal*, 20 (March 1982) 28.

attitudes, an unrelenting perfectionism. An example of how these principles might work out in practice might be of help. In the area of marriage and marital problems, the pastor will always want to hold on to lifelong monogamy as the God-given ideal, but at the same time he will recognise it for just that—an ideal. As well

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as realising that none of us ever live up to God's ideal for relationships within such a marriage he will also, because of his realistic assessment of the extent of sin, recognise that there will be times when such an ideal will become totally unworkable. Just how the pastor proceeds from there will depend on where he puts most weight in the pastoral dialectic that we are considering. For example, if he were to stress the inviolability of God's standards he would rule out any possibility of remarriage, whereas if the emphasis were to be placed on allowances being made for sin such an option would not be ruled out.

The Christian carer must always bear in mind the two way nature of any pastoral relationship. This means of course that, as well as being aware of the sinfulness of the one(s) being cared for, he must also take into account the effect of sin in his own life. Any help offered will be given in the recognition that it will inevitably be imperfect. So, as well as injecting a note of realism into Christian pastoral care, our awareness of sin should also lead to a basic attitude of genuine humility. This provides a necessary counterbalance to our earlier statement about the pastor standing as a symbol of God's judgement. The symbol will always be an imperfect one. This is a reality which J. Adams, for one, seems to have grasped only in part, for while he readily and, indeed, correctly notices that sinfulness renders solutions based entirely on the human sciences inadequate, and while he equally correctly recognises that, as a revealed religion, Christianity must always put more weight on what God has revealed than on what man has discovered, what he has singularly failed to take account of is that, though the revelation itself might indeed have been preserved from the effects of sin, our perception and application of that revelation most definitely have not.<sup>18</sup> So although pastoral care will always be kerygmatic,<sup>19</sup> there is no room for the pastor qua pastor to adopt the stance of the prophet, and to proclaim without reservation 'thus saith the Lord'. Smail sums it up well:

we must be humble in our judgement, because we are in like case to the one we are pastoring. We also are creatures in rebellion. Our own insights and solutions can indeed be that which God gives us, but they also can be distorted and prejudiced, and we need the tentativeness and gentleness of those who know that they stand under the same love and under the same judgement as the one to whom they speak.<sup>20</sup>

## **REASON TO HOPE**

Although it is true to say that Paul was realistic in his assessment of the human condition, not failing to take full note of the extent of the damage caused by sin, we must also be aware of the fact that the apostle was not fatalistic in his attitude to man, nor ever truly pessimistic. Paul's

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<sup>18</sup> Adams, *More than Redemption*, 16-27; cf also his exposition of 'nouthetic counselling' in *Competent To Counsel* (Grand Rapids, 1977).

<sup>19</sup> For an exposition of the place of *kerygma* in pastoral care, see E. Thurneysen, *A Theology of Pastoral Care* (Edinburgh, 1962).

<sup>20</sup> *Theological Renewal* 20 (March 1982) 29.

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realism left room for hope; indeed in the light of his knowledge of God it required it. Paul never lost sight of the possibility of redemption: human sinfulness is not the last word. As Smail points out, man is a theologically ambiguous creature.<sup>21</sup>

The *nous* which has become darkened and perverse can also be renewed, restoring to it the ability to correctly discern and try out the will of God, thus leading to the renewal of the whole man. The darkened heart can once again be enlightened by receiving the Spirit, by having the love of God shed abroad within it, by being shone upon by the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ. The *soma* need no longer remain enslaved to the law of sin, but by being dedicated to God can be redeemed now and ultimately glorified. From being the abode of sin it can become the temple of the Holy Spirit. *Pneuma* need not always be applied to man only in a secondary and limited way, but through fellowship with the Holy Spirit, can be re-vivified and transformed, becoming the basis of relating to, receiving from and knowing God. So, as well as accounting for the evil in man, the Pauline anthropology can also explain the goodness in man, because it sees man still in some sense retaining the image of God (unredeemed man is still seen as a being with a spirit and a conscience, both of which are 'elements within' man that point to his origin in God, and to his purpose of relating to God), and capable of redemption and glorification.

As with our examination of human sinfulness, the first implication of this view of man as having a reason to hope and retaining traces of godliness is that the Christian carer will be careful not to adopt without qualification any anthropology that is incapable of properly accounting for human goodness. Such an anthropology lies at the heart of Freudian psychoanalysis. As Cosgrove and Mallory explain, 'Freud pointed out the evil lurking within us: our aggressive, sexual and death instincts. But proponents of this view have difficulty explaining the goodness and nobility we do find in man.'<sup>22</sup> Working from the Pauline anthropology,' the pastor has good reason for offering to the other person(s) an adequately based and honest hope. No carer with such a view of man as originating from God and capable of redemption by and for God, can ever be justified in treating anyone as a hopeless case, offering them a totally bleak prognosis. The offer of genuine hope is a powerful force for healing, indeed it might be regarded as the *sine qua non* of true health. In the words of V. Grounds, 'mental health and healing demand a conviction of life's meaningfulness... mental health and healing demand a source of courage which will enable a person to encounter the inescapable anxiety of life.'<sup>23</sup>

This is precisely what the Christian carer is in a position to offer. We must stress that this must always be the offer of genuine hope and not the trite platitude that everything will turn out all right in the end, nor the heartless exhortation to pull oneself up by the boot-laces. The

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apostle Paul neither believed in the inevitability of human redemption nor in man's ability to bring it about for himself. No Christian hope is genuine unless it both takes sin seriously and includes the God of salvation in the picture. As well as being both realistic and adequately

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>22</sup> *Mental Health*, 26.

<sup>23</sup> V. Grounds, *Emotional Problems and the Gospel* (Grand Rapids, 1976) 101, 102.

based, the Christian offer of hope is fully rounded. The Christian hope is not a hope for one part of man, à la Gnosticism, but hope for man in his entirety. How this is derived from Pauline anthropology is to be seen in this quote from Stacey as he sums up his findings on the subject:

Any contention that localises the divine energy in one element in man must be fundamentally wrong. In a corrupt person, all is corrupt, even the *nous*, and there is no natural element of deliverance. In a redeemed person, all is redeemed, and even the members of the flesh can serve the law of righteousness. The 'element of deliverance' then covers the whole personality.<sup>24</sup>

So the pastor will want to avoid both pietism which seeks to 'save men's souls', treating man as if he were some kind of disembodied spirit, and the cruder forms of social gospeling which lay so much stress on man's physical and emotional needs that they effectively ignore the inner man, the spiritual dimension. To be truly Christian, pastoral care must hold out hope for the whole man.

Finally we need to take note of the importance of hope for the carer as well as for the one cared for. However strongly we may wish to have as broad a scope for pastoral care as possible, to include encouraging the strong as well as caring for the weak, the fact of the matter is that a good deal of pastoring will involve the pastor devoting himself to the needy and the hurting, and therefore to enter into pastoring without an adequate grasp of genuine Christian hope is almost certainly to consign oneself to frustration and desperation. But for Christian hope, pastoral care would lose much of its driving force and sustaining energy.<sup>25</sup>

## RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

We have noticed so far the coexistence within the Pauline view of man of both a realistic assessment of the extent and seriousness of sin, and a persistent hope held out for man. We have also noticed that this hope is not a mere wishful thinking. We have suggested that the hope is, on the contrary, well founded because it is based on faith in a God who remains committed to man. This brings us to the third of the elements of Pauline anthropology which we are examining for pastoral implications. It is our belief that this element is the most fundamental aspect of Paul's understanding of man and is also of the utmost importance in terms of its implications for Christian caring. Bultmann puts it well: 'Paul constantly sees man as placed before God. The ontological possibility of being good or evil, is simultaneously the ontic possibility of having a

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relationship with God.'<sup>26</sup> As we said above, for Paul, all anthropology is also theology. One cannot hope to fully understand man without reference to his standing before God. Indeed it is not simply a question of an understanding of man which leaves God out of the picture being incomplete, but rather, because God is the most important element in that picture, to leave him out of one's reckoning is to seriously misunderstand man. For Paul, human value resides

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<sup>24</sup> *The Pauline View of Man in Relation to its Judaic and Hellenistic Backgrounds* (London, 1956) 202.

<sup>25</sup> For an excellent treatment of the implicit hope held out for man by nearly all carers see P. Halmos, *The Faith of the Counsellors* (London, 1978<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>26</sup> *Theology of the New Testament*, 1. 228.

in the commitment of God to humanity; it is a bestowed value rather than an inherent value. The hope which Paul holds on to is only meaningful because of that commitment of God. Conversely, the sin of which Paul is so aware comes about precisely because man has chosen to turn his back on that commitment rather than to reciprocate it. The question of how a man relates to his God is the pivotal point of Pauline anthropology. It determines whether it is the consequences of sinfulness or the opportunities of hope that are to the fore-front. Hence whether the soma is seen as the instrument of the flesh or the temple of the Holy Spirit, depends on whether it is dedicated to God. The *nous* becomes darkened and futile when it chooses to ignore what can be known of God. Similarly the transformation of the whole man, his deliverance from conformity to 'the world' can only come about if God is allowed to renew the mind. The flesh ceases to be neutral and becomes a force drawing man into sin, when it, rather than God, becomes the object of a man's trust. The *pneuma* is only revived and transformed when it enjoys fellowship with the Holy Spirit. It is only by virtue of the activity of the same Spirit in a man's life that, although the outer man may be wasting away, the inner man can be daily renewed. We could go on, but the point is clear: what a man is in himself is determined by what he is in relation to God.

Now the implications of all this for the Christian carer are far-reaching. On the most general level, our caring must take God into account. As Adams puts it: 'Is God at work in the world? Then one's counselling system must take account of that fact... A system that fails' to do so is failing to take account of the most important dynamic of all.'<sup>27</sup> Christian caring, then, cannot be atheistic caring or humanistic caring. It starts off with a different understanding of man's essential nature.

Man cannot be understood in terms of himself as a product of the natural world in which he lives, but his life depends upon and finds its meaning only in relation to the divine thou, who addresses him and confronts him as the one who affirms him and also as the one who requires a response from him.<sup>28</sup>

To treat man as if that were not the case is not only short-sighted but unloving.

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More specifically, such a view of man will give the Christian carer insight into the root problem that he is dealing with. As Cosgrove and Mallory put it: 'The Christian counsellor believes that the *ultimate* origins of *most* human difficulties can be traced to man's separation from God and all the detrimental effects that that separation has had on man and his world.'<sup>29</sup>

In other words, man's nature is fundamentally flawed on the spiritual level, on the level of his relationship with his maker, and it is only through a restoration, a healing, on that level that wholeness can be achieved. So pastoral care, if it is to be true to its understanding of man, will inevitably be evangelistic. To try and expunge all traces of evangelism from our pastoring out of some misguided respect for the other person's integrity or religious sensibilities, is in reality not respectful but cruel since it denies him access to the answer to his most fundamental need. Enoch, a consultant psychiatrist in the public sector is interestingly straightforward on this matter: 'when the counsellor asks the oft-repeated question, "what

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<sup>27</sup> Adams, *More than Redemption*, 42.

<sup>28</sup> Smail, *Theological Renewal* 20 (March 1982) 29.

<sup>29</sup> *Mental Health*, 53, 54, emphasis mine.



must I do?"', he must simply be invited to admit the gospel to the understanding of his heart.<sup>30</sup> This approach is, of course, open to the charge that under the guise of caring it is in fact nothing but proselytising. But that is to misunderstand the whole motive behind evangelism in pastoral care. Smail explains his own position thus:

Any pastoral care in which I become involved will have an evangelistic thrust to it. I do not mean that in any crude sense of pressurising or manipulating people in a Christian direction... I speak to them as an evangelist as one whose own centre is in Christ and who is convinced that the greatest service he can do them is to enable them to relate to that same centre in the way that is appropriate to them.<sup>31</sup>

Spiritual regeneration introduces God as an active, present agent in the remaking of the personality. Hence evangelism within pastoral care need not be regarded as a covert method of pursuing church growth, but ought to be seen as the ultimate expression of Christian caring, an expression that arises out of the conviction that man can only flourish in this life when he is properly related to its source.

One obvious corollary of all this is that the Christian carer will want to assert, along with Enoch, that 'Psychotherapy [or any other form of therapy that fails to touch the spiritual dimension] even in its deepest form, does not deal with man's most fundamental needs, his ultimate predicament, the problem of existence and death. It does not deal with his spiritual aspects, the eternal dimension.'<sup>32</sup> This, of course, is not to say that all that one ever does is to seek to evangelise the other person or seek to deepen his relationship with God.

The importance of a human being's relationship to God does not

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mean that a Christian psychotherapist's first order of business is to take advantage of a client's weakened condition and baptize him on the spot. No, the therapist's first responsibility is to address himself to the immediate needs of the client, who often has calamities in his life that need *urgent* attention.<sup>33</sup>

That which is of *urgent* importance is not often of *ultimate* importance, but it is not therefore unimportant. To fondly imagine that pastoring is only of any real value when it is dealing with life's ultimate questions is to consign much of the work of Christian caring to the level of trivia.

The Christian counselor... can touch upon his client's need to deal with his spiritual alienation from God, if the client expects any long-term healing of self. If the client sees no need, or disagrees, this is no reason for the therapist to refuse further treatment. Not everyone is ready, mentally or emotionally to make a personal commitment to God. There are still many ways the therapist can help one who is not ready to make such a commitment.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Healing the Hurt Mind*, 137.

<sup>31</sup> *Theological Renewal*, 20 (March 1982) 27.

<sup>32</sup> *Healing the Hurt Mind*, 121.

<sup>33</sup> Cosgrove and Mallory, *Mental Health*, 55, emphasis mine.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 56.

As Adams points out, the pastor approaches the other person with something to offer in both hands—in the one a treatment for their symptoms, in the other a cure for the disease. While, ultimately, he will of course want to offer the cure, he must always remember that there is value in relieving symptoms. Nor are we suggesting that once the cure has been administered there will be no need for further treatment. As Enoch points out, 'It really is unfair to say "Jesus saves" and suggest that all problems will be solved and all symptoms healed if they merely accept Jesus as Lord.'<sup>35</sup> If our caring is indeed to be true to our understanding of man, then, while recognizing the primacy of the spiritual dimension, of a man's relationship to his God, it will also remember that, although there is a very real duality about man, there is also an overarching unity, so that to deal with the spiritual alone, is no more dealing with the whole man than is an approach based upon a materialistically monadic anthropology.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion then, we must be realistic about man's sinfulness, refusing either to condone or to condemn. We must never lose sight of the hope held out for man, a hope which is neither naive, for it is based on God's ongoing commitment to man, nor limited for it reflects God's concern for the whole man. We must ensure that a proper place is given to the importance of a man's relationship to God as the most crucial aspect of human existence.

These are just three of the lessons to be learned for Christian caring from an examination of a small part of the sources of Christian faith.

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They are relevant and important lessons which stand as a vital reminder that, if pastoral care is to remain distinctively Christian, rather than allowing itself to be conformed to the world, then it must allow itself to be transformed by a renewed examination of its own distinctively Christian roots.

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<sup>35</sup> *Healing the Hurt Mind*, 125.