

SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE
PROBLEMS OF NOUETHETIC COUNSELLING
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF
THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

by
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A B S T R A C T

In recent years there has been much debate amongst evangelical Christians involved in pastoral counselling and care surrounding attempts to produce a biblical model of counselling. Related to this debate has been the question of whether the psychological sciences have a place in Christian counselling or not.

Currently one of the most prominent evangelicals involved in this debate is Jay E. Adams, Dean of the Institute of Pastoral Studies and Director of Advanced Studies at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. Adams has developed what he regards to be a distinctively biblical method of counselling. He calls his method Nouthetic counselling. This term is derived from the Greek verb Noutheteo, to admonish and the related noun, Nouthesia, admonition. Adams has sought to develop a counselling model that is not only comprehensive but one which is based on the Bible alone.

For this reason Adams insists that the psychological sciences are not necessary in Christian counselling for in the Bible the counsellor will find all he needs to assist people with problems.

To promote the principles of Nouthetic counselling, Adams has written many books and publications and has also established The Christian and Counseling and Education Foundation, which publishes The Journal of Pastoral Practice. As a consequence, Nouthetic counselling has developed into an influential movement in the United States and even in South Africa.

Not everyone has accepted the counselling principles espoused by Adams. Nouthetic counselling theory has become the subject of much criticism, not only from the more liberal Christian counsellors, but also from those who would share Adams' commitment to the authority of the Bible. The main areas of criticism are, Adams' rejection of the psychological sciences, the dangers of biblicism, his neglect of the psychological aspects of human nature and consequently his simplistic approach to pathology and his confrontational approach to counselling.

Adams' rejection of the findings of the psychological sciences and his neglect of the psychological aspects of human nature have resulted in serious limitations in the application of Nouthetic counselling methodology to complex problems. At this point, Adams is out of step

with evangelical theology, which, on the basis of the doctrines of General Revelation and Common Grace, recognises the validity of the findings of science. Furthermore, in his attempt to develop a comprehensive, one model approach to counselling, Adams has overlooked the complexity of human nature.

Adams' concern for a biblically based counselling model and the stress he lays on the importance of the spiritual dimensions of counselling have been a major contribution to the development of pastoral counselling and care in the evangelical sector of the church.

Whilst recognising the need for a biblically based counselling approach, recognition must also be given to the insights of the psychological sciences and the need for a multi-modelled approach to counselling.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

A. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

The aim of this dissertation will be to examine critically the Nouthetic Counselling theory of Jay Adams as a resource for counselling in the church today. Nouthetic counselling will be looked at from both a theological and practical perspective. This evaluation will also focus on the extent to which Nouthetic counselling techniques are used among Baptist ministers in South Africa.

As this study will highlight severe limitations in the use of Nouthetic counselling as a resource for counselling, it will also be necessary to examine some possible solutions to the problems of Nouthetic counselling within the context of the church.

B. DEFINITION OF TERMS

While the terms Pastoral Care and Pastoral Counselling will be used synonymously in the study, to be precise "pastoral counseling is a specific discipline within the large discipline of pastoral care". (1)

We may define pastoral care as the total caring ministry of the church, as it responds in loving action to people in their needs. It is "organised, supportive ... care with the intention of building the congregation". (2)

Those offering pastoral care are not only more informed and specially gifted in this area of ministry, but they usually perform it as part of an official church ministry. This must be distinguished from mutual caring which is the most basic form of care and consists of the (usually)

(1) W.E. Hulme, Pastoral Care Come of Age, p.10
Full details in Bibliography for all footnotes.

(2) J.T. de Jongh van Arkel, "A Paridigm for Pastoral Diagnosing", (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of South Africa, 1987), p.9

spontaneous caring actions among believers toward each other. (3)

Pastoral counselling is the specific ministry within the larger ministry of pastoral care. It is,

the task of the professional, trained pastor who creates a helping relationship with people experiencing difficulties or problems for which they seek help. (4)

It can further be described as "short-term focused, goal orientated counseling, focused on a specific personal problem which has as its goal some therapeutic change". (5)

C. THE PROBLEM STATED

It will be shown below that counselling is basic to the purpose and ministry of the church. However, with the rise of the secular psychologies from the Enlightenment onwards, and especially from the beginning of the 1900's, this position was increasingly challenged. (6)

The main reason for this was the fact that both theology and psychology studied human nature but that psychology claimed that its understanding of human nature was scientific. However, most of the psychological studies excluded any idea of God and the spiritual aspects of human nature. This resulted in a questioning of the traditional understanding of human nature espoused by the church. For these reasons, since the beginning of this century and more particularly, since the 1920's, the church has been in the throes of an encounter with psychology and psychiatry which made big inroads into areas which were traditionally considered the domain of the church, areas like sustaining, guiding, healing, and reconciling. Instead of turning to the church with their

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid.

(5) O. Strunk, "Abandoning the Pastoral Identity Issue : Suggestions For a Different Strategy", Journal of Pastoral Care, 18:2, Fall-Winter 1987, p.15

(6) R.F. Hurding, Roots and Shoots : A Guide to Counseling and Psychotherapy, pp.211-212

personal problems, people began to look more and more to secular psychologists for help.

To put the problem in perspective, it will be necessary to look firstly at the place of counselling in the tradition of the church and secondly how the church responded to this challenge from the psychological sciences.

1. Review of the Place of Counselling in the Tradition of the Church

Over the past twenty to twenty five years there has been a proliferation of books, articles and journals on Christian counselling. Pastoral counselling has become a popular movement within the church. This can be seen in the appearance of periodicals such as Pastoral Psychology, The Journal of Pastoral Care, The Journal of Psychology and Theology, The Journal of Pastoral Practice, The Journal of Psychology and Christianity. It can also be seen in the development of various counselling institutions and associations for the promotion of training in counselling, like United Association of Christian Counselors, The National Association of Nouthetic Counselors, The Rosemead School of Psychology, The Counsel for Clinical Training, and The Institute of Pastoral Care. From this it would be natural to conclude that counselling in the modern sense, of helping people to achieve spiritual, mental and emotional wholeness-health, is a recent development in the tradition of the church.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Although pastoral counselling is new in its form it is not new in its purpose. (7) Although it is not ever to be regarded as a text book in counselling, the Scriptures are concerned with relationships. This stress in the Bible falls on man's

(7) W.E. Hulme, Counseling and Theology, p.1

need of close relationships to God and to other human beings in love and trust. God said, "It is not good for man to be alone". (8)

The most important consequence of the fall (Adam's failure to obey God) was a distortion in humanity's relationships. (9) Because humanity's relationship with God was distorted it led to a distortion in the relationship between men and women, manifested in murder, jealousy, coveting, stealing, adultery, lying. In addition it led to a breakdown in the way men and women related to themselves, manifested in lost identity, anxiety (fear), anger, depression, guilt. (10)

According to William Kirwan :

Through the fall Adam tainted the destiny of all who would follow him. An important result of the fall is mental and emotional suffering, formally labelled psycho-pathology. (11)

The Scriptures represent in its message the solution for the restoration of this alienation and the restoration of these relationships. That is what counselling is concerned with, the restoration of these relationships. Ultimately these relationships can only "be restored for each of us through Christ, whose Death and Resurrection bring a message of healing". (12)

Paul calls this the message of reconciliation, which has been committed to the church. (13) According to Ralph Christensen, this message is tied inextricably with the God's word. (14) This word comes to us both corporately and individually. Corporately it comes mainly through

(8) Genesis 2:18

(9) W.T. Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p.38

(10) Ibid., p.40

(11) Ibid., p.38

(12) Ibid.

(13) 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

(14) R.W. Christensen, "The Implications of the Biblical Phrase 'In Christ' for Christian Mission", (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of South Africa 1979), p.158

public preaching. But there are times when it is necessary to bring the word to bear on a specific need of the individual Christian. This is the area of counselling. Thus counselling like preaching is a ministry of the word, (15) but is it a ministry that is more specific and individual.

In the church, both aspects of this ministry of the word have been recognised. The fact that Paul links the gifts of pastors and teachers (16) implies that teaching (including preaching) and shepherding, must both have an equal place in the church. The shepherding function speaks of care and loving concern, which is the area of counselling.

Counselling is therefore an important part of the Christian message and is basic to the Christian tradition. It is implicit in the New Testament's stress on love, in the servant motif, in the meaning of the word diakonia and in the motif of the shepherd. (17)

2. Response of the Church to the Challenge of the Psychological Sciences

a. The Clinical Pastoral Education Movement

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, through the influence of Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939), regarded as the father of modern psychiatry, a radical change took place in the direction and practice of psychology and psychiatry. These two disciplines increasingly came to be regarded as a science and brought new and fresh insights in understanding human behaviour. With this, the counselling role of the pastor and the church was increasingly usurped. According to John Carter and Bruce Narramore,

(15) Jay E. Adams, More Than Redemption, p.279

(16) Ephesians 4:11

(17) C.W. Brister, Pastoral Care in the Church, pp.16-21

society increasingly looked to psychology for help. It resulted in a situation where "the whole process of 'curing sick souls' moved from the church to the doorstep of psychologists and other mental health professionals". (18)

With the new insights provided by psychology and psychiatry, there was a growing awareness that many personal problems a minister faced in pastoral care were of the psychological nature. For this reason, in 1925 the need was seen to integrate psychology and psychiatry with theology. It was Anton T. Boisen who did pioneer work in this field, and can be regarded as a founder of what came to be known as the Clinical Pastoral Education Movement. (19) Beginning with only a few students, he started a loosely organised training programme for seminary students at Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts. (20) Hall stresses the important influence Boisen exercised in the area of pastoral counselling and care when he states, "all of the leaders in the field of clinical training, both in institutions and in theological schools, had some direct or indirect relationship with the beginnings under Anton T. Boisen." (21)

From this simple beginning Clinical Pastoral Education (C.P.E.) has developed into a highly organised movement. One of the men who exerted a major influence from the late 1940's in the C.P.E. Movement was a former student of Boisen's, Seward Hiltner. Hiltner gave expression to the practical implications of Boisen's work for ministry, particularly in

(18) J.D. Carter, B. Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology : An Introduction, p.10

(19) Gary Collins, Helping People Grow : Practical Approaches to Christian Counseling, p.12

(20) C.E. Hall Jr., "Some Contributions of Anton T. Boisen (1876-1965) to Understanding Psychiatry and Religion", Pastoral Psychology, 19:186, September 1968, p.44

(21) Ibid., p.45

the development of the verbatim report. During the 1940's Hiltner's concern for the verbatim report became evident in his publications. He was singularly involved in stressing the use of case material in pastoral studies. Hiltner's main contribution to the C.P.E. Movement was the stress he placed on the theological base of pastoral care. In the early days of the emergence of specific investigations of pastoral practice, any theology present was on the whole réductionistic. As a consequence, most of the early writings were non-theological as a whole and where theological concepts were introduced, they were made subservient to the psychological and psycho-therapeutic principles which apparently seemed more relevant to the data. It would not be accurate to say that Hiltner escaped this pitfall at every point. He too was a product of his time and the thrust of the Movement in which he found significance and meaning naturally affected his formulations. Nevertheless he most assuredly came closer than any writer in dealing forthrightly with the theological implications of the empirical data. He was not only aware of the theology of the Fathers, but saw the importance of maintaining a theological perspective at every point in the investigation of experimental material.

It is significant to note that men like Boisen and Hiltner represent what Gary Collins calls 'Mainstream Movement' in the area of counselling.⁽²²⁾ Although this covers a broad theological spectrum, for the most part it was theologically liberal.⁽²³⁾ According to Carter and Narramore, proponents of this theologically liberal Mainstream Movement,

(22) G.R. Collins (ed.), Helping People Grow : Practical Approaches to Christian Counseling, pp.13-14

(23) Carter and Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology, p.33

stress the universal aspects of the Bible rather than the supernatural and redemptive aspects. Focus on love, freedom, responsibility, and similar virtues but gloss over or redefine the Bible's emphasis on sin and the need for personal salvation. These concepts are not seen as necessary for a proper understanding of human beings. A God of creation or providence is acceptable but not a God of justice and redemption. Christianity is not viewed as essentially different from other religions. Its symbols may be different and Christ is viewed as the 'ultimate man', but at its core Christianity is simply another way to the truth of the good life. (24)

It is therefore not surprising that the theologically liberal section of the church responded positively to the findings of psychology and psychiatry. With their commitment to ministering to the physical and emotional needs of society, psychology offered hope for the present world.

b. An Evangelical Response to the Psychological Sciences

However, not all in the church reacted as positively to the integration of the psychological sciences in counselling. Collins suggests that during the 1930's and 1940's, when clinical pastoral training was being incorporated into many seminaries' curriculum, the conservative theological schools were hesitant and sceptical. He concludes as a result of this scepticism that many evangelicals viewed the clinical pastoral training as a theologically liberal movement and stayed away. (25) They saw the dangers of a wholesale assimilation of the secular psychologies. (26)

Within the past twenty years, there has been a substantial move towards an interfacing of theology and psychology amongst evangelicals. (27)

Some of those who are making a major contribution towards integrating

(24) Ibid., p.85

(25) G. Collins, "The Pulpit and the Couch", "Christianity Today", 19, pp.1087-1091

(26) R.F. Hurding, Roots and Shoots, p.227

(27) Ibid., p.223F

psychology into counselling are Gary Collins, (28) William Hulme, Maurice Wagner, Thomas Oden, Lawrence Crabb, Paul Tournier, and Frank Lake. (29)

A special school was founded with the purpose of promoting an interfacing of psychology and theology in the area of counselling, namely The Rosemead Graduate School of Professional Psychology, at Biola University in the United States. Heading the school are John D. Carter, and S. Bruce Narramore, both professional psychologists. (30) They are also editors of the Journal of Psychology and Theology.

Not all evangelicals involved in pastoral care and counselling have accepted this integration of psychology into pastoral counselling. One of the main opponents of any sort of integration is Jay Adams, Dean of The Institute of Pastoral Studies and Director of Advanced Studies at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. He was responsible in 1969 for introducing a distinctive model of counselling known as Nouthetic Counseling. Through his many publications he has become an influential figure amongst evangelical counsellors on both sides of the Atlantic. (31) Seeking a purely biblical approach to counselling, Adams rejects any form of integration. He constantly reminds pastors of their heritage and resources in their interpersonal encounters with people in the pastoral relationship. His experience of observing pastoral counselling processes in a variety of settings led him to conclude that pastors have relied on psychology rather than on their own Christian tradition. He is a prolific writer and the results of his research appear in an ever increasing series of books. His first book was published in 1970 -

(28) Ibid., p.235

(29) Ibid., p.272

(30) Ibid., pp.264-265

(31) Ibid., p.277

Competent to Counsel. In it he lays down the biblical and theological and psychological foundations for his later works. In his books he challenges the basic assumptions of modern psychiatry and psychotherapy and modern pastoral care. Central to his approach is a place he gives to the Bible in counselling. His chief complaint against the ministry of many clergymen is that they are ineffective and uncreative because they do not know or use the Scriptures. Accordingly, he is diametrically opposed to every form of counselling that is not based upon and defined in terms of the inerrant word of God. Nouthetic counselling has burgeoned into a movement. The Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation exists to promote the principles of Nouthetic counselling and publishes The Journal of Pastoral Practice. The growing popularity of Nouthetic counselling in evangelical circles shows that many ministers feel the need for realistic counselling techniques which accord with their theological convictions rather than running counter to them.

There are definite questions and reservations in regard to this model. The purpose of this study is to evaluate Adams' Nouthetic counselling approach. As part of the preparation for an evaluation of Adams' model a questionnaire was sent to twelve Baptist ministers involved in counselling. It will be shown that from a biblical and practical perspective Nouthetic counselling raises a number of basic problems in pastoral care.

D. CHAPTER OUTLINE

In this study we will consider some possible solutions to the problems of Nouthetic counselling within the context of church. It will be shown that Nouthetic counselling theory arose as a reaction against the integration of the principles of the psychological sciences in the

Mainstream Movement of pastoral counselling and care. To understand the background to the development of Nouthetic counselling theory it will be necessary in Chapter 2 to consider why the liberal section of the church so readily integrated the psychological sciences into their pastoral counselling and care. Here it will be shown that it was essentially their theological framework that led to the Mainstream Movement's positive attitude to the psychological sciences. However, we will see that the counselling theory of this Movement, which is based on their view of Scripture and human nature is unacceptable to those committed to the authority of Scripture.

Chapter 3 will involve a consideration of Adams' background in pastoral counselling and care and specifically his own personal disillusionment and the influence of O. Hobart Mowrer on his own development. The main features of Nouthetic counselling theory will also be presented, namely the three elements that form the basis of Adams' theory of counselling. This discussion will focus on the main controversial aspects of Nouthetic counselling theory, namely, Adams' rejection of the psychological sciences, his behaviouristic approach to change, and the place he gives to the Bible in counselling.

Chapter 4 of this dissertation involves a theological critique of Adams' system of thought, the controversial aspects of Adams' theory mentioned above are the result of his limited view of general revelation and common grace and also his defective view of human nature. As a result of this, it will be seen that Nouthetic counselling theory has very severe limitations in the handling of human pathology. Here we will see the main reasons why Nouthetic counselling theory has only limited application as a counselling resource in the context of church and society.

In the final chapter it will be shown from a survey of a group of Baptist ministers in South Africa, that Nouthetic counselling techniques cannot be used in general counselling for the reasons discussed in Chapter 4. Notwithstanding these limitations, we will see that Adams' biblical perspective has been important in the development of pastoral counselling and care amongst evangelicals. In conclusion, in the light of recent trends amongst Christian counsellors committed to a biblical perspective, the implications of a multi-model approach will be considered as a possible solution to the problems of Nouthetic counselling in the context of church and society.

CHAPTER 2THE RESPONSE TO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY IN THE MAINSTREAM PASTORAL COUNSELLING
AND CARE MOVEMENTA. INTRODUCTION : PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS CHAPTER

As we have seen, the rise of modern psychology and psychiatry met with a mixed reception in the Christian church. Generally, the more theologically conservative wing of the church treated the findings of psychology and psychiatry with suspicion and made no attempt to integrate psychology into its counselling.

It was, as we have seen, the theologically liberal wing of the church which under the leadership of men like Anton Boisen and Seward Hiltner, who attempted to develop an approach to pastoral counselling and care that integrated the findings of psychology and psychiatry. This became known as the Clinical Pastoral Education Movement and represented what Gary Collins has called the "Mainstream Christian Counseling Movement".⁽¹⁾

The purpose of this chapter is to establish firstly the factors which contributed to the openness of the Mainstream Movement to the findings of psychology and psychiatry. As it will be necessary to understand why evangelicals kept aloof from the Mainstream Movement of Pastoral Care and Counseling, an attempt will be made to describe the pastoral counselling of this Movement by referring to Seward Hiltner, who may be regarded as the leading influence in this Movement. Finally it will be necessary to show why this counselling approach is not a viable counselling model for those who take seriously the authority of the Scriptures.

(1) G.R. Collins, Helping People Grow - Practical Approaches to Christian Counseling, p.13

B. THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THOSE IN THE MAINSTREAM OF PASTORAL COUNSELING AND CARE MOVEMENT

Why was it that the conservative wing of the church treated the findings of psychology with suspicion, whereas the liberal wing of the church welcomed it?

The main reason why conservative Christians hesitated to accept the methods and findings of psychology was because they believed there were inherent conflicts between psychology and Christianity. This was partly due to the fact that for the most part the leaders of psychology and psychiatry were anti-Christian and were deeply committed to naturalistic explanations. For example, it is a well known fact that Sigmund Freud dismissed religion as an illusion, a universal obsessional neurosis which served as a narcotic to help potentially troubled people maintain their personal stability. Freud believed that religion was part of humanity's evolutionary development. (2) As children pass through phases of neurosis in their development to adulthood, so humanity as a whole has passed through various stages analogous to neuroses. He regarded religion as a neurosis stage pertaining to humanity's childhood stage of development out of which they must grow up to maturity. (3) Many of the leaders who followed Freud, likewise dismissed God as a human invention and professed human experience as the ultimate reality with no place for the spiritual dimension. An atheistic humanism was a result and this had an influence on psychology. (4) One just needs to look at B.F. Skinner's behaviourism, Albert Ellis' rational-emotive therapy,

(2) S. Freud, The Future of an Illusion, Vol.21, quoted in J.T.Carter & B. Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology - An Introduction, pp.25-26

(3) Ibid.

(4) M.R. McMinn, J.D. Foster, "The Mind Doctors", Christianity Today, 32:68 April 1988, p.17

Rogers' client-centred counselling, or Maslow's third-fourth psychology to realise that they all attack the very basis of Christianity. (5)

X According to John Carter and Bruce Narramore, the main areas of conflict between conservative Christianity and psychology were the following :

1. Psychology strongly stressed the naturalistic explanation of human behaviour, which of course conflicted with the conservatives' commitment to a biblical supernaturalism.
2. Many of the assumptions about human nature by psychology ran counter to biblical anthropology.
3. Psychology's emphasis on determinism conflicted with the Christian's understanding of free will and personal responsibility.
4. Psychology's emphasis on sex as an explanation of human behaviour was unacceptable to the conservative Christians.
5. Psychology's focus on emotions and feelings is in sharp contrast to the heavy emphasis on cognition by conservative Christians. (6)

In addition, the evangelical segment of the church defined the mission of the church in terms of personal salvation rather than the emotional needs of humanity. Their concern was primarily salvation. That does not mean that they were not interested about social needs but these were mainly confined to physical needs as a tool of evangelism.

The question that now needs to be addressed is if there is a conflict between psychology and traditional Christianity, how was it possible for the liberal wing of the church to accept psychology? To understand why the liberal wing of the church responded so positively to modern psychology and psychiatry and in this way spearheaded the Pastoral Counseling Movement, one needs to understand the theological framework

(5) Ibid.

(6) Carter and Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology, p.32

with which they worked. It is important to grasp the fact that it was their view of the nature of revelation that enabled them to integrate psychology and theology. They were being consistent with their own presuppositions. One needs to keep in mind that every theory of counselling makes assumptions that relate to epistemology (the nature of truth); Anthropology (the doctrine of human nature); and these will also to a large extent, influence counselling techniques. One also needs to understand that the liberal wing of the church represented a radical move away from traditional Christianity.

This was manifested in the 1920's in theological divisions in most denominations into liberal and conservative/evangelical groups. J.I. Packer points out that this division was sharper in America than any other part of the world. (7) The significance of this will be appreciated if we keep in mind that it was in America that the Pastoral Counseling and Care Movement had its origin and received its greatest impetus.

Up to now we have referred a number of times to the liberal wing of the church. What is a liberal? J.I. Packer uses the term to cover all those who are wedded to the methods of 19th century biblical criticism. (8) As will be shown below the roots of liberalism can be traced to the 19th century in Germany, and was strongly influenced by the 18th century Enlightenment. To be precise, one needs to distinguish between liberalism of doctrine and liberalism in biblical scholarship. The one rejecting the traditional doctrines of Christianity and the other rejecting the authenticity, historicity and divine inspiration of the

(7) J.I. Packer, Fundamentalism and The Word of God, p.25

(8) Ibid., p.146

Bible. However in practice the two were closely related.

In the realm of doctrine, Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) exerted major influence. He argued that humanity has the ability to arrive at truths through its own unaided reason. (9) This stood in marked contrast to the Christian concept of autonomous revelation. Accordingly revelation was deprived of its religious authority. (10)

Kant created two worlds, the worlds of the Phenomena, this is the world which can be weighed and measured, the external world of science, that can be perceived by reason through the raw material of the senses. Then there is the Noumenal world, the world of God from which we derive the concepts of meaning and values. There is no way in which we can perceive this world by reason. In fact, he questioned whether anyone could prove the existence of anything, either outside of oneself, or even in oneself. We have the data of our senses, but nothing beyond that. (11)

This is how Harvey Conn sums up the effect of this philosophy:

God is straitjacketed by Kant into a soundproof bulkhead tied to the phenomenal world only by Kant's umbilical cord of man's need for the idea of God in the world of ethics ... God has been effectively isolated from man and man has been effectively isolated from God. (12)

This isolation of God into the Noumenal world is a favourite theme of contemporary theology and is clear in Hiltner's thinking. This is how S.N. Williams puts it:

The Enlightenment could relegate the Creator to a remote caretaker or irrelevant possibility, deny the incapacity of human nature to attain Heaven by its own created resources and affirm that the moral life, conducted in good faith, if not complete knowledge, fulfils the basic purpose of existence. (13)

(9) H.M. Conn, Contemporary World Theology - A Layman's Guide Book, p.4

(10) S.V.Ferguson D.F.Wright (eds.), New Dictionary of Theology, S.N.Williams, "The Enlightenment", p.223

(11) F.A.Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live - The Rise and Decline of Western Culture, p.160

(12) H.M. Conn, Contemporary World Theology, pp. 5-6

(13) Ferguson & Wright, New Dictionary of Psychology, S.N.Williams, "The Enlightenment", p.224

This resulted in an openness to scientific discovery unshackled from the authority of the church, as well as a hostile attitude to traditional Christianity and a refusal to be bound by the historic creeds and confessions. Kant spoke of the Enlightenment; "as the spirit's determination to exercise its intellectual faculties in unfettered integrity." (14)

Side by side with liberalism of doctrine, there developed a liberalism in biblical scholarship with the establishment of the so-called Historical-Critical method which called into question the authenticity of the biblical documents. As the proper object of Historical-Critical method, the Bible was treated like any other set of documents from the past and, like any other document, it was subject to the intrusion of error. In fact it was regarded as nothing more than "a fallible human record of religious thought and experience rather than a divine revelation of truth and reality". (15)

The Bible was no longer regarded as unique or inspired. These views exerted a strong influence on Protestant European theology for half a century until World War 1 and provided the basis for a move away from historical Christianity and a redefining of traditional Christian beliefs. J.I. Packer summarises the main tenets of this early form of liberal theology as follows:

1. The Universal Fatherhood of God as well as the universal brotherhood of man.
2. The inherent goodness of man.
3. An emphasis on the humanity of Jesus Christ as an example and teacher but not as a Saviour from sin, atoning for man's guilt. In reality Jesus Christ was seen as no more than man.

(14) Ibid., p.223

(15) Ibid., p.385

4. Christianity was regarded as only one of many ways to God, although the best and highest of religions.
5. The Bible was not seen as God's revelation to man but a record of man's experience of God. (16)

According to Packer:

Liberalism swept away entirely the Gospel of a supernatural redemption of sinners by God's Sovereign Grace. It reduced grace to nature, divine revelation to human reflection, faith in Christ to following His example, and receiving new life as turning over a new leaf; it turned supernatural Christianity into one more form of natural religion, a thin mixture of morals and mysticism. (17)

It was in this context that the liberal wing of the church, no longer bound to traditional Christianity, with a redefined understanding of the mission of the church, welcomed the rise of psychology and psychiatry as a means of assisting them with their work. The mission of the church was seen to minister to the social needs of humanity. If the church were to succeed in its mission in the world today it had to concern itself with salvation here and now and not some future "pie-in-the-sky-when-we-die". Concepts such as personal salvation, scriptural inerrancy, heaven and hell and human depravity were rejected as irrelevant to twentieth century man.

In the 1920's, this led to a bold innovation in pastoral care and clinical psychological study. Carter and Narramore point out that,

as this segment of the church moved further from a focus on biblical theology and personal salvation, it turned increasingly to sociology, psychology and politics as an alternative means of ministering to the needs of society. (18)

The person who did more than any other to initiate this ideal was Anton Boisen, who, utilising case study techniques, commissioned a new instrument in the study of pastoral care. In the United States this movement, as we have seen, reached the place where it was organised as

(16) J.I. Packer, Fundamentalism and the Word of God, p.26

(17) Ibid., p.27

(18) Carter and Narramore, The Integration of Psychology & Theology, p.33

the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. Although it has not yet reached a similar stage elsewhere, it is reflected in men like Paul Tournier and Theodore Bovel in Switzerland and Frank Lake in Britain.

In recent years no one made a greater contribution to integrating psychology and counselling than Seward Hiltner. He, more than any other person, moulded and directed the course of the C.P.E. Movement. This is how Simon Doniger assesses Hiltner's contribution. He states:

Hiltner has pioneered in bringing new depths and breadths to the ministry through his contribution to such areas as Pastoral Theology, Clinical Pastoral Education and the like. (19)

It was his approach to pastoral care and counselling that provided the model which others followed in the Mainstream Movement. In order to understand the counselling approach of those in this Movement the main features of Hiltner's Pastoral Theology will be outlined.

C. AN OUTLINE OF THE MAIN FEATURES OF HILTNER'S PASTORAL THEOLOGY/COUNSELLING

According to Hielema, the theological concepts that Hiltner employs in his pastoral theology was affected by the epistemological and metaphysical viewpoints of Alfred North Whitehead, Paul Tillich and Anton T. Boisen. Hielema points out that,

The position a person takes and the method he employs are intrinsically related. In terms of the teachings of Whitehead, Tillich and Boisen this means that there can be no divorce between the message they have (and the methods they use) and the teachings of Seward Hiltner, for the two ...are interdependent. (20)

In order to understand how Hiltner's pastoral theology was affected by the viewpoints of the above scholars, it will be necessary to give a

(19) W.B.Oglesby Jnr. (ed.), The New Shape of Pastoral Theology : Essays in Honor of Seward Hiltner, p.5

(20) J.S. Hielema, Pastoral or Christian Counseling : A Confrontation with American Pastoral Theology in particular Seward Hiltner and J.E. Adams, p.32

brief summary of the main aspects of their teaching that affected Hiltner's theological method.

1. The Roots of Hiltner's Pastoral Theology

a. Alfred North Whitehead

The central idea of Whitehead's theological system is that nothing in the universe is static, reality is a process of becoming. God is but an aspect of all reality. (21) Even God is subject to becoming. Therefore God is not to be conceived as being over and above the universe. The only way for man to know God is for man to create God in his own image. According to Whitehead there is no such thing as dogmatic finality. (22)

Applying this philosophy to theology, it means that theology is thus also seen as in the process of development. There is no such thing as a final revelation. There is no such thing as eternal truth, rooted in a biblical revelation. Truths need to be reformulated in the light of the current situation. By this we don't just mean that truth must be communicated in a way that is relevant to modern man, but that truth itself must be reformulated. According to Hielema, Hiltner applied this principle in his work time and again. (23) Because revelation is dynamic, in the process of development, it is wrong to accept concepts about creation, sin, providence, grace, the gospel, sickness, predestination etc., as formulated in former generations. (24) He believed that, "in the light of scientific findings Christians must put a new eye

(21) Ferguson & Wright, (ed.), New Dictionary of Theology, p.534

(22) H. Conn, Contemporary World Theology, p.82

(23) J.S.Hielema, Pastoral or Christian Counseling, p.12

(24) S. Hiltner, "The Death of God : A Psychological Perspective", Pastoral Psychology, 17:167, October 1968, p.7

on 'the Christian revelation itself'. (25) The point Hiltner is making then is that truth is not absolute, truth is in the making. The Bible cannot be regarded as a final word in any sense. The implication is that the Bible is only one of the means of building a pastoral counselling theory. (26)

b. Paul Tillich

Hiltner was also influenced by Paul Tillich (1886 - 1965). Tillich had a passionate concern for relating the biblical message to his contemporary situation. He attempted to bridge the gap between Christian theology and secular thought. In constructing his system, Tillich used what he called the method of correlation. The method of correlation is an effort to adapt the Christian message to the modern mind without at the same time distorting or losing the essential character of the Christian message. Tillich defines the method of correlation as the explanation of the content of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence. He says, "Symbolically speaking, God answers man's questions, and under the impact of God's answers man asks them". (27)

Tillich believed that it is impossible to answer man's existential questions by using answers given by the biblical writers. These answers, he believed, were formulated in terms of their world view. We need to get behind the symbols based on their world view and answer the questions in terms of our world view. For this reason Tillich believed that the fundamental conceptions of historic Christianity had to be

(25) S. Hiltner, "Faith in Cosmology", Pastoral Psychology, 19:187 October 1968, p.7

(26) J.S.Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling, p.231

(27) Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol.1 p.51

remodelled to fit the frame of reference in which man today is supposed to do his thinking. How did Tillich reinterpret the fundamental conceptions of historic Christianity? Tillich saw God as man's symbolic answer to the search for courage that overcomes the anxiety of man's boundary situation between being and non-being. (28) God is neither a thing nor a being. God is being itself, "the ground of our being". (29) The biblical distinction between Creator and Creation of course vanishes. Tillich saw sin as estrangement from being. (30) He rejects historic Christianity's teaching on the person and work of Christ. Christ is a symbol of the "New Being in whom estrangement is overcome." (31) In other words, Jesus Christ stands as an example, a symbol, of how man can overcome his existential conflicts, and overcome his estrangement from himself, from others and from his ground of being. Justification is a symbol word to designate that man is accepted in spite of himself. This means that man is not saved by an act of believing, he is already accepted, he only needs to see this for himself. (32) According to Tillich, man himself holds the key to the solutions to his existential problems. Psychology and psychiatry provide man with the key and not the revealed truth of the Bible. He insisted that,

Theology had to learn from the psychoanalytical method the meaning of grace. The word grace, which had lost any meaning, has gained a new meaning by the way in which the analyst deals with his patients, he accepts them. (33)

According to Wayne Oates, Tillich opened the door for the use of the psychological method in theology. He also provided the pastoral psychologist with a theological method for translating the power of the gospel into the idiom of twentieth century thought, namely a

(28) Ibid., p.261

(29) Ibid.

(30) Ibid., p.263

(31) P. Tillich, Systematic Theology, vol.2 p.109

(32) Ibid., p.204

(33) P. Tillich, Theology of Culture, p.124

psychological way of thinking, a psychological idiom . (34)

According to Hielema, Hiltner built his pastoral theology on both Tillich's method of correlation and also upon his idea of acceptance, which can be related to Hiltner's notion of man's self-fulfillment and freedom.

c. Anton T. Boisen

Hiltner was also deeply indebted to Anton T. Boisen, whom he called "this great teacher of mine". (35) Boisen was a pioneer in the development of clinical pastoral training. His major work arose out of his own inner conflicts. He suffered an acute psychotic reaction necessitating hospitalisation where he recorded the process of his illness and recovery through letters to friends. He subsequently went on to graduate work on psychology and religion and became an eminent teacher, author and originator of clinical pastoral training. Much of his original thinking came from his tireless empirical study to test the insights formed during his period of acute conflict. On July 1st, 1924, Boisen was appointed as chaplain to Worcester State Hospital. It was during his time at Worcester State Hospital that the Clinical Pastoral Training Movement was born. Soon after his appointment he began to consider taking some theological students in training. In the summer of 1924 four theological students came to Worcester as the first Clinical Pastoral Training group. This is how he describes what he attempted to do:

I wanted them (the students) to learn to read human documents as well as books, particularly those revealing documents, which are opened up at the inner level of judgement. (36)

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- (34) W.E.Oates, "The Contribution of Paul Tillich to Pastoral Psychology", Pastoral Psychology, 19:181, February 1968, pp.12-13
- (35) S. Hiltner, "The Heritage of Anton T. Boisen", Pastoral Psychology, 16:158, November 1965, p.10
- (36) A.T. Boisen, The Exploration of the Inner World, p.1

For him the problems of sin and salvation, of hell and heaven, of atonement and judgement, could not only be understood by the careful study of theological books but also through firsthand observation of those who were struggling with the basic realities of their lives. He felt that we must not begin with traditions or systems formulated in books, "but with open minded exploration of living human experience in order to build up a body of generalisation". (37)

Boisen was not attempting to introduce a new theology, but only a new method of theological study. He wanted "theological study to be relevant and not like so much theological study of that time, abstract, removed from life and divorced from the tasks of ministry". (38)

This new method of theological study involved the use of clinical case studies using psychological insights aimed towards morality and religion. The emphasis was therefore on learning by doing, in other words, on actual experience. He encouraged his students to write life histories of patients in order to discover the factors that produced both their illness and their potential strengths. It is this aspect of the Clinical Case Method that became one of the most important ingredients in the clinical training of theological students as Boisen saw it.

It is significant that all the leaders in the field of clinical pastoral training, both in institutions and in theological schools, had some direct or indirect relationship with Anton T. Boisen. (39)

2. Conclusion

From this it should be obvious that there is one thing that is common to Whitehead's Process Philosophy, Tillich's Correlation Method and Boisen's Living Human Document Theory ; a total rejection of a theology

(37) Ibid., p.251

(38) S.Hiltner, "Fifty Years of C.P.E.", The Journal of Pastoral Care, p.91

(39) C.E.Hall Jr., "Some Contributions of Anton T. Boisen (1876 - 1965) to Understanding Psychiatry and Religion", Pastoral Psychology, 19:136 September 1968, p.45

that focuses on an absolute final revelation and consequently a reformulation of traditional Christian beliefs, and the opening up of theology to the psychological sciences. With this point of view, Hiltner entirely agreed and this determined his approach to pastoral theology and was the main reason why he was so open to the findings of the psychological sciences.

D. AN EVALUATION OF THE PASTORAL COUNSELLING OF THE MAINSTREAM MOVEMENT

In seeking to establish whether the pastoral theology of Hiltner and that of the Mainstream Movement is a viable counselling model for those committed to an evangelical theology, it will be necessary to compare Hiltner's view in two areas that have a direct influence on any pastoral counselling model with that of the views of orthodox evangelicalism.

For the sake of comparison it will be necessary to explain what we mean by evangelicalism. The term, according to J.I. Packer, refers to those who hold to the following fundamentals of Christianity:

The inspiration and infallibility of Scripture,
The deity of Christ,
His virgin birth and miracles,
His penal death for our sins
His physical resurrection and personal return. (40)

The two areas which are critical in evaluating any theory of pastoral counselling and care are, its view of Scripture and its anthropology.

It is here that we can see how the view of Whitehead Tillich and Boisen affected Hiltner's pastoral theory and to what extent Hiltner differs from the view of evangelicals.

X 1. Scripture and Its Use

What is the place of Scripture in constructing a basis for pastoral theology? What part does the Bible play in counselling? We have seen,

(40) J.I.Packer, Fundamentalism and The Word of God, p.24f

influenced by Whitehead, and Tillich, Hiltner rejects any concept of complete truth. Consequently he does not accept Scripture as a final word. It is only part of the development in our understanding of truth. Revelation must not be identified with the Scriptures.⁽⁴¹⁾ The reason for this is the fact that the Bible was written by humans conditioned by values, customs and ideas of their time. God's truths had to pass through the prism of their imperfect lives. Hiltner insisted that,

We must not be chained to the Bible but we see it both as an historical record and as speaking to us today if we get through the complexities and hear that message.⁽⁴²⁾

To get through these complexities, Hiltner wants to demythologise the Bible. This would mean, for example, that Christ's incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection are not so much to be regarded as facts but understood as an experience.⁽⁴³⁾ According to Hiltner it would be wrong to confine revelation to the Bible. There is no such thing as final revelation because the word comes to man through life.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Revelation is therefore not something static, but something dynamic, it emerges from the Sitz-im-Leben.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The Sitz-im-Leben includes the latest scientific findings. In fact Hiltner believes that Scripture must be interpreted in the light of these scientific findings.⁽⁴⁶⁾ It was his view that "we need to utilise any knowledge and wisdom we can get from other sources".⁽⁴⁷⁾ This means that the Bible is only "a way of constructing a basis for pastoral theology".⁽⁴⁸⁾ It is for this reason

(41) S.Hiltner, Ferment in a Ministry, p.53

(42) S.Hiltner, Pastoral Care in the Liberal Church, p.226

(43) S.Hiltner, "Psychology and the Resurrection", Pastoral Psychology, 16:15, April 1965, pp.5-7

(44) S.Hiltner, Pastoral Care in the Liberal Church, pp.225,234

(45) J.S.Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling, p.242

(46) S.Hiltner, "Faith and Cosmology", Pastoral Psychology, 19:187, October 1968, p.7

(47) S.Hiltner, The Christian Shepherd, p.14

(48) S.Hiltner, Pastoral Care in the Liberal Church, p.226

that Hielema accuses Hiltner of equalising Scripture with other sources and to that extent degrading the sufficiency of Scripture. (49) The result is, that in practice, Hiltner relies more heavily on the insights of science than the Bible and interprets Scripture in the light of psychodynamic principles. (50)

The pastoral theology of the Mainstream Movement is not only based on the findings of science, in addition great weight is given to empirical investigations through pastoral interviews. Thomas Oden describes the method in this way:

The overwhelming weight of authority for theological knowledge is given to experience One first does certain things and experiences certain relationships, like shepherding the flock, and only then draws valid theological conclusions. (51)

In other words, theological conclusions are drawn from the counsellor/counsee relationship.

We have here the governing principle behind Hiltner and the Mainstream Movement's approach to pastoral counselling, the assumption that Scripture is only one source of truth and must be interpreted in the light of the world view of twentieth century man. This, of course, affected Hiltner's methodology. It led Hiltner to adopt a functionalistic approach to his pastoral theology. This means that he emphasised the functions of the ministry rather than theoretical matters. He saw pastoral theology essentially as a type of problem solving. His pastoral theology can also be described as operation-centred which means that "theological conclusions or theory and basic principles, emerge from reflection primarily on acts or events or functions from a particular perspective". (52) In other words, the starting point of Hiltner's

(49) J.S.Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling, pp.232-233

(50) Ibid., p.231

(51) T.C.Oden, Contemporary Theology and Psychotherapy, p.89

(52) J.S.Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling, p.10

pastoral theology is not theology itself but the situation. He begins not with tradition but with the "open-minded explanation of human experience ... to build up a body of generalisation". (53) Theological conclusions are drawn from inter-personal relationships and pastoral experience. In particular, from the examination of actual pastoral conversations and clinical relationships. His pastoral theology is therefore based on insights and truths obtained from case studies and pastoral conversations.

How does this approach compare with the approach of evangelicals? According to Carter and Narramore, this approach has serious limitations for those committed to an orthodox view of Scripture. They correctly point out that while this approach opens

the possibility of meaningful dialogue between psychology and theology, it does so at the expense of the evangelical view of Scripture. It takes a 'cookie cutter' approach in which the theories of psychology are pressed into the dough of Scripture. The dough that fits within the cutter is retained while whatever falls outside is rejected It reduces Scripture (or religion) to psychology and robs it of its revelational and supernatural content ... what is left is simply psychology from the human perspective. (54)

What is the evangelical view of Scripture? The evangelical view of Scripture is that it is "given by inspiration of God" (55) meaning that it has its origin in God and can be correctly called, God's word written. (56) Furthermore, it is infallible and inerrant which, according to J.I. Packer means that it never deceives or misleads and is wholly trustworthy and reliable and wholly true. (57) This, "does not, however, guarantee the infallibility and inerrancy of any interpretation". (58) Furthermore account must be taken of the fact

(53) Ibid., p.84

(54) Carter and Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology, p.89

(55) 2 Timothy 3:16

(56) J.I. Packer, Fundamentalism and the Word of God, p.75

(57) Ibid., p.75

(58) Ibid., p.96

that Scripture does not claim to teach science. Inerrancy must not be connected to form, which is rooted in the world view of the biblical writers, it is connected to content which is authoritative in all matters of Christian life and faith. (59) Consequently, all human ideas are to be tested by Scripture's teachings. It is our only infallible guide to life. The Bible is accepted as the final authority on all of life's questions and is therefore important for developing a model or theory for counselling. That means that pastoral care can only proceed in complete dependence upon the Scriptures. We have to listen to the word of God and formulate our theories and methodologies on the basis of God's word and not on the basis of case studies or research. This does not mean that evangelicals necessarily treat the Bible as a text book in counselling. But they do accept that it contains truths which are normative for counselling. John Frame puts it this way:

The Scriptures do not contain all knowledge which we must have, but Scripture contains all the Commandments; Scripture contains everything that God requires us to believe and to do. Scripture does not tell us how many trees there are, but it does tell us what God wants us to do with the trees, to use them to His Glory, and out of love for fellow man. And as we grow in knowledge and in experience of the world, we learn how to apply God's commands to new and fresh situations. (60)

As we saw earlier the Bible is concerned with relationships, our relationship with God and our relationship with each other. Ultimately all counselling is concerned with the restoration of relationships. The Bible represents in its message the solution for the restoration of humanity's relationships. What about research and empirical evidence obtained through the counselling interview? Research is valuable, but it must be interpreted and evaluated. Scripture must be the final authority.

(59) Ibid., pp.95, 97

(60) J.Frame, "Biblical Authority", Westminster Philosophical Conference, p.8

This is how Oden puts it:

Although we hardly wish to challenge the validity of interview analysis in pastoral care we seriously question whether this alone is adequate as a vantage point for drawing theological conclusions without the theological equilibrium that comes from the sustained study of Scripture and tradition and the struggle for rational systematic self consistency. (61)

How does Hiltner and the Mainstream Movement measure up in the area of anthropology? What are the underlying assumptions regarding human nature that emerge in their model of counselling and care?

2. Anthropology

Anthropology from a theological perspective deals with the origin and nature of humanity. Thurneyson has quite correctly claimed that, "The underlying understanding of man will determine the form and the theory and practice of pastoral care". (62) What was Hiltner's view of human nature?

He developed his anthropology around the notion of freedom and self transcendence. He placed a great deal of emphasis on man's freedom. He rejected any idea of dependence upon God for he felt it would lead to irresponsibility on the part of man. He states:

God values freedom in His creatures so much that, despite His desire for their freedom, He is unready to bring about this consummation from outside without their co-operation and initiative. (63)

With the fundamental freedom that man has, he has the capacity, according to Hiltner, to lift himself out of his despair and tragedy. He "holds in his hands the key of his own self fulfillment". (64) Humanity has inherent potential to mature in responsible self realisation. According to Hielema Hiltner does not become tired of saying that man must believe in his own creative abilities. Man has to stretch his muscles and grow. (65) Humanity is able, unaided, to throw off defeat and

(61) T.C.Oden, Contemporary theology and Psychotherapy, p.90

(62) E.Thurneyson, A Theology of Pastoral Care, p.52

(63) S.Hiltner, Theological Dynamics, p.81

(64) Ibid., p.80

(65) J.S.Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling, p.68

failure and be made whole. He has the capacity and the strength to devise, quite unaided, the steps which will lead him to a mature and more comfortable relationship to his reality.

It is obvious that Hiltner thus has a very optimistic view of humanity. Theologically one can define his anthropology as Pelagian in character.⁽⁶⁶⁾ This is clearly brought out in his understanding of original sin. For Hiltner, original sin is another way of explaining the effects of the environment on humanity, it has nothing to do with the effects of Adams' sin transmitted to every human being.⁽⁶⁷⁾ This is how Carter and Narramore summarise his view of sin:

People with emotional problems were not necessarily depraved sinners. Instead they were victims of their environment. The solution to their ailments did not necessarily lie in a spiritual rebirth and consequent growth. Instead it lay in an anthropocentric growth process that need not be concerned with supernatural phenomena.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Hiltner's optimistic view of man led him to adopt a nonjudgemental and nonconfrontational approach in counselling. He stresses the importance of approaching the counsellee with an open mind. It is the perception which the client has of himself, his world, and the counsellor which is important, not what the counsellor believes or is trying to do. The basic stance of the counsellor is that of unconditional, positive regard. This involves the counsellor's genuine willingness, for the counsellee to be whatever feeling is going on in him at the moment, irrespective of what it is, fear, hatred, love, anger or pride. It means that the counsellor cares for the counsellee in a nonpossessive way - in fact he values the counsellee in a total rather than conditional way. This attitude of respect for the counsellee, for his capacity and his right

(66) Ibid., p.234

(67) J.D.Carter and B.Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology, p.87

(68) Ibid., p.35

for self direction is of primary importance for Hiltner. Because the counsellee has the capacity within himself to rise above his problem, the counsellor is no more than a facilitator helping the counsellee to release his inner resources. What part does religion play in counselling? According to Hiltner, it is a "channel of access the minister has to personality". (69)

It is this optimistic view of humanity and faith in man's capacity to achieve ultimate self fulfillment which underlies the pastoral theology of Hiltner and the C.P.E. Movement which is unacceptable to evangelicals. Basic to a biblical understanding of man is the affirmation that man is created in the image and likeness of God. (70) In other words, human beings are creatures of God. It is impossible to understand man apart from his relationship to God. According to Berkouwer,

Anyone who tries to construct a picture of man or of himself without the light of divine revelation can never obtain anything except the picture in which the unique nature of man does not appear The relation of man's nature to God is not something which is added to an already complete, self-enclosed, isolated nature; it is essential and constitutive for man's nature, and man cannot be understood apart from this relationship. Only an abstract view of man, which ignores this relationship, can abstract or separate the knowledge of man from the knowledge of God with the unavoidable result that such knowledge becomes abstract, and no longer refers to actual man, real man, man as he really is. (71)

Also basic to our understanding of man is the reality of the fall of man into sin, which has broad implications for our understanding of personality. According to John White,

In that fall (man) was both morally and mortally wounded. Sin has warped his personality. But it has done more. It has alienated him from God and distorted his relationship with creation ... it also impaired (though it did not destroy) his ability to think and to make decisions. More serious still, sin, like a disease, not only made him mortal but made it impossible for him, in spite of his best resolutions, to refrain from sinning. (72)

(69) S.Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling, p.187

(70) Genesis 1:27

(71) G.C.Berkouwer, Man : The Image of God, pp.21-23

(72) J.White, The Shattered Mirror, p.23

Hiltner's optimistic view of man does not take into account the reality of the fall and the effect of sin on man's personality. We have to reject his view of man as natural, socialised, constructive and forward moving with the potential for growth and self-actualisation. The evangelical would argue that as a consequence of the fall man does not have the inner resources to make radical changes in his life. Man does not have the capacity to achieve ultimate self-fulfillment. For this reason Hielema asks whether man in Hiltnerian thought is really able to overcome the destructive forces of evil of which Paul speaks. (73) Hiltner's understanding of the reality and effects of the fall is defective.

However, the biblical view of humanity does not only take the fall into account but also the divine purpose and merciful intervention for humanity and therefore regards humanity as alienated by sin but capable of reconciliation. The teaching of the image of God in Scripture is framed in the context of both creation and re-creation, which raises the doctrine of Soteriology. The relevance of this teaching to pastoral care, for even a non-Christian psychologist like Mowrer, is reflected in his observance that,

Protestantism has, on the whole, handled the problem of guilt very badly ... the Gospel of Sin, Salvation and Redemption is not one of bondage but a liberation, hope and strength; we must, I believe return to it in all seriousness. (74)

For the evangelical, then, there can be no healing in the psycho-therapeutic process, unless the counsellor and counsellee accept that apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, man cannot change and modify his behaviour. Personality growth in the ultimate sense is not the work of man. Thus any attempt to deal with man's predicament apart from this

(73) J.S.Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling, p.254

(74) H.Mowrer, Crisis, Psychiatry and Religion, p.196

diagnosis and solution will be fruitless.

E. CONCLUSION

Quite clearly the C.P.E. Movement and Hiltner in particular were endeavouring to integrate the findings of the psychological sciences and theology, to develop a workable model of counselling and care. They were also motivated by deep concern for human need. Psychology and psychiatry were seen as a means of meeting that human need. The contribution of the C.P.E. Movement in the whole area of pastoral care and counselling must not be underestimated. The C.P.E. Movement has provided standards for training pastoral counsellors; provided supervised counsellor/counsellor training; investigated various methods of relating theology and the psychological sciences and demonstrated the relevance of the psychological sciences to pastoral counselling.

However, the great weakness of the C.P.E. Movement's approach to pastoral counselling and care has been the way they have divorced their counselling from the teaching of the Bible and placed it within the framework of secular psychology. In this connection, Wayne Oates in his book Protestant Pastoral Counseling, warns against the dangers of selling out to psychology. While acknowledging the contributions of clinical methodologies from other disciplines, the insights of social and cultural anthropology, the know-how of psychotherapists, the skills of psycho-social roles analysis etc., he is however concerned that pastoral counsellors are in the awkward position of having sold their birthright for a mess of psychological pottage, because of the dangers of pastors uncritically adopting the theoretical presuppositions of psychology. (75)

(75) W.Oates, Protestant Pastoral Counseling, p.23

Paul Mauger sums up the situation in this way:

Having abandoned much of the orthodox dogma of their churches, they have been worshipping at psychoanalytic altars. This new psychological theology seems much more in tune with our modern era than traditional theology, and many ministers and theologians have adopted it with the enthusiasm of a knight closing in on the Holy Grail. While a critical appraisal of traditional theology in the light of the contemporary scene may be laudable, the uncritical acceptance of the highly speculative system of psychoanalysis is dangerous folly. The pot of gold some theologians have sought at the end of the psychoanalytic rainbow may indeed turn out to be "a mess of psychological pottage". (76)

It should be obvious why this approach to pastoral counselling and care is unacceptable to those committed to an evangelical view of Scripture and humanity.

In the remainder of this thesis we will look at an alternative model of pastoral counselling and care that has been developed by Jay Adams who represents the view that there can be no co-operation between Christianity and psychology. His view will be looked at in detail and evaluated in order to arrive at a counselling model that is both acceptable to evangelicals and is relevant to the needs of man.

(76) P.A.Mauger, "Psychology, Theology, and Sin", Pastoral Psychology, 23:27, October 1972, p.6

CHAPTER 3AN EVANGELICAL RESPONSE TO PASTORAL COUNSELLING AND CARE - A DESCRIPTION OF THE NOUTHETIC COUNSELLING OF JAY ADAMSA. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS CHAPTER

As we have seen, in contrast to the liberal wing of the church, evangelicals by and large, disassociated themselves from the psychological sciences. This is not surprising, since many of those in the forefront of psychology and psychiatry were not sympathetic to Christianity and were committed to naturalistic explanations in contrast to the evangelical's commitment to the supernatural. Generally speaking, evangelical pastors involved in counselling tended to be directive authoritarian and insensitive to the needs and the feelings of counselees. According to Carter and Narramore,

The pastoral counselling of the typical conservative minister was often very limited. And when he did counsel, it was usually following a conversion, or in periods of death, grief, or special hardship. The bulk of their counselling ministry was of a directive, Bible-teaching nature that failed to cope with many of the hidden wishes and frustrations of emotional living. The typical conservative minister was twenty or thirty years behind his liberal colleague in being aware of the contributions of psychology to the understanding of personality. (1)

However, as evangelicals increasingly became more sensitive to the emotional and psychological needs of people, they realised how poorly equipped they were and that they needed to increase their understanding of the human personality and learn better principles of counselling. Yet, when an evangelical sought to further his studies in counselling, he was faced with the problem of where to study and what to read. With a few exceptions, the only training and books available came from those within the ACPE movement. Thus an evangelical minister faced a tension: on the one hand, his training was not adequate to equip him to help troubled people, but, on the other hand, the training available brought

(1) J.D. Carter, B. Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology : An Introduction, P. 37

him in conflict with his theological presuppositions. Increasingly then, the need was felt in evangelical circles, to develop realistic counselling techniques which accorded with their theological convictions rather than running counter to them.

It was in this situation that Jay Adams emerged with his particular counselling model which he called Nouthetic Counselling. Although other evangelicals dealt with particular counselling problems, Adams was the first to develop an integrated, structured and systematic biblical approach to counselling.

Adams is a prolific writer and the results of his research appear in an increasing series of books, articles and pamphlets. Although he does not have formal training in psychology he is clearly familiar with the contemporary psychological literature and has been the most outspoken and lucid opponent of the ACPE movement. (2) The growing popularity of Nouthetic counselling in evangelical circles in America shows that many ministers feel the need for realistic counselling techniques which accord with their evangelical convictions rather than running counter to them.

The question which we are addressing in this thesis is; does Nouthetic counselling provide the evangelical minister with a counselling technique that is adequate within the context of the church and society?

In this chapter we will firstly consider Adams' background in pastoral counselling and specifically the factors that led him to develop his Nouthetic counselling model.

(2) William Putmann, "What is Nouthetic Counseling?" The Christian Counselor's Journal, 1:1, 1980, p.7

Secondly, the main aspects of Adams' Nouthetic counselling will be presented. It will be left to the next chapter to evaluate Nouthetic counselling as a viable model for counselling in the church today.

B. THE BACKGROUND OF ADAMS' NOUTHETIC COUNSELLING

What were the factors that led Adams to develop his own unique model of counselling?

1. Adams' Personal Disillusionment with Current Pastoral Counselling/ Care

Like many ministers, Jay Adams learnt little about counselling in theological college and, not surprisingly, he was soon in difficulty. Early in his first pastorate he found himself totally unable to help an emotionally distressed man who approached him after a service, so he determined to try to become a more effective counsellor. He read all the current literature on counselling and he enrolled for courses on pastoral counselling taught by a practising psychiatrist at a university hospital. It was not long before he found that what he learnt did not seem to work out in practice. Moreover, it appeared to be at variance with Scripture at two crucial points: non-directive methods of counselling were advocated where the Bible gave clear guidance, what the Bible called sin was classified as sickness. This is how Adams describes his experience in trying to further his studies in counselling:

Almost all commended non-directive Rogerian methods or advocated Freudian principles. Uneasily I tried to put into practice what I read, but I could not help wondering how as a Christian minister I could re-translate what seemed to be sin as sickness. (3)

Adams' frustration in trying to counsel troubled people using Rogerian and Freudian principles is described in his book The Power of Error. This book consists of a verbatim report of a case he was involved in

(3) J.E. Adams, Competent to Counsel p.XI

while doing graduate work for a Th.M. degree. According to Adams, it illustrates the "futile efforts of an orthodox Christian minister and those around him to integrate and apply pagan counselling theory and methods." (4)

Adams argues that because he applied Freudian and Rogerian counselling principles in this case, he did not get to the root of the counsellee's problem and closed himself to applying biblical principles in the case, with the result that even after a year of counselling he was not able to help the counsellee.

Gradually he drifted into the way of applying scriptural exhortations as he remembered them and discovered that the more directive he became, the more successful he was as a counsellor. To his surprise, the more he told people what God required of them, the more they were helped. This is how Adams puts it:

I could not help but notice that the more directive I became (simply telling counselees what God required of them) the more people were helped. Spelling out and getting commitments to biblical patterns of behaviour after an acknowledgement of and repentance for sin seemed to bring relief and results. (5)

This led Adams to begin a systematic study of what the Bible had to say about counselling problems. From his studies he found the Bible had a great deal to say about counselling and his convictions grew that the Bible is a unique and invaluable handbook for counselling. His ideas were further crystallized as he prepared a course in pastoral theology which he taught at Westminster Theological Seminary. Perhaps the greatest influence in the development of thinking was a distinguished research consultant in psychology, Dr. O. Hobart Mowrer.

(4) J.E.Adams, The Power of Error, p.VIII

(5) J.E.Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.XIII

2. The Influence of O. Hobart Mowrer

At the time when Adams was questioning current counselling theory and practice, he began to read Mowrer's book, The Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion. Here Mowrer challenged the tradition of Freudian and Rogerian ideas. According to Adams, reading this book,

was an earthshaking experience for here Mowrer, a noted research psychologist was challenging the entire field of psychiatry, declaring it a failure and sought to refute its fundamental Freudian presuppositions. (6)

Mowrer was opposed to the Freudian Medical Model and wanted to replace it with the Moral Model. According to Mowrer,

There is, as we know, a widespread tendency ... to assume that human beings cannot be 'responsible' for anything, that we are all just cogs in a vast cause-and-effect complex and are in no way accountable for anything we do or anything that happens to us. Such a doctrine, aside from its lack of genuine scientific justification, it devastating ... no society could long endure which thoroughly accepted it ... and neither can an individual human being. (7)

For Mowrer then, who is not a Christian, personal responsibility is central. He insists that neurosis is brought about by a repression of the super-ego and that the time has come to talk about a suppressed super-ego (conscience), to face the reality of guilt and to replace ventilation of feelings with confession.

After corresponding with Mowrer, Mowrer invited Adams to participate in the Eli Lilly Fellowship Programme at the University of Illinois working under him for the summer session. It was here that Adams observed Mowrer's treating patients in two mental hospitals. Adams discovered that,

(6) Ibid, p.XVI

(7) O. Hobart Mowrer, quoted in William Glasser - Reality Therapy - A New Approach to Psychiatry, p.III

apart from those who had organic problems, like brain damage, the people I met in the two institutions in Illinois were there because of their own failure to meet life's problems ... they were there because of their unforgiveness and unaltered sinful behaviour.⁽⁸⁾

In other words, most of the inmates of these mental institutions were not sick but sinful. They escaped to institutions to avoid facing responsibility for their actions. His convictions were reinforced when he saw that those people labelled neurotic, psycho-neurotic and psychotic made a rapid recovery when they confessed deviant behaviour, assumed personal responsibility for it and made appropriate restitution instead of blaming others or their circumstances. This is how Adams describes his time with Mowrer in summer 1965:

+ That was an unforgettable experience for which I shall always be grateful ... I feel that the summer programme was a turning point in my thinking ... I came home deeply indebted to Mowrer for indirectly driving me to a conclusion that I, as a Christian minister, should have known all along, namely that many of the 'mentally' ill are people who can be helped by the ministry of God's Word.
(9)

Though Adams acknowledges his debt to Mowrer, he denies he is a Mowererian. ⁽¹⁰⁾ According to J.D. Carter, writing in 1975;

For someone fully acquainted with Mowrer's books, Adams' debt to Mowrer is strongly evident, though his latest work (1973) shows Adams has moved somewhat away from Mowrer. ⁽¹¹⁾

Mowrer reinforced Adams' conviction that the Bible is a unique and invaluable handbook for counselling. He says :

(8) J.E. Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.XVI

(9) Ibid, p. XV, XVIII

(10) Ibid, p. 19

(11) J.D. Carter, "Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counselling" Journal of Psychology and Theology, 3:3, 1975, p.143

During the years that followed, I have been engrossed in the project of developing biblical counseling and have uncovered what I consider to be a number of important scriptural principles. (12)

These principles, of what came to be known as Nouthetic counseling, are explained in his first book Competent to Counsel which was published in 1970. In it he lays down the biblical, theological and psychological foundations of Nouthetic counselling. Adams insists that because counselling has to do with behaviour change, this is the work of a Christian minister and not the work of the psychiatrist. Accordingly Adams states that,

psychiatry (not psychology) is a usurpation of the work of the Christian minister. Psychiatrists do not operate as physicians. Their goal is personality and behaviour change and their method is value alteration. This usurpation has been achieved by declaring a host of people 'sick' who are not, and then taking them under the pale of medicine The institution of the medical model became a means of usurpation. (13)

What began for Adams as a personal quest has burgeoned into a movement. His first book Competent to Counsel was soon followed by his magnum opus The Christian Counselor's Manual, the sequel and companion volume of Competent to Counsel which indicates how to deal with a wide variety of problems. This was followed by The Use of Scripture in Counseling.

Other books followed, The Big Umbrella, Coping with Counseling Crisis, More Than Redemption, in which Adams shows how a counsellor can apply the different doctrines relating to soteriology to counselling cases. In The Christian Counselor's Case Book, he sets out over one hundred cases, based on actual counselling experience, designed to give the would-be counsellor practice in applying the methods set out in his earlier

(12) J.E. Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.XIX

(13) Ibid., p.12

books. These books have been brought out in popular format for the layman. titles include What Do You Do When Your Marriage Goes Sour?, What Do You Do When Fear Overcomes You?, What Do You Do When You Become Depressed? To promote the principles of Nouthetic counselling, The Christian Counselling and Educational Foundation was formed which publishes The Journal of Pastoral Practice.

3. Synopsis

The background to the development of Adams' thought dealt with thus far has been of utmost importance in understanding his thinking. Much of Adams' work in counselling arose from his own need in the area of counselling and is also a reaction against the acceptance of Freudian and Rogerian principles in pastoral counselling. Adams felt it was necessary to develop a model of counselling that would enable the Christian minister to gain his rightful place in counselling troubled people. What he is determined to prove and what he wants the Christian minister to prove

is that qualified Christian counsellors properly trained in the Scriptures are competent to counsel, more competent than psychiatrists or anyone else. (14)

An account of the main features of Adams' Method of Counselling by means of the Scripture must now be described. The primary area for discussion here is Adams' Nouthetic counselling.

(14) Ibid, p. 16

C. AN OUTLINE OF THE MAIN FEATURES OF ADAMS' NOUTHETIC COUNSELLING

Adams calls his method Nouthetic Counseling. The term comes from the Greek word Nouthateo and the related noun (to admonish - admonition). Adams finds this word particularly in Paul's letters where the Apostle uses it most often to describe believers' responsibility for each other's spiritual growth. For example, this is the way Adams trans-literates Paul's word in Colossians 1:28:

We proclaim him, admonishing (confronting every man nouthetically) and teaching every man with all wisdom, in order that we may present every man complete in Christ.

Adams believes that this word, which has no English equivalent, most clearly brings out the main thrust of counselling. Although all believers are involved in this work, (15) it is the particular responsibility of the Christian minister in his work of shepherding. (16)

What exactly does the word mean and how specifically does it relate to counselling? According to Kittel, this word group has the following meanings :

* to impart understanding; to set right; to have a corrective influence on someone; to teach, to instruct, to warn. It presupposes an opposition which has to be overcome; it seeks to correct the mind, to put right what is wrong, to improve the spiritual attitude. (17)

Based on these various shades of meaning, Adams has identified three basic elements in Nouthetic confrontation :

First Element Nouthetic counselling implies that there is a problem in the life of the counsellee that needs to be overcome.

Second Element The problem is overcome and change is brought about by means of verbal confrontation.

(15) Colossians 3:16, Romans 15:14

(16) Colossians 1:28

(17) G.Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, VOL IV,

Third Element The Nouthetic confrontation is intended for the benefit of the counsellee.

These three elements form the foundation of Adams' theory of counselling. To more clearly understand Nouthetic counselling it will be necessary to look at each of these three elements in more detail.

1. First Element - A Problem to be Overcome

A counselling situation arises as the result of a need, some problem in the life of a person that needs to be overcome. Whatever the problem the focus of Nouthetic counselling falls on a need for change. According to Adams,

Nouthetic confrontation arises out of the condition in the counsellee that God wants changed. The fundamental purpose of the confrontation thus, is to effect personality and behavioral change. (18)

What type of problems is Nouthetic counselling concerned with? The types of problems are varied and can be traced in Adams' different books and publications: alcoholism, anger, fear and anxiety, depression, sexual difficulties (masturbation, homosexuality, marital problems and schizophrenia). Whatever the problem may be, Adams insists that counsellors must reach a biblical understanding of the counsellee's problem, and in particular the cause of the problem.

Fundamental to an understanding of Nouthetic counselling is Adams' thesis that there are only two causes of emotional and behavioural problems, namely physical, caused by injury, disease, genetic or chemical imbalance, he calls these organic causes. (19)

(18) J.E.Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.45

(19) Ibid., p.28

Then there are those which can be classified as non-organic. These are hamartagenic (sin-engendered) produced by wrong attitudes to self, others and God. (20) He affirms:

X | All non-organic problems are represented in the Scriptures as stemming from the counsellee's sin. There is no third, neutral category or sub-category, that allows for non-organic difficulties for which the counsellees may not be held personally responsible. (21)

There is no mysterious third area of mental illness, in fact Adams decries the medical model in explaining behavioural problems or even mental illness. According to the medical model, mental illness, and many behavioural problems are the result of disease and sickness and consequently the counsellee cannot be held responsible for his/her actions. (22) Adams insists that the medical model removes the entire notion of human responsibility. People no longer consider themselves responsible for what they do wrong. He states :

The idea of sickness as the cause of personal problems vitiates all notion of human responsibility. This is the crux of the matter. People no longer consider themselves responsible for what they do wrong. They claim that their problems are allogenic (other-engendered) rather than auto-genic (self-engendered). Instead of assuming personal responsibility for their behavior they blame society. (23)

✓ Adams lays great stress on responsibility. He believes that God made man a responsible being. He believes that the medical model destroys hope and locks the counsellee into patterns of behaviour for which he is not responsible and, therefore, about which he can do nothing.

(20) Ibid, p. 29

(21) J.E. Adams, The Use of The Bible in Counsel p.12

(22) J.E. Adams, Competent to Counsel, pp. 4-5

(23) Ibid., p.5

a. Adams and Psychiatry

Here we find one of the major areas of conflict between Adams' approach and the approach of modern psychiatry. He accuses modern psychiatry of abdicating the idea of responsibility. He argues that this approach originated with Freud and his stress on uncovering the reasons for behaviour in the past. He feels that to emphasise the "why" of the patient's behaviour leads to speculation and blame shifting. He believes counsellors will be of greater help if they stressed the "what" of behaviour. He insists:

'what' leads to solutions to problems. 'What have you been doing?' is a very significant question to ask. Having answered that question, counsellors may then ask what can be done about this situation? What does God say must be done? (24)

Adams believes that modern psychiatry has underestimated man's problem and as a consequence has also underestimated the solution to man's problem. Man's problems are not just the result of poor socialisation, or failure to actualise untapped resources, or a bad environment. He affirms:

Our problem is sin. We have rebelled against our Holy Creator, breaking His laws and incurring His wrath. As sinners, we cannot manufacture holiness with dirty hands. A righteous God has declared that He will punish us for our sin. We have no way in ourselves, through other sinful human beings, or by the manipulation of the environment, of appeasing Him. (25)

That is why Adams constantly points out that psychiatrists and psychotherapists cannot basically help people and why he rejects any eclectic approach to counselling. He insists that,

The Freudian or the expert knowledge approach is based squarely upon the presupposition that man is not responsible for what he does. This is a fundamentally non-Christian assumption. Consequently, the methods used by the experts also turn out to be anti-Christian. (26)

(24) Ibid, p. 43F

(25) J.E. Adams, The Use of The Bible in Counseling, p. 39

(26) J.E. Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p. 76

For Adams then, behavioural problems are the result of sin unless some organic cause can be identified. If a counsellor is going to be of help to the counsellee and if he is going to give him hope, it is vital to understand the counsellee's problem biblically and that means labelling behavioural problems sin and not sickness.

b. Three Dimensions of Problem

In identifying the problem Adams speaks of three dimensions of problems. He shows that problems are usually more complex than those counsellee's identify as their problem. That which the counsellee identifies as his immediate problem and the cause of his problem, is really an effect of some deeper problem. The counsellor must probe deeper to uncover in what way a counsellee responds unbiblically to life. Even this may not be enough. What must be uncovered are the underlying causes why the counsellee responds to life sinfully. It is not sufficient to deal with the problem itself, it is necessary to get to the root of the problem if a biblical solution is going to be found.

Adams believes that people develop sinful patterns of behaviour over a long period of time. They become conditioned and programmed to handle life's situations in a certain way. This is the only form of probing into the past that Adams recommends. He believes:

It is important to review the past thoroughly enough to establish the fact that nonbiblical response patterns are at the root of one's immediate problems. The counsellee needs to be shown the pre-conditioning problem at the root of the particular problem which he has presented. The purpose of going back into the past is to take a behavioral history. (27)

Once a problem is identified biblically, it will be possible for the counsellor to help the counsellee towards a change of behaviour. How is this change brought about? This brings us to the second element in Nouthetic counselling.

(27) J.E. Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 151

2. Second Element - A Verbal Confrontation

Change is initiated by means of verbal confrontation. This is a key to understanding what Nouthetic counselling is all about. Adams, quoting Trench, shows that this is basic to the very meaning of the word Nouthetic. He attests:

It is training by word ... by the word of encouragement, when this is sufficient, but also by that of remonstrance, of reproof, of blame, where these may be required, as set over against the training by act and by discipline which is **paideia** ... the distinctive feature of Nouthesia is the training by word of mouth. (28)

A person to person confrontation is involved aimed at helping the individual change his patterns of behaviour to conform to biblical standards and practices.

a. Focus on Behaviour

In Nouthetic counselling the emphasis falls on what can be done about the problem; upon correcting undesirable behaviour patterns rather than on understanding the causes of these behaviour patterns. Furthermore, Adams believes that counsellors must concentrate on behaviour rather than feelings. He states:

Nouthetic counseling assumes that the feelings are not the most profound level of human relations with which one must be concerned in counseling. (29)

Although he does not deny the existence of feelings, he regards them as entirely the servant of behaviour. Adams insists that people feel bad because of wrong behaviour, feelings flow from actions. Right behaviour leads to good feelings. (30) Adams insists that God's commands deal with attitudes and behaviour. If the individual obeys God's commands,

(28) R.C.Trench, Synonyms of The New Testament, quoted in Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.45

(29) Ibid., p.92

(30) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.93

the result is good feelings. On the other hand if he disobeys, the result is bad feelings. (31) For this reason the Nouthetic counsellor focuses on behaviour and not feelings. (32) Adams insists that to treat feelings rather than behaviour is to treat the symptom and not the cause.

b. Directive and Non-Directive Counselling

Adams makes no apology for the fact that Nouthetic counselling is directive. He believes:

Christian counseling involves the use of authoritative instruction. Authoritative instruction requires the use of directive Nouthetic techniques. (33)

In this regard Adams takes issue with the non-directive counselling that is based on Rogers' Client-Centred Therapy. At this point Adams represents a major departure in the area of pastoral counselling and care, for as Hielema points out:

Carl Rogers' so called 'Client-Centred Counseling' dominates the field of pastoral counseling and forms the basis of most Liberal and much Conservative counseling. (34)

To understand why Adams spends so much time refuting Rogers' counselling, it will be necessary to give a brief outline of the Client-Centred Counseling of Carl Rogers.

c. Rogers' Client-Centred Counseling

According to Rogers, the client who confronts the counsellor for therapy is in a state of incongruence which is

a potential for much psychological tension between the self-structure of the individual and the experience of the individual. By experience is meant the immediate field of sensory and visceral experience and represents 'all that is experienced by the individual through all the sense modalities'. (35)

(31) Ibid.

(32) Ibid.

(33) Ibid., p.55

(34) J.S.Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling : A Confrontation with American Pastoral Theology in particular Seward Hiltner and J.E.Adams, p.81

(35) C.R.Rogers, Client-Centred Therapy, p.525

Experience is a fluid and constantly changing field. Self-structure indicates the "configuration of concepts which have been defined as the structure of self, or the concept of self." (37)

This includes the patterned perceptions of the individual's characteristics and relationships, plus the values associated with these. The concepts included in the self-structure are available to awareness. This is not so in the category of experience.

Client-centred counselling sees man as natural, socialised, constructive, forward moving, and each man has the potential for growth and self-actualisation. Rogers affirms concerning a person,

he is free to become himself or to hide behind a facade; to move forward or to retrogress; to behave in ways which are destructive of self and others, or in ways which are enhancing; quite literally free to love or die, in both the physiological and psychological meaning of these terms. (38)

Granted anti-social emotions exist, but they are not spontaneous impulses, they are reactions to the frustrations of basic impulses such as love and belonging, and will be released in a relationship where the appropriate conditions exist.

Humanity's problem then is no more than a failure to live up to its full potential. Because humanity is the cause of its own problems, it has the ability to provide the solution to these problems. It is through non-directive counselling that a person is able to find the answers for himself/herself.

(37) Ibid

(38) C.R. Rogers, "The Concept of the Fully Functioning Person".
Pastoral Psychology, 16:153, April 1965, p.32

Rogers believes that if the counsellor provides a permissive atmosphere and if the responsibility is genuinely placed with the individual, and if there is a basic respect for the capacity of the individual, then a responsible and adequate analysis of the problem can be made, leading to responsible self direction.

Thus the main function of the counsellor is to understand what the counsellee is saying or feeling but to offer no interpretation other than to summarise what the counsellee is feeling. The Rogerian counsellor attempts to concentrate on the central feelings the counsellee expresses and to restate them in his own words. He is not to try and promote insight, directly or give advice, blame, or teach or suggest programmes of activity. The counsellor merely listens and reflects the feelings of the counsellee. It means that the counsellor is not to make any moral judgements, he is to remain morally neutral. He must set aside his own value judgements and must not allow his own convictions from controlling the interview. It is felt that if direction is given the process will be short-circuited and real personality readjustment will not take place.

The counsellee is to accept full responsibility for the answer to his problems. Rogers regards directive counselling as problem-centred rather than client-centred. The directive counsellor asks highly specific questions whereas the client-centred counsellor recognises feelings and attitudes. The directive counsellor explains and gives information, the non-directive counsellor interprets feelings and attitudes.

From this description of Rogers' Client-Centred Counselling it is not difficult to understand why Adams rejects it. As we have seen, central to Client-Centred Counselling is the fact that the counsellor must be non-directive. This of course rests on Rogers' anthropology. He

believes that at core humanity is good, not evil, having the potential for growth and self-actualisation. Therapy is but the liberating of an already existing capacity in the individual.

Adams believes that humanity's basic problem is sin. According to Adams sin is a positive evil understood only in terms of the law of God. The doctrine of sin and humanity's depravity occupies a fundamental place in Nouthetic counselling, therefore freedom does not lie in us. Humanity has no resources within itself to solve its problems at the deepest level.

It is clear that Adams' emphasis on being directive in counselling arises from his view of human nature and his view of the Bible. Similarly Rogers' emphasis on non-directive counselling is based on his view of human nature. Accordingly Adams insists that,

Rogerianism ... must be rejected **in toto**. Every remnant of his humanistic system exalting man as autonomous must be eradicated. The basic premise leads to the methodology. Reject the one and you reject the other. (39)

Here we have the reason why Adams rejects any sort of eclectism in counselling. Adams argues that it is not possible to use techniques by non-Christian counsellors, for techniques grow out of presuppositions. He believes: "It is impossible to destroy the foundations and preserve the superstructure". (40) Because nonbiblical systems rest upon nonbiblical presuppositions,

it is impossible to reject the presuppositions and adopt the techniques which grow out of and are appropriate to those presuppositions. (41)

(39) J.E.Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.103

(40) Ibid., p.102

(41) Ibid.

d. Nouthetic Counselling and Listening

Does listening have any part to play in Nouthetic counselling? Adams is not against listening. Answering the question whether listening has any place in Nouthetic counselling, Adams replies: "Of course we should listen, the Bible taught the importance of careful listening long before Rogers said anything about it". (42)

Thus Adams spends two chapters in The Christian Counselor's Manual on gathering data and asking questions in which it is clear that listening plays an important part in Nouthetic counselling. He points out, for example, that counsellors must listen not only to what is being said but how things are said. He states quite categorically that,

totally active listening procedures must be developed in order to become an adequate counselor. The good listener works hard at listening. (43)

In addition, Nouthetic counselling involves asking probing questions to get to the root of the counsellee's problem.

Adams is therefore not against listening, he is against non-directive Rogerian reflectory listening. In fact Adams accuses Rogerian counsellors of not really listening, not really showing an interest in what the client says. Listening according to Adams means taking interest in what another says and responding appropriately. (44)

Taking an interest in content is one essential element in taking an interest in the client. According to Adams,

(42) Ibid., p.87

(43) J.E.Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p.258

(44) J.E.Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.92

The Rogerian stance avoids help, avoids advice, avoids value judgements, avoids applying divine declarations to personal problems. Rogerians substitute repetition of the client's question for the application of biblical principles. (45)

Clearly then, even as the Nouthetic counsellor listens, his listening is directive. According to Adams, it is the Nouthetic counsellor who is really client-centred because Nouthetic counselling is aimed at behaviour change for the benefit of the counsellee. This brings us to the third element in Nouthetic counselling.

3. Third Element - A Beneficial Change

Nouthetic counselling is motivated by a deep and genuine concern for the counsellee. According to Adams "Nouthetic counselling ... embodies involvement of the deepest sort". (46) It is aimed at change for the benefit of the counsellee, changing that which is harming the counsellee, the aim is positive change.

a. Change Versus Change

We must be clear what type of change Adams is talking about. He points out that not all counsellors have the same kind of change in mind. In clarifying the matter he states that,

What we are talking about as Christians is change that goes far beyond minimal or incidental modifications in personal behaviour. The superficial change offered by secular counselors will not do. (47)

The change Adams is concerned with is more than just outward, it is what he calls "substantial change", (48) a change in one's inner life that is known only to God and oneself. It is change toward God. Adams

(45) Ibid., p.92

(46) Ibid., p.53

(47) J.E.Adams, How to Help People Change : The Four Step Biblical Process, p.XII

(48) Ibid.

believes that whatever one's problems may be, the ultimate cause of such problems can be traced to one's relationship to God. Thus the counsellor must not only deal with immediate problems, he must deal with the deeper problem. According to Adams, "external changes that do not follow on internal changes of heart toward God always move a person further away from The Lord". (49) According to Adams, change may be socially good but may be religiously evil, because it has not led to an internal change of heart towards God. (50)

How is this change brought about? Adams is convinced that such change is the work of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly Adams states; "counseling is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the source of all genuine personality changes". (51) Adams insists that, "substantial change requires the Holy Spirit's alteration of the heart". (52) For this reason it is not surprising that Adams believes a non-Christian counsellor cannot help people to experience such substantial change.

How does the Holy Spirit work in the believer's life to bring about this change? According to Adams, He firstly, illuminates the counsellee's mind, giving him the ability to interpret and understand God's will. Secondly, He gives power both to will and to do that will. (53)

What means does the Holy Spirit use to work such change in the life of person? This is where the Scriptures come in. According to Adams,

(49) Ibid., p.6

(50) Ibid.

(51) J.E.Adams, Competent to Counsel, pp. 20-21

(52) J.E.Adams, How to Help People Change, p.XIII

(53) J.E.Adams, The Use of The Bible in Counseling, p.59

there is a close connection between the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures.

This is how he puts it:

Now the work of the Spirit is not mystical. The Holy Spirit's activity often has been viewed in a confused and confusing manner. There is no reason for such confusion. The Holy Spirit Himself has plainly told us how He works. He says in the Scriptures that He ordinarily works through the Scriptures. The Bible is the Holy Spirit's book. He inspired it. Godliness does not come by osmosis. Human ideas and efforts will never produce it. There is no easy path to Godliness. It always required a prayerful study and obedient practice of the Word of God. (54)

This is the reason why the Bible plays such a vital part in Nouthetic counselling.

b. The Place of The Scriptures in Nouthetic Counselling

Adams points out that the elements of Nouthetic counselling accord well with the basic purpose of Scripture.

So we may legitimately adopt the Bible as the manual par excellence for Christian counsellors. Accordingly, Adams states; "One might say that the Scriptures themselves are Nouthetically orientated". (56)

As we have seen, the aim of Nouthetic confrontation is behaviour change. This is the reason why the use of the Scriptures is basic to Nouthetic counselling; for, "Everywhere the Scriptures either demand change or assume its possibility. Since not all change is good, the Scriptures were written to give direction to that change". (57) That is why Adams insists that, "Nouthetic confrontation must be scriptural confrontation. Nouthetic confrontation is, in short, confrontation with the principles and practices of Scripture". (58)

(54) J.E.Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p.186

(55) J.E.Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.51

(56) Ibid.

(57) Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p.18

(58) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.51

What kind of book is the Bible? According to Adams, it is the organic, inerrant word of God for revealing God's mind and will for us. To the charge that the Bible was not written as a text book of physics, Adams would reply that, while the Bible does not pretend to be a text book in physics, it does claim to have been written to deal with humanity's relation to God, and God's relation to humanity. (59) Therefore the Scriptures are entirely adequate as the text book for living, and for changing our living to conform to God's requirements. (60)

To the charge that the psychological sciences have provided us with more information about man's nature and his personality and should be used to supplement the knowledge found in Scriptures, Adams insists that the Bible does not need to be balanced off by modern psychology or combined with psychology to construct a balanced approach. (61)

Does the Bible deal with the sort of problems faced by twentieth century man? Adams believes that,

While the Scriptures deal with every situation that the Christian minister faces in the course of his legitimate work, while they contain all of the data that is necessary for life and Godliness, this information comes neither in the form of an encyclopaedia, nor as a ready reference manual. (62)

Adams is careful to distinguish between unalterable biblical principles and the specific application of them, which will vary from case to case. There is no question of simply quoting a text and urging the client to pray. The elements of the problem are uncovered and the client shown how these problems may be solved along biblical lines by changes in attitude and behaviour. Adams, answering the charge of simplistic use

(59) J.E. Adams, How to Help People Change, p. 31

(60) Ibid.

(61) J.E. Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p. 92

(52) J.E. Adams, The Use of The Bible in Counseling, p. 42

of Scripture says:

It is time to put to rest the tawdy caricatures of the Nouthetic counselor as someone who tears out passages of Scripture and hands them to counselees accompanied by the simplistic direction 'take these three times a day with prayer'.... Over the years the leaders of Nouthetic or biblical counselling have expended much effort to teach counselors how to use the Scriptures, emphasising that inaccurate, unexplained, superficial or unimplemented use of the Scriptures demean God's Word and harm counselors. (63)

c. . Rehabilitation and Dehabilitation

In practice, in what way is the Bible used in Nouthetic counselling to bring about change? Adams' theory of change is built on his understanding of the human personality. The human personality according to Adams is,

The sum total of all that one is by nature and nurture, i) **phusis** i.e. inherited nature and ii) acquired habit. While the **phusis** is genetic and largely unchangeable, one may radically change the way in which he used his nature. (64)

According to Adams then, the personality is determined by the way we, with our particular nature **phusis** respond to our environment. These responses, Adams believes, become deeply ingrained, they become a habitual way of responding and it is this that leads to problems. It is this way of responding that Adams believes can be changed. It is one of the major premises of Nouthetic counselling that human nature can be changed. This, as we have seen, is the work of the Holy Spirit. Adams affirms; "The work of the Holy Spirit is precisely the work of personality change and the Christian counselor must become involved in this work as an agent whom the Spirit may use." (65)

How does the counsellor assist the counsellee in affecting this change?

(63) Adams, How to Help People Change, p. 77

(64) Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p. 174

(65) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p. 74

In assisting the counsellee to affect change, the focus of the counselling falls on present behaviour not past influences except insofar as the past assists the counsellee to understand his present actions. The focus also falls on behaviour and not feelings. The focus falls on what behaviour must be changed. What must happen, according to Adams, is the habitual way of responding to situations must be changed. The pattern of responding wrongly must be reversed by beginning an upward cycle of righteousness. The counsellee must take responsibility for his behaviour and must consciously begin to respond in a way that is in conformity with the Word of God. Adams believes that as the counsellee learnt to respond unbiblically and which has become a pattern of behaviour, so he can learn new patterns of behaviour. (66)

Adams finds scriptural support for this principle of change, which he calls the principle of 'Dehabituation' and 'Rehabituation', in Ephesians 4 and in particular verses 22 to 24. (67) Here the Apostle Paul speaks of change in terms of putting off the old man (i.e., the old lifestyle) and put on the new man (i.e., the Christian lifestyle). The old man and the new man Adams interprets as learned patterns of behaviour. Change comes as the counsellee puts off, that is, unlearns his habitual sinful way of responding and puts on, that is, learns new and righteous ways of responding to situations. (68)

Although Adams does not underestimate the difficulties of change, he insists that through habit, a person can learn biblical patterns of behaviour. In this way obedience becomes natural until it becomes second nature, it becomes a habit. He believes that,

(66) Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p.174

(67) Ibid., p.176f

(68) Ibid.

It is by willing, prayerful and persistent obedience to the requirements of the Scriptures that Godly patterns are developed and come to be a part of us. (69)

According to Adams, habit is a God-given capacity that can operate negatively or positively. He affirms:

Whenever one does something long enough, it becomes a part of him. Counselors must remember that their counselees (as well as themselves) are fully endowed with this capacity. (70)

Although the counsellor stresses that the counselee is to take responsibility for this change,

he knows that he and the counselee do not have to do it alone. He may assure the counselee, 'it is God who works in you' (Philippians 2 verse 13). All holiness, all righteousness, all Godliness is the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Galatians 5 verses 22 to 23). It takes nothing less than the power of the Spirit to replace sinful habits with righteous ones ... the Holy Spirit can change any Christian and does. (71)

Adams identifies this process as sanctification. He states: "Nouthetic counseling in its fullest sense ... is simply an application of the means of sanctification." (72) According to Adams, Nouthetic counseling has the same goal as that of sanctification, to conform (to change) the counselee to the image of Christ. (73) In other words, the goal of sanctification is change, which is also the goal of Nouthetic counselling.

Counselees are assisted to make these changes through scheduled interviews which are backed up by assignments of practical homework. Given the wholehearted co-operation of the client, Adams claims that most problems are solved after 8 to 12 counselling sessions. Emphasis is

(69) Ibid., p. 187

(70) Ibid., p. 180

(71) Ibid., p. 184

(72) Ibid., p. 73

(73) Ibid., . 74

laid throughout on personal responsibility, obedience to God's Word, repentance, communication and behaviour change.

4. SYNOPSIS

In response to Adams' Nouthetic counselling, the chapter which follows will present a critique of the concepts outlined above. The approach will be to consider Nouthetic counselling from a theological perspective. It will be shown that the unique aspects of Nouthetic counselling, and in particular the prominence Adams gives to the Bible in counselling, and his rejection of the psychological sciences, is the result of a limited view of General Revelation and Common Grace. It will also be shown that although Adams has presented a model of counselling that has many aspects that would be appreciated by counsellors committed to an evangelical outlook, however, in its application it tends to be legalistic and behaviouristic. This is the consequence of a defective view of human nature. For this reason it will be shown that Nouthetic counselling is severely limited as a counselling resource.



CHAPTER 4A VARIABLE CRITIQUE OF THE NOUTHETIC COUNSELLING OF JAY ADAMSA. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter it was shown that Nouthetic counselling arose as a reaction against the encroachment of the psychological sciences on the counselling ministry of the church.

As we have seen, in the liberal sector of the church, the findings of psychology was welcomed and a serious attempt was made to incorporate the insights of psychology into its ministry. But the result was that pastoral counselling began to rely increasingly on psychological theories and less on theology.

In contrast to this movement, Jay Adams worked at developing a counselling model based on scriptural principles rather than psychological theories. (1) In line with this, Adams totally rejects the use of Freudian and Rogerian principles in Christian counselling. Central to Nouthetic counselling is the prominent place given to the Bible as a counselling resource. Nouthetic counsellors turn to the Bible for answers to people's problems rather than to the psychological sciences. It is Adams' opinion that Christian counsellors should in no way defer or refer counselees "to psychiatrists steeped in their humanistic dogma". (2)

He maintains that "qualified Christian counselors properly trained in the Scriptures are competent to counsel, more competent than psychiatrists or anyone else". (3) Accordingly, Adams boldly claims that Nouthetic counselling is biblical counselling. (4) There can be no doubt that

(1) Jay Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.XIX

(2) Ibid., p.18

(3) Ibid.,

(4) Jay Adams, What About Nouthetic Counseling - A Question and Answer Book, p.1

Adams' bold insistence on the primacy of Scripture has been of great value in encouraging the re-evaluation of counselling methodologies in the light of the Bible. In this connection Roy Hurding states that,

Adams' contribution to counseling is immensely important in its urgent quest to be biblical, in its challenging of the secularisation of psychology, in its confronting of sin and in its practical help in forming new patterns of living, in the power of the Spirit and the Glory of God. (5)

Adams' major focus has been toward pastors and the Christian community in order to make them aware of the need for a more biblically faithful counselling theory and practice. As a consequence of this, he has made a major contribution in restoring the Christian minister to his rightful place in counselling troubled people.

Adams must also be commended on stressing the importance of persons accepting responsibility for sinful and wrong attitudes and returning to healthy behaviour by way of repentance, change and the implementation of correct living patterns. This emphasis on human responsibility and the grace of God has brought hope of change. Counselees are not locked into patterns of behaviour over which they have very little control. Adams is therefore to be commended for his positive approach to problems. Adams not only claims that Nouthetic counselling is biblical, furthermore he claims that the application of Nouthetic counselling principles have led to dramatic results. He states: "not only have people's immediate problems been resolved, but there have also been solutions to all sorts of long term problems as well". (6) In other words, obedience to God's Word results in emotional and psychological health. Obviously, Adams sees a direct relationship between obedience to the Scriptures (through

(5) R.F. Hurding, Roots and Shoots : A Guide to Counseling and Psycho-Therapy, pp.289,290

(6) J.E. Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.XIX

the application of Nouthetic counselling principles) and mental health. It is interesting that as judicious a psychologist as Gordon Allport remarks that,

The crux of mental health, and of much physical health, is found in the nature of the individual's beliefs; his minor beliefs about domestic and social situations in his immediate world, and major beliefs about the nature of the universe in which he lives. (7)

So faith can indeed have a positive influence on an individual's emotional and even organic functioning. Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., endorses Allport's appraisal of the relationship between an individual's faith and his total well being. Clinebell observes that,

Spiritual health is an indispensable aspect of mental health. The two can be separated only on a theoretical basis. In live human beings, spiritual and mental health are inextricably interwoven. (8)

On the other hand, Adams' views on counselling have been challenged by many involved in counselling. Amongst those who have expressed reservations about Nouthetic counselling are, John D. Carter, "Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling," Journal of Psychology and Theology, 3:3, 1975, pp.143-155; Donald Capps, Biblical Approaches to Pastoral Counseling; John D. Carter and Bruce Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology; Richard D. Winter, Jay Adams - "Is He Really Biblical Enough?," The Way, 5:4 (1982); Roger F. Hurding, Roots and Shoots : A Guide to Counseling and Psychotherapy.

From what we have seen, there is much to commend in some of Adams' emphases, especially in showing that pastors have a crucial role to play in the whole area of counselling. Despite this, there are definite weaknesses in his system of thought which need to be supplemented from both a theological perspective and also as a therapeutic model for counselling.

(7) G. Allport, The Individual and his Religion, p.97

(8) H.J.Clinebell Jr., Mental Health Through Christian Community, p.20

In this regard, then, it will be shown in this chapter and the next chapter, that Nouthetic counselling is defective both theologically and practically. From our own findings it will be shown that Nouthetic counselling has very limited application and that it should be used with due caution.

The remainder of this chapter will consist of an evaluation of Adams' Nouthetic counselling theory from a biblical/theological perspective.

B. THEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF NOUTHETIC COUNSELLING

Adams insists that Nouthetic is biblical. He states :

I want to alter any or all of what I have written provided that I can be shown to be wrong biblically; I am not interested in debate which moves off non-Christian suppositions. I have attempted to re-examine counseling (suggestively but not exhaustively) in a biblical manner, and I ask therefore that my work shall be similarly criticised. (9)

It is therefore from this perspective that we will begin our evaluation of Nouthetic counselling. It will be shown that Adams has i) a limited view of general revelation and common grace and ii) a defective view of Human Nature.

1. Limited View of General Revelation and Common Grace

It is in the matter of the use of the Scriptures in counselling that we find the distinctive characteristic of Nouthetic counselling. According to Adams, in the Bible we not only have all that is necessary for saving faith in Jesus Christ, but in addition, in it we have all "that is necessary to bring about a process of change that will lead to mental health". (10)

(9) J.E. Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.269

(10) Ibid., p.61

That is the reason why Adams insists that, "a good Seminary education rather than medical school or a degree in clinical psychology, is the most fitting background for a counselor". (11) The point Adams emphasises again and again is, that theological and biblical training is the essential background for a counsellor, not training in psychology or psychiatry. (12) He insists that,

The study of psychology in depth coupled with a smattering of Scripture data can lead only to the grossest mis-statements regarding man and the solutions to his problems. (13)

To the question: "Does science have any role to play in counselling?"

Adams would reply :

I do not wish to disregard science, but rather I welcome it as a useful adjunct for the purpose of illustrating, filling in generalisations with specifics, and challenging wrong human interpretations of Scripture, thereby forcing the student to restudy the Scriptures. (14)

But do the psychological sciences not contribute more than merely illustrating, filling in generalisations with specifics and challenging wrong human interpretations of Scripture? Do they not have a role in supplementing our understanding of man? As pointed out earlier (15) Adams believes the Bible is sufficient in itself and does not need to be combined with psychology. For this reason Adams rejects any eclectic approach to counselling. By this he means counsellors who find their sources of information in, but also outside the Bible. He sees no necessary relationship between psychology and Christian counselling. By this he means that Christian counselling is in no way "dependent upon psychology for its existence or the existence of any part of it". (16)

(11) Jay Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p.33

(12) Ibid.

(13) J.E.Adams, How to Help People Change, p.38

(14) J.E.Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.LXXXI

(15) Chapter 3, p.59

(16) J.E.Adams, How to Help People Change; The Four-Step Biblical Process, p.34

He states:

When I say that there is no dependence of Christian counseling on psychology, I mean just that. Long before modern psychology was even a thought, Jesus Christ was the World's Wonderful Counselor. In no way was His counseling dependent upon the "findings" of psychology (ancient or modern). Therefore there was no necessary relationship between the two. All that He needed in order to counsel men and women perfectly about their problems was provided by the Old Testament Scriptures. (17)

It is interesting that Adams draws a distinction between what he calls legitimate and illegitimate psychology. He argues that it is illegitimate for psychology to attempt to deal with values, behaviour, attitudes and beliefs, that is the territory of Christian counselling, even if it does not conflict with biblical principles and practices. (18)

He insists that any truth necessary to counselling that a clinical or counselling psychologist may discover, even if it is not contradictory to the Scriptures, "will be found already in purer form in the Bible". (19)

This means that in reality the psychological sciences can add nothing to our understanding of man and his problems, everything necessary is already in the Bible. Adams believes that to concede that psychology provides necessary training, background, or even information for Christian counselling, is to imply that the Bible is insufficient, that Christ is inadequate as a counsellor and that until the introduction of psychology the church lacked an important resource to assist people. (20)

a. The Influence of Adams' Presuppositional Thinking

Adams rejects the use of the psychological sciences, not only because he believes the Bible contains everything the Christian counsellor needs, there is a further reason why he rejects the psychological sciences, it is due to his view that presuppositions determine methodology. The

(17) Ibid., p.35

(18) Ibid., p.38

(19) Ibid., p.39

(20) Ibid., p.36

acceptance of the one leads to the acceptance of the other and vice versa. Francis Schaeffer defines presuppositions as .

a belief or theory which is assumed before the next stage in logic is developed. Such a prior postulate then consciously, or unconsciously affects the way a person subsequently reasons. (21)

According to William Kirwan,

all counseling theories have philosophical presuppositions at their core. Those basic assumptions lead to certain logical conclusions concerning the human person, behavioural change, and meaning in life. (22)

For Adams this close connection between presuppositions and practice is crucial. For this reason Adams is against all forms of eclectism.

Accordingly he states:

The sort of eclectism by which one assumes that he can adopt techniques that grow out of nonbiblical principles that rest upon non-Christian presuppositions has done much damage to Christian counseling. (23)

It is on this basis that Adams totally rejects Freudian theory and therapy and why he calls Freud an enemy and not a friend. (24) Because Freud regarded Christianity as an illusion and like all other religions was a sign of neurosis, Adams insists that it is not possible to use Freudian principles in counselling. He therefore insisted that,

The Freudian view involves a totally non-Christian objective to be reached by totally non-Christian methodology that flows out of a totally non-Christian presupposition, namely, that somebody else is responsible for a counselee's problems and poor behaviour. (25)

Adams rejects Rogerian counselling methods on similar grounds. In our analysis of Rogers' Client-Centred counselling (26) we saw that central

(21) F.A.Schaeffer, The God Who Is There, p.179

(22) W.T.Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p.22

(23) J.E.Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.100

(24) Ibid., p.15

(25) J.E.Adams, The Big Umbrella, p.52

(26) Chapter 3, pp. 51-54

to Rogers' teaching is man's autonomy. Man, according to Rogers, is an amazing creature who comes alive when he uses his capacities and sensibility for self actualisation. Adams argues that Rogers' presupposition of man's autonomy and innate capacity to self fulfillment is diametrically opposed to the biblical view of man. (27) He believes that the Rogerian system confirms sinful man's belief that he is autonomous and has no need of God. (28) Because Rogerian counselling is based on nonbiblical presuppositions, Adams insists that it is impossible to accept Rogerian counselling techniques once the presuppositions are rejected. His point of view is quite clear when he argues that,

It is impossible to destroy the foundations and preserve the superstructure. Because nonbiblical systems rest upon nonbiblical presuppositions, it is impossible to reject the presupposition and adopt the techniques which grow out of and are appropriate to those presuppositions. (29)

It is clear then that for Adams presuppositions are basic to counselling. (30) He insists again and again that presuppositions determine methodology; that methodology is integrally related to counselling philosophy. (31) The issue at stake then, according to Adams, is what methods may Christians use in Counseling? Here Adams rejects any sort of moral neutrality. (32) It is his presuppositional approach to counselling that leads Adams to reject the use of the psychological sciences in counselling. Adams' presuppositional approach is based on the presuppositional analysis of Cornelius van Til who has exercised a major influence on Adams' thinking.

(27) J.E.Adams, The Big Umbrella, p.128

(28) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.82

(29) Ibid., p.102

(30) J.E.Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p.71

(31) Ibid.

(32) Ibid.

b. The Influence of Cornelius van Til on Jay Adams

Cornelius van Til (1895 - 1987) taught apologetics and systematic theology at Westminster Seminary from 1929 to 1975. Van Til insisted that there is no neutrality between the Christian position and the non-Christian world. He drew a clear cut dichotomy between the bases for living of the believer and the unbeliever. (33) He further believed that scientific methodologies are never neutral, "they grow out of conceptions of reality - either Christian or non-Christian". (34) He insists that, "all men are either in covenant with Satan or in covenant with God". (35) In line with this, according to Colin Brown, he argued that,

The task of Christian apologetics is not to try to discover some neutral, common ground on which the believer and the unbeliever may both stand ... but to lay bare the presuppositions of his thinking. (36)

Van Til believed that the task of the Christian apologist is to challenge the entire framework of non-Christian thought in every area of life and then to construct a true biblical world view. (37)

Adams acknowledges the importance of van Til to his theological reflections. (38) The extent of this influence is underlined by Hielema as he observes that, "Adams' Nouthetic counseling could well be called a Christian apologetic in the field of pastoral care. Adams is waging an offensive as well as a defensive warfare". (39)

(33) C. van Til, The Defence of The Faith, p.286

(34) Ibid., pp.288-299

(35) Ibid., p.306

(36) C.Brown, Philosophy and the Christian Faith, p.248

(37) C.van Til, "My Credo" - Jerusalem and Athens, Critical Discussions on the Philosophy and Apologetics of Cornelius van Til
Editor E.R.Geehan, p.21

(38) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.XXI

(39) S.Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling : A Confrontation with American Theology in particular Seward Hiltner and J.E.Adams, p.151

Adams insists that,

Nouthetic counseling is diametrically opposed to every form of counseling that is not based upon or defined in terms of the inerrant Word of God. (40)

In the light of Adams' insistence on the Bible as the only source of truths for counselling and his rejection of the validity of perspectives discovered by the psychological sciences, the question arises whether the Bible claims or implies that all we need to know about life is contained in its pages? Does it teach that only believers can discover true truths? In this connection it is Roger Hurding who points out that, "In following van Til, Adams seems to enter a controversy over Common Grace and 'General Revelation'". (41) It is basically Adams' understanding of general revelation and common grace that lies at the heart of his rejection of the psychological sciences. According to Carter and Narramore, Adams' perspective at this point "runs counter to the traditional orthodox commitment to the fact that God is the author of all truth". (42) What is the traditional orthodox or evangelical understanding of general revelation and common grace?

c. The Meaning and Implications of General Revelation for Counselling

Revelation refers to the disclosure or unveiling of something. According to the Bible, God has revealed himself, his divine power and his will for humanity, so that we might come to know him. (43) According to Bernard Ramm: "In the broadest sense revelation is the sum total of the ways in which God makes Himself known". (44) Carl F. Henry has

(40) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.XXI

(41) R.F.Hurding, Roots and Shoots : A Guide to Counseling and Psychology, p.285

(42) J.B.Carter & B.Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology, p.79

(43) Romans 1:19-23

(44) B.Ramm, Special Revelation and The Word of God, p.17

written of revelation as follows:

The term revelation means intrinsically the disclosure of what was previously unknown. In Judeo-Christian theology the term is used primarily of God's communication to man of divine truth, that is, His manifestation of Himself or of His will ... this revelation (is) further discriminated as General or Universal (that is revelation in nature, history and conscience) and special or particular (that is redemptive revelation conveyed by wondrous acts and words). (45)

Psalm 19 calls out attention to the two varieties of divine revelation. On the one hand, the heavens are telling the glory of God in such a way that it is impossible for anyone not to know it, yet on the other hand, there is a testimony granted to Israel which conveys more specific information about the gift and demands of God. We call the first general revelation because it is universally available, and the second special revelation because it is a particular disclosure about how man can find favour with God, a disclosure given at first to particular people chosen by God but intended in the end for the whole human race. According to D.M. MacLeod:

Although there are differences between general and special revelation in terms of their completeness and orientation, we should not draw the contrast too sharply. (46)

Because God is the source of all revelation, general and special revelations "stand together in a complimentary relationship". (47)

Nevertheless, it is clear that as far as unregenerate men and women are concerned, general revelation is insufficient.

As general revelation is the main area of concern in this critique of Adams' Noutheistic counselling, it is pertinent to look more closely at the evangelical view of general revelation.

(45) Bakers Dictionary of Theology, p.457

(46) S.B.Ferguson, D.F.Wright (eds), New Dictionary of Theology, p.585

(47) Ibid.

(i) Evangelical View of General Revelation

In his book Varieties of Christian Apologetics, Bernard Ramm gives an excellent summary of Calvin's teaching on revelation. Calvin held that there is a valid general revelation to which all men are accountable. This revelation is seen firstly in man's nature. Calvin says that by natural endowment man has a sense of deity. (48) God's revelation is also reflected in creation "This skilful ordering of the universe is for us a sort of mirror in which we can contemplate God, who is otherwise invisible". (49) General revelation, however, does not achieve the purpose of leading men to a knowledge of God. The reason for this is man's depravity which renders general revelation ineffective. Calvin, whilst acknowledging general revelation, denied that this could lead to natural theology.

G.C.Berkouwer takes a position similar to that of Calvin. Although he strongly stresses the priority of special revelation and insists that "No one comes to the Father but by Christ". (50), nevertheless he holds to the existence and validity of general revelation. He stresses that general revelation is one source of revealed truths which can be studied in an attempt to discover the truths about human nature. By studying nature through the disciplines of science, we can make many hypotheses concerning truth as it is revealed in the pattern of nature. Unfortunately, because of our limitations, we are unable to fully know the truth due to errors in observation and interpretation. (51)

(48) B.Ramm, Varieties of Christian Apologetics , p.166

(49) Ibid., p.167

(50) G.C.Berkouwer, General Revelation, p.134

(51) G.C.Berkouwer, Science and Religion, p.152

From this it can be seen that evangelicals have traditionally accepted the validity of God's revelation in creation. Although this revelation cannot lead to a saving knowledge of God, nevertheless, it does mean that we are able to discover some truths of God's creation outside of special revelation. Murray Janson, Professor of Practical Theology at the University of South Africa, in an article dealing with the relevance of the doctrine of creation for pastoral care, states:

The Protestant tradition has always clung to the idea denoted by the term 'general revelation'. By this is meant a revelation implicit in God's relation to His creation which all people can experience everywhere at all times. Naturally this is a secondary level of revelation and we must be careful lest in any way we open a door to 'natural theology' or naturalising of grace. (52)

It is because Adams is afraid of a natural theology that he "is in danger of neglecting the biblical dimension that proclaims a God who speaks through both word and works". (53) Adams seems to have set special revelation against general revelation to the extent that he has limited the value and validity of general revelation. It would seem that Adams, like Karl Barth, is afraid that to acknowledge the validity of general revelation in the area of counselling will lead to a natural psychology. Berkouwer has convincingly shown that acceptance of general revelation does not lead to a devaluation of special revelation.

(54) Murray Janson interestingly points out:

That Karl Barth (who flatly rejected the doctrine of *analogia entis* in this connection), nevertheless tries to assign a proper place to 'profane humanity' in the last part of his discussions of reconciliation, when he guardedly describes the 'other words', from *extra muros ecclesiae* as 'true words as parables of the kingdom'. (55)

(52) M.Janson, "The Doctrine of Creation and Pastoral Care", Theologia Evangelica, XVI:3, September 1987, p.24

(53) Ibid.

(54) C.F.Henry (ed.), Revelation and The Bible, "General and Special Divine Revelation" pp.18-19

(55) Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Volume 4/,3:122, p.128, quoted in M. Janson, "The Doctrine of Creation and Pastoral Care", Theologia Evangelica, XVI:3, September 1987, p.24

If God has revealed Himself within the created order then the way is open to humanity for the legitimate exploration of all that the Creator has made. Thomas Torrance, formerly Professor of Christian Dogmatics at Edinburgh, rightly indicates that this path of enquiry is acceptable to both science and theology. Torrance states:

The natural scientist enquires into the process and pattern of nature, and man himself is part of nature; and the theologian enquires of God the Creator of nature and the source of its created rationalities, to which man also belongs. (56)

What would be the implications for pastoral care if we accept the legitimacy of general revelation? According to Murray Janson,

It certainly means that pastoral theologians would not object in principle to finding out what the other human and social sciences have to teach about human beings. (57)

Although it is true that pastoral theology, pastoral counselling and care are naturally concerned with special revelation (salvation) it would be foolhardy not to learn what it can from the other sciences. (58) It is therefore not sub-evangelical to accept that general revelation is generally more relevant to the study of the sciences and that it can teach us many facts about human behaviour which can generally assist in pastoral counselling. This means that the findings of the psychological sciences are important if we are to understand more fully human behaviour.

William Kirwan expands on the concept of general revelation and the validity of the use of the psychological sciences in counselling. He

(56) T.F.Torrance, The Ground and Grammar of Theology, p.6

(57) Janson, "The Doctrine of Creation", pp. 23-24

(58) Ibid.

observes that at creation God established laws governing the cosmos, land, vegetation, animals, birds, sea life and human persons, the laws of physics, chemistry, geology, sociology, psychology, and theology. The point he makes is that these laws established by God enable us to understand God's creation. For example, the laws of physiology help us to understand the functioning of the human body (anatomy), the laws of psychology similarly help us to understand human behaviour. He says: "The Bible everywhere assumes these physical and biological laws which are essential to the definition of human beings". (59) He continues: "it also assumes those laws of psychology which are essential to the definition and understanding of human personality". (60) He concludes:

To study psychology, which is a God-centred category, is therefore legitimate and proper, provided one remembers that it is part of a much larger whole - the spiritual laws governing humans encompass more than psychology. (61)

For this reason "In counseling people in mental and emotional distress, then, it is imperative to couple scriptural truths with psychology". (62)

(ii) Conclusion

From this analysis it is clear that Adams is in danger of narrowing the full breadth of God's self disclosure. Although counsellors committed to an evangelical theology will agree with Adams that God is the source of all truth, which implies that truth is absolute and eternal, however, it is important to note that in identifying a single source of truth, it

(59) W.J.Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, p.37.

(60) Ibid.

(61) Ibid., p.42

(62) Ibid.

does not follow that there is a single means of revelation. As James Guy points out:

Though there may be a single source of truth there may be several means of revealing it, as well as many ways of perceiving and interpreting it. (63)

Adams' stress on the Bible in counselling to the exclusion of the psychological sciences, has in effect set special revelation in opposition to general revelation, thus implying that there is a dichotomy in truth. In opposition to this, Kirk Farnsworth makes the point, "that all truth, whether scientific data or verses from the Bible - is God's truth". (64) John Carter and Bruce Narramore similarly argue that:

Christianity affirms that God is the Creator of all things and that this establishes a basic unity of all truth, whether found in scriptural revelation, or scientific experimentation. (65)

However, Adams is not only guilty of holding a limited view of general revelation, he also restricts the effects of common grace.

d. The Meaning and Implications of Common Grace for Counselling

In evangelical theology the existence of common grace has traditionally been held. The doctrine of common grace was formulated by Reformed Theology with its emphasis on the depravity of humanity to account for the fact that unbelievers, that is, society at large, is endowed with special gifts talents and make contributions to the development of science and art, and can speak the truth and do good to others. Calvin spoke of general common grace, a grace which applies to mankind in general and every member of the human society. (66)

What do we mean by common grace? This is how Charles

(63) J.D.Guy Jr., "The Search for Truth in the Task of Integration", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 8:1, 1980, p.27

(64) K.E.Farnsworth, "The Conduct of Integration", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 10:4, 1982, p.310

(65) Carter and Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology, p.13

(66) L.Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p.434

Hodge, the great Reformed theologian defines it as follows:

The Bible ... teaches that the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth, of holiness, and of life in all its forms, is present with every human mind, enforcing truth, restraining from evil, exciting to good and imparting wisdom or strength, when, where, and in what measure seemeth to Him good ... this is what in theology is called common grace. (67)

He continues:

As God is everywhere present in the material world, guiding His operation, according to the laws of nature; so He is everywhere present with the minds of men, as a Spirit of truth of goodness, operating on them according to the laws of their free moral agency, inclining them to good and restraining them from evil. (68)

John Murray puts it even more clearly when he states that God,

Endows all men with gifts, talents, and aptitudes; He stimulates them with interest and purpose to the practice of virtues, the pursuance of worthy tasks, and the cultivation of arts and sciences that occupy the time, activity and energy of men and that make for the benefit of civilisation of the human race. He ordains institutions for the protection and promotion of rights, preservation of liberty, the advance of knowledge and the improvement of physical and moral conditions. (69)

This teaching recognises that humanity is created in God's image but, as a result of the fall, the image has become marred. In spite of this, an unbeliever, devoid of special saving grace and unregenerate, is still a creature of God with certain abilities and understanding, which are a reflection of that image. Drawing a distinction between common and special grace recognises that the gifts and talents and abilities have nothing to do with special grace, so that a believer may have a lower I.Q. and have inferior gifts to an unbeliever. What is the relevance of common grace for counselling and the psychological sciences? John Carter makes the point that,

Any view of counseling which calls itself biblical must recognise that God is at work in His world (which includes mankind) and also in redemption. (70)

(67) C. Hodge, Systematic Theology - Volume 2, p.657

(68) Ibid., p.668

(69) John Murray, Collected Writings Volume 2, p.102

(70) J.D.Carter, "Toward a Biblical Model of Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 45:8, Spring 1980, p.45

This means that discoveries made by non-Christians, in the area of psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy etc. should not be rejected as Adams does. Hurding points out that although in his books and in personal conversations, Adams accepts the reality of common grace, the thrust of his writings and his attitude to the psychological sciences and in particular to men like Freud, Rogers and Maslow, demonstrates a restricted view of common grace. Hurding argues that Adams has concentrated so much on man's fallenness that he has overlooked any "residual glory". (71) According to Kirwan, Adams is going beyond van Til, who in his younger days stressed that non-Christian scientists using Christian presuppositions,

Bring to light a great deal of truth about the facts and laws of the universe And as Christians we may and should make grateful use of truth, from whatever source it springs, because ultimately all truths spring from God. (72)

A point that is worth noting is that in rejecting psychological theory as secular, Adams is guilty of a secular/spiritual dualism. What happens is in Adams' thinking, common grace becomes secular and must therefore be rejected. But common grace is really God's common grace and therefore should not be rejected. The Christian counsellor, on the basis of common grace, can legitimately make use of, and build upon, the findings of secular scientists. The doctrine of common grace recognises that God's endowment of intellect, reason and talents are distinct from God's endowment of saving grace. That is why Kirwan states that,

Sigmund Freud, Carl Rogers, B.F. Skinner and others ... although their philosophical conclusions are doubtless anti-Christian, their empirical findings are not. Whether or not they acknowledge that

(71) R.F. Hurding, Roots and Shoots, P. 285

(72) C. van Til, Articles on Science, P. 38, quoted in W.J. Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling, P. 26

human personality is made in the image of God, the fact remains that they have made a thorough study of personality. (73)

A little further on he says: "Freud deserves credit for exploring what can be known of our unconscious selves". (74) On the basis of common grace,

we accept the findings of non-Christian scientists to the extent that their non-Christian presuppositions have not coloured the truth discovered. (75)

This point is not disputed when it is applied to other disciplines, for example medicine, physics, chemistry, literature, engineering or business science. The question that needs to be asked is, what makes the psychological sciences different? Is God not equally the Creator of the psychological laws as of the physical laws? Adams in limiting common grace in the area of the psychological sciences and his insistence that the Scriptures yield a total understanding of counselling, pathology and psychic functioning, seems both inconsistent and unprecedented since the same requirements are not made for medicine and other natural sciences. Although John Carter has interestingly pointed out that Adams does in fact rely on the psychological theories of Glasser, Mowrer and Szasz to fill in the specifics of counselling theory and psychic functioning that is not supplied in the Scriptures. Competent to Counsel cannot be read by those who have read Mowrer's Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion and The New Group Therapy without perceiving Mowrer's influence. (76) Adams therefore makes himself guilty of inconsistency in judging others who adopt a different psychological system and is not as exclusively biblical

(73) Ibid., P. 25-26

(74) Ibid., P. 58

(75) Ibid., P. 26

(76) J.D. Carter, "Nouthetic Counseling Refuted : Reply to Ganz" Journal of Psychology and Theology, 3:3, 1975, p.208

as he claims to be.

e. Synopsis

In our critique so far it has been shown that in Adams' rejection of general revelation and common grace and by his presuppositional approach he is in fact out of step with the main body of Reformed theology which he claims forms the basis of his counselling.

Before we move on to the next area of weakness in Adams' theory, it needs to be explained why the bulk of this critique has been devoted to general revelation and common grace. The reason for this is that it is Adams' understanding of these two doctrines that has determined the unique aspects of Nouthetic counselling and in particular the special place he gives to the Bible in counselling. Hurding points out that these two doctrines form the main root of Adams' more disputed opinions. (77)

According to John Carter, "Common Grace and the problems its rejection has created for Adams' theory, appears to be the 'Hound of Heaven' which pursues Adams throughout his theory". (78)

Relating to Adams' rejection of general revelation and common grace, is his sub-biblical view of human nature.

2. Defective View of Human Nature

a. Introduction

It seems a self evident truth that whenever one person attempts to help another person solve particular problems of living, there are bound to be assumptions of human nature. What assumptions about human nature form

(77) Ibid., p.210

(78) Ibid., pp.210-211

the basis of Adams' Nouthetic counselling theory? As we have seen, Adams claims that Nouthetic counselling is biblical and that he wants his counselling theory to be judged from a biblical perspective. (79) The question we therefore need to look at is how biblical is Adams' understanding of human nature? Is his theory of counselling based on a balanced view of man which emerges from the Scriptures?

The importance of this question is recognised by Adams himself for he consistently insists that counselling methodology is integrally related to counselling philosophy. (80) He points out:

What we do to another man and how we do it is tightly bound up with what we **believe** about that man ... Christians insist that counseling methodology **necessarily** must grow out of and always be appropriate to the biblical view of God, man and creation. (81)

Lawrence Crabb shares Adams' view. He states:

Counseling theory always begins, either explicitly or implicitly, with a set of very basic ideas about human nature ... from this we develop a model of counseling. (82)

It is therefore important to ask what is Adams' view of human nature and how does his view affect his counselling methodology?

b. Adams' Understanding of Human Nature

On the whole Adams holds a traditionally evangelical view of human nature. He believes in the existence of literal Adam, created by God. (83) Also along with traditional Christianity Adams holds a dichotomous view of human nature. (84) However Adams does not see body and soul/spirit as separate parts but they are different aspects of a unified whole.

(79) Chapter 4 of Thesis

(80) Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p.71

(81) Ibid., pp.71-72

(82) L. Crabb, Understanding People, p.87

(83) J.E. Adams, More Than Redemption, p.98

(84) Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p.9

Although Adams speaks of the soul and spirit, the image of God in man is the more central concept in his Nouthetic theory. In line with his general approach Adams stresses that the image is moral and cognitive.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Man was created an intelligent, morally responsible creature. With evangelical theology, Adams also believes that man fell from his state of perfection through an act of disobedience. In the fall the image of God became distorted in man resulting in guilt and corruption in all aspects of human life.⁽⁸⁶⁾ As a consequence of the fall man is born guilty (culpable) before God. Adams' understanding of man as the image of God seems to major on man's fallenness at the expense of any residual glory. In this regard he writes:

The image of God in man was distorted by the Fall. Man as a communicating, holy, knowledgeable, righteous being, reflecting God, his Creator, became rather a reflection of the Father of lies.⁽⁸⁷⁾

Elsewhere he writes: "The image of God was ruined by the Fall".⁽⁸⁸⁾ There is no real hope for man, Adams maintains, unless the sinner by the gracious work of the Spirit comes face to face with the issue that sin must be seen as having affected his whole personality. Through a work of the Holy Spirit in the sinner's heart there can be a radical change in the whole personality.⁽⁸⁹⁾ It is only in Jesus Christ, through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit that the image of God is being renewed. Adams insists that unbelievers do not reflect the image of God, but rather "the image of the Father of lies".⁽⁹⁰⁾

(85) Ibid., p.116

(86) Adams, More Than Redemption, p.140

(87) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.218

(88) Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, pp.92-93

(89) Ibid., p.139

(90) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.218

c. Weaknesses in Adams' View of Human Nature

(i) Attitude to Unbelievers in Counselling

In the first place Adams' view of unbelievers must be challenged. According to Adams, in the fall the image of God was distorted and became a reflection of the Father of lies. (91) It is only in the Christian that the image of God is once again reflected. Since the non-Christian is fallen and is not being restored he appears to be a Satanic reflection. In this way Adams eliminates any natural goodness in humans (common grace). The result is, according to John Carter, that Adams attempts to establish a counselling theory based on the doctrine of salvation/sanctification and thus he, in effect, limits counselling to Christians. (92) Adams himself states:

God does not want His counselors to aid and abet non-Christians in exchanging one sinful pattern for another (that is reformation); He has called us rather, to a ministry of reconciliation and renewal. (93)

What the Nouthetic counsellor has to offer a non-believer apparently is very limited except to evangelise him. "To be true to God's commission and thus offer an adequate solution to man's needs, evangelism is absolutely essential to counseling". (94)

The implication is that regeneration will solve the client's problems which of course is not true to Scripture or experience. Nor is it empirically valid nor theologically sound to state that a person cannot

(91) Ibid.

(92) J.D.Carter, "Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 3:3, 1975 p.207

(93) Adams, More Than Redemption, p.150

(94) Ibid.

be helped apart from personal belief in Jesus Christ. Non-Christian therapists have seen alcoholics dry out, addicts go straight, marriages healed and broken relationships mended. Organisations such as Alcoholics Anonymous, FAMSA are helping troubled people, and few of these claim to be evangelising. Some excellent words have come from Paul Tournier, concerning this. He states that God has

Divine support which is not reserved for believers but is offered to all men, and which can sustain them in the most desperate situations, and rescue them from despair. What distinguishes the believer is thus solely the fact that he knows that that support comes from God whereas the unbeliever sees it only as an insoluble mystery. (95)

The evangelical can still respect the client's right to self-direction knowing that, even should he or she not turn to Christ in faith and repentance, God can still work in spite of such a choice.

However, the major criticism of Adams' view of human nature arises not so much from what he says, but rather from what he leaves out, namely, the biblical emphasis on the interior aspects of human nature. (96) The New Testament concepts of spirit, soul and heart and flesh are excluded in his description of man and his problems.

(ii) Attitude to Inner Aspects of Human Nature

Adams' Understanding of Heart

Adams' understanding of the inner aspects of human nature is brought out in his explanation of the scriptural notion of the heart. He makes it clear that the heart must not be understood in terms of emotions and feelings, rather it must be seen in terms of intellect. (97) The heart

(95) P.Tournier, A Place For You, p.203

(96) Carter, Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling, p.209

(97) Adams, More Than Redemption, p.114

speaks of the inner life that God sees and which we live before God, in contrast to the outward behaviour, which is visible for all to see. (98) Adams identifies the heart with the conscience which is defined as the faculty of moral self judgement. (99) Referring to Adams' understanding of the inner life, Roger Hurding makes the point that Adams leaves out the so called psychological. (100) That this is so is confirmed by Adams when he states that there is not

the slightest hint in the Bible that there is **another** inorganic, amoral aspect of men in addition to the heart, (the so called psychological) which (according to the advocates of the view) is so important for living. (101)

In this regard, Adams takes Lawrence Crabb to task for his psychological approach to counselling because he stresses the inner aspects of human nature. (102)

It is for this reason that John Carter accuses Adams of having a sub-Christian view of man. He says: "Adams' view of man in a psychological sense is almost completely eternal and behavioural". (103) The words soul, spirit, and heart which are used in the Bible to describe the interwoven aspects of human nature almost never occur in Adams' writings. When Adams does infrequently touch on these aspects of human nature, he is basically behaviouristic in his approach to man and his problems. He sees behaviour in terms of active effort of command keeping.

In keeping with Adams' view of human nature, he assumes that feelings are

(98) Ibid., p.115

(99) Ibid.

(100) Hurding, Roots and Shoots, p.285

(101) Adams, More Than Redemption, p.151

(102) Ibid., p.117

(103) Carter, Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling, p.151

not the most profound level of human relationship with which one must be concerned in counselling. He believes that changes in behaviour are based on decision and affect the emotions, thus reaching the whole of man. It is sinful behaviour that leads to bad feelings - feelings flow from actions. (104)

In the light of Adams' lack of emphasis on the inner aspects of human nature and his consequent behaviouristic approach, John Carter goes so far as to say that,

The only thing that seemingly prevents (Adams) from being a fully fledged Skinnerian and Mowrerian is (his) metaphysical commitment to God and the Bible. (105)

The question we need to ask is whether Adams is biblical in rejecting the existence of the psychological in human nature.

A Biblical View of the Psychological

In this connection it is instructive to look at the way a leading New Testament scholar, coming also from a conservative/evangelical tradition, George Eldon Ladd, understands the biblical references to the inner aspects of human nature. Ladd shows that in both the Old Testament and the New Testament the terms heart (lêb/kardai), designate, "the inner life of man from various points of view". (106) It is used to refer to the inner aspects of man as contrasted to the outward and visible. This is Adams' understanding of the term heart. In addition, however, heart is described as the seat of the emotions, both good and bad. (107) Heart can also be used for man's intellectual activity; the seat of the

(104) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.92

(105) Carter, Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling, p.151

(106) J.E.Ladd, A Theology of The New Testament, p.475

(107) Ibid.

will, the organ of ethical judgement, or the seat of religious experience. (108) A word bearing a similar meaning is Splangchna, which refers to the noble organs, the heart, liver, lungs and in Paul used to refer to Christian affections. (109)

From this it should be clear that the Bible uses a wide and rich range of words and imagery to describe human beings. These references show that Adams' understanding of the concept of heart is very limited and that he has in fact excluded aspects of the inner life that we would today refer to as psychological. A Christian view of human nature must thus take seriously its complexity, in particular those references in the Bible which have to do with the inner aspects. Adams' theory fails to take this seriously enough. Interestingly, John Carter points out that the Lord Jesus Christ made the inner aspects of human nature more fundamental than the outer. In addition, he observes, that many passive commands in Scripture focus on the inner or central aspects of human nature and cannot be made to fit Adams' behavioural definitions. (110)

Similarly, Francis Schaeffer makes the point that,

We are constantly brought face to face with the concept of the subconscious, which is a realisation that man is more than that which is on the surface. All too often the evangelical Christian acts as though there is nothing to man except that which is above the surface of the water. (111)

For this reason, William Kirwan warns that, "to dismiss the existence and influence of the unconscious is both unwise and unscriptural". (112) This Adams is guilty of doing. The effects of Adams' unbiblical

(108) Ibid.

(109) Ibid.

(110) Carter, Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling, p.152

(111) F. Schaeffer, True Spirituality, p.103

(112) W. Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Living, p.59

understanding of human nature emerges in his dealing with pathology.

(iii) Adams' Understanding of Human Pathology - His Diagnosis and Cure

Adams insists that there is a direct link between sin and pathology. This is obvious from the title of Chapter Fourteen in The Christian Counselor's Manual, namely "Sin as the problem". He states; "Sin ... in all its dimensions, clearly is the problem with which the Christian counselor must grapple". (113) Thus the real cause of problems (i.e. pathology) is sin and disobedience, in any case where there is no organic or chemical unbalance. There is no grey area, or psychological causes, only sin. That is why he insists that there is no such thing as non-organic mental illness. (114) This assertion of no non-organic causes of problems is central in Adams' thought and he devotes a large portion of two chapters to the topic in The Big Umbrella, (115) and most of two chapters in Competent to Counsel. (116)

Depression - Its Causes and Cure

Adams' approach is illustrated in his analysis of depression. He holds that depression is never an isolated emotion but the result of sinful mishandling of an initial problem. A sinful response to a problem such as sickness, falling behind in one's work, negligence, or such, is the basic cause of depression. (117)

Adams' classification of the causes of depression are simplistic to the point of being misleading. He has chosen to ignore the fact that, as

(113) Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p.124

(114) Ibid., pp.9-10

(115) Adams, The Big Umbrella, pp. 1-36, 123-156

(116) Adams, Competent to Counsel, pp.1-19, 26-36

(117) Ibid., p.378

John White, a leading evangelical psychiatrist points out:

Depression has many faces. It cannot be relieved on the basis of one simple formula, arising as it does by numerous and complex mechanisms ... there are mysteries about it which remain unsolved. No one theoretical framework is adequate to describe it. (118)

Similarly Kirwan, reminds us that research into the working of the brain has revealed the correlation between various physical factors and emotional makeup. Physical disorders can result in mental and emotional disturbances. Some research has shown that there are disorders that are genetically determined. (119)

John White has shown that changes in brain chemistry and neuro-physiology can also be related to certain kinds of depression. He states:

As I review recent articles discussing the issue, it seems that there is a growing consensus that both nature and nurture play a part, but that in some forms of depressive illness genetics may be more important, while in other forms early experiences play the critical role. (120)

How does Adams suggest the counsellee be helped? The counsellor must identify not only the immediate problems, the way the depression manifests itself, but it is important to identify "all facets (incidents etc.) and/or life pattern(s) that may have led to the sinful reaction to the initial problem". (121) The counsellee must then be urged "to take biblical action in the power of the Spirit to replace these patterns with biblical ones". (122) In this way the downward cycle of depression will be halted. (123) He insists that "the hope for depressed persons, as elsewhere, lies in this: the depression is the result of the counselee's sin". (124)

(118) J. White, The Masks of Melancholy, p.18

(119) Kirwan, Biblical Concepts for Christian Living, p.69

(120) White, The Masks of Melancholy, pp. 127, 135-136

(121) Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, p.378

(122) Ibid., pp. 378-379

(123) Ibid.

(124) Ibid.

Because Adams assumes all depression is caused by sin, he also assumes that there is one standard cure. More serious, from a practical point of view, Adams assumes initiative on the part of the depressed person when at best there is but a flickering candle. According to Wayne Colwell, the depressed person is "in an impasse, unable to go forward on his own supply".(125)

Adams and Sin

Adams has correctly ascribed the ultimate cause of problems to original sin. In this regard, John White states:

There is indeed connection between sin and sickness. Sin gives rise to disease in two ways; directly or indirectly. All disease arises indirectly from sin, while some in addition may represent the direct results from sin. (126)

It is therefore important to distinguish between personal conscious sin and the inherited sinfulness that taints everything. There are some psychological problems which do not result from individual sin or from conscious sin. This point is emphasised by Vernon Grounds, President of the Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, Colorado. He states:

One must remember that mental and behavioural problems may be brought about by a vast complex of past influences and present stresses, not necessarily including a volitional maladjustment to God. (127)

Adams' approach to pathology is simplistic. Because he has reduced all problems to sin, problems are solved through confronting counselees with their sinful ways of responding and helping them to eliminate sinful behavioural patterns with righteous behavioural patterns.

(125) W.E.Colwell, "Not a Prescription for Everyone", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 2:1, Winter 1974, p.149

(126) John White, The Masks of Melancholy, pp.215, 222

(127) V. Grounds, "Holiness and Healthy Mindedness", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 2:1, Winter 1974, p.10

For the non-Christian the solution is salvation and for a Christian, the solution is more sanctification, which Adams sees in terms of obeying God's commands. Here stress is laid on a person's external, outward behaviour. Behaviour is modified through an elaborate system of rewards and punishment. It comes down to responding correctly through a simple act of the will. Although it is true that Adams does not deny the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit, his emphasis is on the counsellor's ability to respond correctly.

In other words, therapeutic change or sanctification is merely a matter of the will and of discipline. A person can determine to change his/her behaviour, to give up certain compulsions, like homosexual impulses, or to even not feel a certain way. This emphasis on discipline is clear when Adams says:

There is only one possible way to become Godly; you must be disciplined toward Godliness until you do in fact become Godly. (128)

Kirwan accuses Adams of taking too mild a view of the all and its effects on human functioning:

The will, along with cognitive and affective aspects of the heart, has been badly damaged; to a large extent human beings no longer have control over themselves. (129)

John Carter takes this to its logical conclusion when he says:

If correct responding can eliminate the state of sin and Adams' whole theory stresses correct responding, then the sinful condition can't be very serious. (130)

Similarly Hielema asks:

By dealing with sin mainly in terms of dehabitation and rehabilitation, does Adams not present us with a reductionistic approach to sin? (131)

(128) J.E. Adams, Godliness Through Discipline, p.14

(129) Kirwan, Biblical Concepts of Christian Living, p.91

(130) Carter, Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling, p.212

(131) S.Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling, p.254

For this reason, Carter accuses Adams of Pelagianism. It appears that sin can be eliminated by obedience. (132) Theologically Adams is not a Pelagian, he is Reformed in his theology, which is clear in his emphasis on the depravity of man. Carter declares:

However, in practice, Adams' stress on behaviour and the elimination of sinful habits indicate another conception of sin which has a strong Pelagian tone since it (sin) can be eliminated by right behaviour or obedience. (133)

Adams and Sanctification

Adams' view of sanctification cannot be supported biblically. In the first place, there is no necessary link between sanctification and the solutions to our problems. Greater sanctification does not automatically lead to emotional healing. Vernon Grounds points out that more obedience

in and of itself does not invariably produce a person who is a paragon of equanimity and integration. A Christian of rarest piety may exhibit both the pathological traits and habits; if interviewed by a clinician, he might be urged to undergo a long regimen of psychotherapy. (134)

Secondly, Adams' view of sanctification tends towards legalism with its emphasis on outward behaviour. It also tends towards perfectionism with his emphasis on an upward cycle of righteousness which leads to further righteousness. (135) Adams' behaviouristic understanding of sanctification cannot be supported biblically, it is a much more complex concept than mere outward obedience.

(132) Carter, Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counseling, p.213

(133) Ibid.

(134) Grounds, Holiness and Healthy Mindedness, p.10

(135) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.145

According to K. Bockmeuhl, Professor of Theology and Ethics at Regent College Vancouver,

The apostles hold that people must be sanctified by a cleansing of the heart (Acts 15 vs.9) and conscience (Hebrews 9 vs.14) as well as actively living out sanctification in moral conduct (1 Peter vs.15, 1Thessalonians 4 vs. 1 forward). (136)

In other words there are many factors involved in our sanctification. There is a strange dualism in the process of sanctification; on the one side, it is something believers actively pursue; on the other side, it is seen primarily as a work of God, of Christ and especially of the Holy Spirit. (137) Accordingly Bockmeuhl says: "believers are thus both passive and active in their sanctification". (138) There is a mystery in sanctification which cannot be reduced to simple outward obedience. Hielema stresses that in counselling it must always be remembered that growth in the way of holiness is not our work but God's work. (139)

Adams' concentration on outward behaviour results in just that, a focus on the outward without reaching down to the deeper, inner parts of the counsellor. At this point then Adams is a behaviourist by praxis. Hielema points out that underlying Skinner's methodology, "is the conviction that behaviour is determined not from within but from without". (140) Although Adams would say that ultimately man needs the grace of God to change, practically, his emphasis is very similar to Skinner's. Lawrence Crabb warns that it is possible to look good on the outside and to conform outward behaviour to fit a certain pattern whilst neglecting the deeper aspects of our problem. (141) In this connection

(136) G.V.Ferguson, D.F.Wright (eds.), New Dictionary of Theology, "Sanctification", K. Bockmeuhl, p.613

(137) Philippians 2:12-13

(138) Ferguson, Wright, New Dictionary of Theology, "Sanctification", K.Bockmeuhl, p.613

(139) Hielema, Pastoral and Christian Counseling, p.255

(140) Ibid., p.212

(141) L.Crabb, "Facing the Pain Inside", Discipleship Journal, Issue 42 p.52

he states: "Change, real change, involves far more than trying harder to do all we should. It requires ... a hard look at our insides." (142)

Real change requires, therefore, far more than altering sinful behaviour patterns. Real change is not an accomplishment on man's part. Apart from the Spirit's help man cannot change and modify his behaviour. Through the Spirit man will be clothed with the image of Christ in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. These changes, through the Holy Spirit take place in the heart, the centre of our self-consciousness and self-awareness. This means that behaviour modification is not fully in line with Scripture. The biblical teaching of the human heart stresses that all aspects of the personality must be dealt with. And since the Holy Spirit is a source of all truth, He has also revealed truths about man in the psychological sciences which can be legitimately used in this process of change/sanctification.

d. Synopsis

In this evaluation of Adams' counselling theory from a biblical perspective, it has been shown that Adams' unbiblical view of the fall and the image of God, is related to his rejection of common grace and general revelation. Related to this is also his emphasis on behaviour and his neglect of the inner aspects of human nature, and his rejection of the psychological sciences. This has resulted in a very superficial and simplistic approach to counselling which is unscriptural in that it tends towards legalism and perfectionism and a very superficial view of sin and sanctification.

It remains for us to evaluate Nouthetic theory from a practical perspective where it will be shown that Nouthetic counselling at best is

(142) Ibid., pp. 52, 57

only one amongst other counselling models, and has only very limited usage as a resource in helping troubled people.

CHAPTER 5

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF NOUTHETIC COUNSELLING THEORY LEADING TO A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF NOUTHETIC COUNSELLING IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

A. INTRODUCTION

We have seen that Adams claims that Nouthetic counselling is not only biblical, but repeatedly throughout his works he claims significant and rapid success in counselling. (1) In this regard Carter remarks:

those who are familiar with the research literature of psychotherapy and counseling, and its attendant, conceptual, and methodological problems will be aware of the difficulty that Adams would have in establishing that his approach produces significantly better than chance results, let alone the superiority of his therapy when compared to other therapies. (2)

There is an obvious need for empirical research to test Adams' claims. However, Adams, himself sees no value in empirical research into the effectiveness of Nouthetic counselling. His reason, he says is that "we are not dealing only with quantifiable entities". (3) It is not possible, he believes, to measure the results of the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life. Accordingly, he will not agree to any sort of evaluation of Nouthetic counselling techniques for it would be to "abandon the fundamental stance on the Word and Spirit". (4) Although there is an element of truth in what Adams says, his claims invite some sort of measurement into the effectiveness of Nouthetic counselling techniques as a counselling resource.

In this regard, as part of this evaluation of Adams' Nouthetic counselling techniques, a survey was conducted by the writer to establish to what extent Nouthetic counselling techniques are used as a counselling

(1) J.E. Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.XVIX

(2) J.D. Carter, "Adams' Theory of Nouthetic Counselling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 2:2, 1975, p.143

(3) J.E. Adams, What About Nouthetic Counseling? A Question-and-Answer Book, p.71

(4) Ibid.

resource by Baptist ministers in South Africa. For this purpose twelve Baptist ministers known to the writer were chosen. These ministers were selected because they were involved in counselling and for the most part were university graduates. It is not claimed that this survey is exhaustive or even scientific. The purpose was to merely arrive at a general impression of the attitude of ministers to Adams' Nouthetic counselling theory. The reasons why the survey was limited to Baptist ministers are as follows:

1. The writer is himself a Baptist minister.
2. Of all ministers, Baptist ministers are the most likely to use Nouthetic counselling techniques as they, would be attracted by Adams' conservative evangelical viewpoint and in particular his view of Scripture.
3. Due to inadequate training, Nouthetic counselling techniques would be an attractive resource for counselling with its practical no-nonsense approach.
4. This could be a first step in further research into the counselling practices of Baptist ministers in South Africa with the objective of looking at the whole counselling ministry among Baptists in South Africa.

B. RESULTS OF SURVEY TO ESTABLISH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NOUTHETIC COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES

1. Procedure

A two page questionnaire was constructed to assess to what extent these ministers used and found Nouthetic counselling techniques to be effective in their counselling. (5) Before the questionnaires were sent out, each respondent was contacted personally to solicit his co-operation in the survey. Particular care was taken to ensure that each respondent was aware of the purpose of the study. This was followed by letter which again outlined the purpose and importance of the study, the questionnaire was attached to this covering letter. On return of the completed

(5) See Appendix for Questionnaire

questionnaires, the writer made personal contact with many of the respondents to clarify points made or to solicit more information that may not have been clearly made in the questionnaire.

2. Result of Survey

- i) With the exception of two respondents, all the other respondents found severe limitations in using Nouthetic counselling techniques in their counselling. Their main objections were;
 - Neglect of the psychological sciences (9 respondents)
 - Too directive (7 respondents)
 - Behaviouristic and legalistic (5 respondents)
 - Simplistic in its diagnosis and treatment of pathology (5 respondents)
 For this reason Nouthetic counselling techniques were used in the following instances when counselling Christians :
 - a. In cases where the counsellee needed to be confronted with gross disobedience, like adultery or some clear violation of Scripture;
 - b. In cases where the counsellee was mature and the problem not deep seated;
 - c. In the latter stages of counselling.
- ii) Not one respondent reported ever using Nouthetic counselling techniques in counselling non-Christians, nor did they only focus on evangelism when dealing with non-Christians.
- iii) On the other hand, eleven of the respondents appreciated Adams' spiritual perspective on counselling as well as his attempt to build his counselling on a biblical foundation.

3. Conclusions

Although, as already mentioned, this survey cannot be regarded as scientific or exhaustive, it does give a fair indication of the extent to which Nouthetic counselling is a viable counselling resource. From what

we have seen, there are aspects of Adams' theory which are of benefit to the pastoral counsellor and care giver, and which have made a major contribution to the understanding and development of pastoral counselling and care in the evangelical sector of the church.

Adams' emphasis on the spiritual dimensions of counselling has underlined the vital importance of not neglecting the spiritual aspects of human nature. The stress he lays on basing all counselling on a sound biblical foundation and his attempt to find a way of using the Bible in counselling has been a reminder of the resources we have as Christian counsellors. Adams has also assisted the church, and particularly pastors, in understanding and rediscovering their place in the work of counselling and caring for people. Adams has therefore made an important contribution in making Christians aware of the need for a more biblically faithful counselling theory and practice.

On the other hand, it would appear that Nouthetic counselling theory cannot be used generally in even counselling Christians. It can only be used in a small percentage of counselling situations. Nouthetic counselling theory is therefore limited as a counselling resource. There seems to be very little doubt that these limitations are directly related to the theological weaknesses identified and discussed in Chapter 4. We saw that Adams has a limited view of general revelation and common grace. For this reason Adams rejects the validity of the principles of the psychological sciences as an important resource in pastoral counselling and care. Allied to this is Adams' neglect of the inner (psychological) aspects of human nature. This has resulted in a simplistic approach to pathology and has raised many problems in the applications of Nouthetic counselling techniques.

Perhaps the most glaring weakness of Nouthetic counselling theory, from a practical perspective is that Adams basically has one method of counselling - confrontational. Adams has based his Nouthetic counselling

counselling model on the Greek word Nouthesis and Noutheteo. (6) He translates these words as, "admonish", "warn", and "teach". (7) He understands these words to speak of confrontation in order to "effect personality and behavioural change". (8) He thus renders it "confront Nouthetically" or "authoritative Nouthetic confrontation". (9) This is a central concept in his counselling approach and is clearly brought out in the three elements which he sees as basic to Nouthetic counselling.

Adams' concentration on Nouthesia has limited Nouthetic counselling to confrontation and has thus limited its application to certain counselling situations. For some counsellors, the confrontational model may be sufficient in itself; for those who are spiritually mature, possess some degree of ego strength, or do not suffer from deep seated problems. But all the people who need counselling by no means fit these categories, so the repertoire of methods for pastoral counselling must be increased.

Adams has built his counselling approach on one single concept. He is correct in his understanding of Nouthesia. But the question that needs to be asked is whether counselling is not more than Nouthesia. In this connection John Carter emphasises that any biblical model of counselling must not be built on one single concept or even several biblical concepts but on a network of biblical concepts. (10) He points out that there are many different words used in the New Testament which relate to what seems to be the counselling process. (11) Hurding has similarly pointed out that Adams in choosing Nouthesia is guilty of ignoring a range of alternatives which could also be related to counselling. (12) In this connection it is instructive to make a study of some of the words which are used in the New Testament Epistles which focus on believers' care for one another.

(6) Adams, Competent to Counsel, p.41

(7) Ibid., p.44

(8) Ibid., p.45

(9) Ibid., p.44

(10) J.D.Carter, "Towards a Biblical Model of Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 8:1, Spring 1980, p.46

(11) Ibid.

(12) R.F Hurding Roots and Shoots p. 285

A word and its cognates which John Carter regards as a more appropriate base for a model of counselling than Nouthesia and its cognates, is the word Parakaleo. (13) Lawrence Crabb similarly believes that Parakaleo and its cognates supply a much more adequate model of counselling than Nouthesia from a biblical perspective. (14) This word, which appears more than one hundred and thirty times in the New Testament, in its verbal form means: to come alongside to help, to encourage, to console, to comfort someone, either by verbal or nonverbal means. (15)

Another word and its cognates which can be applied in the counselling process is the Greek word Paramuthia. This word is found twice in the Gospels and twice in the Epistles and carries the meaning: to encourage, and conveys a strong sense of comfort and consolation. (16) Its application in counselling is clear when Paul says:

For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God who calls you into His Kingdom and Glory. (17)

A similar idea is conveyed by the word boetheo and its cognates (18) and carries the meaning: to help, to assist, to be concerned with, or to take an interest in. (19)

How do these words relate to specific problems or people? In 1 Thessalonians 5:14 the believers are encouraged (parakaleo) to

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- (13) J.D.Carter, "Nouthetic Counseling Defended : A Reply to Ganz", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 3:3, 1975, p.215
 - (14) L. Crabb, Effective Biblical Counseling, p.149
 - (15) J.P.Lcuw, E.A.Nida (eds.) Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p.306
 - (16) L.O.Richards, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, p.246
 - (17) 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12
 - (18) Hebrews 2:18, Hebrews 4:16
 - (19) Richards, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, p.560

admonish (noutheteo) the unruly or idle, comfort (paramutheomai) the faint hearted (those who are temporarily overwhelmed by the stress of things), (20) to hold onto (antechemai) support, hold onto, and not to abandon the weak, and be patient (makrothumeo) with everyone. (21)

This verse suggests widely varied helping styles to what seems to be three different problems, and a general style applicable to all people. If Adams wants a biblical model of counselling it is not sufficient to adopt one counselling style. His counselling methodology must include comforting, encouraging, consoling, caring, guiding, helping, supporting and not only confrontation. Adams obviously expects too much from his counselling model. It is interesting to note that in a recent publication of the Journal of Pastoral Practice, D. Powlison, of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, has admitted that authoritative, direct and decisive intervention is only one mode of biblical counselling, and in fact not even a primary mode. He says: "the most characteristic biblical counseling relationship is a long term friendship consisting of mutually invited constructive dependency on one another". (22) This is the paracletic part of Nouthetic counselling that has been hitherto neglected.

C. TOWARDS A SOLUTION

1. We saw in the previous chapter that commitment to the authority of the Bible does not preclude the acceptance of the findings of the psychological sciences. In fact at this point Adams is out of step with the evangelical and Reformed tradition that he seeks to represent. John D. Carter and Bruce Narramore, who represent the Rosemead Graduate School

(20) L. Morris, The first and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, p.169

(21) Ibid.

(22) D.A.C. Powlison, "Crucial Issues in Contemporary Biblical Counseling", Journal of Pastoral Practice, 9:1988, p.66

of Professional Psychology at Biola University, have stressed the importance of evangelicals recognising the validity of the psychological sciences as a resource in pastoral counselling and care. Starting with the assumption that God is the Author of all truth, they have argued for a need to develop models of counselling that integrate the findings of psychology into pastoral counselling and care. (23) The Rosemead Graduate School and the Journal of Psychology and Theology have been established to

aid a large group of evangelical Christians in the process of integration ... we hope the Journal ... will provide an interdisciplinary focus for the integrating of biblical and psychological truth. (24)

The Journal itself contains research data aimed at gradually building a body of objective data relating to this objective. It also serves as a focus for exchanging ideas and information relating to the integration of psychology and theology. According to Narramore,

The evangelical church has a great opportunity to combine the special revelation of God's Word with a general revelation studied by the psychological sciences and professions. The end result of this integration will be a broader (a deeper) view of human life. (25)

This movement of seeking to integrate psychology and theology is now exerting an important influence in pastoral counselling and care amongst evangelicals in the United States. It is represented not only by Bruce Narramore and John Carter, but in addition it is represented by William Hulme and Lawrence Crabb, (26) Gary Collins, (27) Kirk E. Farnsworth, and W.T. Kirwan etc. Thus the reality of general revelation and common

(23) J.D.Carter, B.Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology, pp.103-104

(24) B.Narramore, "Perspectives on the Integration of Psychology and Theology", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 1:1, January 1973, pp.3-4

(25) Ibid., p.17

(26) Carter and Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology, P.106

(27) Narramore, "Perspectives on the Integration of Psychology and Theology", Journal of Psychology & Theology, 1:1 Jan.1973 p.17

grace demands that in any model of counselling cognisance needs to be taken of the findings of the psychological sciences.

2. From what we have seen it is clear that there is a wide range of counselling needs facing a pastoral counsellor and care giver. The reason for this is the fact that humans are many faceted beings, with a variety of needs and problems, consequently some counselling models are more effective than others when dealing with this variety of needs. Furthermore, David Carlson points out that a counsellor may find that he works better with a particular model than with another because "he understands some methods better than others, and because of his personal style and emotional comfort level." (29) To a large extent then, counselling techniques depend on both the nature of the counsellee's problems and also on the personality of the counsellor. In this connection Carter and Narramore point out that there are a variety of models available developed by therapists equally committed to the authority of Scripture as Adams understands the concept. (30) There are those, "we find leaning toward client-centred (Hulme, 1967), rational-emotive (Crabb, 1977), analytic (Wagner, 1975), and existential (van Kaam, 1968) styles of counselling." (31) For this reason Minirith has pointed out that there is no single biblical model of counselling. (32) This is confirmed by the results of the survey referred to above. None of the respondents used only one counselling model. Six of the respondents used a variety of models, depending upon the situation and the problem.

(29) D.E. Carlson, "Jesus' Style of Relating : The Search for a Biblical View of Counseling", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 4:3. Summer 1976, p.191

(30) Carter & Narramore, The Integration of Psychology and Theology, p.113

(31) Ibid.

(32) F. Minirith, Christian Psychiatry, p.93

As one respondent to the questionnaire put it: "I have found different models help different people" (33) and another said: "I basically adapt a model to suit the situation but do approach things analytically, using analytical insight and secular psychodynamics". (34) In other words, these respondents could be regarded as following an eclectic methodology. Two respondents depended on their experience and reading on the particular problem they were dealing with rather than being aware of a particular counselling model. Two respondents used the rational-emotive model of Lawrence Crabb.

Although there is much to commend in Adams' Nouthetic counselling theory, he expects too much from his counselling model. No one model is able to deal with all the problems facing counsellors. There is no single model or counselling approach that applies to all counselling situations. Therefore what is needed is a multi-varied approach to counselling. It is a mistake to rely on one single style of counselling. No one model can be classed as distinctively Christian or biblical. For this reason the pastoral counsellor and care giver should seek to find and understand and try out the various techniques and approaches that are consistent with his or her understanding of Scripture.

(33) Response to questionnaire. See Appendix at end of this chapter.

(34) Ibid.

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May 25, 1989.

I really appreciate your willingness to complete the enclosed questionnaire regarding Pastoral Counselling Models.


As Evangelicals we have become more aware of the need to approach pastoral counselling more 'Scientifically'. However, it is also true that we are for the most part a little wary of the approach of professional Psychologists and Psychiatrists. For many, the Nouthetic Counselling Model of Jay Adams has been the answer. It has presented many pastors with realistic counselling Techniques which accord with their theological convictions rather than running counter to them. But it does seem that those who are familiar with Nouthetic Counselling are becoming more aware of the limitations of this Model.

The aim of this questionnaire is to establish the extent to which Nouthetic Counselling is used and to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of this Model, i.e. whether it is a viable resource for Pastoral Counselling. This information is required for a Master of Theology Thesis, the title of which is 'Some possible solutions to the problem of Nouthetic Counselling within the context of church and society'.

This questionnaire has not been sent out to all pastors. I have confined it to only twelve men whom I believe would be in a position to give me a fair assessment of the Nouthetic Counselling Model. Therefore this survey is not to be regarded in any way as 'scientific'. It aims only at trying to catch some of the flavour of thinking of those involved in pastoral counselling in any way.

Once again I wish to thank you for your assistance in this matter.

With Christian greetings,


Errol R. Wagner

QUESTIONNAIRE

Aim: to establish the extent to which Adams is used among leading Counsellors (Evangelical) particularly in Baptist Denominations.

Questions:

1. Have you any formal training in counselling:
Bible College only
Post Graduate (details)
.....
.....
2. Do you counsel?
How many hours per week?
3. Do you use any particular model for counselling?
.....
.....
4. Do you use insights of 'secular psychology'?
.....
.....
5. Do you work as part of a counselling team?
.....
6. Do you work with other professionals in your counselling?
.....
7. What is the predominant type of counselling in which you are involved?
Educative
Pre-marital counselling
Marriage counselling
Family counselling
Crises counselling
Other (Actual)
8. Are you familiar with the Nouthetic Counselling Model of Jay Adams?
9. What do you regard as the strengths of Adam's counselling model?
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