



# CPSC Notes

COUNCIL FOR PASTORAL AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELLORS

No 16 – May 2021

## *Be the bearers of hope, faith and love*

My dear fellow Pastoral Caregivers

**A**s CPSC, we have faced many challenges and experienced a lot of setbacks during the current pandemic. Despite this, we experienced a growth in numbers. We could not have conferences and workshops in person as we are accustomed to and we had to adapt to virtual meetings. CPD sessions and our annual CPSC conference have still not realised. I trust that we will be able to break the news of our virtual conference soon.

I am still thankful for our personnel, Anita and Maria (who started assisting Anita this year) for going beyond the call of duty to keep all the systems running. We had our first Board meeting this year and we have big dreams for CPSC.

During these trying times, I trust that we all will take care of ourselves as well as all our clients, family and friends. May God graciously bless us with all we need.

Since we are pastoral caregivers, it is my privilege to share the thoughts and guidance of Paul, pastor of the church and supervisor of Timothy, with you. May you learn from it and be encouraged by it.

### **A special calling**

Pastors are ordinary people in this world with a special calling and this calling change their lives permanently. Paul is taking up his supervision role seriously and wrote Timothy a pastoral letter (1 Tim 6). He encourages his young spiritual child to avoid the pitfalls of worldly practices, worthless arguments, and the longing to be rich.

Paul guides him in his role as spiritual leader in his community. Paul mentions all the disgraces of the world and that some people turn away from God because of their love of money and all other kinds of sin.

1 Tim 6: 11 But you, man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of eternal life to which you were called and about which you have made a good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 In the



presence of God, who gives life to all, and of Christ Jesus, who gave a good confession before Pontius Pilate, I charge you 14 to keep this command without fault or failure until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 God will bring this about in his own time. He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see, to him be honour and eternal power. Amen. 17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all

things to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share, 19 storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of what is truly life. 20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding irreverent and empty speech and contradictions from what is falsely called knowledge. 21 By professing it, some people have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all (Christian Standard Bible. (2020)).

Paul saw Timothy as a new Moses, Elijah, or David. But this does invest Timothy's role and position with the gravity of a tradition in which God leads his people through chosen shepherds and teachers of his Word.

And since "Timothy is addressed as a leader whose way of life is to be an example to all believers," there is a sense in which all believers are summoned by the words Paul writes: "to be followed by all of God's people, especially by their leaders, starting with Timothy".

The gospel does not just forbid doing wrong, based on God's law, as a moralistic conception of what a relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Christ calls for. It actually empowers the believer in his pursuit of excellence in personal communion with God.

For every *No!* in Paul's writings, there is generally a corresponding and relational *Yes!* In this passage Paul's *Yes* is sixfold, perhaps corresponding loosely to the vices listed in vv. 4–5.

Paul wanted to encourage Timothy, as God's man, to work at what is right and good, learning to trust Him and love others, and to be patient and gentle. In this context, we can regard Paul's six targets for Timothy's pursuit as an informal summary of a few of the main graces the gospel imparts to those who receive and walk in it over the course of time.

To do justice to these six graces (and others closely related) would be the business of a theology of Paul. But Timothy, having ministered with Paul and been taught by Paul, did not need a structured exposition.

A few of the main headings of the Pauline synthesis were sufficient to impress him with Paul's will regarding how he should act (not merely thinking or believing) in light of the epistle thus far.

### Christ Jesus as manifestation of God

For Paul, Christ Jesus is the definitive and saving manifestation of God (of which only one exists). He is also the sole mediator between God and humans (1 Tim 2:5). Socrates may have thought and spoken like he knew himself to be "a relative of the gods," but this conviction was mistaken, both as to divinity's number and divinity's identity.

Timothy's connection with Christ Jesus, to which Paul appeals, is a strong incentive to heed his words. Before Pilate, Jesus stated clearly who he was (Luke 23:3), at great peril to his life, humanly speaking. Timothy now has the opportunity to state in Ephesus clearly who he takes Jesus to be, whatever threats and loss he might face in doing so.

Paul has a distinct apostolic call and authority, which he draws on here in summoning Timothy to abide by his writings. It can be regarded as a command, given the prominence of Paul's "charge" to Timothy throughout 1 Timothy. As Paul appeals to Timothy to "keep this command," he highlights Christ's appearing.

But it is an appearing whose gloriousness is radiant precisely as the culmination of numerous other aspects of his person and work that have created a people who live awaiting his return, whether they eventually celebrate it in this age or the next.

Paul wants Timothy to live in keen awareness and anticipation of Christ's glorious appearing (v. 14). But Timothy cannot become distracted by wondering when that will be, for its timing is up to God and him alone to "bring about". Honour is what Timothy and all creation owe God. Might is what he possesses that makes any other response to him except honour inexplicable folly.

### A warning to the wealthy

Timothy is also charged to counsel the rich not to "to put their hope in wealth," for it is "uncertain." Paul has already reminded Timothy, "We have put our hope in the living God" (4:10), Who is the opposite of uncertainty. The difference in outcome is decisive. Wealth's advantages are limited and fleeting. But the benefits of God, who "richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment", are not.

Wealth and its concerns may blot out consciousness of God. The wealthy therefore need to learn how to live with their eye on God more than on their wealth, a skill that may well require pastoral guidance, admonition, and encouragement, in addition to fiscal expertise and prudence. Paul is providing Timothy resources for his ministry to those with wealth here. "The issue is not whether one had wealth but whether one used it for oneself or for others."

Accordingly, the challenge for the rich is not to be on the lookout for "good deeds" they can elect to perform with their money; it is rather to live the transformed life Paul speaks of in a passage like Rom 12:1-2.

Paul wants Timothy's people with financial means not to be slack or grudging but to be quick to step up and put their potential to good use in the sense of "readily giving" and "magnanimous". Their actions and use of wealth should rather reflect in the present a full measure of awareness of the eternal realities that earthly life merely foreshadows.

Paul also commands overseers at Ephesus to "keep watch," "be shepherds of the church of God," and "be on your guard" (Acts 20:28, 31). Timothy, like loyal pastors through the centuries, will sometimes find himself saying with the Psalmist, "I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war" (Ps 120:7; cf. Eccl 3:8; Mic 3:5). He cannot simply cave in.

Guarding in the sense Paul intends "is active rather than a passive task." "What has been entrusted" to Timothy's care is, minimally, all that Paul has written to him in this epistle. It is a tall order, but none of it is insignificant. More broadly, it is the gospel message and the concerns of "God's household, which is the church of the living God" (3:15). ■

*Extracts from The Letter of 2 TIMOTHY.*

*Yarbrough, R. W. (2018). The Letters to Timothy and Titus. (D. A. Carson, Ed.) (pp. 321-343). Grand Rapids, MI; London: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos.*

### Dr Tertius Erasmus

CEO: Association of Christian Religious Practitioners and Chairperson of CPSC.

## Guidelines for prayer counselling

By Dr Michiel van der Merwe

**Dare to pray ... and become healed in Christ!**

### What is prayer counselling?

Prayer counselling is more than just to conclude a counselling session with a prayer. Prayer counselling confirms that God must be part of our lives and thus also of the whole counselling session, and what happens thereafter!

Our theological understanding of **prayer** as such determines the character of our prayer counselling. The following concepts, for example, play a very significant role in the way how we implement prayer counselling:

► **God** – Our understanding of God determines what we pray and what we are expecting about the outcome of our prayers. Is God (just to mention a few examples):

- The Christmas Father – who gives us what we ask if we behaved ourselves;
- The Almighty – who will He give us whatever we ask as He is able to do even the impossible;
- The Sovereign – who knows what is the best for us, and we must just accept gladly whatever we receive;
- The God of love – who will protect me from any bad things; or
- The Righteous – who will punish me if I am not following Him with my whole life.

► **The will of God** – The following questions, for example, may be asked according to the will of God in my current life situation:

- Where is God in my current situation? Is He just “passive” allowing whatever in my life; or is He the “author” of all the suffering in my life?
- Where does my dreams fit in? May I ask for specific outcomes in my life; or must I just accept whatever happens in my life?
- How can I find peace of mind about what His will for my life is?
- What about the love of God and His omnipotence as aspects of His will? Will a God of love allow suffering for his children? And, if He is almighty, why will He allow suffering for those who love Him?



► **Answer on our prayers** – Our expected outcome of our prayers forms a crucial part of our healing. This may be determining the success of our prayer counselling. The following questions, for example, may be asked:

- Is God answering us with a “yes”, “no” or “wait”? What is my next step if the answer is “no”? And how long must I wait for an answer?
- How do I know if it is God’s answer? What if two persons praying for the same cause receive opposite answers, like two persons praying about the ongoing of their relationship?
- May I “demand” a specific answer from God and even ask as many as possible persons to pray with me

for a good cause?

- What effect is God’s answer supposed to have on us?

### Conclusion

To pray is actually a risk: “Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays” (S Kierkegaard). If we want to pray, we must be willing to accept and live the answer on our prayers. Warpula (1978) wrote an article with the title: “The tragedy of an answered prayer”.

The answer on our prayers is not our answers, but THE ANSWER (spiritual healing). “Instead of being simply a dialogue, a triologue comes into being” (Oates, 1949).

Prayer counselling is *ora et labora* (“pray and work”) in practice. First pray and then live the answer on your prayer! The result of prayer counselling is therapeutic.

“Welke visie wie ook hebben, we kunnen niet ontkennen dat het gebed de bidt beïnvloedt. ... Het gebed kan gekarakteriseerd worden als een therapeutische meditatie die diegene die bidt op zichzelf toepast” (Brümmer 1985).

### ► Prayer counselling in practice

The challenge is to implement prayer counselling responsibly in our daily counselling sessions towards healing in Christ.

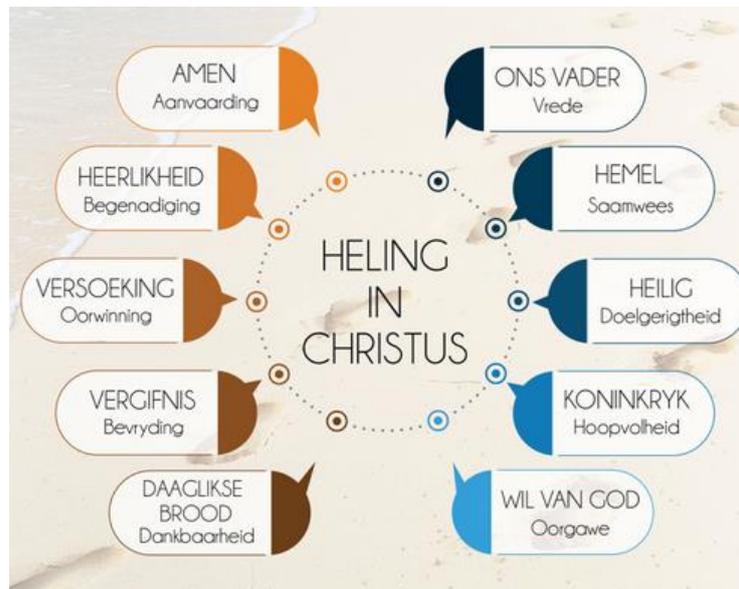
The book “WAAG DIT OM TE BID ... en vind heling in Christus” (published by Spearpoint Publishers: 2020) provides practical guidelines about prayer counselling. The OUR FATHER-prayer of Jesus is used as guideline how to implement prayer counselling. Every chapter also refers to another Scripture reading to guide the reader towards healing in Christ.

The format of WAAG DIT OM TE BID is to provide

- the real issue in each scenario,
- where to start with your counselling
- our focus and/or approach
- our purpose;
- and the aspect of healing in Christ.

A brief outline of the book, *WAAG DIT OM TE BID*, is as follows:

- **Our Father.** The concept of God is used how to do counselling with a person who wants to argue theoretically about who and what God is. The example of a person who wants to prove everything with facts and researches about the reality of God is used. The outcome is peace of mind.
- **In heaven.** The concept of God being in heaven is used how to do counselling with a person who questions the presence of God in a situation of intense emotional pain. The example of a father who lost his child and experiences God as absent in this context, is used. The outcome is being reassured of the presence of God.
- **Holy Name.** The concept of the holiness of God is used how to do counselling with a person who has lost his job. The outcome of this is to understand God's purpose for us in foreign circumstances.
- **Kingdom.** The concept of the kingdom of God is used how to do counselling with a person who wants to serve God with all his heart, but whose circumstances does not allow it (apparently). The outcome is being hopeful.
- **Your will.** The concept of God's will is used how to do counselling with a family who has a substance dependent person. The outcome is accepting your purpose and roll in a challenging situation.
- **Daily bread.** The concept of God providing us our daily bread is used how to do counselling with a person who is satisfied with what a person has in live. The outcome of this how to be thankful in a practical way.
- **Forgiveness.** The concept of forgiveness is used how to do counselling with persons living with guilt feelings. This chapter is expanded with a section about the difference between true and false guilt feelings. The outcome of this is freedom.
- **Temptation.** The concept of temptation is used how to do counselling with a person who survives by living



unethical according to some religious norms and standards. The outcome of this to commit oneself to a lifestyle of overcoming day to day challenges.

- **Glory of God.** The concept of the glory to God is used how to do counselling with a person who want to praise God during a situation of intense personal trauma. The outcome is to live through the grace of God.

- **Amen.** The concept of Amen is used how to do counselling with a person who has many ideas about serving God. The outcome of this is acceptance of God's purpose for your life.

The book has a very useful table at the end about all the above-mentioned scenarios. Where to start, guidelines, warnings and the expected outcome.

At the end, it is not (only) what we do during prayer counselling. The more important question is what we do after the session of prayer counselling, which may be an indication if we received healing in Christ.

May we not pray (do prayer counselling) until God hears us, but until we listen to God! ■

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## WAAG DIT OM TE BID ... en vind heling in Christus!

By Dr Michiel van der Merwe | R 100.00

Order from Dr Michiel van der Merwe ([mvd360@gmail.com](mailto:mvd360@gmail.com) or 082 462 3529)

OR place order at

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# Guidelines for consultation via distance counselling

By Pastor Gawie J Leroux, CPSC affiliate  
/ CEO PGM Foundation

Since South Africa have declared a national state of disaster due to the breakout of Covid 19 in 2020, some of the work done by professionals have moved online. Distance counselling uses modern communication technology rather than traditional face-to-face methods. These online consultations use any the following platforms:

- Video calls like Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Skype.
- SMS and chat platforms such as WhatsApp, Messenger, Telegram and Signal.

## Professional body guidelines

As an example, the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) guidelines and considerations dated April 17, 2020 points to the following:<sup>1</sup>

Practice as a health care professional is based upon a relationship of mutual trust between patients and health care practitioners. The term “profession” means “a dedication, promise or commitment publicly made”.

To be a good health care practitioner requires a life-long commitment to sound professional and ethical practices and an overriding dedication to the interests of one’s fellow human beings and society.

Note the following extracts for consideration in online consultations:

### 1. Practitioner’s wellbeing

Practitioners are regarded as frontline workers in the pandemic. As a result, they have an elevated risk to become infected and should always be cautious in carrying out their responsibilities.

### 2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPEs aligned with Covid protocols must be in place when personal consultation take place.

### 3. Telemedicine / Telehealth

On March 26, 2020, the HPCSA instructed medical workers to only do online consultation to patients known to them.

### 4. Non-medical practitioners

The following practitioners are mostly work online:

- Social workers
- Psychologists
- Counsellors
- Pastors / Pastoral caregivers

## 5. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Practitioners are expected to continue updating their professional knowledge and skills in order to effectively manage patients in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other health conditions of public health importance.

## Responsibilities of the profession

Another example is the Council for Social Service Professionals (CSSP) guidelines for ethical online consultation. The purpose of the guidelines is to:

- guide practitioners who provide technology-supported services; and
- strengthening protection of clients who receive technology-supported services.

As applied to the context of pastoral counselling practitioners, clause 3 of the General notice 6 of 2020 states the following:<sup>2</sup>

### Integrity of the profession

- The practitioner must be registered in their profession to consult online and be able to provide proof of registration to clients. Clients must be able to verify the identity and registration of the practitioner on the Council’s database online or by contacting the Council’s offices.
- When unavailable to render continued services to existing clients, the practitioner will make alternative resources available for continuity of services, by means of technology supported services and/or referral to another social worker or organisation.

### Negligence

The practitioner will:

- select appropriate technology to deliver relevant services. Using only text-based service delivery does not comply with general accepted standards of practice. A combination of text and telephonic and/or video delivery is required; and
- ensure that their technology-supported professional services are covered by their professional indemnity insurance, if applicable.

### Competency

In providing distance counselling, the practitioner will:

- keep up to date with emerging knowledge on and be competent to use technologies supporting distance counselling;

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/Professional\\_Practice/Conduct%20%26%20Ethics/Booklet%2010%20Telemedicine%20September%202016.pdf](https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/Professional_Practice/Conduct%20%26%20Ethics/Booklet%2010%20Telemedicine%20September%202016.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sacssp.co.za/2020/GENERAL%20NOTICE%20TECH%20SUPPORTED%20SOCIAL%20WORK.pdf>

- exercise careful judgement and take responsible steps (for example appropriate education, research, training, consultation and supervision) to ensure competence in their work and to protect clients from harm;
- undertake training to understand the technology used in distance counselling, including different platforms and applications, security and possible technical problems such as loss of power, viruses, hardware failures, image and/or sound distortions; and
- be aware of the effectiveness and evidence of technology supported services, as well as the ethical implications and potential benefits and risks.

#### **Compliance with legislation, policies and procedures**

The practitioner will have a sound knowledge and understanding of legislation, policies and procedure on the use of technology in providing social work services, access to and protection of electronic information and data, e.g. the Protection of Personal Information Act.

#### **Ethical responsibilities**

Keep clients informed of potential benefits, limitations, policies, and procedure while using technology-supported services.

- The practitioner must inform the client in writing when and how technology will be used to record, gather, manage and store information concerning the client.
- Inform clients of their consulting times.

- Get written consent from clients before consultation take place.
- Where minors are involved, the practitioner must get written permission from the parent.

#### **Confidentiality**

- Take all reasonable steps to assure that client information is kept confidential.
- Only use sound technologies.
- Educate clients on online safety and encryption.

#### **Professional relationships**

- Keep personal and professional relationships apart.
- Have boundaries guidelines available.

#### **Payment**

- Provide clients with tariffs and payment agreements.
- Billing should be reasonable.
- Providing invoice and receipts where applicable.

#### **Guidelines on online etiquette**

Strive to make the online consulting more pleasant and ethical. Online communication differs from direct personal communication, as it may lack the nuances in tone present when we work in the practice.

#### **Security**

When we consult on an online platform, we need to consider additional measures to protect the client's safety and privacy.

## **Further guidelines for online communication**

Some general tips for online communication: <sup>3</sup>

### **1 Be respectful to others**

As in the normal guide in terms of our scope of practice we already have a set of guidelines to comply with, because we are working online, we need to be extra causes when we work online, the importance here are that we still need to respect the person on the other side in this communication method. It is okay to disagree, but still respect the person point of view. Ensure that you and the client are aware of the following:

- Dress code – been proper dressed – the same as on a personal meeting
- The place where the online consultation will take place are private
- The consultation room are need and tidy and that there are no access or disturbances during the consultation.

- Recommendation: Make use of a safe online VPN (Virtual Private network) not the free ones because they do not give protection as the promised, made use of a screened background because it helps that your online apperency look professional.

### **2 Be positive**

Be always positive when dealing with clients, when you are negative it leads your client also been negative.

### **3 Choose images carefully**

In using images, ensure that it is a true reflection of what you want to communicate.

### **4 Ensure mindful use of language**

- Use clear language. Avoid strong words, swearing and slang.
- Choose your words carefully, using proper grammar and punctuation to ensure the proper meaning is communicated.
- Avoid SMS-style communication, as this may mean different things to different people.

<sup>3</sup> 19 Tips to Improve Online Etiquette, Randy A Brown, August 14, 2008, [https://elegantmarketplace.com/19-tips-to-improve-online-](https://elegantmarketplace.com/19-tips-to-improve-online-etiquette/)

etiquette/

- Even though we are working online, grammar and spelling still matters. Edit and proofread all communication properly before sending it.
- Understand the technology you are using. Use emoticons and stickers only where appropriate. The meaning must be clear to the recipient and it should be interpreted correctly. 😊
- Always respect culture in consultation.

### 5 Fact checking

Make sure that the research is correct before sharing. Avoid posting fake news or making statements not reflecting the true value in a statement. Don't forward chain letters. Provide references where it could improve the conversation. Don't post a portion of a quote – always keep the context clear.

### 6 Online communication is never private

Keep in mind that online work is a great resource, but also keep in mind that nothing online is private. Anything can be screen-captured or repeated. If you wouldn't say it over an intercom for all your co-workers and family to hear, don't say it online.

### Other recommendations

- Always use an excellent **antivirus program**.
- Use **encryption software** to send and receive documents. (Note: Due to the POPI Act it will be a requirement in term of protecting your client privacy and is recommend that all practitioners are up to date and compliant with the Act.)

- **Do not connect with just anyone:** Be careful in your dealing with strangers online – not all people are who they say they are.
- **Do not break trust:** The same rule applies online as we consult a client in our practises.
- **Use aliases with care:** Choose an alias with care – it should not be insulting or inappropriate.
- **Respond to others:** If someone ask you something directly, do not ignore them. If you cannot answer immediately, inform the client, refer the client and be sure to follow up.
- **Follow the rules:** The rules as prescribed by your professional body must always be followed.
- **Keep it short:** When sending online communication, keep it short and to the point of the topic under discussion.
- **Think before sending or posting:** Take the necessary care - is the communication really required and is it legally compliant?
- **Protect your reputation:** When using social media, be mindful of your reputation as a professional.

### Conclusion

Follow etiquette to ensure that online consultations provide value by the use of high quality and clear communication.

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## *The mind as the gateway to change*

By Dr Christo Nel

*This is the third in a series of articles.*

Christians tend to instinctively distrust the mind, thinking it is irredeemably corrupt and humanistic.

They point to Harvard, Yale and other universities that were originally founded on Christian principles, but which today promulgate deceptions and lies.

However, the mind is actually a powerful instrument of the Spirit of God. He made it as the gatekeeper of Kingdom activity on Earth.

The great tragedy when a mind goes astray, is that God's freedom to establish His will on Earth is limited.

The mind is not to be tossed out; it is to be used for its original purpose. If the mind weren't vitally important to our walk with Christ and our commission, Paul would not have urged us to "be transformed by the renewing of our minds."

In fact, only a renewed mind can consistently bring Kingdom reality to Earth.

Yet many of us live with unrenewed minds, which are of little use to God.

An unrenewed mind is like a discordant key on a piano. Once you discover that key, you don't use it anymore, because it detracts from the music. You skip over it and work around it.

In the same way, people who are out of sync with the mind of Christ, seldom get used, no matter how available they are, because their thoughts conflict with the mind of Christ. They are self-appointed in their mission and are not in submission to the primary mission. As a result, they are working entirely outside God's intended commission.

However, when we come into agreement with the primary mission, our minds become powerful tools in God's hands.

This explains why there is such an intense war being waged for your mind and your mental agreement. Every thought and action in your life speaks of allegiance to God or to Satan. Both are empowered by your agreement.

Renewing your mind means learning to recognize what comes from Hell, and what comes from Heaven, and agreeing with Heaven. That is the only way you will complete your divine assignment. God designed your mind to be one of the most supernaturally powerful tools in the universe, but it needs to be sanctified and yielded to the Holy Spirit so you can carry out His designs, creative ideas, and plans in your everyday life.

### Repentance made practical

Renewing the mind begins with repentance. That is the gateway to return to our original assignment on Earth. Jesus said, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

To many Christians, "repent" refers to having an altar call where people come forward and weep at the altar and get right with God.

That is a legitimate expression of repentance, but it is also much more than that. "Re" means to go back. "Pent" is like the penthouse, the top floor of a building. Repent, then, means to go back to God's perspective on reality. And in that perspective, there is a renewal, a reformation, that affects our intellect, our emotions, and every part of our lives. Without repentance we remain locked into carnal ways of thinking.

When the Bible speaks of carnality, it doesn't necessarily mean obvious, disgusting sin. Most Christians have no appetite for sin; they don't want to get drunk or sleep around, but because they live without the demonstrated power of the Gospel, many have lost their sense of purpose and gone back to sin.

### A renewed mind

Having a renewed mind, is often not an issue of whether or not someone is going to Heaven, but rather of how much of Heaven he or she wants in his or her life right now.

Jesus urged us to do an about-face in our approach to reality because His Kingdom is at hand. He brought His world with Him, and it is within our reach.

He wants you to see reality from God's perspective, to learn to live from His world toward the visible world. But if you don't change the way you think, you'll never be able to apprehend the Kingdom power that is available.

Jesus said that "unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3). What does that mean?

Well, Jesus was not saying that we would have visions of Heaven, though I know that happens. He was speaking

more practically. He was saying that when our minds are renewed, we will see the Kingdom displayed and proven as He did in His earthly ministry.

That is what it means to "see" the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our souls long to see such things. We have inside of us an unrelenting hunger to watch the Kingdom break into this realm—and not just to watch, but to participate, to become the connecting point and gateway for God's power.

I walked into church one recent Sunday morning, greeting people before the meeting, and in the back, I met a homeless gentleman who'd come as a guest of someone else. He had a cast on his arm and was treating it with great care.

So, I said, "Hey, what happened to your arm?"

He said, "I fell off a 20-foot bridge and shattered my wrist."

"How about if we pray for that?" I asked.

"Okay," he replied.

We prayed and I told him, "Now move it around."

He moved it and his jaw dropped. He looked in complete astonishment at the lady who brought him because he had been completely healed in a moment of time. His wrist was fine. When the invitation came for people to give their lives to Christ later in the service, he was the first to come forward. Once again, we see that "His kindness leads us to repentance."

That is a simple, everyday example of proving that the Kingdom works on Earth. It is not mind over matter, or something spooky and weird. It is going back to God's perspective of reality and living as if we really believe it.

His purpose—His reality—is to raise up a delegated group of people who work with Him to destroy the works of the devil, who demonstrate and prove the will of God here on Earth as it is in Heaven.

That is the core of the Great Commission, and it is your privilege and mine to co-labour with Him in it.

A renewed mind sees the way God sees. It receives His impressions and becomes a creative force to release His expression of dominion on planet Earth.

A renewed mind destroys the works of the devil so that earthly reality matches heavenly reality.

It proves the will of God not just in word, but in deed.

It heals the sick, frees those enslaved to sin, brings joy where there was sadness, strength where there was weakness, explosive creativity and world-changing ideas and inventions where there was lack of invention.

It causes the Kingdom of God to be expressed "on Earth as it is in Heaven". ■

## *Pastoral counselling – a calling*

By Heinrich Lottering

This may seem like a strange topic for an article furnished to counsellors, psychologists and ministers with training, academic education and many years' experience. Yet it is so important for professionals to stand back from time to time and reassess their ministry and counselling service by measuring it against the norms and mission of the field of therapy they practise.

It is very important for professionals in this field to fully grasp that there is a difference between pastoral counselling (therapy) and clinical counselling (therapy) done by a confessing or cultural Christian. Although pastoral counselling is naturally based on tried and tested therapeutic methods and principles, the basis of such therapy is the Bible. Sadly, the Bible is often perceived by many patients and therapists as a mundane single focussed one-dimensional narrative.

Nothing can be further from the truth. We approach the Word as divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit as explained in 2 Tim 3:16 "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living".

Written over two thousand years by over forty authors from shepherds, kings, prophets, a judge, governor, doctor, fishermen, apostles, et cetera, it is clearly a very rich and multi-dimensional divine "handbook" for the complex human experience that is life in the post-modern era.

The next crucial point flowing forth from acknowledging the role Scripture plays, is that therapists need deep and extensive knowledge and insight in the Word. Just reading again Psalm 119:115 "Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path", one is clearly reminded by the influence of Scripture on believers' thoughts and actions.

Therapists cannot impart such divine wisdom and guidance if they themselves have not extensively read and digested the Word in their own spiritual walk with God. Hence the Word informs us that lack of sufficient knowledge is not only an impediment to therapy but often the cause of further decline in spiritual and emotional health. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because you have rejected knowledge." (Hosea 4:6a)

In pastoral counselling, the therapy is strongly based on the security provided by the Lord's grace and faithfulness. It takes in consideration the psychological understanding of healing and personal growth, yet use spiritual resources for guidance, motivation and providing the ultimate goal. Christ atoning forgiveness is a powerful truth and tool for dealing with paralysing guilt and fear. For spiritually-focussed individuals whose world

view is strongly based on their religious hopes, addressing emotional or relationship battles without spirituality is often ineffective and without lasting result.

Clients are reminded that as true Christians, they have as source of strength and assistance the Holy Spirit living in them and guiding them and also the superior guidance and authority of Scripture.

"The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

Pastoral counsellors are more capable in their faith than they often realise. Although counselling is problem initiated – meaning the majority of patients make an appointment in response to a crises or problem that is confronting them – part of the therapy is always offering the eternal perspective.

The latter reflects on the fact that the turmoil is often temporary and even long-term challenges are less of battle when perceived from a viewpoint and focus of eternity.

What is the foundation of the coping mechanisms a pastoral counsellor can assist clients with? In dealing with terminal illness and death, the counsellor offers spiritual hope of eternal life and points to the hope that death is merely a transition to a better and more fulfilled life in God's presence.

The incredible wisdom of the Saviour is revealed in John 9:1-3 "And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

In this verse, His divine counsel motivates patients to take their focus off the crises, crippling fear or worries and re-focus their attention, energy and resolve on the result that can come from the trying time – that is a result of strength, growth and personal edification through their relationship with God.

It is a great reward for a pastoral counsellor to end a session and the patient's crises or problem has been resolved by objective Biblical guidance and wisdom, yet even if the session does not end with complete resolution of the problem – to enable the patient to leave with renewed hope kindled is the least expectation of success we can have.

That is exactly what Scripture states faith is all about: "Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see" (Heb 11:1) and "We are

filled with hope, as we wait for the glorious return of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (Tit 2:13)

To summarise, to practise pastoral counselling or psychology is a calling, an incredible privilege and an enormous responsibility. For it does not only entail promoting emotional and psychological health – but the therapist also fulfils the role of spiritual shepherd/authority figure during therapy.

As stated in Hebrews 13:17: “Obey your leaders and do what they say. They are watching over you, and they must answer to God”. This sobering statement that shepherds (including pastoral counsellors) bear the responsibility for peoples' souls. It is a pastoral counsellor's duty not only to stay abreast on psychological and

therapeutic skills – but also have extensive and ever deepening level of Scriptural knowledge.

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## *Pastoral care with young people suffering from depression in the context of Soweto*

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### Abstract

The situation and challenges of young people with depression in the urban African context of Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa, are investigated from a pastoral care perspective. Depression is one of the more prevalent mental disorders. In African contexts it is often equated with demon possession. The aim of the article is to investigate the interplay between Western understandings of depression and African perspectives and to come to a deeper understanding of the way in which support and healing are approached in this context.

The article investigates the ways in which young South Africans in Soweto, their families and faith communities cope with and understand “depression” on the one hand, and the culturally related phenomenon of “demon possession” on the other. The article proposes a collaborative method of providing support which requires the cooperation of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, African spiritual healers, and pastoral caregivers.

### Introduction

The article proposes a pastoral care praxis for caring for young people in Soweto who suffer from depression or demon possession, depending on how their condition is

diagnosed in medical terms or designated in cultural terms. These two possible designations already indicate a clash of worldviews. Both worldviews can be found in their context. To provide adequate care for these young people, a holistic form of care should be found that effectively attends to the physical, psychological, social, cultural, mental and spiritual aspects of being human.

Depression is the most prevalent form of psychotic behaviour and is characterised by a “breakdown of integrated personality function, withdrawal from reality, emotional blocking, distortion of thought and behaviour” (Mohanty 1984:221). It is a disabling and one of the most widespread behavioural disorders, also referred to as “mental illness”. According to Mojtabai et al (2016:48), depression is often accompanied by emotions such as a sense of loss, failure, a sense of injustice and ill health. Joy and sorrow, growth and decay, light and darkness are part of life and even the negative aspect of each of these pairs has a valid role to play in the greater scheme of things Assari et al (2018:14). However, for those who are prone to depression it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain hope and to experience the positive side of life. Life’s ordinary struggles can become unbearable. If an already negative period in a person’s life is exacerbated by, for example, the emotional trauma of

bereavement or severe financial loss, people can fear for their survival. The platitudes of well-meaning friends and loved ones do not alleviate their situation. They become increasingly convinced that no one understands what they are going through (Assari 2017:76). People who suffer from depression are not just “feeling sorry for themselves”. According to the American Psychiatric Association in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–5 2013) depression, as a recognised medical condition with specific signs and symptoms, is the fastest growing epidemic in the developed world as indicated by the of the. The World Health Organization (WHO) ranks depression at number five in its top ten lists of disabling illnesses.

With the shift to modern and postmodern paradigms the idea of “demonic possession” fell out of favour (Isaacs 2018:373). These ways of thinking have not presented answers to the phenomena associated with demonic possession or developed appropriate methods of treatment for those who experience the signs and symptoms of classical possession. Though belief in possession is often rejected as “superstition”, phenomena associated with demonic possession do exist and must be dealt with. Mark Crooks (2007:28, 45-76) defends the use of a traditional paradigm for understanding the phenomena associated with demonic possession. He suggests that demonic possession should be viewed as a valid phenomenon. He argues that denial because of a shift in philosophical paradigms does not negate the reality of an event. He does not find the recently adopted explanations of the natural sciences to be necessarily more convincing than traditional views. Using what he calls a “post-anecdotal” method, Crooks (2007:45) shows that the ancient system of demonology is not only as adequate as the modern medical model but more effectively describe the phenomena of possession states.

## The context

Over a period of five years the following statistics from the Psychiatric and Psychological Department Annual Report of 2019, indicate the prevalence of depression among patients in the Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto, Johannesburg. In 2014 there were 53 patients with depression out of 254, which is 36%; in 2015 there were 26 patients with depression out of 139 patients, which is 18%; in 2016 there were 12 patients with depression out of 74 patients, which is 19%; in 2017 there were 16 patients with depression out of 77, which is 18%; in 2018 there were 6 patients with depression out of 41 patients, which is 16%. This record, however, represents only the small number of families who dared to visit medical professionals with the problem of a family member with depression. There are probably many more who gave up hope without fully understanding the mental health issue at hand. Often, families are not equipped to deal with the problem of depression.

Domestic violence, poverty and other socio-economic factors exacerbate the problems associated with depression – both with regard to contributing to the causes of the young people’s condition and as an impediment to creating an optimal environment for their recovery.

Many people in this context have no in-depth knowledge of the classification and indicators of mental disorders. Some may have superficial knowledge of depression because they know people who suffer with it or have heard of the condition. Many do not want to associate with individuals with depression for fear of stigmatization. The slightest indication of a ‘tainted family lineage’ would mean social rejection in that community. This would, for example, affect marriage alliances between families and would in general impede social interaction.

Those who are somewhat familiar with the term ‘depression’, often have a wide range of understandings of what it entails. Some see it as a ‘split personality’, others as a ‘curse’. Some see it as ‘mental illness’ whereas others do not know what this term signifies. Many are aware of the prevalence of depression among young people in Soweto, but even clinicians acknowledged in interviews that they sometimes fail to recognize the symptoms of depression in the initial stages. Generally, people in Soweto context are not well equipped to deal with the reality of mental illness, including depression.

In African contexts mental disorders are often perceived as demonic possession, in other words as the result of some supernatural influence. Where a community places a strong emphasis on supernatural powers, it would be difficult to identify depression and provide people with the necessary help. In the context of Soweto, a variety of professionals are involved with matters of healing and fullness of life. These include psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, pastors, and traditional healers. The question is how these healers and caregivers can cooperate to provide effective holistic care to young people with depression in Soweto.

People with an African worldview depart from the cultural assumption that those who are ‘demon possessed’ or victims of witchcraft should be treated by a traditional healer. They could consult a prayer warrior, an exorcist, or can be taken by their family to a prayer home. Wiebe (2011:156-178) points out that symptoms of depression are often attributed to either demon possession or witchcraft. Individuals who start behaving strangely can be suspected of either. In such a cultural context it is rarely suggested that a medical doctor should be consulted. One of the recommended treatments would be for them to consult a prayer warrior. Another is to consult a *sangoma* who would perform rituals and incantations. The fees of such practitioners are rather high. Other ‘treatments can include whipping with tree branches (Halloy and Naumescu 2012:77).

Clinical depression often sets in during early adulthood. In African contexts this is, at times, misdiagnosed as demon possession or being bewitched. Relatives do what they can to help the sufferer. They take them to prayer warriors, *sangomas* or prayer homes, but as time passes without any signs of improvement, they lose hope and accept the malady as part of their lives. However, not all people who are suspected of being possessed are in fact possessed. So also, not all people who are suspected of being victims of a curse, are suffering because of that (Mercer 2013:16). Demon possession is a common cultural and spiritual explanation for the psychological and biological condition of depression. This misconception then results in people not receiving the treatment they need. It is like when people are misdiagnosed and receive the wrong treatment in the medical world. Collaborative care which includes expertise from the various fields – medical, psychological, psychiatric, social work, pastoral and traditional-cultural – can contribute to avoiding misconceptions that can adversely affect the condition and life of persons who suffer and get them the treatment they need.

## Multicultural pastoral care and liberation

### ▷ African psychology

The emerging field of African psychology is an important resource for an African-based intercultural pastoral theology and practice. In the contemporary context of Soweto, the ministry of pastoral care with young people who suffer from depression often do not yet utilize the useful theoretical perspectives and insights from this discipline. Though it is new and still evolving, it is increasingly making its presence felt in the broader area of African culture and religion (Awah-Nyameke 2012:14). For the last two decades African theologians have been pointing to the need for an in-depth focus on psychology and Africa. They have identified that strategies are needed to address the specific psychological problems and challenges of this cultural context with its tumultuous history

From the perspective of African psychology, it is clear that a diverse range of psychological challenges face young people in Soweto who suffer from depression. Many of these are the direct result of the internalization of oppressive messages and cultural behaviours regarding their condition (see Makhubela 2016:7). Psychological problems include low self-esteem, self-blame, and internal conflict. On the cultural front they are burdened by misunderstandings about what depression is and how it manifests. They are often labelled and socially ostracized.

Unlike many current psychological theories that tend to see the source of the problem inside the person, as is discussed by feminist theologian and clinician, Christie Cozad Neuger (2001:22), both feminist pastoral care and African psychology (Wasike 2006:18) have shown that

the source of the problem is more often than not the oppressive structures of the prevalent system and its definitions of depression. The psychological problems that young African people experience are not ‘a disability’ or ‘a personality deficiency’ but are often survival adaptations or harmful adjustments to prevailing unhealthy systems. They are generally not given room to understand and accommodate African cultural perspectives and African psychology and embrace the alternative perspectives of traditional beliefs that can provide them with a different orientation.

### ▷ Liberation psychology

Although the idea of ‘liberation’ was adopted in a variety of fields, including theology, during the latter part of the twentieth century, liberation psychology was conceived primarily by Ignacio Martín-Baró (1994:27), who was a priest as well as a trained social psychologist (Montero and Sonn 2009:3). He formulated his ideas in an article titled, ‘Towards a psychology of liberation in the *Bulletin of Psychology* published by the Central American University in 1986. The article argues for the construction of a new transformative psychological practice for oppressed peoples (Montero and Sonn 2009:3). Martín-Baró (1994:27) outlined three basic tenets of liberation psychology, namely a new goal, a new epistemology, and a new praxis.

The most valuable goal of psychology, according to Martín-Baró (1994:29), is to focus its theoretical and practical energies on the ‘needs and suffering of the majorities who are numbed by oppressive life circumstances’ (Martín-Baró 1994:28). He argues that there is a link between an individual person’s psychological problems and the wider social, political, and economic contexts in which the person’s life is embedded. He intends for psychology to gain clarity in understanding the relationship between psychic and social structures, ideologies, and discourses that force people into ‘marginalized dependency’ and ‘oppressive misery’ by taking away their ability to define their own lives. Fragmentation and apathy reduce people to a state of submission and they no longer expect anything from life (Lester 2003:94). Liberation psychology is amenable to the communal contextual and intercultural model of pastoral care that should be developed for African communities in general and that will be of use with regard to the psychological struggles of young people who suffer from depression. Such an approach attends to people’s historical, cultural, and social realities.

Martín-Baró (1994:27) articulates the goals of liberation psychology as that oppressed people need to gain knowledge of what may not yet be present in their current state of oppression but will be present in the tomorrow of their liberty. Truth is not to be found but *made* (Martín-Baró 1994:28). Truth is constructed, not as ‘a matter of thinking for them or bringing them our ideas or solving their problems for them; it has to do

with thinking and theorizing with them and for them' (Martín-Baró 1994:28). The communal contextual and intercultural model of pastoral care that this article envisages, has a similar goal. Oppressed people are subjects of history rather than mere objects of either history or pastoral care. Conventional models of pastoral care tended not take oppressed peoples' perspectives or experiences sufficiently seriously when devising pastoral care practices. These then largely people the subject status they deserve as human beings.

In his quest to develop a new epistemology, Martín-Baró was influenced by Paulo Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Freire refers to 'pedagogy of the oppressed' and not *for* the oppressed – language that maintains their subject status. Ideas from liberation theology are evident. Liberation theology emphasises that the God of Jesus is to be found from the perspective of the poor. In the same vein a psychology of liberation teaches that from the oppressed existential truth can be discovered and built upon (Payne 2006:19). Martín-Baró (1994:29) proposes that existing knowledge be revised from the perspective of the poor and the oppressed.

Martín-Baró (1994:3) challenges psychology to a new praxis 'to place itself within the process alongside the dominated rather than alongside the dominator'. If such a new praxis that transforms people and reality is not developed, it will hamper the construction of a liberative psychological practice (Nylund 2003:388). Psychologists should then take a stand for the oppressed people and make ethical choices. However, the call to 'take sides' can, for psychologists, social workers or clergy, create an unhealthy and harmful 'us or them' dynamic which will not contribute positively to the transformation of communities. Further, such a paradigm also has the potential to replicate the strategies of the dominant and not succeed in breaking the cycle of domination (Payne 2006:19). There is a need to rather work in an integrative and dialogical manner.

### Psychology, Christianity, and traditional cultures

Despite the tremendous technological and material advancements, there are still areas where people are completely cut off from the rest of the world. They still practise traditional ways of living and surviving. Prior to development of modern medicine, treatment for the sick and suffering were often rather harsh (Lagacé-Seguin and d'Entremont 2010:37), especially the treatment of the mentally ill because 'there were no effective methods for controlling their actions or helping them find relief from their inner torment' (Collins 2007:648). Some of the more popular treatment practises for the mentally ill was that they were 'whipped, starved, chained, seared with hot irons, dunked into freezing water' (Collins 2007:648). Such actions were justified on the basis that the patients were demon possessed and the torture

would make their body uninhabitable to the demon(s). Another method was to make holes in the patient's skull to let the tormented spirits out. This was done without anaesthetics. Religious practitioners stood by as these methods were executed and exorcisms were done, 'especially in treating disorders that had a strong physiological basis (Collins 2007:648).

Though psychology, Christianity and traditional beliefs and practices are discussed together in this article, they represent quite different approaches. Psychology, like any scientific enterprise, consists of theories that embedded in a scientific worldview and emanate in detailed findings (Watts 2002:74-75). Within each field there is also a variety of sometimes rather divergent approaches. In psychology there are, for instance, both a more introspective and a more behaviourist method. According to Watts (2002:75-76), it is 'the more philosophical end of theology that intersects with scientific disciplines such as psychology'.

In the Old Testament, there are references to Moses and the other prophets repeatedly warning against activities such as divination, sorcery, and idol worship (Virkler 1988: 281). Similarly, in the New Testament demons are regarded as personal, fallen, spiritual beings that are stronger than human beings but weaker than God. They were capable of oppressing and possessing human beings (Virkler 1988:281). To distinguish between demon possession and other mental illnesses, some characteristics are distinguished by Meier et al. (2010:260). Demon possessed people have more physical strength than other people. Demon possessed people respond differently when the name of Jesus is spoken to people with psychological problems. There is a change of voice when the demon speaks. Demon possessed people can perform supernatural acts. People with demon possessed speak rationally whereas individuals with psychological problems do not. Those who are possessed often have a history of occult activities such as participating in séances or Satan worship. Demon possessed individuals do not respond to therapy (Meier et al. 2010:260).

Oesterreich (1930:54-56) also identifies characteristic features of demon possession. For him, most striking characteristic features of demon possession is the change in the persons' personality. They seem invaded and governed by a strange new soul. The second characteristic is their change in voice. The normal tone of the parent body is suppressed and transformed into a deep and heavy bass tone. The third characteristic feature is that the new voice does not speak according to the spirit of the normal personality but that of the new one.

New Testament authors discredited physical and mental illnesses due to demon possession (Virkler 1988:281-282). They distinguished between the state of being demon possessed and other illnesses. They also distinguish between 'demonically caused and non-demonically

caused illness in their discussion of healing' (Virkler 1988:282). Both categories of people were healed unconditionally, but the mode of healing was different. The former was healed by casting out the demons out of the possessed whereas the latter was healed by other means. However, it is often difficult to distinguish between whether a person is demon possessed or mentally ill, because the 'symptoms arising from psychopathology and demonization overlap to a considerable extent' (Virkler 1988:285). Though there was no knowledge of mental disorders and treatments known today, the Bible does provide insight into human nature, showing the human condition before God. It provides an understanding of human suffering and offers hope (Collins 2007:635).

### Pastoral care perspectives

Though 'depression' is understood differently in different cultures, ethnic groups, the condition is to be found in all walks of life (Davis and Epkins 2009:29). The condition can, however, be exacerbated by a difficult environment. Living with depression can be even more difficult for people who bear the emotional scars of a traumatic youth. It is the task of pastoral caregivers to provide effective care for all the individuals and communities they serve (Mojtabai et al. 2016:25). The aim is to guide people who suffer with depression to live their life with human dignity and regain their confidence. Caregivers who journey with the young people who suffer from depression that is often equated to demonic possession in their culture, should do so with respect and compassion. Kaplan and Benjamin (1991:11) describe the complexity of the work as follows: 'The arena of pastoral work is multifaceted and full of surprises, unexpected problems and opportunities for profound insight into the human situation. It is an arena within which the pastor is privileged to be with people where they live and breathe, succeed and fail, relate intimately and experience alienation; it is the down-to-earth world of the human living.'

Pastoral caregivers aim to provide guidance, support, and encouragement to people in distress and to do so in a way that is liberating (Cobb et al. 2015). Another challenge is to create a safe environment and foster a healthy and healing relationship. Healed people can contribute further to the healing and transformation of society (Kaplan and Benjamin 1991:11). The caregiver's focus is on the empowerment of the person, bringing the voiceless to voice and, if necessary, becoming the voice of the voiceless and their prophet to the powerful. The pastoral care method proposed in this article has the aim to empower young people who suffer from depression so that they can regain their dignity and develop confidence in themselves. The faith community should be a space that nurtures the growth and development of its members. It should challenge negative constructions which have a life-limiting effect on people and affirm positive and constructive perspectives. A pastor

provides not only care but is also called to be a prophetic witness in culture and society when the need arises.

### A new framework for a pastoral care praxis

Pastoral care models that were developed in a Western context are often at a loss when it comes to the connection that is made in some cultures between the internal and external conditions of depression and demonic possession (Matsaneng 2010:53-64). Often pastors do not have an adequate understanding of the condition of depression. Conventional pastoral care models generally focus on care and fail to include the two other critical needs of liberation and belonging (Gerkin 1997:70). The personal problems of the young people who suffer from depression and their families should be understood in the larger socio-cultural context. Both the internal and the external source of the depression should be addressed for the liberation and emancipation to be achieved.

Communal resources of faith communities should be utilized to serve the needs of the young people with depression and their families. John Mbiti (1990:56) points out that cultural resources should be valued and affirmed. Through culture-affirming practices from a liberation psychology perspective and intentional conscientization, sufferers, their families and communities can gain insight into harmful ideologies and discourses they have internalized, and which have served to keep the young people who suffer silent. Through conscientization the young people can find solidarity in their communities and work towards the transformation of their social order to make it just and equal for all individuals and communities to exist in life-affirming ways.

To achieve a liberating African pastoral care praxis, a narrative approach which makes use of the pastoral care methods of positive deconstruction (Pollard 1997:44) and reframing (Capps 1990:126), can be effective strategies for identifying, deconstructing, and reframing dominant cultural narratives. For pastoral caregivers in Soweto the church need not only be the *object* of their pastoral ministry but can also be their *partner in* pastoral ministry. The young people themselves should be mobilized to resist the forces of oppression and work towards their own liberation. However, one of the most debilitating effects of the current situation is that the community is divided. They do not form a cohesive force to resist the oppression to which they have been subjected. The internal division sabotages efforts to raise their concerns with a unified voice in the public arena.

Pastoral caregivers in Soweto can utilize the cultural capital represented by the young people and their families. For that, the church will have to develop and articulate a clear theological understanding of the relationship between the gospel and culture (Wasike 2006:12). Pastors can identify ways in which African cultural wisdom

can be reclaimed and affirmed to become a medium through which the gospel message can be communicated effectively and experienced authentically (Cobb et al 2015:69). The liberating and nourishing elements of the African culture can be utilized to meet the socio-cultural needs of the young people of Soweto. Another important strategy of pastoral ministry can be to collaborate with the authorities and with other religious movements, organizations, and bodies to address the many needs for care in the context of Soweto. Collaboration is essential if the needs of young people who suffer from depression are to be met.

### Creating a caring environment of trust

As a pastoral caregiver in the context of Soweto I found it a challenge to gain the trust of the young people. They were wary, not knowing what to expect. The challenge is to create trust, a 'firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something' (Oxford Dictionary 2001:901) in order to be able 'to put one's confidence in a person or thing' (Goyal et al. 2014). Trust is needed for them to share their stories openly without fear of suspicion and stigma.

The distrust of the young people also extends to the faith community and the local community. People who suffer from depression or have had experiences that are called demonic possession by others, do not feel safe to share their stories in the congregation for fear of being discriminated against, victimized and stigmatized. This exacerbates and perpetuates their suffering (Mercer 2013:17). The church should intentionally create an environment of trust where people can express their pain and struggles without fear of victimization, discrimination, and stigmatization. To create such an environment, those in leadership will have to act with the integrity when dealing with confidential matters. Empathetic care and a God-honouring, Christ-like disposition of the leaders can contribute to creating an environment of trust in the church (Mogoba 2011:170). Caregivers' own lives should display the kind of character that is worth imitating by the rest of the community. For a faith community and community to be trustworthy and able to create a safe environment for people who suffer with depression, education and awareness are needed.

### Education and conscientization

Depression among the young people in Soweto affects not only themselves, but also their families, the broader community, and the faith community in which they worship (Masoga 2005:98). Education is necessary if *every member*, also people who suffer from depression or those who are suspected of demon possession, is to be fully accepted and treated with love and care (Cotton et al. 2006:17). Some examples are workshops, sermons and a teaching series, Bible study sessions, liturgies and songs/hymns that are appropriate for the purpose (Johnson 2010:79). Educational programs should be

implemented with sensitivity. Information should be accurate and presented in a professional way. An attitude of love and compassion and a deep concern for the human rights and dignity of all people, is needed. Educators should challenge those who act in hurtful ways towards people who suffer, affirm and support those who are derided and persuade a lifestyle change in all people (Koole et al 2010:53). They should examine conditions that promote hurtful behaviour and advocate for Christian values that call for behavioural change. Other crucial matters include gender and the empowerment of young people. The church is called to examine critically 'some of the cultural, customary and sexist practices that have been perpetuated in certain circles of society' (Koole et al 2010:54). Failure to do this would continue to render depressed young people vulnerable to their circumstances and in conflict with their families and surroundings.

The faith community in its prophetic ministry should communicate a clear message that young people who suffer from depression should not be rejected, stigmatized, labelled, and discriminated against in any way by fellow believers (Walker et al. 2014:105). The gospel message of love, care, acceptance, grace, and compassion should be brought to those who live with depression or demonic possession. Through education the whole body of Christ is challenged to examine itself from a deep reflection on and understanding of how people are affected by depression and the positive or negative role that families and the community can play.

Conscientization can be achieved by means of the sharing of testimonies. The stories of those who have found a way to live with their condition can give hope to those who are still struggling (Goldston et al. 2008:38). Those who have the courage to their testimonies can regain a sense of strength, confidence, and dignity in themselves. They can be empowered to go out and face their challenges with courage, knowing and feeling that they are supported by the community. In these testimonies there should also be space for lament regarding their experience of pain and trauma. Ed Wimberley (2003:162) calls lament the expression of the moans of the soul that arise from life's struggles and losses. Lament is brought to speech in prayer. Liturgies can be designed for the benefit of those who suffer and find it difficult to speak. This gives them the opportunity to express their pain openly in worship.

Education and creating awareness are about more than just teaching people about depression. It challenges the whole faith community to stand in solidarity before God, crying out for God's help and liberation. It would also involve the training and empowerment of pastoral caregivers to provide effective guidance for young people who sufferer with depression.

## Destigmatization

Stigma can be described as ‘a mark or sign of disgrace’ (Oxford Dictionary 2001:824). It is a sign of social unacceptability associated with a deep sense of shame. If communities and faith communities attach stigma to certain conditions and actions, those who suffer will not be able to come forward and share their stories and experiences for fear of being judged, rejected, and discriminated against. Until stigma is eradicated, it will remain difficult for young people with depression to experience a sense of belonging and the acceptance they so desperately need from their faith community and the broader community.

*Destigmatization* would be to stop shaming and shunning people and to begin to treat them with dignity, love, and compassion. Then they can feel fully human as people created in the image and likeness of God. They can then know and accept themselves as persons of worth and dignity, equal to all others in the community. This will communicate to them the strong message that they are still God’s own beloved children who need not be ashamed of themselves because of a condition over which they have no control. *Destigmatization* will mean for the sufferers that the message of the gospel is communicated in a manner that brings about healing and transformation.

## Support

Faith communities can begin support groups where people with experience of depression can come together to share their stories and encourage one another. Such groups can also be spaces where people whose behaviour is detrimental to those who suffer, are challenged to change their behaviour. This would give them the opportunity to make right where they harmed others through their actions. Support groups for young people who suffer with depression and their families have the following aims (Goldston et al 2008): ‘To transform individuals into a real personal relationship with Jesus Christ through the baptism of the Spirit; to heal relationships and to build community – especially in the family and the neighbourhood community, and, to transform society by healing relationships of injustice and oppression.’

Every local church in Soweto can be a centre of healing and support if it takes seriously its mission with regard to those who suffer, including young people who suffer from depression who live in their communities and worship in their churches. Christian believers are called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation (Pollard 1997:43).

The lack of support structures is, however, a problem throughout Africa. Pastors often feel ill-equipped to deal with the trauma that affects their congregants. Masoga (2005:239) suggests that professional counselling centres are established with the aim to provide care for clergy. Waruta and Kinoti (2005:230) emphasise that clergy

care should pay specific attention to their personality and ministry. Such centres should be places of healing, restoration, and transformation.

## Welfare, advocacy, and collaboration

Faith communities have the mission to be a visible sign of Christ’s presence in the world. According to Wasike (2006:35), the vitality of the church depends to an extent on the health and integral wellbeing of the society and culture in which it operates. Therefore, it is the church’s salvific mission to promote and foster healthy and healing human relationships at a public level (Waruta and Kinoti 2005:133). This means that the church can and should partner with all other organizations that seek to advance the cause of those who suffered from depression. The church must be the voice of the voiceless and the conscience of society. Its responsibility is to care for all who suffer. This includes young people who struggle with depression. Ministries can be developed with this group of people in mind.

Churches can establish recovery centres and partner with organisations that provide aid for those who suffer from depression. Together they can hold accountable those who do not live up to their mandate to deliver acceptable services to people who desperately need them. The body of Christ should follow his example. He challenged the causes of detrimental conditions in society. The church’s responsibility that of loving liberation rather than judgement (Waruta and Kinoti 2005:133). Churches should be at the forefront of addressing the issue of depression with families and communities in order to fulfil its mandate to preach good news to the poor, proclaiming freedom to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, releasing the oppressed and proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favour (Lk 4:18-19).

## Collaborative support

In general depression is an often-misunderstood mental health condition in African cultures and contexts. From a pastoral perspective a contribution can be made on various levels in order to improve the situation of sufferers. The focus of this article was specifically on young people in the urban African context of Soweto. The contribution of pastoral caregivers can be to create awareness of the suffering of people with depression and the care they need from their support systems and communities. Another function pastoral caregiver can fulfil is to educate both the faith community and the broader community with regard to depression in order to foster a greater understanding of the realities and challenges of this particular mental health condition. With greater understanding harmful reactions and practices can be eliminated to a great extent. In African contexts specifically, where the condition of depression is often equated with demon possession, pastoral caregivers can also initiate and sustain cooperation among themselves and medical professionals, social workers and traditional healers in

order to approach the problem holistically. The aim is that all the helping professions and the communities should work together to help and support young people who suffer, rather than that misunderstanding of the condition and dissension among the caregivers and support systems exacerbate their suffering. The aim of the article was therefore to develop a contextual and collaborative pastoral care approach to depression among young people who suffer from depression, which takes seriously the interplay between Western understandings of depression and African perspectives in order to provide effective and holistic care and support. ■

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## Strengthening the SOUL of your leadership

By Rev Diane Pickford

Book Review: Part 1

### Strengthening the SOUL of your leadership: Seeking God in the crucible of ministry by Ruth Haley Barton.

This is a book about your soul, which is your very essence, the part of you that is most real. Your soul is the part of you that exists beyond your roles, your job descriptions and the relationships that seem to define you. It is the part of you that longs more for God.

It is possible from Jesus' perspective to gain a whole lot of ministry and pastoral successes, and yet lose your own soul in the midst of it. When leaders lose their souls due to the pressure and busyness of ministry, their organisation and their work will lose its soul as well.

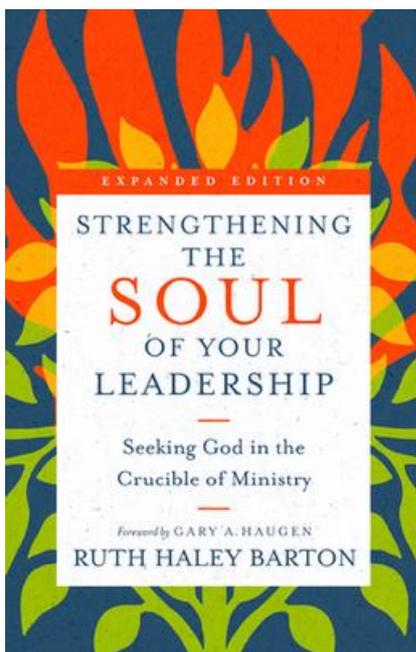
Ruth Haley Barton has been ministering to leaders for many years and recognizes that there is a deep and consistent cry from all leaders: "There has to be *more* to life in leadership than many of us are experiencing."

She said that, "...the *more* that we are looking for is the transformation of our souls in the presence of God. It is what we want for ourselves and it is what we want for those who we are leading."

This book explores the correlation between a leader's public ministry life, and their need to receive God's presence in times of silence and solitude in their private life. The book is an invitation for leaders to enter God's presence, thus preventing them from disconnecting from the reality of God in their own lives.

There are spiritual practices at the end of each chapter, assisting leaders to set up for an encounter with God.

Haley Barton says, "Truly the best thing any of us have to bring to leadership is our own transforming selves."



She traces the leadership development and soul transformation in the character of Moses.

By examining the book of Exodus, she shows how solitude and silence help us to experience a place of authenticity within. We can then stop trying to control outcomes and allow God to meet us and spiritually sustain us first-hand.

Unless we are desperate, we rarely meet authentically with God. By using Moses as an example, she shows how all of us have a shadow side to our leadership. This shadow side includes personal insecurities, dysfunctions, and the need for approval. These traits are often at

the bottom a leader's list of failures.

Ruth Haley Barton encourages us to get in touch with ourselves, through times of silence, so we can hear what our soul really wants to say to God. She continues: "Only those who have faced their own dark side can be trusted to lead others towards the Light."

The challenges that work against leaders seeking the presence of God, include the pressures and paradoxes of leadership, as well as a pressure to perform.

The pastoral and ministry roles tend to be a lot more complicated and demanding these days, since the activities and experiences that go with leadership can be very addicting. Leaders therefore need to move beyond the 'mere dabbling in solitude and silence' to have meaningful encounters with God. ■

## God is Water of Life and Light

By Mrs Roxanne Bailey, Career Guidance Counsellor, Independent Psychometrist and Pastoral Counsellor

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."  
- John 4:14

### Introduction

**W**ater has played an integral role since the beginning of God's creation. "And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so." (Genesis 1:7)

If, 'Water is Life', does it mean that we should drink approximately seven glasses of water per day and then we will experience everlasting life...

Noah's ark was surrounded by water, God gave Moses the might through the spirit to move apart the waters of the sea, and while Jesus was at a wedding in Cana with his disciples, He turned water into wine. These are just some examples in the Word of the important role of water. Still there are more meaning to the phrase, 'Water is Life'.

Although the water molecule comprises of two atoms, hydrogen and oxygen, and seen as the most versatile and useful, by all human beings; there is a deeper meaning to "water". Much research has been done on water as a liquid. Scientific research done in 1988 by Dr Jacques Benveniste, a French immunologist, looked at water memory. Furthermore, another scientist Dr Emoto, a pseudo-scientist, done several volumes of work, where he stated that water provides us with messages through the shape of crystals being formed, when water hears different sounds. If water could provide us with messages, such as seen in biblical times..., why can't there be truth in the workings of Dr Emoto; where water contains a message. Yet, this message is more than turning into different crystal shapes. It is to open our eyes to God's truth, which He revealed to the woman at the well of Samaria and through Jesus's baptism.

Let us consider the woman's story of Samaria from John 4: 7-24. She wondered why Jesus asked her to provide him with a drink of water, since she might have felt that she has lesser worth than someone being a Jew. Jesus also knew that this woman had been with five men, where none of them she



was married to. Yet, he asked her again if she had a husband. Jesus continued asking and then exclaimed that she had 'five husbands' yet if she repents and drink of the 'everlasting water' thus give her whole self to God that she would be forgiven from her ways and that God will provide her with new life. She should trust fully in the one true God: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4: 7-24):

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.



20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

To acknowledge life, is to accept that we are His, 'water', thus God placed the Holy Spirit within each one of us, as the ultimate form of liquid. We might not always allow this truth in our lives, thus at times leads us to just live; in the sense of just take in earthly water, only to survive for each daily moment.

Eckhart Tolle (1999) might not be seen as someone that follows a particular religion, yet he embraces all of the traditions such as, "the essence, of all other traditions, and contradicts none of them — Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, indigenous, or anything else. He is able to do what all the great masters have done: to show us, in simple and clear language, that the way, the truth, and **the light is within us.**"

I am referring to E Tolle (1999) to show that through his life experience of inner anxieties until the age of thirteen, as well as a deep depression which he was experiencing within his life. He got enlightened by a deeper spiritual enlightenment of his soul, where he found that there is light in us. To me this light is from God and is the 'water of life'- Holy Spirit.

Yet E Tolle's (1999) life indicates that through his deep dread and suicidal thoughts, he found himself in his lowest of lows in his life, yet one morning at the age of twenty, he experienced some miracle. Whether he saw it as the divine divinity – God; only he will truly know, but his 'water of life' felt touched by 'Light'. He might not have seen it as God, as stated by him, in his book. When someone is within a deep emotional state of hurt, I believe only God as 'light' can lift you out of that deep well of hurt; if you are willing to let Him, do it. E Tolle (1999) exclaims in his book that "Everything was fresh and pristine, as if it had just come into existence. I picked up things, a pencil, an empty bottle, marvelling at the beauty and aliveness of it all. That day I walked around the city in utter amazement at the miracle of life on earth, as if I had just been born into this world." He states in his book that this light was as Maslow refers as true, self-realization, thus enlightenment of being. My believe is that God's Holy Spirit, was that 'light' he felt.

Dale Carnegie (1948) provided so many well written and compiled life stories on how every day, human beings tend to worry so much that we end up not living at all. Yet, all of these life stories form the everyday individual had some hope and ultimate 'light' – to live life. It is as though we lose sight of the most important aspects within the 'now'- the real water of life. I want to share in my own summarised words one of the individual's life's stories that brought wonderful soul food to anyone in need of some 'fuel', thus water given by God to our life's well.

Sir William Olsier, during Spring of 1871, picked up a book containing the following twenty- one words, that started him on his profound journey as a medical student: "Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand." Forty- two years later, Sir William Olsier addressed his Yale students and told them that as a someone of mediocre character, anything is possible. Sir William Olsier told the students the following: "What I urge is that you so learn to control the machinery as to live with 'day-tight compartments' as the most certain way to ensure safety on the voyage." Furthermore, he urged his students to begin the day with Christ's prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread."

Moreover, Sir William Olsier stated the following: "Remember that prayer asks only for today's bread. It doesn't complain about the stale bread we had to eat yesterday; and it doesn't say: 'Oh, God, it has been pretty dry out in the wheat belt lately and we may have another drought-and then how will I get bread to eat next autumn-or suppose I lose my job-oh, God, how could I get bread then?' No, this prayer teaches us to ask for today's bread."

Now, further imagine that we look at 'water of life'- the now, with guidance from within, as being our sacred bread and we give thanks in prayer. Could we see the wonders in water, as Dr Masaru Emoto saw through his scientific studies? To emphasise that there is memory in water, thus hidden messages, from the ancient of times. This then lead us, to the hope, which Jesus's baptism brought; to unlock this water memory through the spirit and holy ghost. Dr Masaru Emoto studied the idea of water's hidden message, with scientific evidence of 'how the molecular structure in water transforms when it is exposed to human words, thoughts, sounds and intentions.', for over twenty years until his passing away in 2014.

Dr Masaru Emoto demonstrates the following through his research: "how water exposed to loving, benevolent, and compassionate human intention results in aesthetically pleasing physical molecular formations in the water while water exposed to fearful and discordant human intentions results in disconnected, disfigured, and "unpleasant" physical molecular formations. He did this

through Magnetic Resonance Analysis technology and high-speed photographs.”

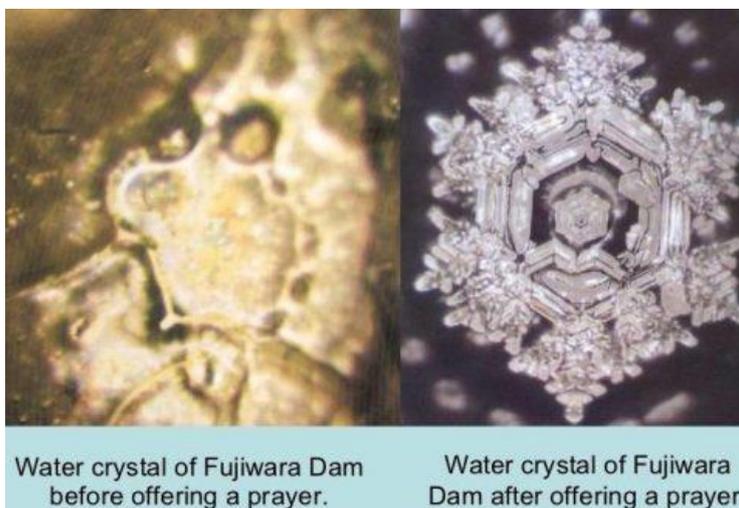
Here is one of Dr Masaru Emoto’s, ‘Water crystal photographs. Each water crystal you see was exposed to the word it has written next to it prior to being photographed:



“His research also showed us how polluted and toxic water, when exposed to prayer and intention can be altered and restored to beautifully formed geometric crystals found in clean, healthy water. The following photos are images of photographs of the water in the Fujiwara Dam before and after the Reverend Kato Hoki, chief priest of Jyuhouin Temple, offered an hour- long prayer over it.”

Some might find this obscure, others might find it a hoax...yet can't there be truth... that real love, honesty and kindness through genuine prayer, might be able to create such wonderful images. If it is able to create such magnificent images, it shows us just how much strength lies in prayer; in the ‘water of life’- Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It leads me to bring into view the verse in Matthew 3:16-17- “<sup>16</sup> And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:<sup>17</sup> And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” As mother and wife, Counsellor, Independent Psychometrist and Mentor this is my first approach to counselling, knowing that ‘water is life’; accepting the self and trusting that whatever doubts and fears placed in ones mind, that His Spirit will be the guidance. Some might need to journey a more lengthier journey than others, yet when we go through the first step of acceptance and acknowledging that there is a God, even if it starts by the miniscule ‘light’ of self-actualisation, with continual step by step,



small acceptance of knowing that you are more... individual healing can start to unlock the 'day-tight compartments' that Sir William Olsier referred to.

Neer Watchman (1977) portrays ‘water is life’ in the most well written way, which links up to the scripture within Matthew 3:16-17: “Spiritual knowledge is very important to spiritual life. Let us

add, however, that it is equally as, if not more, important for a believer to be humble and willing to accept the teachings of the Holy Spirit. If so, the Holy Spirit will grant him the experience of the dividing of spirit and soul, although he may not have too much knowledge concerning this truth.”

**Conclusion**

C S Lewis (2014) summarizes the human nature in such a way to highlight our hesitance from ancient times, to recognise God as the ‘water of our lives’. God wants us not just to view the daily miracles He daily set for us, but really absorb thus drink from His Word- His ultimate ‘water’, through supplication. C S Lewis (2014) states the following:

“God creates the vine and teaches it to draw up water by its roots and, with the aid of the sun, to turn that water into a juice which will ferment and take on certain qualities. Thus, every year, from Noah's time till ours, **God turns water into wine. That, men fail to see.**

Either like the Pagans they refer the process to some finite spirit, Bacchus or Dionysus: or else, like the moderns, they attribute real and ultimate causality to the chemical and other material phenomena which are all that our senses can discover in it. But when Christ at Cana makes water into wine, the mask is off." The miracle has only half its effect if it only convinces us that Christ is God: it will have its full effect if whenever we see a vineyard or drink a glass of wine,

we remember that here works He who sat at the wedding party in Cana.”

As John 4:14 says: “but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.” If we see ourselves as swallows flying, it would not be feasible to stop halfway on our journey to groom our feathers. Our faith and receipt of His ‘water of life’ should be with fullness of body-mind-soul. As D Carnegie (1948) referred to Sir William Osier’s life approach... start with Christ’s prayer: “Give us this day our daily bread.” If you do not know God as yet within your life, you have probably met Him, just was not ready to notice Him, thus accept Him to drink His ‘water’. Then start with smaller steps, He reveals Himself within our lives daily, yet makes it more memorable when we might be at our lowest of lows and might experience a situation of ultimate pain or fear. When we let him enter, we set our compass to the true north of self-actualisation. Yet, this is not enough, since this is what C S Lewis (2014) means by the words: “The miracle has only half its effect if it only convinces us that Christ is God: it will have full effect if whenever we see a vineyard or drink a glass of wine, we remember that here works He who sat at the wedding party in Cana.”

Dale Carnegie (1948) provides the following steps to start living a life of self-acceptance, and may just be tools to start accepting God as our miracle, thus our ‘water of life’, which turns into ‘water is life’... - acknowledging the Holy Spirit within us given by the Grace of our Loving God.

**RULE 1:** If you want to avoid worry, do what Sir William Osier did: Live in "day-tight compartments". Don't stew about the future. Just live each day until bedtime.

**RULE 2:** The next time Trouble - with a capital T - comes gunning for you and backs you up in a corner, try the magic formula of Willis H. Carrier:

- a. Ask yourself, "What is the worst that can possibly happen if I can't solve my problem?"
- b. Prepare yourself mentally to accept the worst-if necessary.
- c. Then calmly try to improve upon the worst-which you have already mentally agreed to accept.

**RULE 3:** Remind yourself of the exorbitant price you can pay for worry in terms of your health. "Businessmen who do not know how to fight worry die young."

Ultimately, remember the importance of Christ’s prayer: “Give us this day our daily bread.” Furthermore, find time to absorb these words by Nee Watchman (1977): “miracles in fact are a retelling in small letters of the very same story which is written across the whole world in letters too large for some of us to see. Of that larger script part is already visible, part is still unsolved.

In other words, some of the miracles do locally what God has already done universally: others do locally what He has not yet done, but will do.”

Moreover, John 14:26 states that God is our Comforter and He will reveal Himself daily through His ever presence “the Holy Ghost”. His Spirit and guidance are ever present, yet a very few really accept Him in our lives. For some individuals, in a state of overwhelming negative experiences, they might get in a mindset trapped by earthly magnetism, which spiral into dread. However, God will never leave His children...as John 14:26 says: “... he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

God’s miracles are ever present, once we let Him into our lives, the Holy Spirit already present within our souls, can take flight. Not a halfway flight but recognising God’s full miraculous flight of ‘Light’ and accepting Him as the “Water of Life”, and also our light wherever we go.

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## Notes from the CPSC office

Dear CPSC affiliate

**A**t times it is difficult to grasp that we are already in June 2021.

We started the year with renewed hope for more normality after 2020, which has been an extremely difficult year. It was filled with challenges from beginning to end which caused uncertainty, anxiety, worry and loss.

It was quite a shock when the reality came to light - 2021 was not really going to be much easier. The adverse effect of 2020 resembles a long shadow reaching well into 2021. Jobs and income are still compromised, people are still sick and loss of life continues.

There are, however, positives as well and all is not all doom and gloom.

As Christians we now more than ever realize that our only certainty rests on our faith in Jesus Christ.

When all else feels uncertain, we can still draw eternal hope from knowing that we need not handle difficult circumstances alone. God always leads the way.

While we were hit with hard lockdowns and loss of income with no relief in sight in 2020, the approach towards lockdown is a bit more lenient now. People started taking responsibility by wearing masks and sanitizing regularly. By doing this we are working our way through the different waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. The vaccination process now also gives a bright



glimmer of hope and many have already received their first dosage.

Alternative ways of communicating and decision making were explored and a whole new virtual world opened to many of us. The development of many online and Zoom workshops enabled our affiliates to attend virtual CPSC CPD events in the comfort of their own homes.

It was no different within CPSC and ACRP. Behind the scenes the work continues at an alarming pace and Zoom meetings now is the norm. At CPSC we had our first CPSC Executive Zoom meeting in May 2021 with all the members of our newly extended CPSC Executive who was introduced to you in the previous issue.

The good news is that we are planning a virtual CPSC conference later in the year and that we are also exploring new ways of earning CPSC CPD points in future. There are working committees to attend to the new matters and I will keep you informed once the finer details have been discussed and protocols formulated.

We are hopeful that the future will continue to be a bit more manageable and that we will be able to hold onto Hope!

Keep warm and healthy!

Kind regards and best wishes

Anita ■



### CPSC CONTACT DETAILS

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