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SOCIAL CASWORK PRINCIPLES OF WORK
TO A PARTER IN COUNSELING

SHORT TITLE

CASEWORK PRINCIPLES IN COUNSELING

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
In partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

Vernon Robert Wicks

June 1952

Approved by

[Handwritten signatures]

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attempt to prove that the principles of social casework can be applied by the pastor as a counsellor. Seven casework principles will be discussed, first as they relate to the social casework process, and then as they can be of value to the pastor in counseling.

These principles will be discussed under two headings: (a) Acceptance, nonjudgmental attitude, purposeful expression of feelings, and confidentiality will be discussed as attitudes which the caseworker has toward the client; (b) Under the approach used by the caseworker, the principles of controlled emotional involvement, client self-determination, and individualization will be discussed.

The term "principle" of social casework means "an essential element, constituent, or quality, especially one that produces a specific effect." Social casework is

¹ Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (New York: The World Publishing Co., c.1955), p. 1158.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There has been much discussion in the past years concerning the work of the pastor as a counselor. Many books have been written and many lectures have been delivered on the subject. Various approaches and techniques are advocated by those dealing with the subject. This thesis shall attempt to prove that the principles of social casework can be applied by the pastor as a counselor. Seven casework principles will be discussed, first as they relate to the social casework process, and then as they can be of value to the pastor in counseling.

These principles will be discussed under two headings: (a) Acceptance, nonjudgmental attitude, purposeful expression of feelings, and confidentiality will be discussed as attitudes which the caseworker has toward the client; (b) Under the approach used by the caseworker, the principles of controlled emotional involvement, client self-determination, and individualization will be discussed.

The term "principle" of social casework means "an essential element, constituent, or quality, especially one that produces a specific effect."¹ Social casework is

¹Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (New York: The World Publishing Co., c.1955), p. 1158.

defined as:

The method employed by social workers to help individuals find the solution to problems of social adjustment which they are unable to handle in a satisfactory way by their own efforts.²

Pastoral counseling denotes "a specialized relationship between the ordained minister and the parishioner who has sought help."³

The seven casework principles are based upon the book, The Casework Relationship by Felix P. Biestek, S. J.

² Florence Hollis, Social Work Year Book, 1954, edited by Russell H. Kurtz (New York: American Stratford Press, Inc., c.1954), p. 474.

³ Otis R. Rice, The Ministry, edited by J. Richard Spann (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1949), p. 94.

CHAPTER II

ACCEPTANCE

Definition

Acceptance is defined as

the principle of action wherein the caseworker perceives and deals with the client as he really is, including his strengths and weaknesses, his congenial and uncongenial qualities, his positive and negative feelings, his constructive and destructive attitudes and behavior, maintaining all the while a sense of the client's innate dignity and personal worth.¹

Acceptance also can be defined as that warmth and fullness in giving one's self to and receiving another person which says to him, "I like you; I lend myself to you to meet your needs, to know and respect your right to retain your own identity." Acceptance is a nurturing quality, a readiness to lend one's self to the needs of another.²

Acceptance does not mean the approval of deviant attitudes or behavior. The object of acceptance is not "the good" but "the real." The object of acceptance is pertinent reality. This means that the caseworker does not gloss over wrong which has been committed.³

¹Felix Paul Biestek, The Casework Relationship (Chicago: Loyola University Press, c.1957), p. 72.

²Helen Harris Perlman, Social Casework, A Problem-Solving Process (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c.1957), p. 68.

³Biestek, op. cit., p. 72.

Acceptance emphasizes that each individual, by the very fact of his existence, is of worth. This is a fundamental premise which permeates social work.⁴ Father Biestek, a priest and social worker, speaks of the value of every person:

The human person has intrinsic value. He has an innate dignity and worth, basic rights and needs. Man has a unique value in the universe. This intrinsic value is derived from God, his Creator, and is not affected by personal success or failure in things physical, economic, social, or anything else. The applicant for financial assistance, the deserted child, the alcoholic lying at the rear door of a tavern on Skid Row, the violent patient in a mental hospital, each has the same intrinsic human dignity and value as the wealthy person, the child of loving parents, the well integrated person, and even the saint. The social failures, just as the socially successful are made in the image of God, are children of the infinitely loving heavenly Father and heirs of heaven.⁵

The Client's Need of Acceptance

The object of acceptance is the individual client as he actually is, with his strengths and weaknesses, his potentialities and limitations, his congenial and uncongenial attitudes, his positive and negative feelings, his acceptable and unacceptable behavior.⁶ The client is a person and is therefore not to be manipulated. He is to be accepted, to be taken for what he is, to be respected and to be

⁴Herbert Bisno, The Philosophy of Social Work (Washington: Public Affairs Press, c.1952), p. 5.

⁵Bistek, op. cit., p. 73.

⁶Ibid., p. 72.

understood. The client is to be understood in a much wider and deeper sense than he himself understands, than any of his friends, neighbors or doctor understands.⁷

The client has a definite need of this acceptance which the caseworker must fill. The client comes to the agency with a certain amount of fear. He does not know what the reaction of the caseworker will be to his problem. He is fearful of telling the details of his problem. He feels insecure in meeting and approaching someone whom he has never met.⁸ A problem that is simple on its objective face is complicated for the person who owns it because it gnaws at him, drains his confidence and hope, and takes possession of him.⁹ The client or counselee must be given the assurance that here is someone who understands him, who is truly and actively concerned to help, who does care what happens to him and who accepts him as a person of real worth.¹⁰

⁷Emma V. A. Jensen, "Principles of Social Case Work," Proceedings of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Associated Lutheran Charities, 1934 (St. Louis: n.p., 1934), p. 65.

⁸Biestek, op. cit., p. 75.

⁹Perlman, op. cit., p. 107.

¹⁰Mary E. Rall, "Casework with Unmarried Mothers," Proceedings of the Regional Meetings of Associated Lutheran Charities and of the Social Work Institute, 1954 (St. Louis: n.p. 1954), p. 78.

The Caseworker's Role

The caseworker has the major part to play if the client is to feel the acceptance of which he is in need. Whether a person will unburden himself before another depends to a great extent on whether the client feels the social worker is understanding or acceptant of him.¹¹ It is the duty of the caseworker to impart this feeling of acceptance to the client. Basically, a caseworker respects and accepts the client as a fellow human being, not as a social problem.¹² In casework just as in pastoral counseling, whatever is accomplished is based on the ability of the counselor to establish good relationships and to accept all kinds of people without censure or blame.¹³ The caseworker has a connection concerning the value of each person regardless of his economic or social status. All his work with individuals is founded on faith in the essential dignity and worth of each individual. He believes that each person, no matter how low he may seem to have fallen, has a marked capacity for adjustment and change.¹⁴

¹¹ Karl De Schweinitz, The Art of Helping People Out of Trouble (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., c.1924), p. 61.

¹² Arthur P. Miles, American Social Work Theory (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1954), p. 78.

¹³ Grace Browning, "Toward a Better Understanding of Casework," Proceedings of the Regional Meetings of Associated Lutheran Charities and of the Social Work Institute, 1949 (St. Louis: n.p., 1949), p. 11.

¹⁴ Ibid.

The caseworker first of all sees the reality of the client's problem regardless of its unpleasantness. It is the client who initiates the establishment of the casework relationship by coming to the agency, but the degree of ease with which he is able to follow through depends largely on whether the attitude of the caseworker permits him to express himself. The fact of the client's coming calls for a definite response from the caseworker. This response of the caseworker has several characteristics:

- a. The first characteristic is that the response is client focused.¹⁵ The response is directed to the needs of the client rather than to the worker's own needs. The entire casework relationship is client focused. The caseworker has a real interest in the client; he cares about him. The caseworker is concerned about the client.
- b. The caseworker realizes the potential of the client for self-help.¹⁶ He exercises professional responsibility for the promotion of the growth of the client. The caseworker is tolerant of human emotions of every kind but at the same time expects the best from an individual and often insists that he carry this out.
- c. The third characteristic of the response is that it contains both thought and feeling elements. On the thought level it implies an awareness of purpose and a knowledge of human personality and behavior patterns.¹⁷ On the emotional level acceptance of the client involves the use of self in the relationship. The use of self can only be achieved through a knowledge of self.¹⁸

¹⁵ Biestek, op. cit., p. 78.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 80.

Treatment actually begins in social casework in the first moment of contact. Treatment starts with acceptance, when mutual confidence is established, when a client accepts the caseworker's interest in him and conversely the caseworker feels an interest in the client. When the applicant, a tense, possibly defensive, and certainly anxious individual arrives, the caseworker gains his confidence through sympathy, respect, and recognition of him as a person.¹⁹ The caseworker must be able to tolerate, understand, and in a limited way handle not only feelings of dependency, love, and gratitude, but negative feelings of dislike and anger. For the most part the caseworker plays the part of the good friend or parent to the anxious, depressed, or frustrated individual.²⁰ In good casework situations it does not suffice to say to the client, "I accept you as a person." Rather, the client must feel the acceptance. This acceptance is expressed in the relationship of the caseworker to the client.²¹

Before the caseworker or pastor can be acceptant of others he must be acceptant of himself. Self-acceptance may sound absurd but it is an important point. Self-awareness leads to the acceptance of self and ultimately to the

¹⁹Gordon Hamilton, Theory and Practice of Social Casework (New York: Columbia University Press, c.1940), p. 189.

²⁰Ibid., p. 190.

²¹Ruth M. Blom, Seven Principles of Case Work (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University, n.d.), p. 8.

acceptance of others. The perception of one's own attitudes, feelings, and responses to problems helps one to accept another person's attitudes, feelings, and responses to difficulty. It is the caseworker's and pastor's understanding of these feelings as he has experienced them in himself that enables him to understand these feelings and attitudes in others.²²

Obstacles to Acceptance

Most impediments to acceptance stem from one source; that is, the caseworker's lack of self-awareness in some area. This impedes the counselor from perceiving reality and from dealing with the client as he really is. The following are a few of the obstacles to acceptance:

- a. Insufficient knowledge of patterns of human behavior. The professionally trained caseworker receives psychological and psychiatric knowledge especially concerning patterns of human behavior in times of stress, common emotional reactions to social and economic problems, and the ordinary defense mechanisms.²³ Such study is not present to a large extent in the theological curriculum. Additional knowledge may be acquired by the pastor through personal reading and study in these fields.
- b. Nonacceptance of something in self.²⁴ It is possible that the caseworker perceives, to some degree, negative and undesirable factors in the client's situation which are quite similar to something in the caseworker's. This may be for example a

²² Biestek, op. cit., p. 80.

²³ Ibid., p. 82.

²⁴ Ibid.

dislike for an in-law or a fear of economic insecurity. If the caseworker suppresses these unresolved conflicts in himself, he will find it difficult to help the client face them when it is good casework to do so. Because the caseworker or pastor could not deal with such factors realistically in his own life, he will be unable to deal with them as realities in the client's life.

- c. Imputing to the client one's own feelings. It is easy to stop a client in his speaking when one thinks he knows the client's feelings. Actually, the counselee by this action may be imputing his own feelings on the client. Such action gives a client or counselee the feeling of subtle rejection.²⁵
- d. Bias and prejudice. Bias and prejudice can include differences in race, creed, culture, and even more difficult ones to detect.²⁶ A pastor counseling across denominational lines may be severely tempted by this obstacle.
- e. Unwarranted reassurances. Some reassurances can prevent a client from bringing into the open his own feelings. Unwarranted reassurances can help the client postpone temporarily the facing of a difficult reality.²⁷
- f. Loss of respect for the client.²⁸ A shocking account of a counselee's past life can disturb a pastor who had high respect for a faithful member. Such loss of respect cannot be hid from a client.²⁹
- g. Overidentification. Identification is a natural result of the casework relationship. It can be overdone to the point it ceases to be good.³⁰ The root of overidentification is again a lack of

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 85.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 85.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 86.

self-awareness on the part of the caseworker. Over-identification prevents the caseworker or pastor from seeing things as they really are and therefore endangers the effectiveness of the total helping process.

Acceptance in Pastoral Counseling

The principle of acceptance can be viewed in a special light by the pastor in counseling. Scripture tells us why we can and must be acceptant of others. From Scripture we see that man derives his innate dignity from the fact that he was created in the image of God.³¹ Though man fell into sin and lost this image, yet God made possible salvation for all through His Son, Jesus Christ.³² The Scriptures also make plain that all men are sinners and in need of the salvation which God offers in Christ.³³ God desires all men "to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."³⁴ Though men are diversified according to social situations, yet such social barriers are absent before God.³⁵ The pastor's counseling will reflect the attitude of acceptance. The divorcee at the well in Samaria, the rich tax collector Zacchaeus, and the blind man who could

³¹Gen. 1:26-27.

³²Gen. 3; Luke 2:10-11.

³³Eccles. 7:20.

³⁴1 Tim. 2:4.

³⁵Deut. 10:17; Matt. 22:16.

only cry from the wayside as Jesus passed by, all were the concern of the Lord.

The pastor may be tempted by a particular obstacle to acceptance in that he may catalogue counselees according to the severity of sin or how public their sin might have been. This is not in accord with the forgiving and acceptant attitude of Christ as portrayed in Scripture.

In summary, the principle of acceptance in good casework and pastoral counseling is important. Acceptance is actually based on Scripture. All men are created equal before God, are sinners, and are in need of His salvation. The caseworker and pastor also must be aware of obstacles which hinder one from being acceptant in casework and counseling.

CHAPTER III

NONJUDGMENTAL ATTITUDE

Definition

The nonjudgmental attitude is a basic quality of the casework relationship. This attitude is based on a conviction that the casework function excludes the assigning guilt, innocence, or degree of client responsibility for causation of problems or needs. The nonjudgmental attitude does include making evaluative judgments about the attitudes, standards, or actions of the client. The nonjudgmental attitude, involving both thought and feeling elements, is transmitted to the client. In casework, judging would mean an attempt to place blame upon the client declaring him, either verbally or nonverbally, responsible for causing his problems or his dependency whether the cause is environmental or in his personality.¹

A key distinction must be made between judging and evaluating. The caseworker prescinds from judging the guilt or innocence of the client, but the caseworker objectively evaluates the attitudes, standards, and actions of the client. The client feels hurt when he is judged; he is not

¹Felix Paul Biestek, The Casework Relationship (Chicago: Loyola University Press, c.1957), p. 90.

necessarily hurt if his behavior is evaluated.²

Nor does the nonjudgmental attitude mean indifference to or the rejection of value systems. Standards and values being a part of reality are not only compatible with the nonjudgmental attitude, but are indispensable for effective casework help.³ Three reasons are offered in confirmation of this conviction:

- a. The caseworker, because he is a social worker, has a social responsibility; he is an agent, a representative of the community whether employed in a public or a private agency.⁴ By profession he is necessarily allied with social, legal, and moral good. His function is to help the individual within the law and within the basic values of a society which is based upon the belief in God.
- b. The client will not be helped if he finds that the caseworker is indifferent to the antisocial, illegal, or immoral attitudes or standards that brought trouble to the client.⁵
- c. To maintain the integrity of his own personality the caseworker cannot remain interiorly indifferent to standards contrary to his own.⁶

A client comes to a social agency with a need. One of the feelings that the client comes with is the fear of being judged. He sees the caseworker as a symbol of society whose critical judgment he fears. He is afraid of being labeled a

²Ibid., p. 93.

³Ibid., p. 94.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

failure, inadequate person or a moral weakling. As long as the client fears judgment he will not feel free to talk about himself or his problem with ease and openness. He will not be free with his information because of the fear that the information may be used against him in some way.⁷ A person does not like to be scolded or to be shown that he is wrong.

In order for the caseworker to be of help to a person, he must obtain facts from the person. Judging on the part of the caseworker can hinder one from ascertaining such facts. This can occur when the caseworker himself leaps to conclusions. This may happen when the problem that the client presents seems typical of many others the caseworker has known and he begins not by individualizing the person with his problem but by tucking him into some taken-for-granted category.⁸ It is neither right nor fruitful to pigeonhole people.⁹

The client or counselee is not only affected by a judging attitude on the part of the caseworker but also when the counselor or caseworker showers an abundance of praise and approval upon him. The client or counselee may develop the

⁷ Ibid., p. 92.

⁸ Helen Harris Perlman, Social Casework, A Problem-Solving Process (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c.1957), p. 118.

⁹ Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1939), p. 55.

feeling that the worker accepts him conditionally and that he is fortunate to have been judged favorable. He may feel compelled to remain within the good graces of the caseworker by presenting himself only in a favorable light. The client will be discriminating in what he says and thus present a one-sided view of the problem. Blame and praise may have an identical effect upon the client; that is, to urge him to hide a part of himself.¹⁰

Nonjudgmental Attitude in Pastoral Counseling

Scripture speaks very clearly on the principle of judging another person. We are told, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."¹¹ "Let us not therefore judge one another any more."¹² "Who art thou that judgest another?"¹³

For the pastor as counselor the principle of nonjudgmental attitude will be viewed in a different light from that of a secular counselor. The pastor will not judge the counselee in the sense of condemning him for his action but he will evaluate and point out actions which are contrary to God's law. A positive view should be taken as the following quotation shows:

The nonjudgmental theory should strike a responsive

¹⁰ Biestek, op. cit., p. 92.

¹¹ Matt. 7:1.

¹² Rom. 14:13.

¹³ James 4:12.

chord in the pastoral counselor. He finds that Christ did not reject the Samaritan woman, although He certainly did not approve of her marital life. Quite the opposite, He offered her the Water of Life. Secular acceptance does not go as deeply, in fact, as the pastoral relation where one sinner in need of God's grace confronts on the same plane another sinner aware of his need for God's grace. The severity of the transgression makes no difference in the common need of utter dependence on God.¹⁴

The pastor will point out to the counselee where he has acted contrary to God's law. At the same time the pastor will freely offer the comfort of the grace of God through Christ his Savior. He can assure the counselee of God's continual love and forgiveness for him if he truly repents of his sin. The pastor here is not judging the counselee. The counselee, however, has been shown his wrong; his behavior has been evaluated.

The pastor also must remember that the counselee is affected when an abundance of praise is showered upon him. A counselee may withhold valuable information in order to remain in a favorable light with the pastor. Such praise given by the counselor can cause him to not fully see the problem of the counselee.

In summary, the caseworker and the pastor do not judge a person but they will evaluate the action and attitudes of the client. Such evaluation will aid the relationship being

¹⁴Kenneth H. Breimeier, et al., What, Then, Is Man? (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1958), p. 273.

built between the pastor and counselee and also aid in solving the problem at hand.

Every problem has an emotional part to it.¹ The client that comes to the counselor's office or the parishioner who appears at the pastor's study brings with him a problem loaded with emotional tension. The client's or parishioner's predicament is actually twofold: (a) The problem itself is felt by him as a threat or an actual attack; (b) He is confronted with a host of feelings, especially the feeling of inability, in that he was not able to cope with a problem. These emotions increase his tension.² It is the counselor's and pastor's job to help the client or parishioner express these feelings associated with his problem in a purposeful way.

The purposeful expression of feelings, or verbalization as it is called, is defined as the recognition of the client's need to express his feelings freely, especially his negative feelings, and the counselor's responsibility to listen purposefully. The counselor listens purposefully

¹Felix Paul Winter, *The Counselor's Relationship* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, c.1957), p. 30.

²Helen Harris Perlman, *Emotional Maturity: A Problem Solving Approach* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c.1957), p. 28.

CHAPTER IV

PURPOSEFUL EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS

Definition

Every problem has an emotional part to it.¹ The client that comes to the caseworker's office or the parishioner who appears at the pastor's study brings with him a problem loaded with emotional tension. The client's or parishioner's predicament is actually twofold: (a) The problem itself is felt by him as a threat or an actual attack; (b) He is confronted with a host of feelings, especially the feeling of inability, in that he was not able to cope with a problem. These emotions increase his tension.² It is the caseworker's and pastor's job to help the client or parishioner express these feelings associated with his problem in a purposeful way.

The purposeful expression of feelings, or permissiveness as it is called, is defined as the recognition of the client's need to express his feelings freely, especially his negative feelings, and the caseworker's responsibility to listen purposefully. The caseworker listens purposefully

¹Felix Paul Biestek, The Casework Relationship (Chicago: Loyola University Press, c.1957), p. 36.

²Helen Harris Perlman, Social Casework, A Problem-Solving Process (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c.1957), p. 26.

by neither discouraging nor condemning the expression of these feelings. The caseworker sometimes even actively stimulates these feelings when they are therapeutically useful as a part of the casework process.³

The person who comes to the social agency for help can be known and understood only through the search for meaning in the little movement of his behavior. The way he feels, thinks, and acts in the presence of the caseworker and others, the accounts from him or from others about his behavior outside the casework situation, how he has behaved in the past, how he conceives of behaving under different circumstances projected in fantasy, from some or all of these sources the caseworker may draw inferences as to what his client is striving for or against.⁴

The Role of the Caseworker and Pastor

The duty of the caseworker is to create a permissive atmosphere. This can be described as an atmosphere in which the client may freely express his feelings in a purposeful way. This does not mean blowing off steam. Father Biestek lists six suggestions for the caseworker for bringing about permissive atmosphere. These can be very well applied to the pastor in counseling:

- a. The caseworker should be relaxed to help the client

³Biestek, op. cit., p. 35.

⁴Perlman, op. cit., p. 9.

feel comfortable.⁵ This includes even a small detail like having the counselor's desk positioned so that the counselee can view a pleasant picture or window instead of continually looking at the caseworker. The pastor's study in which he does his counseling should live up to its name and not merely be a left-over room in the parsonage or church edifice.

- b. The foreground of the caseworker's mind should not be cluttered with details.⁶ A client makes a definite appointment with the caseworker. This period is then set aside entirely for him. This point speaks for scheduling counseling appointments with the pastor rather than being interrupted in the midst of working on a sermon or the writing of some correspondence. A pastor cannot do justice to the problems of a parishioner when he himself is struggling to concentrate on what is being said or when he betrays himself with drifting eyes and a bored expression of face.
- c. Most important is the caseworker's ability to listen attentively and purposefully.⁷ Training is given the caseworker in listening to the client in a purposeful way. The pastor lacks such training. The pastor through self-discipline must be attentive to what is being said. He must not only hear in the sense that he is listening with his ears but also understand and interpret what is being said.
- d. The caseworker may encourage the client to express his feelings.⁸ Simply a nod of the head by the caseworker or counselor or a soft reply of "yes" to what is being spoken will assure the client that what is being said is understood. If the counselor can put himself into the client's place and try to make it as easy as he can for the client, the client will be more able to relate to the counselor.⁹

⁵Biestek, op. cit., p. 42.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 43.

⁸Ibid.

⁹William E. Hulme, How to Start Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1955), p. 35.

The pastor who breaks into the parishioner's order of speech continually soon frustrates the parishioner and literally shuts him up not only in telling his story but in expressing his feelings.

- e. The caseworker must have a sensitive awareness of the client's rate of movement to his goal.¹⁰ A slowing down or a speeding up of the movement of the client's feeling in the casework situation can be harmful. The busy pastor who hurries the parishioner in his account is keeping emotions from being expressed and is also harming the relationship involved.
- f. Too early interpretation, too much interpretation, and unrealistic reassurances on the part of the caseworker can block the client's expression of feelings.¹¹ This happens especially when the caseworker identifies with the client. Such a caseworker rushes in to relieve the client of his anxiety, thus cutting off the expression of feelings which might have been the only effective way of actually relieving the anxiety.

Next in importance to permissive atmosphere is the caseworker or pastor's real desire to help the individual. When the client or parishioner first comes to the agency or pastor, the willingness to help on the part of the pastor or caseworker will be merely intellectual awareness. As the relationship grows this becomes more realized. This real desire to help is conveyed to the client through feeling tones.¹² The attitude and expression of the caseworker or pastor conveys this desire to help.

If the caseworker is truly to understand the counselee, he must understand him on two levels. The two levels are

¹⁰Biestek, op. cit., p. 43.

¹¹Ibid., p. 44.

¹²Ibid., p. 41.

thought or intellect and feelings or emotions. Every person operates on these two levels. This means that the caseworker must understand what has happened to the client as well as how he feels about what has happened. The caseworker and pastor must get not only the facts but the feelings. Every experience in life carries with it an emotional counterpart.¹³

The Purpose of Permissiveness

What is the purpose of the expression of feelings on the part of the client or counselee? Permissiveness aids the caseworker and client in seeing more clearly the problem at hand and aids in strengthening the casework relationship.

There are times when the urge to unburden one's self is necessary.¹⁴ Inhibitions are usually weakest immediately after an emotional experience. It is then that such persons are most likely to tell what is upon their minds. With others the desire to tell is cumulative in its urgency until at length they can no longer hold their secrets.¹⁵ The client or parishioner must release some feelings in order to see his own problem. The telling of one's story relieves the feelings of the person in trouble, preparing him

¹³Ruth M. Blom, Seven Principles of Case Work (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University, n.d.), p. 12.

¹⁴Karl De Schweinitz, The Art of Helping People Out of Trouble (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., c.1924), p. 59.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 60.

emotionally for the reception of the truth and making his own history vivid.¹⁶ Often the client is so disturbed and so involved in his own problem that he cannot see it clearly until he has released some of his feelings.¹⁷ The client must understand the things which have happened to him and the feelings he has about these things if he is going to make effective use of the help given him.¹⁸

Also, the process of telling and of receiving a sympathetic hearing strengthens the counselee's confidence in the caseworker who is listening to him. This in turn facilitates the task of interpretation.¹⁹ The casework relationship is thereby strengthened through the purposeful expression of feelings.

Limitations to Permissiveness in Pastoral Counseling

There are limitations to permissiveness of which the pastor who is not professionally trained in counseling must be aware and on guard against. The verbal expression of feelings is therapeutically harmful when:

- a. The counselor is too quick to interpret the meaning or significance of the feelings of the counselee.²⁰ Upon hearing part of the counselee's story

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁷ Biestek, op. cit., p. 46.

¹⁸ Blom, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁹ De Schweinitz, op. cit., p. 101.

²⁰ Blom, op. cit., p. 13.

the counselor may be tempted to pigeonhole the case in comparison to previous such cases. By cutting off the counselee from fully expressing his feelings, the counselor may actually only be receiving part of the truth and also receiving a false view of the entire situation.

- b. A counselee may use verbosity as a defense mechanism. This has been diagnostically established. Such a counselee may use much of the interview period in merely verbalizing and expressing his feelings to avoid coming to grips with the problem at hand.²¹
- c. Realistic time limitations are not set on the interview period.²² When this is the case the client may express his feelings with such intensity and for such a long period of time that the interview will become exhausting to the counselor and the counselee.
- d. The counselor stimulates the counselee to express feelings in areas that he is not able to deal with effectively.²³ The pastor who delves in the unconscious and the subconscious of the counselee without proper training is certainly out of his field. Such delving can prove to be harmful to the counselee and only make matters worse.

In summary, the principle of permissiveness or the purposeful expression of feelings is the recognition by the caseworker of the client's need to express his feelings and his responsibility to listen purposefully. The pastor untrained professionally in counseling must be aware of the limitations involved in such permissiveness.

²¹Ibid., p. 13.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

CHAPTER V

CONFIDENTIALITY

Definition

Confidentiality is the "preservation of secret information concerning the client which is disclosed in the professional relationship."¹ Confidentiality is a basic right of the client. It is necessary for effective casework. A client knowing that all things told the caseworker are kept in strictest confidence feels more willing to talk over intimate family problems. Throughout the entire casework relationship the client can be assured that the information will be used only in ways of benefit to himself.² It is imperative to successful treatment that the client put himself unreservedly into the hands of his counselor. In the course of treatment there is an increasing tendency for the client to yield himself more completely, trusting in the caseworker's understanding and skill to help him.³

The client's right of confidentiality, however, is not

¹Felix Paul Biestek, The Casework Relationship (Chicago: Loyola University Press, c.1957), p. 121.

²Viola Paradise, Toward Public Understanding of Casework (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, c.1948), p. 89.

³Gordon Hamilton, Theory and Practice of Social Casework (New York: Columbia University Press, c.1940), p. 342.

absolute. The client's secret is often shared with other agencies in so far as these agencies can be helpful to the client and his particular problem. The obligation of confidentiality then binds all concerned equally.⁴

What is confidential information of all which the case-worker or pastor hears during the course of counseling sessions? A social worker defines confidential information as "a fact or a condition or the knowledge thereof pertaining to a person's private life which is normally hidden from the eyes of others."⁵ This is of three types:

- a. Natural secret. This is information which, if revealed, would defame, injure, or unjustly sadden the person. The obligation to preserve natural secrets binds everyone, regardless of the nature of the relationship.⁶
- b. Entrusted secret. This is information which is communicated to a confidant with the previous explicit understanding that the matter will not be revealed.⁷
- c. Promised secret. This is one in which the confidant promises after he has learned the secret information that he will not divulge it.⁸

Confidentiality in Pastoral Counseling

The principle of confidentiality is stated in Scripture.

⁴Biestek, op. cit., p. 121.

⁵Ibid., p. 123.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 124.

⁸Ibid.

Luther makes clear in his explanation to the eighth commandment that betraying our neighbor means to reveal his secrets. The Book of Proverbs speaks explicitly about revealing one's secrets: "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter."⁹

The Roman Catholic Church has made adequate provision concerning confidential material, for Cannon Law says: "The priest who breaks the seal of the confessional remains under ex-communication. This law admits of no exception."¹⁰ So binding is the confessional vow upon a priest that he will not speak to a penitent outside of the confessional upon the subject of matters which he has confessed unless that person has first given him permission to do so. Neither by word, nor by sign, will he betray a confidence given to him.¹¹

As the pastor counsels with Mary Brown, the intimate details of her life become part of his thinking. She must be assured of strictest confidence. This is too often violated. The pastor does not deliberately talk about these things but they slip out in a moment of carelessness at the family table or in company of friends when some other reference may be made to the counselee.¹² To be "in the know"

⁹Prov. 11:13.

¹⁰John Sutherland Bonnell, Pastoral Psychiatry (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1938), p. 70.

¹¹Ibid., p. 70.

¹²William E. Hulme, How to Start Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1955), p. 37.

concerning the lives of others is flattering to the ego. When a pastor hears others talking about somebody concerning which he has inside information through counseling, he is tempted to impress his hearers with what he knows. This urge is particularly strong when the others are acting as though they knew all about the subject but are wrong. If he succumbs to the temptation, he may attempt to set them straight. Realizing what he has done, he may attempt through talking to redeem the situation or at least to justify it. The usual result is that he gets himself in deeper and then the damage is done.¹³

There may be times when the pastor will find it necessary to consult with someone else concerning a client who is in his confidence. At such times when the pastor must consult with a physician, psychiatrist or another pastor, the identity of the parishioner need not be revealed. If the pastor should need to use a case history for purposes of instruction, the individual identities may be disguised without altering any vital psychological or spiritual content, as is done in most textbooks on psychiatry and psychology.¹⁴

The minister certainly does not refer in public or private to any member of his congregation or otherwise who is

¹³ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁴ John Sutherland Bommell, Psychology for Pastor and People (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1948), p. 175.

in his confidence. This would include referring to a person in a way in which he feels his identity is sufficiently covered. Whatever details the pastor employs in any public way should not be recognizable by anyone, friend, intimate, or loved one, of the person concerned.

In summary, the principle of confidentiality protects not only the client or counselee but also the caseworker or pastor who is counseling. This principle aids the relationship of both and aids in the solving of the problem which is present.

Emotional control. He will not manifest surprise, shock, anger, revelation, affection, or other extreme reactions. Superior ability and sympathy are characteristics he, too, must develop through training and self-discipline. His compassion will be tempered with clear thinking, constant presence of mind, and sound common sense.⁵ Control involves the subconscious assessment and lay-by-aside of those feelings that have no helping value in the business between client and caseworker. This means simply honestly facing one's and one's feelings. The first step to objectivity is to recognize one's subjectivity, to be self-aware. Once recognized, one's feelings may be subject to change or at the very least, to control. This is more easily said than done. Objectivity

⁵ Felix Paul Stecker, *The Casework Relationship* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1957), p. 26.

⁶ John Nathaniel Sowell, *Psychology for Living and Learning* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1948), p. 126.

CHAPTER VI

CONTROLLED EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Definition

Controlled emotional involvement is

the caseworker's sensitivity to the client's feelings, an understanding of their meaning, and a purposeful, appropriate response to the client's feelings.¹

The counselor will at all times keep himself under emotional control. He will not manifest surprise, shock, anger, revulsion, affection, or other extreme reactions. Imperturbability and equanimity are characteristics he, too, must develop through training and self-discipline. His compassion will be tempered with clear thinking, constant presence of mind, and sound common sense.² Control involves the conscious assessment and laying-aside of those feelings that have no helping value in the business between client and caseworker. This means simply honestly facing oneself and one's feelings. The first step to objectivity is to recognize one's subjectivity, to be self-aware. Once recognized, one's feelings may be subject to change or at the very least, to control. This is more easily said than done. Objectivity

¹Felix Paul Biestek, The Casework Relationship (Chicago: Loyola University Press, c.1957), p. 50.

²John Sutherland Bonnell, Psychology for Pastor and People (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1948), p. 185.

comes only after much practice. Supervision is a great aid to the caseworker in an agency.³

Let us look closely at the definition of controlled emotional involvement. First of all, the caseworker is sensitive to the client's feelings. The client is emotionally involved both with the problem and with his necessity to look for outside help. It is necessary, then, that his feelings be recognized and received sympathetically by the caseworker.⁴ The skillful counselor watches closely the words used by the consultant in setting forth his difficulties. Sometimes the phrasing of a sentence reveals the underlying disorder.⁵

The second part of the definition of controlled emotional involvement is understanding. Understanding means that the caseworker needs to understand the meaning of the feelings in relation to the client and his problems. Understanding is a continuous process, increasing and growing with each interview. A knowledge of human behavior is indispensable for understanding the meaning of feelings.⁶ Psychology, psychiatry and other social sciences impart this knowledge.

³Helen Harris Perlman, Social Casework, A Problem-Solving Process (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c.1957), p. 82.

⁴Perlman, op. cit., p. 71.

⁵Bonnell, op. cit., p. 176.

⁶Biestek, op. cit., p. 55.

The third part of the definition is response. Sensitivity and understanding are means to the response. The caseworker's response to the client on the feeling level is the most important psychological element in the casework relationship and the most difficult of casework skills. The response is not necessarily verbal. Essentially it is a response of attitude and feeling, guided by knowledge and purpose. The response has meaning only in proportion to how thoroughly it comes from the heart. Phrases such as, "I know how you feel," "This must be very hard on you," and so forth, will not be effective unless they spring from within.⁷

Communication is a two-way process. The content of communication indicates the kind of response that is expected. Generally speaking the content can be classified into three categories: ideas only, feelings only, both ideas and feelings. In casework content of communication most often is a combination of thought and feeling. In order to help effectively when the content consists partially or predominantly of feelings the caseworker needs the skill to respond appropriately to the client's feelings. This is one of the most difficult skills of casework.⁸ The worker demonstrates that he is at one with the client, that he is

⁷ Ibid., p. 58.

⁸ Ibid., p. 48.

feeling not like him but with him.⁹ It is important to distinguish between feeling with the client and feeling like him. To feel with him is to enter sympathetically and imaginatively into his situation; it does not mean that we entertain the same feelings or share the same attitudes. To help him we must understand him, but we can hardly help him to reach the appropriate attitude toward this situation if we are caught up emotionally instead of being able to look at it with objectivity. If the client or counselee is overwhelmed by his emotions and by a sense of guilt and shame in relation to his conduct, he will hardly look for direction and help from one who is possessed by the same complex of feelings.¹⁰ The counselor's attitude must be one of confidence. If the counselor's attitude adds to his sense of despair, the relationship is likely to become more of a destructive influence in his life than a beneficent one.¹¹

Empathy

The counselor works basically through the process of empathy. Both he and the counselee are taken out of themselves and become merged into a common psychic entity. The

⁹Perlman, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁰Mary E. Rall, "Casework with Unmarried Mothers," Proceedings of the Regional Meetings of Associated Lutheran Charities and of the Social Work Institute, 1954 (St. Louis: n.p., 1954), p. 78.

¹¹Ibid., p. 79.

emotions and will of each become part of this new psychic entity. Consequently the problem of the counselee is dumped on the "new person" and the counselor then bears his half of it. The psychological stability of the counselor, his clarity, his courage and strength of will, will carry through to the counselee thus lending him great assistance in his personality struggle.¹² Empathy can be defined as a deep state of identification of personalities in which one person so feels himself into the other as temporarily to lose his own identity.¹³ The mechanism of empathy is characterized by a sort of double consciousness. While projecting our feelings into the experience of another, we at the same time retain consciousness of our own personal and professional identity. At the moment of empathizing we are in our own minds two individuals, ourself and the one with whom we are empathizing. One part of our consciousness is devoted to feeling into the situation with the client, while the other part is maintaining the watchful and critical attitude of our professional self.¹⁴ In empathy we endeavor to understand through inference based on our own experiences.¹⁵

¹²Rolla May, The Art of Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1939), p. 81.

¹³Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁴Josephine Strode and Pauline R. Strode, Social Skills in Case Work (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1942), p. 24.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 23.

Imagination also aids in empathy. Imagination helps us to understand the feelings and actions of others. Through imaginative projection of our thinking we come to know what a person is experiencing in a situation. The imaginative process in its purest sense is mental endeavor to understand.¹⁶

Identification also plays into empathy. We unconsciously identify ourselves with people whom we know well or who have emotional values for us. We can not achieve complete identification with any person whose behavior and circumstances are foreign to our experiences, but we can consciously relate ourselves imaginatively to him in the interest of better understanding and thus achieve the partial identification which is an essential part of empathy.¹⁷ Empathy is not a magical process even though it is mysterious. It appears hard to understand precisely because it is so common and basic.

Controlled Emotional Involvement in Pastoral Counseling

The principle of controlled emotional involvement can be used by the pastor in counseling. The pastor, just as the caseworker, must be sensitive to and understand the feelings of the parishioner who comes to him for counseling. The pastor's response also must be purposeful and appropriate.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 23.

A reoccurring temptation for the pastor in counseling may be the desire to satisfy his own emotional hunger by using consultants to this end. No well-adjusted pastor will build up his own self-esteem by seeking the admiration or affection of the people who come to him. Such a procedure is demoralizing for the counselor and the parishioner alike. It is natural and normal that a certain measure of affection should be given to a counselor by the consultant especially in an extended series of interviews. Instead of accepting this affection for himself, the pastor will help his parishioner direct it to God. Likewise, the pastor will not employ a confession of failure on the part of a consultant for the purpose of increasing his own feelings of superiority.¹⁸

It is unwise for the pastor to practice the Freudian technique of transference whereby he receives to himself the affection of a consultant, retaining it until the appropriate stage of the counseling process when he redirects it to its natural objective. Rapport must be established with each consultant and a measure of affection will be given to the pastor-counselor, but he will direct this affection toward God.¹⁹

Remaining objective in counseling presents a greater problem to the pastor than to the caseworker. The caseworker

¹⁸ Bonnell, op. cit., p. 176.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 185.

knows his clients only on a strictly professional basis and does not meet with the client outside of the agency. The pastor knows his counselee on a social basis and may have the opportunity to meet with a counselee in church related organizations and at worship services. Such a personal relationship can be a hindrance for the pastor in remaining objective.²⁰

In summary, in using the principle of controlled emotional involvement, the counselor is sensitive to his own and the client's feelings. The counselor understands these feelings and in turn appropriately responds to them. Empathy is a basic process through which the counselor and counselee relate to one another. The principle of controlled emotional involvement can be used by the pastor in counseling but he must also be aware of its dangers.

²⁰Kenneth H. Breimeier, et al., What, Then, Is Man? (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1958), p. 270.

CHAPTER VII

CLIENT SELF-DETERMINATION

The Role of the Caseworker

The principle of client self-determination is the

practical recognition of the right and need of clients to freedom in making their own decisions in the case-work process. This involves the caseworker with a corresponding duty. The caseworker must respect the right of the client, recognize the need, stimulate and help to activate that potential for self-direction by helping the client to see and use the available and appropriate resources of the community and of his own personality.¹

The caseworker understands that the first and probably hardest lesson to learn about people who are in trouble is that they can be helped only if they want to be helped. There is no such thing as making an adjustment for someone else.² What is so hard about the fact that people can be helped only if they want to be helped is that instinct to help that dwells in everyone, an instinct so powerful that often one cannot resist its impulses. Frequently it forces one to spend energy in trying to help where help is untimely, where the individual is not ready to change, and where, therefore, he benefits not at all, or at least very little

¹Felix Paul Biestek, The Casework Relationship (Chicago: Loyola University Press, c.1957), p. 103.

²Karl De Schweinitz, The Art of Helping People Out of Trouble (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., c.1924), p. 35.

by what one does. However great the opportunities that may be offered to him, however wise the suggestions that may be made to him, unless the person himself is desirous of profiting by them, they can accomplish nothing for him.³ The request one makes for help need not necessarily be a formal one. Often such a request can be conveyed by a look or in a chance remark.⁴

Client self-determination includes four important points:

- a. The caseworker must help the client see his problem or need clearly and with perspective.⁵ The caseworker by remaining objective throughout the casework relationship can be of aid to the client.
- b. The caseworker must acquaint the client with the pertinent resources in the community.⁶ Often a different agency will be of better help to a client.
- c. The caseworker must introduce stimuli that will activate the client's own dormant resources.⁷ The caseworker will help the client realize that the problem can be solved with even resources he never realized but which are a part of himself.
- d. The caseworker will create a relationship environment in which the client can grow and work out his own problems. The relationship in social casework built up between the caseworker and the client is all important.⁸

³Ibid., p. 35.

⁴Ibid., p. 36.

⁵Biestek, op. cit., p. 105.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 106.

⁸Ibid.

Social workers do not impose upon the client their own goals or standards of behavior, their own solutions and morals, but respect the client's right to be himself and make his own decisions and plans. Self-direction, as well as self-dependence, is encouraged and capacities are released and strengthened.⁹

Limitations to Client Self-Determination

There are limitations in the right of client self-determination. Human freedom is a means, not a goal in itself. It is a means for attaining the legitimate, proximate, and ultimate goals in life. It cannot sanction self-injury or injury to others.¹⁰ The following are four limitations to the client's right of self-determination for the social worker and pastor-counselor:

- a. The client's capacity for positive and constructive decision making.¹¹ Individualization has been discussed more thoroughly in another chapter. Each client is individualized concerning his capacity for change and growth. The caseworker's approach to each client must be individualized also in reference to the self-determination of the client. The caseworker will feel if the client is able to make the necessary decisions and does not force him beyond his capacity. This applies also to the pastor. The pastor is

⁹Gordon Hamilton, "Helping People--The Growth of a Profession," Social Work As Human Relations: Anniversary Papers, edited by New York School of Social Work (New York: Columbia University Press, c.1959), p. 14.

¹⁰Biestek, op. cit., p. 110.

¹¹Ibid.

not to hand out decisions on every case presented but the client is to decide for himself the action often necessary with his problem.

- b. Limitations arising from civil law.¹² Civil authority and client self-determination are compatible. The general purpose of law is to prevent the individual from abusing or misusing his liberty and to protect society from such abuse. This probably will not create a large amount of difficulty for the pastor in his counseling situations, but the pastor must be aware of legal limitations.
- c. Limitations arising from moral law.¹³ There are cases in which a client is inclined to a course of action which is immoral. A caseworker helps a client avoid such a decision. For the pastor an opportunity for a positive witness is present. The pastor appeals to the person in such a course of action through the power of the Gospel. The client must be shown that in love Christ has died for him and removed his debt of sin. Realizing the love God has shown him, he will not act contrary to God's will.
- d. Limitations arising from the agency function. Often referral to another agency is necessary.¹⁴

Client Self-Determination in Pastoral Counseling

The pastor's use of the principle of client self-determination will differ from that of a secular counselor. The pastor is concerned not only about the problem of the individual but also about his spiritual welfare. The pastor may not be able to offer the counselee help which he will accept for the solution of a problem, but the pastor still has the opportunity to confront the counselee with the witness of

¹²Ibid., p. 113.

¹³Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 118.

his Savior in the Gospel. The client can still be shown the law of God and God's forgiving grace through Christ in relation to this law.

The four aspects of client self-determination discussed previously in this chapter apply also to pastoral counseling:

- a. The pastor must help the counselee see his problem clearly and with perspective.¹⁵ The pastor himself must see the problem which is being presented. He must remain objective so that he can understand the problem. There must also be continuity in his counseling if the pastor wishes to aid the counselee in clearly seeing his problem. Most problems cannot be solved by having the parishioner drop in the study some afternoon. A goal and proper perspective must be kept in mind.
- b. The pastor must acquaint himself with the pertinent resources in the community.¹⁶ Often the pastor may refer a client to a social agency, physician, or psychiatrist who will be of help with the particular problem of the individual. The pastor should be acquainted with these sources of help so that he can assure the client of their usefulness.
- c. The pastor must encourage the counselor to use his resources.¹⁷ The pastor cannot solve the problem for the counselee. The counselee must live and work with his problem. The pastor can encourage full use of the counselee's powers with which God has blessed him.
- d. The pastor will create a relationship environment in which the client can grow and work out his problems.¹⁸ The pastor will point the counselee to his Savior. The relationship of which the pastor will be concerned is not with the client but the client with his God. The pastor does not want the

¹⁵Biestek, op. cit., p. 105.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 106.

¹⁸Ibid.

counselee to be dependent upon him for help and guidance but rather look upward to the cross and to his Savior.

With the right of client self-determination goes the responsibility of the pastor to sense when he is no longer needed and to withdraw even though progress made with the client may not seem to be of a permanent nature.¹⁹ The counselee who continually runs back to the pastor and seems to be fearful of making decisions of his own with consequential results must be shown that the life he leads is his own and he must determine it. Lengthy periods of counseling can be harmful to the counselee.

In some instances a parishioner will frame his questions in counseling as to evade the responsibility of making a decision for himself.²⁰ The pastor's attitude throughout the counseling must be such that the client is given the dual feeling of freedom and definiteness. Freedom in choice of solution, or how to solve the problem in his own way; definiteness in the sense that the problem will definitely be solved; the pastor is there to help.²¹ The

¹⁹Emma V. A. Jensen, "Principles of Social Case Work," Proceedings of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of Associated Lutheran Charities, 1934 (St. Louis: n.p., 1934), p. 67.

²⁰John Sutherland Bomell, Psychology for Pastor and People (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1948), p. 181.

²¹Herbert H. Aptekar, Basic Concepts in Social Case Work (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c.1941), p. 20.

function of the counselor is to help the counselee be what God intended him to be.²²

In summary, the principle of client self-determination recognizes the right and need of the client to freedom in making his own decisions. The pastor in his counseling can learn from this principle that he counsels but does not manipulate lives.

²²Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1939), p. 54.

"Based upon the right of human beings to be individuals and to be treated not just as a human being but as that human being with his personal differences."

Individualization is one of the essential notes in the concept of "person." No two persons are alike; each individual is the sum total of his innate capacity and his life experiences.²³

The principle of individualization is reflected in the entire casework process. Modern casework is client-focused. It relies upon the individual presentation of the problem. Diagnoses are made and goals are planned individual case by individual case. Treatment is on an individual basis, a

²³Polix Paul Messerk, The Casework Relationship (Chicago: Loyola University Press, c.1937), p. 25.

Gerace Browning, "Toward a Better Understanding of Casework," Proceedings of the National Meeting of Associated Lutheran Churches and of the Social Work Institute, 1935 (St. Louis: n.p., 1935), p. 11.

CHAPTER VIII

INDIVIDUALIZATION

Definition

Individualization is the recognition and understanding of each client's unique qualities as an individual and then the use of principles and methods in assisting each toward a better adjustment. The principle of individualization is "based upon the right of human beings to be individuals and to be treated not just as a human being but as this human being with his personal differences."¹

Individualization is one of the essential notes in the concept of "person." No two persons are alike; each individual is the sum total of his innate capacity and his life experience.²

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¹Felix Paul Biestek, The Casework Relationship (Chicago: Loyola University Press, c.1957), p. 25.

²Grace Browning, "Toward a Better Understanding of Casework," Proceedings of the Regional Meetings of Associated Lutheran Charities and of the Social Work Institute, 1949 (St. Louis: n.p., 1949), p. 11.

person to person relationship.³ Individualization should not be misunderstood as the following quotation makes clear:

This doesn't mean an adherence to the philosophy of existentialism which overemphasizes individuality to the exclusion of commonality. In social work common attributes of human nature and importance of understanding common patterns of human behavior are recognized.⁴

The principle of individualization is seen already in the very beginning stages of the casework situation. The casework process begins with the caseworker's attitude of attentiveness and receptivity. As this attitude is caught by the client and he begins to feel safe in revealing his story and himself, he begins to feel the burgeoning of relationship and the securing sense that, in feeling, the worker is with him. The relationship of trust and confidence grows not on acceptance and warmth alone. It depends for its sustenance on the demonstration that the caseworker not only wants to be helpful but knows how and is concerned about the client as an individual apart from all other cases with which the social worker is dealing.⁵

The principle of individualization employed by the social worker creates an effect on the counselee. The client's awareness of individualization by the caseworker produces

³ Biestek, op. cit., p. 25.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Helen Harris Perlman, Social Casework, A Problem-Solving Process (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c.1957), p. 111.

a desirable effect for the social worker, principally, a constructive use of the agency.⁶ The client who is aware of the fact that he is being treated as an individual will move into the casework relationship easily and will help strengthen the relationship which is being built.

The Role of the Caseworker and Pastor

There are certain skills which the social worker applies to relate the principle of individualization to the casework relationship. These principles can be useful to the pastor in his counseling:

- a. Freedom from bias and prejudices.⁷ A degree of objectivity is necessary. Bias and prejudices cause preconceived cause and effect patterns upon clients in the diagnostic process.⁸ A pastor who has bias to certain members or is prejudiced against others for any reason certainly cannot remain objective in his counseling.
- b. Knowledge of human behavior.⁹ This is necessary as a framework in which the individual is understood and helped. The pastor who is not familiar with what causes individuals to react the way they do to particular situations is at a loss in his counseling. The pastor understands sin as underlying human behavior but this does not negate a need for the knowledge of how sin is expressed in man's behavior. "Common sense" is a tremendous asset but in the professional day to day service to people common sense needs to be supplemented by knowledge and insight derived from the sciences

⁶Biestek, op. cit., p. 27.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 28.

principally from medicine, psychology, psychiatry, sociology and philosophy.¹⁰

- c. Ability to listen and to observe.¹¹ Hearing and seeing are the main ways in which one learns about an individual. The client has come to the social worker for someone to listen to him. He wants someone not only to listen but to hear, to understand what he is trying to say. It takes patience, training, and self-discipline for one to become a good listener. Listening is disciplined attention raised to a high degree.¹² The caseworker or pastor observes what the client is saying about himself through his emotions reflected in his face, eyes, hands and posture.
- d. Ability to move at client's pace.¹³ For the caseworker this means that he does not take over. The caseworker begins where the client is and moves at the client's pace. "Pacing is the guide and test of individualization."¹⁴ In the pastor's crowded schedule, a counselee who is seemingly getting nowhere in relating his problem can become trying and a temptation to push along in his story or to push out of the way. Applying the principle of individualization the pastor will see this person as unique in his problem and in its effect upon him.
3. Ability to enter into the feelings of people.¹⁵ For the caseworker the client's feelings are his most individual characteristics. Problems produce different feelings in different individuals. This certainly is a test of individualization. A patient and sure application on the part of the caseworker upon seeing a particular feeling or reaction of

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 29.

¹² John Sutherland Bonnell, Psychology for Pastor and People (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1948), p. 187.

¹³ Biestek, op. cit., p. 29.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

the client could cause the caseworker's entire relationship in the casework setting to be wrongly channeled. Anxiety, distress, and incapacity are always personal and can best be understood through the individualized approach.¹⁶

- f. Ability to keep perspective.¹⁷ Emotions and details must be controlled and directed to keep a perspective. This ties in hand to hand with pacing of the casework situation. The caseworker does not goad or prod the client but yet discourages detail and emotions which are harmful to the casework relationship. The pastor must see the perspective in his counseling situation. He must see the individual as having a problem and in need of help with his problem. He must realize the desired goal and outcome of the counseling situation.

Individualization in Pastoral Counseling

The principle of individualization is based on Scripture. The individual stood in importance to our Savior. He called His disciples as individuals. Repeatedly, throughout Christ's ministry, He focused His attention upon an individual. The widow's son, being carried to his grave, attracted the attention of Jesus in the midst of the crowd following Him.¹⁸ Small Zacchaeus, in a sycamore tree, became the center of attention as Jesus passed through Jericho.¹⁹ St. Vincent de Paul, in the seventeenth century, and Frederic Ozanam, in the nineteenth century, saw each man not only as

¹⁶Gordon Hamilton, Theory and Practice of Social Casework (New York: Columbia University Press, c.1940), p. 27.

¹⁷Biestek, op. cit., p. 30.

¹⁸Luke 7:12-16.

¹⁹Luke 19:2-10.

a social being but also as an individual.²⁰

The principle of individualization is important to the pastor in his counseling. Seward Hiltner asserts:

If we are thinking in terms of the individual, our concern to help the sinner needs to be greater than our desire to blast the sin.²¹

The principle of individualization must be applied by the pastor even in the physical setting of the counseling situation. A room assuring absolute privacy is the first point of importance.²² The counselee must be assured also that the hour he has been given to speak to his pastor is entirely his and this time must be as free from interruptions as possible. The pastor who must continually interrupt the counselee by answering the telephone or performing other tasks is not aiding in building up good communication and relationship between the counselee and himself.²³

The pastor employing the principle of individualization will find the counselee more readily responding to him. The counselee will more easily confide in the pastor knowing that he is seeing his problem as it affects him and him alone. The counselee will also feel confident throughout the counseling that the pastor will be of help to him.

²⁰Biestek, op. cit., p. 23.

²¹Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1949), p. 18.

²²William E. Hulme, How to Start Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1955), p. 33.

²³Ibid., p. 32.

In summary, the principle of individualization recognizes and understands each individual as an individual. The application of this principle requires certain skills on the part of the counselor. The pastor will find the principle of individualization an asset in his counseling.

- a. The principle of acceptance, based on Scripture, accepts the individual in need as he is. This does not mean the approval of immoral behavior.
- b. Through the application of the principle of non-judgmental attitudes, the counselor is called to evaluate the actions and attitudes of the client. The pastor-counselor, through his own self, judges the counselee in the course of counseling his own life action, yet he points out to the counselee those he has noted contrary to God's law.
- c. The principle of purposeful expression of feelings recognizes the counselor's need to express his feelings and the counselor's responsibility to listen purposefully. There are limitations to such purposefulness in pastoral counseling.
- d. The principle of confidentiality asserts that all matters discussed in counseling are confidential to those concerned.
- e. According to the principle of controlled emotional involvement, the counselor is sensitive to the own and the client's feelings and understands and responds to these feelings. The pastor's emphasis is to remain objective in the application of this principle.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The thesis of this paper has been that social casework principles may be used by the pastor in counseling. Seven principles have been used to illustrate this thesis. It has been found that many of the insights offered by these principles will be helpful in pastoral counseling; however, it has been shown that in some instances these principles must be modified because of theological principles. The seven principles are:

- a. The principle of acceptance, based on Scripture, accepts the individual in need as he is. This does not mean the approval of immoral behavior.
- b. Through the application of the principle of non-judgmental attitude, the counselor is guided in evaluating the actions and attitudes of the client. The pastor-counselor, though he does not judge the counselee in the sense of condemning him for his action, yet he points out to the counselee where he has acted contrary to God's law.
- c. The principle of purposeful expression of feelings recognizes the counselee's need to express his feelings and the counselor's responsibility to listen purposefully. There are limitations to such permissiveness in pastoral counseling.
- d. The principle of confidentiality means that all matters discussed in counseling are confidential to those concerned.
- e. According to the principle of controlled emotional involvement, the counselor is sensitive to his own and the client's feelings and understands and responds to these feelings. The pastor's concern is to remain objective in the application of this principle.

- f. The principle of client self-determination stresses that throughout the counseling relationship the client has a right and a freedom in making his own decisions. The pastor is concerned not only about the problem of the counselee but, above all, about his spiritual welfare and, therefore, presents the message of the Gospel.
- g. Through the application of the principle of individualization, the uniqueness of the individual is preserved and respected throughout the counseling relationship.

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