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Contemporary Celtic Counseling: Envisioning Pastoral Counseling in Ireland Into the Twenty-First Century

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CONTEMPORARY CELTIC COUNSELING: ENVISIONING

PASTORAL COUNSELING IN IRELAND INTO THE

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL STUDIES

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I have been drawn to the task of envisioning Pastoral Counseling in contemporary Ireland by the existential circumstances of my own life right now. Upon completion of my present course of studies here at Loyola I plan to return to my native Ireland and reenter the ministry there as a Pastoral Counselor, a capacity which is new for me. This presents some challenges which I hope to explore in the thesis on hand. There will be three principal foci in my study: (1) the issue of multiculturality in the Irish counseling context; (2) the relevance of our native spirituality to effective counseling practice today; (3) the relevance of the American experience of Pastoral Counseling to the contemporary Irish reality.

Multiculturality

It seems to me that in a very real sense I have needed to apply myself to this topic in some form or another since the day I was born. I am the second last of seven children, the first four of whom were born in a Gaeltacht area of West Cork, while the remaining three of us were born in East Cork, an "English" town to the marrow bone. In this "alien" environment, our family inevitably opted for English as our first language. I became aware, however, from a very young age that in times of intense emotional stress, my mother in particular, always

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expressed herself in Irish: "Is giorra cabhair Dé ná an doras" (God's help is nearer than the door), or "Is maith le Dia cabhair d'fháil" (God helps those who help themselves), or again, "Tá Dia láidir agus Máthair maith aige" (God is strong and has a good Mother). All were sentences uttered with such fervor and conviction that they bespoke far more than the immediate circumstances seemed to warrant, even to a child's way of thinking. They were, of course, culturally loaded and the culture which inspired them was not the prevailing one. Questions which I could not so much as articulate to myself began to formulate in my young mind and I have never let them go. They are all culture-focused and they lead into exciting territory as I hope to indicate in the course of this bit of writing. One benefit which I began to acquire very young and have never had to relinquish was an intense love for Anglo-Irish literature. Felix culpa, for sure!

Being born in the late 1930s, memories of the recent declaration of political independence on the part of 26 of our 32 county country, were fresh in every Irish mind, with all that that entailed. The 1916 Rising was followed by a bitter Civil War which divided households in a manner more painful than even the British oppression over a period of close on to 800 years had succeeded in doing. Many Irish homes, and mine was among them, were faced with the choice of drawing a veil of silence over the painful past--with all the psychological unhealth that the practice of secrecy is known to breed--or quarrel endlessly as to whether De Valera had betrayed Michael Collins or whether, in fact, Collins and Griffith were naive in the extreme in their "unsuccessful" efforts at negotiation with Lloyd George "the Welsh Wizard" who

consolidated Partition--the "six counties" reality of today--under cover

of the "Boundaries Commission." Tension was in the air and its tone

color was unmistakably multicultural! In our home we experienced a

blend of the two options as my father, being a high extrovert, regaled

us endlessly with stories of the fight for freedom--for his part in

which he proudly sported a medal--while my mother, highly introverted,

preferred to get on with life and leave the painful past behind. Both

were agreed on one issue: the superiority of our native culture,

inextricably linked as it was with the Catholic faith, over anything the

Sasanach (Englishman), had to offer.

This is the background out of which I moved into a consideration

of the multicultural dimension of Pastoral Counseling here at Loyola two

years ago. Little wonder, then, that I welcomed insights shared by such

writers as Corey and Corey, Sue and Sue, Augsburger and a host of others

whose acquaintance I have made somewhat less deeply in the course of my

studies. Before appropriating some of these insights and applying them

to my native scene, a working definition of culture, or more precisely,

"multicultural" would help. Contrasting this term with "cross-

cultural," Corey and Corey observe:

> It more accurately reflects the complexity of culture and avoids any
> implied comparison. The multicultural perspective . . . take into
> consideration the specific values, beliefs, and actions conditioned
> by a client's ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic status,
> political views, lifestyle, geographic region, and historical
> experiences with the dominant culture (Wright, Corey, & Corey,
> 1989). It seeks to provide a conceptual framework that recognizes
> the complex diversity of a pluralistic society, while at the same

time suggesting bridges of shared concern that bind culturally
different individuals to one another (Pendersen, 1991).[1]

It may, at first sight, appear rather pretentious on my part to apply

the term multicultural to the Irish scene. After all, our little patch

of ground is very small indeed and, even when we embrace the inhabitants

of the entire island, our people number no more than five million at

most! By touching into the evolution of the modern Irish Celt, from the

dim distant days of prerecorded history right down to the present day, I

hope to establish the appropriateness of the term "multicultural" in the

contemporary Irish context. Suffice it to say here that, though the

blood in our veins is predominantly Celtic, transfusions of other

varieties have come our way with the onward march of the centuries. It

continues to flow, not only through the body of the Irish Celt, but--

possibly more significantly--elements of the diverse cultures which

flavor these "foreign" bloods are buried deep in the individual and

collective unconscious of our people. When recognized and treated with

respect, this admixture is a tremendous enrichment to our race;

conversely, the Pastoral Counselor who attempts to deny or ignore it,

learns her/his mistake sooner or later in the disappointing/adverse

results of the counseling endeavor. This being so, I want to identify a

few central considerations around the whole concept of multicultural

counseling which, I believe, can be of real benefit back home.

As the foregoing definition points out, culture/multiculture, is

never simple--complexity is of its very essence. It encapsulates a

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[1]Gerald Corey, Marianne Corey Schneider, and Patrick Callanan,
Issues and Ethnics in the Helping Professions (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole
Publishing Co., 1993), 241.

person's and a people's "values, beliefs and actions" which, in turn,
are conditioned by "ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-economic status,
political views, lifestyle, geographic region, and historical
experiences."[2]

Any form of counseling or psychological service needs to operate
consciously out of an awareness of this reality. The counselor needs to
be steeped in and respectful of the culture of her/his clients. If this
has not been an intrinsic part of her training program, it needs to be
attended to subsequently and in an ongoing manner. I hope to indicate
in the pages that follow--more by inference than by direct statement--
something of the scope of this task in the Irish setting.

As we move into the twenty-first century, we are called upon at
home in Ireland to come to terms with the demands of reforming ourselves
as a people who are in the very early stages of recovery from the
overwhelming attack on our self-esteem which results from eight hundred
years of oppression by a foreign power. Personal empowerment is an
urgent task for us as a people at this stage of our development. One of
our greatest resources is our rich cultural heritage which, though
weakened, has survived dungeon, fire and sword. The culturally
sensitive Pastoral Counselor is well placed to foster this growth in our
native milieu. For over seventy years a well-nigh overwhelming
complication has been the complex and excruciatingly painful reality of
Partition. The winds of hope have begun to blow through our land again,
however, with the I.R.A. Ceasefire of August 31 of this year. This was
good news for the many who seek liberation and equality for all the

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[2]Ibid.

inhabitants of our land. It constitutes an excellent environment for the introduction of Pastoral Counseling throughout the entire thirty-two counties. Our definition draws attention to the Pastoral Counselor's special, though not exclusive, responsibility for paying particular attention to the theological underpinning which informs the worldview of both the practitioner and the client. Her/his theology and psychology must mutually inform and enrich each other, and function in a manner which is at once sensitive to and respectful of the worldview of the client and this in the context of a Higher Power--her own belief and that of the client, always cognizant of the broader context in which life is lived and fully and holistically as possible. David W. Augsburger issues a pertinent warning, and I quote: "Pastoral psychotherapy at the beginning of the twenty-first century dare under no circumstances remain local and monocultural."[3] The pages which follow will indicate how I believe the contemporary Irish scene to be far from monocultural. This being so, I affirm Augsburger's declaration for our native context. I am convinced that, as an aid to honoring this reality, it is crucial for us, counselors, to pay great attention to our own cultural awareness, to beware of underestimating its complexity and to do all in our power to prepare ourselves to function in a culturally aware and respectful manner.

D. W. Sue and D. Sue provide a helpful summary of the characteristics of culturally skilled counselors under three headings which I believe to be relevant to the Irish scene:

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[3]David W. Augsburger, <u>Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures</u> (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1986), 129.

1. <u>Beliefs and attitudes of culturally skilled counselors</u>

    *   They are aware of their own values, beliefs, attitudes, feelings and biases and of how they are likely to affect minority clients. They monitor their functioning through consultation, supervision and consultation.

    *   They can appreciate diverse cultures, and they feel comfortable with differences between themselves and their clients in terms of race and beliefs. Rather than being ethnocentric and maintaining that their cultural heritage is superior, they are able to value and accept cultural differences.

    *   They believe that there can be a unique integration of different value systems that can contribute to both therapist and client growth.

        They are aware of their limitations and are not threatened by the prospect of referring a minority client to a member of his or her own race or culture, when necessary.

2. <u>Knowledge of culturally skilled counselors</u>

    *   They understand the socio-political system's operation . . . with respect to its treatment of minorities.

    *   They are aware of institutional barriers that prevent minorities from making full use of psychological services in the community.

    *   They understand how the value assumptions of the major theories of counseling may interact with the values of different cultural groups.

    *   They are aware of culture-specific (or indigenous) methods of helping.

    *   They possess specific knowledge of the particular group they are working with.

3. <u>Skills of culturally skilled counselors</u>

    *   They are able to use counseling methods and goals that are consistent with the life experiences and cultural value systems of different minority groups.

    *   They are able to modify and adapt conventional approaches to counseling and psychotherapy in order to accommodate cultural differences.

* They are able to send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and appropriately.

* They are able to employ institutional intervention skills on behalf of their clients when necessary or appropriate.

* They are able to make out-of-office interventions when necessary by assuming the role of consultant and agent for change.

* They recognize their limitations and are able to anticipate their impact on the culturally different client.[4]

Sue and Sue also draw attention to the importance of credibility in the practice of counseling. They isolate expertness and trustworthiness as the two chief components of credibility and point to the "weight of evidence" (gleaned from research), to support

> our commonsense belief that the counselor who is perceived as expert and trustworthy can influence clients more than one who is perceived to be lower in these traits . . . perceived trustworthiness [which] encompasses such factors as sincerity, openness, honesty or perceived lack of motivation for personal gain.[5]

My own life's experience prompts me to concur with the conclusions of that "weight of evidence." Personal experience also reminds me that, while expertness can be learned, trustworthiness must be earned--and it cannot be earned in a hurry! There is no magic formula to deliver perceived trustworthiness. Its acquisition is a long, slow journey into the realm of the culture itself, into its genesis no less than its contemporary expression. That is the journey which I hope to take in the pages which follow.

Finally, I believe that in view of our long pseudo-colonial history, Sue and Sue's Racial/Cultural Development model and

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[4]Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, <u>Counseling the Culturally Different: Theory and Practice</u> (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1990), 159.

[5]Ibid., 87.

Augsburger's model of "The Person in Context, in Culture, in Community"
have much to teach us in designing a culturally sensitive Pastoral
Counseling model for Ireland.

Augsburger's warning is not to be ignored. Of his tool he says:
"It is not a universally applicable construct but a heuristic sketch
which is corrected when reconstructed in each culture."[6] I am
convinced that guidelines such as the foregoing have great potential
value in the Irish context, no less than in the American context for
which they have been primarily articulated. They need to be adapted to
the particular scene and used as one among many tools in developing a
culturally sensitive model/models of counseling.

I turn to Joe McVeigh for advice on how to proceed with this
delicate task: "listening before teaching, seeking to understand and
then helping people themselves to come to a critical awareness of their
own traditions and practices."[7]

The relevance of multiculturality to contemporary Pastoral
Counseling in Ireland is undeniable. Its relevance is inextricably
linked with our long and complex history as a people, both north and
south of "The Border." It follows that a sound knowledge of this
history is essential to effective Pastoral Counseling in our land today.
Armed with this knowledge the practitioner is in a strong position to
influence that change of attitude among the people without which no
political initiatives, or no Ceasefire for that matter, no matter how

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[6]Robert J. Wicks and Richard D. Parsons, eds., <u>Clinical Handbook
of Pastoral Counseling</u>, Vol. 2 (Mahwam, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993), 133.

[7]Joe McVeigh, <u>A Wounded Church. Religion. Politics and Justice in
Ireland</u> (Cork: Mercier Press, 1989), 10.

enlightened or well intentioned they may be, can hope to unite our entire people. Charles R. Stinette points to the importance of self-understanding in the work of Pastoral Counseling and develops this concept cogently when he writes: "self-understanding is a dialogue with history as well as rigorous self-examination here and now."[8]

As we get in touch with our roots we come to realize that we all--not only the inhabitants of Ireland, north and south--but also the inhabitants of England, Scotland, Wales and the neighboring islands too, share a common Celtic heritage. What if Romanization during the early centuries of the Christian era and a subsequent conquest by Angles, Saxons and Jutes virtually wiped out the Celtic dimension in the land we now call England! A small group of English people like to claim that tiny trickle of Celtic blood which still flows in their veins today. These voices have touched into a fragile stream of pro Irish sentiment among both British private citizens and public representatives down through the dark ages of our Irish/English troubled relationship, enabling the oppressed to hope against hope down through the centuries, right up to present day. That gentle voice, with its inherent potential for reconciliation in the present political climate, needs to be heard and encouraged throughout the twin islands of Ireland and Britain. All people of good will, and here I include Pastoral Counselors, must firmly believe that this persistent message of truth has the power to quell the louder clamor of those who in their ignorance continue to brand the Celt as "barbarian" and "savage," thus discountenancing our common roots and

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[8]William A. Clebsh and Charles R. Jaekle, <u>Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective</u> (New York: Dorset Press, 1994), 34.

our glorious past. It can be fanned into a flame by all who seek, speak and work for the truth which alone, in the words of St. John, can "set us free."

Spirituality

Chapter II will give an overview of the Spirituality of our people. I have chosen to highlight this dimension of our developmental story for two reasons: (1) the world of the spiritual has ever been and continues to be a natural habitat for any Celt and (2) the role of a Higher Power in personal growth and healing is a pivotal dimension in the contemporary American models of Pastoral Counseling which I believe to be at the cutting edge and most relevant to the Irish context today.

Relevance of American Experience of Pastoral Counseling to Contemporary Irish Context

Chapter III will be devoted to a review of the historical evolution of Pastoral Counseling in America, contextualized in the broader story of the Euro-American story of Pastoral Care. Finally, in Chapter IV I will seek to establish a meaningful and relevant dialectic between contemporary American theory and practice of Pastoral Counseling and an envisioned practice of Pastoral Counseling in the contemporary Irish cultural milieu.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF A PEOPLE: FOUNDATIONS

OF IRISH MULTICULTURALITY

The history of our people is far too lengthy and complex to
admit of even the most superficial coverage in a thesis of this kind.
Since cultural awareness is of central importance in the ministry of
Pastoral Counseling, however, I will point to some items of fundamental
importance in our evolution as a people as a gesture of respect for this
truth.   Hopefully the evolutionary landmarks I reference here will
provide a context for the work of the third and fourth chapters in which
I will point to possible approaches to counseling which will be suited
to the contemporary Irish context.   For the purposes of clarity I will
follow a linear pattern and follow the story of our peoples from our
very beginnings in the dim distant past (that time which Breton story
tellers affectionately refer to as "once upon a time when there was no
time"), right up to the present day.   I will treat of three major
shifts:

1.   From Primeval times until approximately 530 B.C., i.e., the
     arrival of the Sons of Mil/Milesians/Celts or Gaels as these
     first historically documented inhabitants of Ireland have
     variously been known throughout the centuries.   For the most
     part I will use the term Celt in this thesis.

2. From the arrival of the Celts to the Viking and Anglo-Norman invasions, i.e., c. 530 B.C.-c. 1169 A.D.

3. From the advent of the Anglo-Normans to the present day (c. 1169 A.D.-).

<div align="center">

Primeval Times to the Coming of the Celts
(c. 15,000 B.C.-c. 530 B.C.)

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Sources

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Two complementary sources guide our steps through the shadowy realms of the dim distant past. These twin guides are mythology and archaeology--a welcome blend of both right and left brain recollection of events. In this skeletal review I will first turn to mythology and then to archaeology. Finally I will tentatively bring together their combined insights into the primitive Irish temperament. In developmental terms I tend to look on this entire period as the infancy and early childhood phase.

<div align="center">

Mythology

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In common with many ancient peoples, the story of our beginnings as a people was preserved in Ireland as an oral tradition. Written records began with the Christian monks in the sixth century A.D. These scribes succeeded in remaining faithful to the essential spirit of the oral inheritance while recasting the content to some extent at least in the Christian message. In order to make an authentic entry into the period of our story as a people it is, I believe, important neither to over nor underestimate the extent of the Christian gloss provided by the monkish scribes. Two brief quotations will help make my point:

. . . the very nature of the Irish Matter makes it clear that it is, at root, hierophany or sacred history. Invariably this records events in the history of a people and in the lives of their heroes in a way which emphasizes the special regard in which they are held by the divine.[1]

Dumezil has pointed out that the Irish thought of their history in mythical terms, a comment which can equally well be applied to other Celtic peoples though nowhere with so much justification as in Ireland. The Gaels tried to adjust what happened to them to fit what should have happened to them so that events originated in myth.[2]

Despite the considerable losses sustained throughout centuries of attack and destruction, much has been retained of this basic material. In more recent times the contents of these priceless documents have been made more widely available by way of classification and translation into both modern Irish and into the English language. It is necessary to read the stories themselves in order to grasp something of the sheer power of imagination which sweeps through the language and, in and by itself, provides an entry into the heart and soul of these primitive peoples. Keeping this in mind I will now content myself with the linear approach as the most feasible in this context.

The mythological sources point to a succession of tribes each of whom left a mark on the evolution of civilization in Ireland. Details with regard to the manner of their coming, their way of life, their leaders and heroes and the values which were dear to them abound. Suffice it here to name them in the order of their arrival and to add a

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[1]Ward Rutherford, <u>Celtic Mythology</u> (London: Aquarian Press, 1987), 43.

[2]Jean Markale, <u>The Celts: Uncovering the Mythic and Historical Origins of Western Culture</u> (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1978), 105.

comment or two as is relevant to the focus of the thesis. One group, namely the Fomoire, defies chronological positioning beyond being designated as neither the first nor the last to come. I will mention them briefly at the end.

1. Mythology's primordial tribe is variously referred to as <u>Cessair</u> and <u>Banba</u> and an outstanding characteristic of the group is the predominance of the feminine principle. Evidence of the Christian editing of the original story emerges in connection with their place of origin. We are told that this people left their homeland in disgrace, Noah having refused to admit them into the ark declaring that "this is no ship for robbers and no den of thieves." The outcasts cut all bonds with Noah's God, set up an idol and then proceeded to build an ark of their own! Cessiar's company is said to have consisted of fifty women and three men. The <u>Book of Druim Sneachtai</u>, which comes down to us in fragmentary form from the eighth century A.D., names the first person, a woman, who came to Ireland as Banba, eponym for Ireland. While Cessiar is identified with water, Banba is the land that would emerge from the waters, the island of Banba of the women.

2. The next mythological tribe, the Partholonians, came to a desolate land on which there was only one plain of Elta made by God, the Maker, on which no twig ever grew. In addition to hunting and fishing these people were tillers of soil and skilled in crafts but they all perished in a plague. All, that is, except Tuán who survived not only the plague but also all subsequent invasions and recounted the story of the beginnings of the race in the time of St. Colmcille (sixth century B.C.).

3.   The Nemedians were the third tribe and two of their number are said to be eponyms for present-day Leinster and Meath, Laigne Lethanglas and Mide, respectively. It is during this period that we hear mention of druids for the first time, Mide being the chief Druid. He is said to have lit the first fire at Uisnech, a fire which we are told in the mythology blazed for seven years, so that he shed the fierceness of the fire for a time over the four quarters of Ireland. This tribe was finally driven from the land by the Fomoire of whom I shall speak shortly. Two of their descendants were to lead the fourth and fifth bands of invaders.

4.   The first experience of kingship which the primeval tribes was to know came with the fourth group, the Fir Bolg. Some commentators link this group with the Belgae of classical Gaul. There is a strong tradition that it was the Fir Bolg who first divided Ireland into five provinces, a tribute to their organizational ability. Together with their successors, the Tuatha Dé Danann, the Fir Bolg are considered a "temporal and spiritual élite" among the primeval peoples.

5.   The Peoples of the Goddess Darnu, or the Tuatha De Dannan were the last of the primeval tribes. Their name points to their single greatest attribute, namely their spiritual superiority over all their predecessors. They are described as peoples of magic and wonders, learned in all the arts and supreme in their mastery of wizardry. They had acquired this extraordinary esoteric knowledge while they sojourned in the northern islands of the world whence they are said to have come to Ireland. The following brief quotation from Jean Markale gives a flavor of the ethos of the Tuatha Dé Danann:

> From Falias was brought the Stone of Fal which was at Tara; it cried out under every king who ruled Ireland. From Gorias was brought Lug's spear; no battle could be won against him who had it in his hand. Fron Findias was brought the sword of Nuada; when it was drawn from its sheath no one could escape it. . . . From Muireas was brought the cauldron of the Dagda; no company left without being grateful to it. . . .[3]

6. Mythology treats of one additional evasive, yet very significant primeval tribe. This group, the Fomoire, never really occupied the land of Ireland but rather dwelt on the islands or in the seas. All five tribes already mentioned are said to have come to Ireland from over the seas and all are said to have experienced varying degrees of hardship, opposition, and persecution on their way here from the Fomoire. This encounter with negative experience from the very first emergence of human existence on our island is a vital element of our mythological lore from a spiritual/psychological perspective. The Fomoire are, in some sense, the personification of the integral role of strife, struggle and hardship in human existence. They are depicted as strange beings who came and went with varying degrees of visibility over the entire pre-history period. They finally blended with the Tuatha De Danann with whom they are said to have been comparable in myth and magic.

> They are only vaguely depicted, and their chief features are their unformed or monstrous appearance, their single eyes, single arms, and single legs--the oneness which is split in the world of manifestation--and their hostility to the established order. Nevertheless, they intermarry with the Tuatha, and in some respects they seem to represent the feminine principle.[4]

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[3]Ibid., p. 232, quoting G. Dottin, L'Epopee Irlandaise, 37.

[4]Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales (London: Thames & Hudson, 1989), 96.

Archaeology

1. Archaeology points to the year 5,000 B.C. as marking the beginnings of human life on our island. It designates three phases of primeval habitation and it becomes clear that these three phases correspond to the picture which mythology paints of the six tribes. The first archaeological phase of human habitation is Middle Stone Age.

> Before them (the great stone tombs), we can reconstruct only a rudimentary pattern of human life on the island, going back to the point when--in the Middle Stone Age--the fishermen and food gatherers of post-glacial Europe, following the coastlines and the edges, crossed from Scotland into Antrim to find and exploit the flint deposits there. They may have come dry-shod, before the disappearance of the land-bridges, but more probably they navigated the narrow strait in skin coracles. No prior traces of man's habitation can be shown to survive; the Early Stone Age hunter does not seem to have come so far. Probably because of this the remains of the giant deer we call the Irish Elk abound.[5]

It would appear that our first ancestors were fisher folk who loved to live by the water-side, a practice which continued among our people for thousands of years afterwards. The original dwellings were reinforced by later generations against changing lake levels; later, in metal-using times, artificial islands (crannógs) were constructed in these places. These were lived in right up to the seventeenth century A.D. Nothing is known of how or where these first ancestors buried their dead or what religion, if any, they practiced.

2. Archaeology designates the Neolithic Age as the period in which the second primeval tribe reached Ireland. These were the farmers who cultivated the soil and raised domestic animals. Of them O'Brien says:

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[5]Maire O'Brien and Conor Cruise O'Brien, Ireland: A Concise History (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992), 7.

> They possessed a formidable repertory of skills and materials. Their sophisticated stone axes were mass produced in factories and traded far afield. For their houses, defenses, boats, weirs and causeways they consumed enormous quantities of timber. They had mastered the techniques of pottery, spinning and weaving. They cooked their food and ground their corn for bread. . . . They occupied the hilltops above the heavier low-lying soils . . . and, in time, the entire island of Ireland was populated.[6]

These Neolithic forebears were the ones who built in massive stone, not dwelling-places but sanctuaries, burial places for their dead and perhaps temples for their gods. These ancient "megalithic" structures are everywhere to be seen over the Irish landscape to this day. Scholars tell us that they can be traced in origin to the Mediterranean area of mainland Europe. They have been classified into two groups: (1) the solitary standing stones, dolmens, stone circles and alignments and, (2) the decorated passage graves.

3. The Bronze Age, which lasted all of 1500 years, is thought to have brought Ireland's third--and archaeology's final--band of inhabitants to our land. Their special contribution to the evolving culture is considerable:

> [They] left us a brilliant and diversified craftsmanship to admire: weapons of bronze--the beautifully balanced leaf-shaped sword--and exquisitively distinctive personal ornaments of native gold. The new metals were versatile, but scarce and costly, and many Stone Age methods and materials continued unsubmerged. The people left no records but we know they were aware of the solemn nature of the great tombs; on occasion they buried their dead within their enclosure. They may have continued the cult of mighty stone; many of our "ceremonial" stone circles are attributed to them.[7]

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[6]Ibid., 8.

[7]Ibid., 15.

Observations

In terms of the gradual developmental process of our corporate consciousness as a people, I like to look at this early period as the infancy stage. Whether we look to mythology's six tribes or to archaeology's three phases of habitation some interesting personality traits are clearly emerging.

The feminine principle is prominent. A versatility of skills and an artistic creativity manifest themselves. There is growing evidence of an ability to self-govern among the people and also to organize themselves in a sophisticated manner. (Newgrange could not have happened were this not so, to mention but one of the growing number of archaeological evidences which witness to this.) There is a strong tendency to rebelliousness as the mythology notes. Hospitality is there too and an all-pervading sense of the spiritual.

As we move through the next step of this infancy stage we will see how the above traits develop and/or become modified with the passage of time and its inherent expansion of experience.

From the Arrival of the Celts to the Viking and Anglo-Norman Invasions (c. 530 B.C.-c. 1169 A.D.)

The Celts: General Background

As I take up a consideration of the Celts in Ireland, I move initially at least between the shadowy realms of mythology and the more provable fact world of "modern" recorded history. In the course of my research on Celts in connection with this thesis I have come in contact with some sources which state that very little is known of the Celts while many others provide a vast store of information on their origins,

customs and way of life. These latter rely on archaeology and the
classical writers of Greek and Rome for their information and in their
writings they cover both the original Celts of the Asian/European
continent and the insular Celts who established themselves in the
British Isles. I am happy to be guided by this vast corpus of material,
all the more so in view of Jean Markale's statement that "Ireland is the
only purely Celtic state in the modern world."[8] As such we believe
ourselves to be the descendants of those Celts who first made their
appearance in "a wide swathe from what is now Hungary to the Western
seaboard of Europe during the first millennium B.C."[9]

The archaeological evidence of the early development of Celtic
culture and civilization on the mainland points to constructions,
largely burial chambers, and artifacts, chief among which are the famed
Hallstatt and La Tène collections. These bespeak a sophisticated
culture where the beauty and power of both natural and supernatural are
celebrated and where warrior traits are exemplified. The classical
writers show either a lack of awareness or a lack of appreciation of
this highly developed culture when they portray the Celts as "barbaric
and savage." They give vivid portraits of their practice of charging
naked into battle thus exemplifying a reckless fearlessness in the face
of danger which left Greek and Roman alike at a loss to understand their
behavior. These writers did not take into account the impact on the
Celt of his belief system which included the acceptance of both

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[8]Markale, The Celts, 123.

[9]Caitlin Matthews, The Celtic Tradition, the Elements of (Rockport,
MA: Element Inc., 1989), 1.

reincarnation and the transmigration of spirits. In this context, the
end of one life was merely the gateway to another--a great incentive
towards courage in the face of certain death! In addition the Celtic
practice of using spells and wizardry mesmerized their adversaries,
chief among whom were the Greeks and Romans.

It must be remembered that the classical writers labored under a
serious disadvantage in chronicling the Celtic story, namely the
challenge that the Celt presented to their own self-interest. Caesar's
personal ambition to expand Rome's boundaries into Gaul and thus advance
his own ascent to power in Rome was seriously threatened by the Celts.
Likewise, the Greeks bore the scars of witnessing the sack of Delphi at
the hands of these same people. Small wonder that Ephoros the Greek,
writing in the fourth century B.C., describes the Celts as one of the
four barbarian people of the (known) world. He identifies the four as
the Libyans in Africa, the Persians in the east, and the Scythians and
Celts in Europe.

We are fortunate today to have contemporary scholars who did not
suffer personally at the hands of these "barbarians" and are, therefore,
better positioned to provide unbiased data on this our principal ethnic
Irish ancestor. It is on these resources I rely for the portrait I
paint in the following pages.

I will treat this period in somewhat more detail than I will the
later centuries of our history as I believe that it gives us a clear
picture of several fundamental aspects of the native psyche which the
oppression of later times sought to suppress with at least some measure
of success. These traits continue to live on in the corporate

unconscious and are potentially rich resources of which the culturally-
sensitive Pastoral Counselor needs to be aware. I accept that in the
present context I cannot begin to do justice to the complexity of my
topic so I must be content to judiciously select the dominant influences
and leave it to the reader to do the rest.

The Irish Celt

You will recall that the Tuatha Dé Danann are cited as the last
of the Irish mythological primeval invaders. It is here that myth and
recorded history merge in the account of our evolution as a people. We
are told that Ith, son of Bergon of the Milesians/Celts or Gael as they
are called in recorded history, travelled to Spain through Egypt, Crete
and Sicily where he spotted the land of Ireland from a tower. He
decided to come and investigate this land. The Tuatha De Dannan came to
know of his intentions, became suspicious of his motives and killed him.
Thereupon his kinsmen invaded Ireland to avenge his death.

The Tuatha and the Milesians/Celts confronted one another at the
Battle of Magh Tuired with victory going to the Celt. Following some
negotiations an agreement was reached that the land would be divided
between the two parties to the battle, the Tuatha receiving the
underworld or hidden half. Something of the flavor of this arrangement
has continued to form part of the Irish myth throughout the centuries
right up to the present day in the form of the Sidh which dwell in the
underworld.

Geology and geography provide complementary clues in establishing the journey of the Irish Celt from his mainland place of origin:

> . . . major physical upheavals in Northern Europe . . . resulted in whole-scale migrations of peoples at the end of the Bronze Age, after the first Hallstatt period, i.e., around 530 B.C. . . . archaeological evidence indicates vast southward migrations of peoples escaping the flooding regions.[10]

It would appear that the primeval tribes described in the mythology included at least some groups of these Celtic peoples as well as the aboriginal tribes who inhabited the land before them. The question presents itself: Could the goddess Danu, eponmy of the Tuatha Dé Danann, be linked with the Danube, Dnieper or Don rivers? Rivers were, after all, deities among the Celts! One is also struck by the established facticity of a flooding as the cause of migrations southward. And one is inclined to reflect that the Christian monks of later times did not take quite the liberty with the oral tradition which they put in writing as some commentators would have us think!

> All these various comments suggest that the Celts living in the northern coasts of Europe must have suffered some natural disaster and that their memory of it was transformed into a myth, a common enough practice among Celtic peoples.[11]

One thing is agreed by all sources. It was the Celts who occupied the land of Ireland from the time of their victory over the Tuatha until the Viking raids at the end of the eighth century A.D. It is the Celt also who has continued ever since to provide the principal ethnic strain in

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[10]Markale, The Celts, 25.

[11]Ibid., 27.

the composition of the people we call Irish right up to the present time.

During the centuries which preceded the Christian era in Ireland, the Irish Celt raided the neighboring lands. He was so feared by Rome that Agricola decided against extending the frontiers of the Roman empire into Ireland and so we remained forever outside the dominion of that imperial power. During Europe's Dark Ages the Christian Irish Celt was to rekindle the torch of faith and restore culture and learning in mainland Europe. But I must return to our own shores and to life there both in pagan and Christian Celtic times up to 1169 A.D.

I turn to poetry to lead us into the world of the Irish Celt as nothing is better calculated to create this natural ethos than the power of imagination. I take two excerpts, each of which brings its own special flavor, and I trust that the magic will work with little or no comment from me! The first comes from the Milesian/Celtic/Gaelic poet Amairgen, the second from what is accepted as the greatest of our heroic epics, The Táin Bó Cuailnge.

        I am Wind on Sea,
        I am Ocean-Wave,
        I am roar of Sea,
        I am Bull of Seven Fights,
        I am Vulture on Cliff,
        I am Dewdrop,
        I am Fairest of Flowers,
        I am Boar for Boldness,
        I am Salmon in Pool,
        I am Lake on Plain . . .
        I am a Word of Skill,
        I am the point of a Weapon (that poureth forth combat),
        I am God who fashioneth Fire for a Head.
        Who smootheth the ruggedness of a mountain?
        Who is He who announceth the ages of the Moon?
        And who the place where falleth the sunset?

Who calleth the cattle from the House of Tethra?
On whom do the cattle of Tethra smile?
Who is the troop, who the god who fashioneth edges?
Enchantments about a spear? Enchantments of Wind?[12]

I move straight into the Táin excerpt. It is none other than the epic

hero Cuchulainn who speaks thus of his victory over his dear friend and

foster brother, Ferdia:

All the struggles and contests that I have ever fought seem only
playful games now after my struggle with Ferdia.
    And he said these words:

It was all play, all sport,
until Ferdia came to the ford.
A like learning we both had,
the same rights, the same belongings,
the same good foster-mother
--her whose name is most honoured.

All play, all sport,
until Ferdia came to the ford.
The same force and fury we had,
the same feats of war also.
Scathach awarded two shields,
one to me, one to Ferdia.

All play, all sport,
Until Ferdia came to the ford.[13]

What more need be said about the power of poetry to capture the soul of

the Celt? And this is nothing to the power of the original Old Irish!

    I will now move on to the political and societal structures

which were operative at the dawn of Irish Celtic civilization and

throughout the entire period up to and including the Viking Invasions.

In addition, I will comment briefly on five especially significant

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[12]Rees and Rees, Celtic Heritage, 98.

[13]Thomas Kinsella, trans., The Tain (Suffolk: Richard Clay, 1990),
204.

elements of the social fabric namely, the legal system, the role of women, the institution of marriage, fosterage, and the creative arts.

Societal Structure

The structure I will briefly outline here was not something static put in place with the first arrival of the Celts in Ireland. Far from it. It is, rather, a dynamic, living structure which evolved gradually throughout the entire period covered here and which knew the varying modifications and elaborations to which such a history over so long a period inevitably gave rise.

Among the Celts the basic political unit was the <u>tuath</u> or tribe. Each tribe had its own autonomous form of administration, a practice which safeguarded democracy but made for great complexity in inter-tribal relations. One source describes this as "a carefully preserved, almost built-in tendency to anarchy."

It would appear that each band of Gaels which came to Ireland, though limited in numbers, managed to impose their own language, customs and religion on the indigenous peoples. Each tuath had its own king or chief, a kind of patriarch, war leader, diplomat or judge, whose authority was far more moral than material. The Celts sought to maintain a connectedness among the <u>tuathanna</u> as they believed that a single authority was necessary for survival. They had real difficulties, however, with kingship/queenship as they were very loath to invest significant power in any one person. For them the ideal was that the position of their central authority figure be incontestable but also flexible; the notion of accepting the dictates of any one person was never a viable option for the Celt! Gradually a complex system

evolved which had the capacity to honor these seemingly contradictory aspirations. It was a system which served the needs of the people until it was finally eroded by centuries of oppression. But that is for later!

The entire social system was hierarchically constructed in a manner which was at once vertical and horizontal. It functioned as a unit, especially in its more evolved state. There were in all five distinct levels which were as follows:

1. The high kingship--a position which was essentially honorable. Its authority was nonetheless real, being neither weak nor authoritarian when functioning at its best. In this lay both its strength and its weakness. The basic understanding of the office saw the king as the benefactor of the tuath: the monarch was to serve others rather than profit from his influential position. His principal responsibility was to maintain the tradition. He was called upon to lead the entire army in battle, but only when there was a common enemy. Even in these circumstances, however, the system recognized a warrior who was the actual military leader while the king's role was more of a symbolic, unifying nature. Initially hospitality was the responsibility of the king. According to its laws he was obliged to give any gift a guest might request without knowing in advance what that request might be! Later this responsibility was assigned to the hospitaller. The office of kingship was treated with an awesome respect and was surrounded by taboos of all kinds. Symbolically, the king was seen as married to the land which he held in trust for the people; the notion of

ownership of the land was alien to the Celt. The <u>Ard Ri</u> or High King thus had dominion over the entire land.

A number of historical figures held this office in turn from the first to the twelfth centuries of the Christian Era. The first significant one was the half legend, half real, Conn Cead Cathach, who established the high kingship at Tara in the second century and whose descendants, the Dal Cuind, later the Ua Neill or O'Neills of Ulster, retained that position, with occasional interruptions, right up to 1022 A.D.

Another important High King in terms of the formation of a people was Cormac Mac Airt. He reigned during the third century. We are told that he was renowned for his excellence as king. He addressed himself to establishing political unity in the country. He curbed the power of a maverick force famed in song and story, namely the Fianna, and created colleges at Tara where military science, law, history and literature were taught. Cormac instituted annual assemblies at Tailtiu, near Tara, where the aristocracy would gather to hold an <u>aonach</u> or fair. When he went into retirement, having lost an eye in battle, he composed a treatise on education for kingship and wrote several books of law which have been preserved.

Niall Noigillach occupied the throne during the late fourth century. It was his sons Eoghan and Conall who established the seat of high kingship at Ailech in County Donegal. This site has been preserved as a national monument. Niall's royal descendants were to influence the course of Irish history right down to the seventeenth century. (The mythology celebrates queenship in the person of Medb of Connacht, one of

the central figures in the aforementioned <u>Táin Bó Cuailnge</u> and, in my

opinion, it is unwise to forget that myth points to seminal truth!)

2. In the course of the centuries under consideration here

Ireland was divided variously into five or seven provinces, each ruled

by its own semi-independent chieftain or provincial king. Of equal rank

with these provincial kings were the high king's hospitaller and the

druid. (In Christian times the abbot of a monastery and/or bishop of a

diocese also held this rank.)

The hospitaller came to be respected as a symbol of that

hospitality which was a hallmark of the Celt. He was required to keep

open house at all times and became a kind of second king in the tuath.

The druid or druidess, as women frequently held this office, was

not only the religious leader but also the administrator of justice, the

advisor on the taking of arms, the mediator in disputes and the

officiator at worship in the sacred groves. She/he held enormous power

among the people having the right to speak even before the king. As we

will see in the next chapter Brigid of Kildare is an interesting mix of

pagan druidess, goddess and Christian saint!

3. The <u>aes dána</u> or professional classes come next in the social

pecking order. This was a class which evolved out of the druid class

with the passage of time and many responsibilities originally discharged

by the druids/druidesses came to be looked after by the aes dana. This

class was divided into groups of equal rank: (a) the <u>breithims</u> or

judges who fulfilled many of the legal duties initially carried out by

the druids and (b) the <u>fili</u>, bards or scholars, who took on many of

their religious and cultural responsibilities. Their most sacred task

was the preservation of Gaelic culture and the education of the young.
So great was their commitment to their calling that they continued to
function alongside the monks and nuns during the age of monastic
influence and, in a hidden but most effective manner, throughout the
centuries of English occupation. The famous hedge schools which kept
the language, literature, and general culture alive could trace their
inspiration back to the aes dána and forward into the nineteenth-century
institutions such as the Gaelic League and Conradh na Gaeilge which were
to be so influential in the lives of the leaders of the 1916 Rising.
Speaking of the aes dána and their progeny Markale has this to say:
"The intellectual aspect is worth emphasizing, since few societies have
ever held scholars in such honour as Irish society did."[14]

    4. The fourth level comprised the king's immediate family, his
more distant relatives and his minor knights and harpists. The harp
held a special place of honor, being the symbol of the soul of music in
the society. It had a long tradition in the society going back to the
Tuatha Dé Dannan who were said to have brought the Dagda's harp with
them from the isles of the North. It was endowed with magical powers.
It could come down from the wall unaided and play the music of sleep,
laughter or mourning until the audience began to doze, laugh or weep as
was appropriate.

    5. At the bottom of the scale we find the craftsmen or vassals
and the male and female slaves who were probably former captives or
members of the indigenous tribes. It has been established that while
slavery most assuredly did exist in early Irish society, it was neither

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[14]Markale, The Celts, 112.

harsh nor cruel. Slaves were never treated as beasts of burden and they never existed in very great numbers.

Such was the social pecking order. Let me now turn to some dominant elements throughout the culture.

The Legal System: The "Senchus Mór" or Brehon Laws

All aspects of Irish life were covered by the legal system which, despite its complexity, protected the rights and well-being of every member of society, particularly those who were weakest and most vulnerable. The system, known as the Senchus Mór or Brehon Laws, has its roots far back in pre-Christian times. One source gives the date of origin as 714 B.C. and credits the reigning king, the Ollamh Fodhla with having given this codified system of law to his people. Others point to the pagan Brigid of Kildare as its founder and posit this as an explanation for the exceptionally fine treatment of women which the laws enshrine. Whatever its point of origin we in Ireland have good cause to be proud of the values to which it gives witness. It is a tribute to the inherent excellence of this legal system that it survived until the seventeenth century when it was finally suppressed by English decree. A brief quotation will point to the essential differences which distinguished the Brehon Law system from the English system which was finally to supplant it.

> Whether or not Ollamh Fodhla was entirely mythical and whether or not he had anything to do with the foundation of the Brehon law system, when the Irish legal system was first codified in the early Christian era it was clear that it had evolved from centuries of careful oral preservation. . . . The term ollamh denoted the highest grade of bard, top of the seven grades, and it took a candidate nine to twelve years to memorize the 250 prime stories and 100 secondary stories to become an ollamh. . . .

> The ancient laws of Ireland, named from <u>breitheamh</u>--a judge--are the
> oldest-surviving law system in Europe. The laws are very
> sophisticated and complex, the result of many centuries of practice.
> Their roots are in ancient Indo-European custom and not in Roman
> law, from which other European systems have derived. In parts of
> Ireland this law system survived until its final suppression by
> England in the seventeenth century A.D.[15]

I will mention just one or two examples to illustrate the spirit of the

laws and then move on. The brehons were both male and female. Women's

needs were intimately cared for by law:

> It was a crime for men to impregnate a woman against medical advice
> or the restrictions of her tribe, or even to neglect to cohabit with
> here so that the narrow passage for childbearing results, making
> childbirth more difficult.[16]

No one in early Irish society need fear illness. Under the law

all were assured treatment and hospitalization and society was obliged

to provide the sick and their dependents with food and the means of

livelihood. There were clear directives relating to the running of

hospitals, e.g., hospitals were to be staffed by qualified personnel;

they should be free from debt; they should have four doors and fresh

water; they should be freely available to the sick, feeble, elderly and

orphans.

War was a last resort when all other procedures had failed to

uphold justice and restore peace in the context of intercommunity

disputes. There was no system of public prosecution in the society.

Quarrels were expected to be investigated on a private level. Generally

such investigation resulted in an agreement on the part of both

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[15]Peter Berresford Ellis, <u>The Celtic Empire: The First Millennium
of Celtic History</u> (London: Constable, 1992), 183.

[16]Mary Condren, <u>The Serpent and the Goddess: Women, Religion, and
Power in Celtic Ireland</u> (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publication, 1989),
63.

plaintiff and dependent to go before a judge whose ruling would be accepted as final.

Justice was sought in a variety of ways: the satirical curse of a druid or file could be effective; fines determined by tradition could be imposed on a guilty party and accepted as reparation for damage done or injury endured. Or again, plaintiffs could fast against a defendant outside his house, a tradition which has lived on in the national psyche over the centuries despite the suppression of our indigenous legal system. This was the system chosen by Terence McSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, in 1920 when he endured a seventy-five-day fast unto death in an effort to consolidate the gains of the 1916 Rising. More recently still it was used by Bobby Sands who died on hunger strike in Long Kesh prison, Belfast, in 1981.

How foolish it would be for a Counselor to neglect the contents of the corporate psyche! One cannot ignore the inevitable psychological damage which was suffered as a result of suppression, repression and oppression of this kind by the Irish people. Small wonder that we can be described as against the government, an accusation which is as often true as not! It is my belief that gaining access to the source of such pain, buried deep down in the unconscious, coming to a knowledge of its cause and taking a legitimate pride in the inheritance which still is ours, can go a long way towards healing these deep-seated scars to the psyche. Who is better positioned to minister here that a culturally sensitive Pastoral Counselor?

Women

  I have selected two quotations which point to the position of women in early Celtic society:

> There is evidence, throughout the Celtic legends, of women taking an unrestricted part in public life. They are queens, princesses, priestesses, prophetesses, maids, servants, peasants, workers, educators, warriors, horsewomen. Women do not appear to be ostracized in these idealized mythical societies as they are in the present day.[17]

> A Celtic married woman had full married status and could acquire or own property of her own so that her independence was assured. In Rome all decisions relating to family affairs were taken by the husband alone. This also happened among the Celts, but only if the wife had no property of her own. When both partners had an equal fortune, the wife's advice and consent had to be sought in all things. And if the woman owned more than her husband she was regarded as the head of the household and could settle any family matter without her husband's consent. It was also possible for women to claim the throne, either by birth or as the late king's widow. . . . Irish epic contains examples of such female sovereigns, including the paradigm of queenliness, Medbh.[18]

Clearly women were at least the equal of men in this early Celtic society. It was a matrilineal system which protected the position of the mother in the household. The family extended to the fourth generation, at the end of which legal succession expired. This situation led to fierce rivalry and intriguing, especially in the fourth generation.

The Institution of Marriage

  Polygamy and polyandry were practiced among the early Celts in Ireland. In pagan times it was seen as a contract made before the gods

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  [17]Jean Markale, <u>Women of the Celts</u> (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1986), 253.

  [18]Jean Markale, <u>King of the Celts: Arthurian Legends and Celtic Tradition</u> (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1977), 236.

and humans but it was never considered to be an irrevocable life-long

commitment. Divorce was easily obtained, e.g., by mutual consent. Even

while married the wife continued to belong to her own family. A male

married Celt could keep one or two concubines in the home, but only with

the consent of his wife. A concubine was protected by a sort of short-

term marriage contract by which she was guaranteed financial security

and independence. At the end of a year she was free, unless she wished

to renew the contract. In Christian times these laws and practices were

to create problems between the Irish church and Rome!

Fosterage

This is the final characteristic of our early Irish society to

which I want to draw attention because of its enduring developmental

influence. The form of fosterage which was practiced among the Celts

was unique as the following passage illustrates:

> Whereas an adopted child in Rome would sever all relations with his
> natural family, the adopted child in Celtic society belonged by law
> to both families. Among the Celts both families were totally
> involved and the system of fosterage came to give society in general
> a cohesion on the horizontal plane which its lack of allegiance on
> the vertical scale tended to deny it. For the emotional bonds
> formed in this way humanized other social relationships which might
> otherwise have remained purely legalistic. The custom of fosterage
> continued in Ireland even during the Anglo-Norman occupation when it
> became fashionable to send one's sons and daughters to be fostered
> by some unrelated person who was known to be highly skilled in
> specific area. The children brought up together in this way
> acquired a new sense of brotherhood.[19]

This practice of fosterage which perdured for so long among us was a

singular binding force among the Irish throughout their grim ordeal of

centuries of oppression and gave them strength to believe in themselves,

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[19]Ibid., 237.

in their common culture and in their right to be free from the unjust
yoke under which they were compelled to labor.

The Creative Arts

Throughout this entire period the creative arts were part of the
warp and woof of society. It was a heroic age during which first the
oral, and later the written tradition too, flourished. Events were
celebrated in song and verse and always in the Celt's own Gaelic
language (though Latin and, to a lesser extent, Greek became well known
from the coming of Christianity onward); the curse of the _file_ was
feared far and wide.

The famous Celtic designs come from this period, and earlier
too. They were wrought initially in stone and later in metals and
parchment. Parchment especially celebrated its golden age in the
monasteries with such masterpieces as the Books of Kells, Durrow and
many others to bear eternal witness to the standard achieved by the
monks who illuminated these Gospel scripts. Ornaments and sacred
vessels such as the Tara Brooch, the Ardagh and Derrynaflan Chalices and
the famed High Crosses give a sense of what was accomplished in precious
metals and in stone. The foundations of our splendid literature were
set during these halcyon days when battle, though fierce and frequent,
was fought within the understanding of a common culture and never
seriously threatened the life and values of the culture itself. We were
a people with a soul to guide us and that soul found its expression in
the creative arts.

The Impact of Christianity on the Celtic Way of Life

The major shift in social structure which Christianity offered was the monastic way of life. Gradually during the course of the centuries the monasteries became the cultural centers and political capitals of the country, though kingship continued to play a significant role throughout the entire period. Speaking of the seventh and eighth centuries Markale writes: "Ireland continued to prosper for another hundred years, during which time its cultural achievements far outweighed those of the rest of Western Europe."[20]

During the centuries which preceded the Christian era in Ireland, the Irish Celt had raided the neighboring lands. By contrast, the Christian Irish Celt was the one who rekindled the torch of faith and restored culture and learning in mainland Europe during its Dark Ages.

At home, the tuath social structure and the monastic structure gradually merged in a mutually enriching manner with incredible ease, a transition which is well captured by the phrase: "the age of heroes became the age of saints." Many factors influenced the ease of this transition/transformation. Among them the following are significant:

- the similarities between those monastic structures which the monks brought with them and the native social structures;

- the deep-rootedness of the supernatural in the lives of the people;

- the wisdom of the early missionaries in not trying too hard to debunk the societal structures which they found in Ireland;

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[20]Markale, The Celts, 119.

- the similarities between the biblical stories and the native mythology.

The monastic life played a major role in maintaining that blend of the sacred and secular which the Celt had always known. This was especially true during the early centuries before outside influence combined to foster major changes. This blend of sacred and secular found expression in many ways, e.g., the transcription and artistic illumination of gospel texts, the writing down of the vast store of native wisdom heretofore preserved solely in the oral tradition, the storied high crosses, the ornate metal artifacts, the native literary compositions which the fili continued to compose and recite. All bear eloquent witness to this miracle of assimilation of the Christian message with incredible ease into the native pagan culture.

Finally, it was the influence of Christianity which transformed the practice of plundering neighboring lands into a practice which has perdured to the present day, namely travelling far and near for the spread of the Gospel of Christ.

The Viking Invasions

Another major ethnic influx was soon to break upon our Celtic shores and be the harbinger of significant change. I speak of the Viking Invasions which recurred sporadically from the late eighth to the early twelfth centuries.

The coming of the Vikings provides a stark contrast to the arrival of the Christian monks. The latter brought peace but the former came with the sword. Their intent was to conquer and they set about it relentlessly, pillaging the monasteries on their way. Their leader

Torgeist declared himself abbot of Armagh in 830 A.D. "By 841 his wife, Ota, was playing the prophetess and delivering her oracles on the high altar of Clonmacnoise."[21]

The Irish offered strong resistance with the result that the attacks by the invader became weaker and progressively more intermittent. Some of the Norsemen, in fact, converted to Christianity and intermarried with the Irish. Eventually Irish supremacy was briefly established by the high king, Brian Boru's pyrrhic and short-lived victory at Clontarf in 1014 A.D. A new band of invaders were soon to come and we were to see our last Ard Ri in the person of Rory O'Connor in the twelfth century, marking the definitive end of Ireland's Golden Age.

Observations

In terms of the developmental stages metaphor it is true to say that we have now moved from infancy through childhood and adolescence and possibly to the threshold of young adulthood as a people. Characteristics which were in evidence during the earlier developmental period persist: petulance and a fascination with battle; phenomenal imaginative and creative ability; a gregarious and fun-loving disposition; an all-embracing sense of the supernatural, fused with the whole of life; a tendency to exaggerate and embellish a good story; a desire and capacity for just and flexible law and order; equality among the sexes; care for the weak and vulnerable; strong family, extended family and tribal ties supported by the custom of fosterage crowned by a

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[21]Ibid., 120.

complex, culturally-sensitive legal system which constituted the infrastructure of the whole fabric of the society. Ironically, side by side with all of this, there was a naivete of character which would prove to be the classical tragic flaw which served the native Irish Celt badly during those centuries of oppression which were to follow at the hands of foreign powers who marched to a different drum!

As we move through the next developmental step in our people's story we will see how the above traits develop and/or become modified with the passage of time and its inherent expansion of experience.

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From the Beginnings of Colonialism
to the Present Day

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At the time when mainland Europe was beginning to emerge from its Dark Ages, we in Ireland entered that mode of existence and struggled bravely with it for all of eight hundred years. During these centuries of oppression two imperial forces--sometimes working in unison, sometimes at cross purposes to each other--sought to dominate the lifestyle and value systems of our people. I refer to the British Empire and the Roman Catholic church.

From the time when Henry II, Plantagenet, assumed the title high king of Ireland until the Tudor monarch Henry VIII declared himself head of the English church, and shortly thereafter of the Irish church too at the end of the sixteenth century, Britain and Rome conspired together to subjugate the Irish to their respective ecclesiastical and political domination. The alliance operated in full force from the time when the English-born Pope, Adrian IV, issued his infamous Laudabiliter empowering Henry to impose the Roman diocesan administrative structure

(among other things) on the Irish church. At the same time the Leinster king, Diarmaid MacMurrough acted out the fatal character flaw of the race, naiveté, and sought Henry's help to resolve domestic disputes! Henry was only too pleased to avail himself of this double opportunity to establish a foothold in our country--an action which turned out to be the beginnings of colonialism for our people. Right up to the time of the Protestant Reformation the two superpowers worked hand in hand in seeking control over the way of life of the Irish. The Reformation pitted them the one against the other but they continued to have one thing in common where Ireland was concerned, despite their new-found mutual antagonism: a profound misunderstanding of our psychic structure and its external manifestation by way of the manner in which we organized our lives, both in the secular and the ecclesiastical spheres. Both continued to strive relentlessly to impose their own superior system on our native approach with equally disastrous results for the Irish. Might I add that each enjoyed a fluctuating, yet steady measure of assistance from some of the natives with the passage of the centuries! (Mor ár náir!--Great is our shame!)

    I will deal with the impact of the ecclesiastical interference in the next chapter and so I will turn my attention here to our experience of colonialism at the hands of the English. Fortunately, the groundswell of resistance to the English attempts at subjugation was far stronger than the trickle of support from the natives as is evinced by the freedom which was won for twenty-six of our counties in the early part of this century and the ceasefire which inspires us with such hope today.

The Four Tragic Bells

It is utterly impossible to do justice to the psychic journey of our people in the course of these centuries in a paper of this length and so I turn to one of our poets to help me identify some of the more outstanding relevant events. When the great Irish poet W. B. Yeats accepted the Nobel Prize for literature in Sweden in 1923 he cast a backward glance at the fate of Irish literature over the centuries and how it had spawned that new creation for which he was being personally acclaimed at that very moment, namely Anglo-Irish literature. He used the image of four bells to trace his steps through the four preceding centuries. I will borrow that image now. Each of Yeats' four bells would toll successively at the end of a century, each in turn announcing the gradual annihilation which had taken place in the course of that century of some aspect of our identity as a people. "Four Bells," Yeats was to say, "four deep tragic notes in Irish history."

1. The first of the four bells tolled out over the land in the year 1607 when O'Neill and O'Donnell, the Princes of the North, sailed from Lough Swilley, leaving their lands to be confiscated by the English crown. Their ancestral place of inauguration, dating back to the fifth century A.D., had been desecrated after the dismal Christmas day defeat of the Irish at Kinsale in 1601 and no hope of freedom seemed to be left. Their departure, known in Irish history as "The Flight of the Earls," is generally taken as signalling the death of the Gaelic order.[22]

2. The second bell sounded in 1690 when the Protestant William of

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[22]O'Brien, <u>Concise History</u>, 61.

Orange defeated the Stuart Catholic monarch, in whom the Irish had
placed their trust, at the Battle of the Boyne. This time the principal
loss focussed on any hope in the foreseeable future of a relaxation of
the laws against the practice of the Catholic faith in Ireland. The
Protestant conquest was now complete. Henceforth the infamous Penal
Laws replaced the ancient Brehon Laws in an effort to eradicate native
religious and cultural values from the lives of the people. Commenting
on this penal code, O'Brien likens it to an apartheid system:

> Racist doctrines--including the doctrine of the natural inferiority
> of "the Celt"--did not become influential in Europe until a much
> later period. . . . Had the chronology of Conquest been different, a
> penal code based not on religion, but on a theory of preserving the
> purity of the "Anglo-Saxon race" from "Celtic" contagion, might
> perhaps have produced a more enduring conquest.[23]

3. There was a brief moment of hope in terms of cohesion among
the Irish when Protestant and Catholic buried their differences in
common cause against the English efforts to stymie Irish trade
development. This faint flicker of hope was momentarily fanned to a
flame by the example of the American War of Independence and the French
Revolution. The ruthless defeat of Theobald Wolfe Tone and his French
allies by the English at Killala Bay, and the subsequent prison death of
Tone himself in the fateful year of 1798, quenched that flame in no
uncertain terms. Tone, a Protestant, had captured and spread the spirit
of hope inspired in Ireland by the French Revolution. His untimely
death is identified by Yeats as the third doleful bell in the Irish
history of this period.

4. The fourth and final bell was sounded with the death of

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[23]Ibid., 78.

Charles Steward Parnell in Brighton prison in 1891. This time the chime
was so doleful as to be mistaken by many as the definitive death knell.
Mercifully, this was not so. Parnell's downfall was, in fact, to prove
to be the darkest hour before the dawn.

The Winds of Freedom

In the course of the century between Tone's death and that of
Parnell, hope had been rekindled for the Irish Catholic population under
the charismatic leadership of Daniel O'Connell. The first political
mass movement of the Irish people was brought into being under a leader
of immense energy and resources, Daniel O'Connell. Catholic
Emancipation had been granted in 1829, largely due to this man's ability
to consolidate the gains of previous decades.

There was a major setback when the great potato famine of "Black
'47" struck the land, sending the morale of the people plummeting. One
million of the population went to their graves and another million were
compelled to seek refuge, penniless and inarticulate in any but the
Irish language, on the American shores.

Hope ran high once more under inspired leaders such as Davitt
with his Land League and Parnell's political prowess and compelling
power of oratory. When this failed all seemed lost indeed.

It was now, in the hour of greatest darkness, that the miracle
happened! The native Celt rediscovered his/her greatest treasure! That
cultural inheritance which had been driven underground during the long
night of persecution, was hidden, not lost and now was the time to call
it forth. The love of sport, literature and learning which the Celt had
brought with him from his far off Indo-European home was not dead.

These gifts of nature and grace had been patiently nurtured by the fili, the hedge-school masters, and the story-tellers all through the centuries. The long apprenticeship in learning by heart which had its roots deep in the days or oral tradition had secretly but effectively stood the impoverished but educated Celt in good stead throughout those long centuries of persecution. When leadership was exercised in this sphere it found a ready echo in his heart.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Gaelic Literary Society, the Gaelic League and the Sinn Fein or Self-Reliant Movement were openly established. They nurtured the soul of the native Irish and kept their spirit alive. These activities were ignored by the English authorities who, either in their ignorance of or disdain for the true depth of the Irish culture, greatly underestimated its potential power in the lives of the people.

This oversight, the advent of World War I with its massive English involvement, and the active participation in Ireland's on-going struggle for freedom on the part of those American Famine emigrants who never forgot their homeland, combined to give Ireland her glorious opportunity. W. B. Yeats put it well in his 1923 address to the Swedish Academy:

> The modern literature of Ireland, and indeed all that stir of thought which prepared for the Anglo-Irish war, began when Parnell fell from power in 1891. A disillusioned and embittered Ireland turned from parliamentary politics; an event was conceived, and a race began, as I think, to be troubled by that event's long gestation.[24]

On Easter Monday, 1916, the gestation period was over and the

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[24]Ibid., 119.

Rising which was to lead to our twenty-six county freedom happened. It can scarcely be considered an accident that three of the signatories of the Proclamation which focussed that Rising were poets: Pádraic Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Mary Plunkett. Nor is it insignificant that both Protestant and Catholic found a place among their numbers! Perhaps the most challenging and enlightening symbol of all is the combination of the actual wording of the Act of Proclamation and the choice, by successors of the executed leaders and visionaries of the Rising, of a statue of Cú Chulainn which now stands in gigantic splendor in the General Post Office in Dublin, scene of the Rising itself. The Irish Celt has never lost sight of his/her true identity!

Observations

In terms of the sustained metaphor which I have used from the outset in observing our psychic development as a people, I believe this penultimate and third segment of our history to date can be termed the adult phase with some measure of accuracy.

Ethnically speaking, the Irish Celt had not only assimilated paganism into Christianity, he had also received a rich variety of new blood into his veins: Viking, Anglo-Norman, British, Scots, Welsh, Italian, Spanish, French, and American. This occurred in truly traumatic circumstances, i.e., attack and oppression culminating in the imposition of the heavy yoke of colonialism.

The result was a deep scarring of the corporate psyche:

- the native disposition to respect forces at work in our lives which are beyond our control developed a psychologically unhealthy element of fear arising from the experience of

Conclusion

The chief purpose I had in mind in writing this second chapter of my thesis was to establish beyond the shadow of a doubt the absolute relevance of multicultural sensitivity to the practice of Pastoral Counseling in contemporary Ireland.

The outline I have provided of the evolution of our people and culture is, unavoidably, inadequate. I trust, however, that it establishes my case sufficiently well to inspire sincere and committed practitioners either to revise their own knowledge of the culture, both theoretical and experiential, or to acquire that knowledge for the first time as the case may be. I do not believe that it is ethical to go into practice without it.

CHAPTER III

SOME RELEVANT ASPECTS OF IRISH CELTIC SPIRITUALITY

I have decided to devote a separate chapter of this thesis to
the question of spirituality in the life of the Irish Celt throughout
the centuries and I have done so for two reasons: first, spirituality,
it is agreed by virtually all if not absolutely all experts in the
field, is the single most consistent characteristic of the authentic
Celtic character, and second, spirituality is the single most important
factor in the theories and practices of Pastoral Counseling in the
United States today which I believe to be especially suited to that
ministry in contemporary Ireland. Once again, I am aware that in a
thesis of this type all I can do is select some of the more outstanding
aspects of our native spirituality as it has evolved over the millennia,
describe and situate them briefly and trust that a more in-depth study
will be pursued by such as share my basic premise regarding the
centrality of spirituality in the world of Pastoral Counseling. In the
course of this chapter I hope to deal first with some characteristics of
our spirituality which extend through the entire period, principally up
to the Anglo-Norman Invasion; then make some remarks about medieval
times and finally refer to some aspects of our spirituality in more
recent times.

In my present context I use the term spirituality initially in

its pagan context, which extends throughout the pre-Christian period of druidic influence, and later in the Christian context which has prevailed in our country from the fourth century, more or less, until the present day. In using the term "spirituality" I speak of that understanding which Celtic peoples had/have of their own essence and the essence of all that is as being imbued with a spiritual, non-material dimension which is the life principle of all. There was no dualism between matter and spirit in the world of the Celt; the one was known to be shot through with the other and essential to it. Anthony Duncan describes it well when he says:

> The spirituality of the Celt--"Celtic Christianity," call it what you will--calls us back to what we are. It is a recall to reality. It is not "religious"; life is so integrated, to such a degree are heaven and earth experienced in their unity, that there is nothing left to be "religious" about. There is after all no "religion" in heaven! The spirituality of the Celt is the living of life with the head in the heart.[1]

General Characteristics of Irish Celtic Spirituality

Druidic Spirituality and Transition to Christianity

In Chapter I I spoke of the central position occupied by the druid/druidess, the fili and the many persons who became associated with them with the passage of time (sometimes referred to as superfluous poets), in the Celtic vertical/horizontal societal structure. I spoke of the almost exclusive reliance on oral transmission whereby laws, history, family trees, and religious knowledge were all "learned by heart" and passed on from generation to generation. I likewise referred to the tribal nature of society and the significance of the Brehon Law

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[1]Anthony Duncan, The Elements of Celtic Christianity (Rockport, MA: Element, 1992), 101.

system in the lives of the people. All of these traits were to prove

immensely helpful in the transition from paganism to Christianity in

Ireland.

Despite the widespread belief that Christianity first came to

Ireland with St. Patrick in 432, it has long since been established that

it was alive and well on the island for at least a century before that

date. Mary Aileen Schmiel gets to the heart of the matter when she

says:

> In fact, the real reason for Patrick's mission was not to convert
> heathens but to try to bring the determinedly independent and
> antiauthoritarian Irish church under Rome's aegis. This was not to
> be accomplished for another four hundred years, however. Patrick
> and his helpers were if anything converted to the Celtic system
> rather than the other way around![2]

This peaceful assimilation of Christianity into the existing socio-

political structure in Ireland is intimately connected with the

similarities which existed between the laws and general ordering of

society which the Celts and the Hebrews shared. In both societies the

justice system was complex and all-pervasive, concerned with blood-ties,

debts, injuries, and the rights of the disadvantaged. In the Celtic

society while it was the role of the king or chieftain of the tuath--or

entire country, as the case may be--to preside formally over judicial

matters, the real mediator was the druid(ess)/poet-priest(ess) who sat

at the king's right hand. It was these latter who were the guardians of

all knowledge, both legal and mystical. A special branch of this

privileged class were the house-poets or _bardai_ who had responsibility

for composing verses of praise or satire, as the occasion demanded. All

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[2]Mary Aileen Schmiel, _Exploring Celtic Spiritual Legacies_ (N.p.:
n.p.), 169.

the vast store of learning of this highly respected "sacred" class was committed to memory, not because of an inability to write (the ogham script based on the Druidic tree-calendar was used to write on burial monuments), but rather because of the high regard in which the memory was held by the Celts and their fear of weakening it by dependence on artificial tools. Rhymes and symbolic constructions were used in mystical rites to invoke moods by incantation.

Mystical states were not the preserve of the druid/poets. Since the Celtic mind acknowledged no real dichotomy between this world and the next, the doors of perception were perpetually ajar and visionary or subliminal states were within reach for everyone. The special responsibility of the druid(ess) was to render the Shamanic-type service of living constantly on the threshold of the two worlds. And this they did.

Core concepts among the pre-Christian Celts were the diffusion of divine power through all nature and animal shape-shifting by both gods and humans. The pagan Celt had no understanding of a God who was wholly other nor of humans as something radically different from the rest of the natural world. Equality was absolute in the mind of the Celt, encompassing equally the realms of plant, animal, human and divine! A major consequence of this mind set was the inability to think in a linear manner; metaphor ruled supreme or, as the poet W. B. Yeats expressed it Imagination was all in all! Thus, in the Celtic tradition the letter and the spirit of the law never diverged, a fact which impacted the manner in which Christianity was assimilated into the pagan tradition.

Both Old and New Testament found a ready welcome in the heart of the Irish Celt. Their love for a good story and their understanding of law as an integral part of the faith went a long way towards empowering them to embrace the teachings of the Old Testament. Nor did the personality and manner of teaching of Jesus present any obstacle to the Celt. His claim to be Son of the Lord of the Universe found a ready echo in their hearts as did his identity as a carpenter who wandered through the countryside teaching all who had ears to hear. The strong resemblance to their own badic tradition by the use of symbolic parables was unmistakable. The virtues He extolled and exemplified were familiar in the Celtic world, e.g., truth in the heart, strength in the arm, eloquence in the tongue, was a triad which captured the core of their value system. These were constantly celebrated in the ancient poetic sagas. So too was the necessity of balance and harmony: between human and natural forces, between the head and the heart, and between masculine and feminine wisdom. It was easy to welcome the message of Jesus and the Messenger himself into the tribe!

In addition, there was the mystical side of their cultural consciousness to draw them to Jesus. Fertility rites dating back to pre-Celtic times involved death by tree-hanging while the kind and glorious sun god Lugh of the Long/Generous Hand had died and risen again! That union of the practical and mystical, so pivotal to the Celtic understanding of things, was perfectly exemplified in the person and life of Jesus. This led to that relatively painless and enduring assimilation of the Christian and Celtic traditions which was to

withstand centuries of cruel hardship and oppression and experience a
timely revitalization in this our day.

> The pagan deities, forces, and festivals found their way naturally
> into the Christian calendar, and the cult of Jesus brought a host of
> personalities who blended with native ones with whom they had
> something in common. Great Pan never died in Celtia.[3]

Conchobar, son of a druid and king of Ulster at the time of
Christ, is a central figure in the Celtic mythology which throws light
on the transition from the pagan to the Christian era. Drawing on
accounts of Scathach's training of Cuchullain in the Isle of Skye, Mary
Aileen Schmiel points to his reign as one characterized by wisdom and
sound judgment. He respected the link between fertility and justice,
took decisions only after due deliberation and recognized the pivotal
role of Jesus in the whole world's story when he came to know of the
Christ event. The mythology would have us believe that this great king
died of compassion on Good Friday when he saw a vision of the
Crucifixion at Calvary, or, alternatively that he allowed himself to
slip through to the other world when, in a vision, he foresaw the coming
of a wiser king than he: the risen Christ. Either way, mythology's
message is clear: the Celt offered no opposition to the reign of Christ
in Ireland.

It is with St. Patrick that we move from the realm of myth to
that of history or, rather, that we see myth and history embrace. And
their embrace is a reiteration of the former message: Christ is
welcome. The wonderful poetry known as Filiocht na Fiannaiochta paints
the picture of the meeting of two closely related value systems in the

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[3]Ibid., 171.

persons of St. Patrick and Fionn, son of Oisin. Fionn returns after

three hundred years on the enchanted Western Isles to find his Fenians

long since dead and St. Patrick's monastery situated where their fort

had been. Saint and pagan argue but soon find that their values are far

more similar than different and a lasting meeting point is acknowledged:

> Just by the strength of their hands
> The Fenians battles were fought
> With never a spoken lie,
> Never a lie in thought.
>
> Whatever your monks have called
> The law of the King of Grace,
> That was the Fenians law;
> His home is their dwelling place.[4]

There is one further somewhat lengthier quotation which I

believe elucidates something of the scope of the mutually enriching

experience which the Irish enjoyed in their passage from paganism to

Christianity. It comes in the form of a dialogue between the pagan

Ethne Alba and the Christian Patrick:

> The Questions of Ethne Alba:
> Where is your God and where is his dwelling?
> Is he ever-living, is he beautiful?
> Was his son fostered by many?
> Are his daughters dear and beautiful
> To the men of the world?
> Is he in heaven or on earth?
> In the sea, in the rivers, in the mountains,
> In the valleys?
>
> Speak to us tidings of him:
> How will he be seen.
> How is he loved, how is he found?
>
> Patrick's reply:
> Our God, God of all men,
> God of heaven and earth, seas and rivers,
> God of sun and moon, of all the stars,

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[4]Frank O'Connor, <u>Kings, Lords, and Commons</u>, trans. from the Irish
<u>The Praise of Fionn</u> (Dublin: Gill & McMillan Ltd., 1959), 29.

> God of high mountains and lowly valleys,
> God over heaven, and in heaven, and under heaven,
> He has a dwelling in heaven and earth and sea
> And in all things that are in them.
>
> He inspires all things, he quickens all things,
> He is over all things, he supports all things.
> . . . .
> He has a Son co-eternal with himself . . .
> And the Holy Spirit breathes in them;
> Not separate are Father and Son and Holy Spirit.[5]

In celebrating this smoothness of transition, of course, one must not forget the significance of Patrick's own ethnicity! He was himself a Briton, i.e., Celt and, despite his efforts to establish those Roman-style hierarchical structures which he was sent to put in place, and which he did, in fact, put in place, he readily understood the Irish preference for the simple monastic mode! Ireland was spared the mass massacre of the druids that England had had to endure. Not only that, but druid/file/bard was to continue to flourish in the society for several hundred years while Christianity took root in the nature culture.

The Monastic Influence

Whatever the route it took for its journey, we know for sure that the real home of that monastic spirituality which put down such deep roots in the Irish Christian soil was Egypt. Its familial, democratic, personal and decentralized character, so well suited to the tuath and its chieftain kings, was to have a lasting effect on our

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[5] James Carney, trans. <u>Medieval Irish Lyrics</u> (Dublin: Dolmen Press Ltd., 1967), 3-7.

native spirituality. Celtic monasteries were at their best in the

eighth and ninth centuries:

> More like settlements or small villages, many monasteries admitted
> both men and women, married lay persons as well as celibates, and a
> variety of support personnel. Many abbots were married, and
> leadership was often handed down through families for generations.[6]

In accordance with the Egyptian model the lifestyle was, for the

most part, cenobitical. Some opted for a more ascetical style and lived

in remote, isolated places, alone with God, a practice which came to be

known as green martyrdom. Still others followed what became known as

white martyrdom or a life of voluntary exile unto death out of love for

the homeless Christ. Possessing nothing themselves, they were free to

possess and be a part of all creation. In its most extreme form the

followers of this way would set themselves adrift at sea in rudderless

boats and go where the winds would take them.

Whatever the outward form, the monastic lifestyle upheld the

ideals of true poverty, of sharing, and of living in accordance with the

natural surroundings. There were strong resemblances to the way of life

among the holy ones of the earlier religion: skill in martial arts was

prized, animal companions were kept, and music, poetry and herb-lore

were studied. Not surprisingly, there was a profound mystical tendency

among individuals and within the monastic communities.

The Bible

Celtic spirituality during the peak monastic period, and,

indeed, during St. Patrick's own lifetime also, was firmly grounded in

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[6]Richard Woods, "The Spirituality of the Celtic Church,"
Spirituality Today 37, No. 3 (Fall, 1985): 243-55.

the scriptures. The great saint's own writings--the <u>Confession</u> and the

<u>Letter to Coroticus</u>--are heavily punctuated with references and

quotations. Liturgical celebration, private devotion and study were

scripturally based.

> The great Gospel Books, undisputed masterpieces of the world's
> greatest art, may have been used for liturgical celebrations,
> although missals were created for this purpose at a very early
> period. At any rate, the magnificently illuminated Gospels of
> Kells, Durrow, Lindisfarne and elsewhere not only represent the
> artistic genius of the Celtic Church at its pinnacle, but testify to
> the outstanding importance of the Word of God in their calligraphy,
> portraiture and abstract designs.[7]

The repeated reference in the <u>Leabhar Breac</u> to the scripture as

the body of Christ indicates the position it held in the lives of the

faithful. The Bible was intensely studied in the early monastic schools

as is testified by scholars such as James F. Kenny in his <u>The Sources</u>

<u>for the Early History of Ireland</u> (the chief subject of study in the

monastic schools of early Christian Ireland was the Bible), and Dr.

Bernhard Bischoff. The latter, in a major publication on commentaries

on the Bible, or portions of the Bible, which had been composed in

Ireland or in continental Europe under Irish influence between 650 and

800 A.D., listed some forty works in all, encompassing between them both

the Old and the New Testaments. Although we are told that the works are

not remarkable for their originality, they do constitute compelling

evidence of an intense study of the scriptures. Almost all these

earlier commentaries are anonymous in keeping with the those of the

monasteries. The ninth century brought some major anonymous works on

the Bible, e.g., a valuable corpus of Old Irish glosses on a Latin

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[7]Ibid.

commentary on the Psalter which is now held in Milan and a fragmentary

Old Irish treatise on the Psalter. It is from the ninth century too,

that two well known Irish scholars come, both of whom wrote on the

Bible: Sedulius Scotus and Scotus Eriugena. From the tenth and

eleventh centuries onward commentaries are rarer, due to the progressive

dissolution of the monastic way of life which resulted from the Norse

and Norman Invasions.

Martin McNamara points to the difficulty which exists in

ascertaining the extent to which this strong emphasis on sacred

scripture which characterized the early monastic life did, in fact,

influence the spirituality of the Irish people. There is abundant

evidence of its impact on the spirituality of the monks themselves,

e.g., speaking of St. Columbanus, and quoting a recent editor of his

writings (G. S. M. Walker), Martin McNamara illustrates the place of the

scriptures in the life and teachings of this great saint:

> the Bible was for St. Columbanus the source and norm of doctrine,
> and it is on this ground that he repeatedly asserted the orthodoxy
> of the Irish Church. Hence his claim that no one, not even the
> Pope, can possess a monopoly in the interpretation of the faith. In
> the saint's own words: "The unity of faith has produced in the
> whole world a unity of power and privilege, in such a wise that by
> it all men everywhere freedom should be given to the truth." A
> consensus of Christian opinion, based on an informed study of the
> scriptures, can be the only ultimate tribunal in doctrinal issues;
> and such a consensus, though invested with the authority of a
> General Council, can only interpret, and not add to, the teachings
> which the scriptures contain.[8]

Commenting on the extent of the influence of the Bible on the

lives of the faithful outside the confines of the monastery McNamara

points to the lack of reliable evidence and resorts to conjecture. It

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[8]Michael Maher and Martin McNamara, eds., Irish Spirituality
(Dublin: Ventas Publications, 1981), 43.

is, in his opinion, likely that the homilies at Mass brought the
faithful into contact with the scriptures; it is at least possible that
the eleventh-century homilies of the Leabhar Breac and of some other
extant manuscripts may have been used for this purpose. Similarly,
Penitentials which were in part designed for the laity, undoubtedly
brought them into contact with the word of God. In addition, since
reading and writing were learned through the Psalter one can assume a
widespread knowledge of this part of the scriptures. The influence of
the scriptures on the vernacular Irish literature is deemed to have been
negligible in pre-Viking Invasion times. In later centuries Apocrypha
of both the Old and New Testaments attracted the attention of writers in
the vernacular--the poets in particular! This may have arisen form the
fact that the Apocrypha were available in the vernacular while the Bible
was not--or perhaps it was occasioned by the greater appeal which the
vivid accounts contained in the Apocrypha exerted over the Celtic
creative imagination! Be that as it may, the fact remains that we are
uncertain with regard to the extent of the impact of the Bible on the
spirituality of the laity. Its use in the monasteries, especially from
the sixth to the ninth centuries, focused on liturgical celebration,
private devotion and study. The Pocket Gospels which could be taken on
journeys or on pilgrimage bear witness to the devotional dimension while
the extant commentaries testify to the exegesis.

The Culdee Reform Movement

Inevitably, the intensity of spiritual practice which
characterized life in the monasteries during the early centuries of
Christianity in Ireland waned with the passage of time. Equally to be

expected was the emergence of reform movements from within to curb such decline.

> Irish monasticism, intimately tied up with Irish tribal society, did not lack its own abuses and problems. An important native reform movement called the Ceili De (servants of God), which began in the eighth century did much to recall the monks to austerity of life and fervour of devotion.[9]

One such movement was the "Culdee" reform or, more accurately, the Ceili De movement associated with the ancient monastery at Tallaght and in particular with its founder, Mael Ruian. This reform movement dates from the eighth century and continued throughout the ninth century. It was characterized by great austerity of life among the anchorites who chose this way. Scripture study did not feature significantly in their way of life which had a strong ascetic tone and a mystical flavor also. They were nature lovers--we owe much of our early nature poetry to them--and hagiographers, but they distrusted learning for its own sake. They cultivated the use of the Irish language more than the earlier scholars and have sometimes been compared to the Qumran by virtue of their reference to themselves as the sons of life. Mael Ruian has been referred to as somewhat puritanical, even with regard to music--an unusual dimension of spirituality among the Celts. Despite the strictness of the Rule, however, genuine brotherly love was exhibited by regulations such as the admonition that none should fast beyond his capacity and that the guidance of the anamchara or soul friend could override fidelity to the Rule.

Anamchairdeas was deemed sacred and was extended to the laity

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[9]Pierre Riche, Spirituality in Celtic and Germanic Society (N.p.: n.p.), 171.

under certain circumstances. "Inner healing happens when we openly and honestly acknowledge to another person our concerns, grief, and spiritual diseases, and that God is very close to those who speak as friends do, heart to heart."[10]

Soul friendship was to have a lasting effect on Irish spirituality, an effect which I believe has the capacity to carry over into the realm of Pastoral Counseling in contemporary Ireland. It was in this context of soul friendship that private confession developed in the Irish Church and spread later throughout the entire Church of the West.

> the first aim of penance has always been the healing of the soul and it has been inspired by a principle of medicine in antiquity, the radical opposition of the remedy to the disease, contraria contrariis sanantur. By this maxim Finnian justified the imposition on a covetous cleric of the giving of abundant alms, while Columban reduced the chatterers to silence, and the glutton to a fast. . . . What had they in view? To restore the vital balance, spiritual health.[11]

The divine office, or opus Dei, found a central place in the native spirituality in the Ceili De context where it was pivotal to the entire life of the monks. It was seen as the great positive means of perfection and took priority in daily life. Some of the rituals which accompanied the recitation of the divine office are believed to have been adaptations from pre-Christian times.

Fasting which also characterized the lifestyle likewise had its roots in pre-Christian times and so, strictly speaking, cannot be seen

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[10]Edward C. Sellner, Wisdom of the Celtic Saints (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1993), 27.

[11]Daniel Rops, The Miracle of Ireland (Baltimore: Halcion Press, 1960), 120.

as an entirely new dimension of Celtic spirituality. Present-day
scholars are keen to point out that the fasting was not nearly as
excessive as it was previously thought to have been. The discipline was
in use among the monks and too much travel was frowned upon! The word
of God was most important, the four books of the Gospel being read at
means (a custom which survived among religious right up to the Second
Vatican Council in this twentieth century), and miracles being
attributed to Gospel blessing, "a certain Adamnan succeeded in calming
monastic troubles in far-off Clonmacnois by raising the gospel."[12]

Mass, Communion and the hearing of the sermon also formed an
integral part of the lifestyle under consideration here. Fasting,
stability and prayer would sum up the way of life most accurately in
O'Fiannachta's view. Stability would appear to be the novel ingredient
in the native spirituality as expressed in this threesome and associated
primarily, though not exclusively, with the monastic life. Although the
influence of the monastic tradition was to remain all-pervasive in the
Irish Church and no absolute separation can validly be made between the
spirituality of the laity and that of the monastery, I have focused
primarily on the latter in my treatment of Irish spirituality until now.
From here on I make no such distinction.

The Life of Prayer

One outstanding source of information on this topic in the Irish
context is Douglas Hyde's eighteenth-century collections of Religious
Songs of Connaught. Some commentators would place this collection side

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[12]Maher, Irish Spirituality, 30.

by side with Alexander Carmichael's famed <u>Carmina Gadelica</u>, collected in
the highlands and islands of Scotland in the nineteenth century. Both
collections lead us into what is perhaps the most authentically Celtic
prayer form, rooted deep in the pre-Christian tradition and greatly
enriched by that tradition form its inception into the culture. I speak
of those Invocations and Incantations which encompassed every aspect of
daily life, acknowledging the omnipresence of spirit in all things,
happenings and places. Noel Dermot O'Donoghue expresses the impact and
extent of such prayer in the life of the Celt very poignantly in the
following words:

> this attitude of total involvement with nature as a place of prayer
> and divine presence did not wait upon special occasions such as
> Easter Sunday; it was always there, not only in special events such
> as birth and death and marriage, in times of joy and catastrophe,
> but in all the routines of life; daily, weekly, monthly, yearly.
> . . . We find a hymn long or short for every occasion, and a whole
> sheaf of hymns and invocations from rising in the morning and lying
> down at night. These latter are a special feature of Celtic
> spirituality.[13]

Fire was a dominant symbol in these ritualistic incantatory
domestic prayers in which each act of the daily round is taken into a
domestic liturgy, linking heaven and earth. The day began with a
greeting to the rising sun/day and was clothed in simple but powerful
images of protection and purification, which are constant motifs in
these prayers. That quality of close relationship between the heavenly
presences and the world of nature so often referred to becomes
especially evident in the ritualistic prayers focused on the kindling of
the fire in the hearth at the start of each new day. Such prayers were

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[13]Noel Dermot O'Donoghue, <u>The Mountain Behind the Mountain</u>,
(Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, c. 1993), 18.

recited as the man or woman bent low over the dying embers and rebuilt a new fire for the new day, all the while opening the door to the angelic presences. Enemies of the human heart were named, fear being among the greatest of them. The whole day was placed in the holy presence of God as the power of love is sent forth to friend and foe and also from the lowliest thing that lives to the Name that is highest of all. Commenting on this latter inclusion Noel Dermot O'Donoghue suggests that the practice sets the Celt apart from all others by exceeding the demands of the gospel itself which encompasses friend and foe but stops short at that. Whatever one may think about that observation, none can deny that the expansion underlines very clearly the universality and integrated nature of the Celt's world view. Prayer envelops all, from the rising of the sun, to the milking of the cows, to the shearing of the sheep and lambs, to the sowing of the seed, to the weaving of the yarn, to the hatching of the eggs--nothing was beyond its scope, neither the great nor the small. Nor has this tradition died out completely in our land. One of my own earliest childhood memories is of returning home from school as a small girl and pouring out the news of the day to my mother who was bent over some food for the fowl or animals for which she cared every day. Having prattled on for some time I noticed that I was getting no response from her and I expressed my discontent; the response that this evoked will never leave my mind. My mother stood up to her full height, gave me her full and deeply-caring attention and then said: "I don't have much time to spend on my knees, Maura a chailín, so I say my prayers as I go about doing the jobs all day." The impact of this disclosure, has been profound for me throughout my entire

life, all the more so since I already knew that she neither started nor finished any day without going on her knees. The experience makes it very easy for me indeed to appreciate the all-pervasiveness of this dimension of our Celtic spirituality.

In addition to the incantatory prayers for private and family use referred to above there were the long litanies or loricae most probably designed for processional usage. With the passage of time many of these came to be regarded as magical in some sense, charms of some sort capable of warding off evil. Best known in this genre is, undoubtedly, the famous Deer's Cry or St. Patrick's Breastplate, which continues to be attributed to the saint by so many, despite the evidence that it comes from a later period. I am particularly attracted to Noel Dermot O'Donoghue's translation of this truly wonderful expression of our spirituality with its combination of druidic and Christian influences. Something of the sheer power of the poetry of the original is retained in this unique translation.

Devotion to Mary and the Saints

Although Ireland has few canonized saints in the Roman sense she teems with saints so designated vox populi and the devotion of her children to these revered persons is well documented. This devotion is clearly in evidence right up to the present day is the practice of pilgrimages to the holy wells, mountains, monastic sites and other places associated with them. In more recent times many of these sites fulfill the double function of place of pilgrimage and tourist attraction, a healthy combination in terms of returning to that holistic spirituality which was there from the beginning but lost some of its

vigor during the more recent centuries. We have Brigid of Kildare (druidess, goddess, abbess and saint all in one!), Ita of Limerick, Gobnait of Ballyvourney, Colmcille of Derry and Iona, Malachy of Armagh, Carthage of Lismore, Kevin of Glendalough and a whole host of others. These are the successors of the pre-Christian gods and goddesses whom the pagan Celts approached on a basis of equality and, as such, were intimately connected with every aspect of the daily lives of the people. The hagiographies dating from the sixth to the tenth centuries, and the martyrologies are a rich source of information on the life of the Celtic Church during this early period.

Mary has ever held a very special place in Irish spirituality. Despite the reservation of a name especially for her, Muire in place of Máire for all others who are called Mary, devotion to her is marked by that same familial intimacy and at-oneness with the rest of creation which characterizes the native spirituality in other areas. The following short prayer illustrates my point:

> A Mhuire na ngrás, a Mháthair Mhic Dé,
> Go gcuiridh tú ar mo leas mé;
> Go sabhailidh tú mé ar muir is ar tír,
> Go sabhailidh tú mé leic na bpian.
> Gárda, na nAingil ós mo chionn.
> Dia romham is dia liom.
>
> (O Mary of graces, O Mother of the Son of God; put me on
> the right path. Protect me on land and sea; protect me on
> my bed of pain. A band of angels before my face. God is
> before me and God is with me.)

One has only to drive through the Irish countryside today and see the multitude of Marian shrines to know that Mary has not lost her place in the hearts of the people. That place has had a long history.

Diarmuid O'Laoghaire points out some interesting evidence of

developmental stages in our Marian devotion. He notes the virtually

total absence of any reference to Mary in our pre-eighth-century

literature and the fact that there is a great deal from then on. This

great deal is a mature devotion from the very start which points to a

long existence prior to that period; he speaks of Mary as no isolated

goddess, but the holy and powerful Virgin and Mother of God and then

goes on to say:

> Thus she is depicted, too, in the representation of Virgin and Chile
> in the <u>Book of Kells</u> . . . certainly not romantic, but strong, and
> very similar to Eastern representations of her, e.g., the well-known
> painting of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.[14]

Poems to our Lady composed in the mid-eighth century by the

lyricist Blathmach witness to the warm affection coupled with reverence

in which the Mother of God was held: "I call on you with true words,

Mary, beautiful queen, that we may converse together to comfort your

heart."[15] O'Laoghaire proudly draws our attention to the fact that

such intimate tones are not found in addressing Mary in other European

countries for hundreds of years after the time of Blathmach.

We find that Mary had a central place in the prayer of the

Tallaght monks in the ninth century and note the warm welcome the

mainland European devotion to her received when it reached our shores

from the coming of the Normans and the many religious orders onwards.

True to form, these devotions were given an unmistakable Irish dress. A

few lines from Caoine na dTri Muire (The Lament of the Three Marys),

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[14]Diarmuid O'Laoghaire, <u>Ar bPaidreacha Duchais</u> (Baile Atha
Cliath: Foilseachain Abhair Spioradalta, 1990), 48.

[15]Ibid.

will say it all. (Bear in mind that every other line is followed by the
haunting refrain: Och! Ochón agus ochón ó:

> Do léim sí isteach is amach thar ghárda.
> Dia dhuit, a Mhic, nó an aithnid duit do mháthair?
> Bíodh agat an fhoighne agus gheobhaidh tú na grásta.
> A Linibh, is mór é t'ualach is leig cuid de ar do mháthair.
> Iompraíodh gach n-aon a chrosa féin agus iompródsa thar
>   ceann sliocht Adhaimh é.

(She sprang in and out through the guarding soldiers. Bless you, my
Son, do you not know your own mother? Have patience, mother, and
you will get all graces. O Child, it's a heavy burden, let your
mother part bear it. To each his own cross, for me that of Adam's
children.)[16]

From about 1200 to the eighteenth century the bardic poets--most
of them lay persons--sang to and of Mary with a genuine feeling which
carried a warmth of tone notably lacking in their poems of praise of
their patrons.

It was during the appalling sufferings of the penal times that
Irish devotion to Mary reached its peak; the following four lines speak
poignantly for themselves:

> Ave Maria, gratia plena,
> benedicta tu, Dominus tecum,
> ora pro nobis, a chara na heigne,
> nunc et semper is do-gheabhair eisteacht.

(Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed are you, the Lord is with you,
pray for us, O friend in time of need, now and ever, and you will be
listened to.)[17]

It is since these same Penal Days that the rosary has held its
exceptionally high place in Irish religious practice. No doubt this
reality is closely related to the fact that it had to take the place of

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[16]Ibid., 51, text and trans. from Carney, <u>Medieval Irish Lyrics</u>,
20-21.

[17]Ibid., 53.

the Mass during those centuries of oppression and was often said facing in the direction of wherever Mass would normally have been said. Right up to our own day it was the communal night prayer in all Catholic families throughout the land.

In our Irish tradition devotion to Mary was never separated from devotion to her Son.

Scholars and Theologians

A love of learning has characterized the Celt wherever his abode and the Irish Celt seems to have excelled here. This has left its mark on our native spirituality. Reference has already been made to the vast store of learning which the druids carried, mostly in their memories in accordance with the oral tradition of pre-Christian times. Later the monastic scribes and court scholars were to continue the traditional love of learning but the written word was to supplement and/or replace the oral one. These scholars not only copied the sacred scriptures, they also studied and commented upon them. They also studied grammar, rhetoric and the works of classical pagan poets, Virgil and Horace in particular. They copied and preserved the writings of the Latin Fathers--Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Cassian, Gregory and others. They also recorded the pre-Christian Celtic myths and sagas which they came to know through the oral versions in vogue in the bardic schools. "Thus they preserved for subsequent generations in the Book of Invasions, the Ulster Cycle, the Fenian Cycle and the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, the earliest of all non-classical European mythologies."[18]

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[18]Woods, Spirituality of the Celtic Church, 4.

When I think of Celtic theologians the principal one who comes to mind is Pelagius. There is some uncertainty about his homeland--was it Ireland or Britain? Or was he born in Britain of Irish parents? One thing is not in question and that is that he was a Celt. Another is that he was branded a heretic and yet another, that he was born in 354, the same year as Augustine of Hippo. Perhaps the most interesting fact in the present context is the contribution he has made to Celtic spirituality, despite Rome's manifest displeasure. When in the 390s he came to Rome and observed for himself the moral laxity among the Christians there he was appalled and he made his disapproval of what he considered the practice of double standards widely known. Pelagius clashed bitterly not only with Augustine but also with Jerome of Jerusalem. The clash with Jerome centered around no less an issue than the very nature of human existence, more precisely, the human capacity for sinlessness. Pelagius, for whom the body-soul dichotomy did not exist, believed and taught that part of God's original gift to humanity was the possibility for leading a totally virtuous life. Granted, this possibility had never been realized; it did exist, nonetheless. (This led to his clash with Augustine on the doctrine of grace.) Jerome was resolute that this capacity was denied the flesh itself. And so the clash remained. But it extended beyond this. Jerome's cunsure encompassed Pelagius' practice of associating with unclean types and establishing friendships with mere women.

Other doctrinal perspectives held by Pelagius which were finally to lead to his excommunication were his understanding of the place of the law in Christian spirituality--he was deemed legalistic--and his

teaching on the place of reason therein, which was termed rationalism.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to treat adequately of Pelagius. Suffice it to say that his spirit still finds a home in many a Celtic Christian heart while others concur with the age-old verdict that he is truly heretical. For my own part I believe James P. Mackey gets to the heart of the matter when he says of Pelagius' theology:

> the fascinating prospect it offers of a continuity of a certain Celtic vision of the ubiquity of God's gracious power in all our world, of the belonging together of nature and grace, of the total interpenetration of the spiritual and material worlds.[19]

Art and Craft

I have referred a number of times to the Celtic poetic spirit and to the place of poetic composition in the lives of the people. Its roots are buried deep in pagan times and its fruits continue in an unbroken line right to the present day. Until comparatively recent times this poetry was composed either in the vernacular or in Latin; more recently English has replaced the Latin but the Irish remains in an unbroken tradition. I have selected three brief stanzas from the Filiocht na Fiannaiachta, as a sort of token gesture to this form of artistic expression in our culture. The stanzas I choose present something of the struggle between pagan and Christian times and in the very arguments it puts forward for the superiority of the former, exemplifies the spiritual link which was forged between the two from the very beginning:

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[19]P. J. Mackey, An Introduction to Celtic Spirituality (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989).

Binn sin, a luin Doire an Chairn!
   ní chuala mé in áird sa bhith
ceól ba bhinne ná do cheól
   agus tú fá bhun do nid.

Aoincheól is binne fán mbith,
   mairg nach éisteann leis go fóill,
a mhic Calprainn na gclog mbinn,
   's go mbeartha arís ar do noin . . .

An tráth do mhair Fionn 's an Fhiann,
   dob ansa leo slibha ná cill;
ba binn leo-san fuighle lon,
   gotha na gclog leo níor bhinn.

(Beautiful--blackbird of Doire an Chairn!
   Nowhere on earth have I heard
a lovelier music than yours
   there as you guard your nest.
The world's loveliest song . . .
   A shame you won't listen a while,
Mac Calprainn of the sweet bells.
   You could still fit in your nones . . .

When Fionn and the Fianna lived
   they loved the hills, not hermit-cells.
Blackbird speech is what they loved
not the sound, unlovely, of your bells.[20]

In Christian times epigrammatical poems, often by anonymous scribes, often appear in the margins of gospels and other books. Poetic creativity flourished among the saints--St. Colmcille, for example, was renowned as a poet of some standing in addition to his gift of music.

The artistic talent of the Irish Celt found expression in many forms. One that cannot be forgotten is the capacity to create beauty in stone of which there is abundant evidence throughout the landscape to this present time with some of the creations pre-dating Christianity by many centuries. The great stone crosses of the Christian Era speak as

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[20]Thomas Kinsella and Sean O'Tuama, <u>An Duanaire, Poems of the Dispossessed</u> (Portlaoise: Dolmen Press in association with Bord na Gaeilge, 1985), 41-44.

eloquently today of the spirituality of their makers as they did when
they first adorned the countryside. One not to be missed is the
Monasterboice cross in County Louth, not far from the prehistoric stone
wonder of the world--Newgrange. There it stands, fully twelve or
fourteen feet tall with the great circle of creation and the cross of
redemption brought together into one whole. The vertical portion
elaborates on that central theme by presenting many individual scenes of
both creation and redemption and then, as if compelled to acknowledge
their source in the manner of present day copyright regulations, the
great stone artist(s), has/have carved Anthony of Egypt and Paul of
Thebes at the very top of this magnificent creation. These high crosses
are not just artistic masterpieces but true <u>summae theologicae</u> carved in
stone and intelligible equally to the scholar and the peasant. (One is
forced to contrast these public declarations of a people's allegiance to
Jesus and His gospel with the strange little miniature bog-oak crosses,
with their elongated vertical and truncated horizontal beams, which
supported the faith of the Irish in their wretched hiding places during
the worst rigors of the Penal Laws.)

Reference has already been made to calligraphy, illuminations,
and portraiture of the famous gospel books, to masterpieces of metal art
and to music. Suffice it here to say that all these artistic
expressions put us in touch in a rich variety of ways with the essence
of Irish Celtic spirituality.

Social Action

This deserves a word on its own as I believe that it presents a
complementary aspect of the spirituality we have been exploring in these

pages. In a certain sense it shows us spirituality in action. Social

justice was a core concern to the pagan and the Christian Celt alike:

> Celtic life in all its aspects, involvement in social life was as
> inescapable for the monks as it had been for the druids before them.
> This social dimension of Celtin spirituality was largely expressed
> in its devotion to pastoral care and spiritual development.[21]

The whole approach to social action is redolent of both the tribal and

the monastic life styles: justice and charity were the cornerstones of

the entire endeavor; distributive justice is especially in evidence with

social justice as its close ally. The place of women was remarkable--

they were not only equal to men but in some instances (e.g., Brigid and

Ita, anam charas to Brendan the navigator), they occupied a more exalted

position than them. Some women exercised ecclesial authority. Children

were truly valued and care was taken to ensure that the sick and the

orphan was denied neither their spiritual nor their material needs.

Preaching, sacramental administration and spiritual direction were

widely practiced. Kindness and hospitality constituted a fitting

ambience for all social action. (I have painted a picture of the

practice at its best, knowing as we all do, that the dark side was there

too; I know also that the bright side was bright enough to have our

island home known for centuries as the island of saints and scholars!)

Some Significant Changes in More Recent Times

I will not pretend to do justice to this evolutionary aspect of

our Celtic spirituality here but I think it important in the interests

of engaging the spiritual dimension in the practice of contemporary

Pastoral Counseling to point to some of the more outstanding changes. I

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[21]Woods, Spirituality of the Celtic Church, 5.

will review this change period in two segments, i.e., first, from the mid-seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, and then, from the nineteenth to the present time.

The first major consideration is the effect which the centuries of grinding poverty had on the lives of the native people and their spirituality.

> Our spiritual tradition was preserved, purified and enriched for us by people who were not merely poor, but poor for Christ's sake. They suffered poverty and injustice because they were faithful to their religion. These facts inevitable colour their spirituality and account for particular emphases.[22]

Deprived of education in their own language for centuries, the people inevitably turned in on themselves and this too colored their spirituality.

During these centuries of oppression we remained a rural people. Poverty intensified the natural tendency to good neighborliness and to the strengthening of a communitarian spirit in our midst.

Hope was kept alive in the hearts of the native Irish through an intense eucharistic devotion; the Mass was the center of all and when it too was denied, the rosary took its place.

Corporal austerity, always a characteristic of our spirituality was nurtured of necessity during our dark days and remains a significant element of our spirituality. An outstanding public witness to this dimension is the practice of pilgrimage, especially to Lough Derg with its extreme austerity and the challenging climb up the slopes of Cruach Phadraic.

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[22]Maher, Irish Spirituality, 123

The constant acute experience in daily life during these centuries gave the people a deep understanding and feeling for the passion of Jesus and this, too, characterizes our spirituality today.

Every century has brought positive comment on the quality of hospitality which is found among our people. This too has been honed by suffering as is evident from the practice of extending hospitality to all without distinction--and that includes English and Protestant.

Despite the omnipresent misery and deprivation the land was full of music and gaiety. And so it remains! Visitors constantly comment on the openness and friendliness of our people, that muintearas which we so dearly cherish.

All in all, our adversity deepened the faith that was within us so that O'Laoghaire could say:

> That intimacy with God, his Mother, and one another, based on reverence, is surely the outstanding spiritual and human characteristic of the Irish people. It would be terrible, indeed, .
> to see it replaced by a terrible and (inevitably) inhuman materialism.[23]

Now let me look to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the changes they have known.

Catholic Emancipation in 1829 should have been a glorious experience for the members of that Church, but the glory was dimmed by the effect of the attacks on the popular devotions on the part of the Reformation and the Puritans during the centuries immediately preceding O'Connell's triumph.

The Counter-Reformation was to add its voice to this distrust of popular devotion as ecclesial control tightened at once from Rome and at

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[23]Ibid., 133.

home. In the very year in which emancipation was achieved, for example, the bishops banned all pilgrimages to holy wells, brought abuses at wakes under supervision and made efforts to put an end to the cherished station Mass.

The gap left in the devotional lives of the people by these measures was to be filled by what came to be known as Counter-Reformation spirituality. The native piety was being traded for an import product! It was at this time that a split between rural and urban piety developed, with the printed prayer book in English finding a much more ready welcome in the towns.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart and the parish mission were introduced from mainland Europe and both put down incredibly deep roots in our soil.

This too, was the century for a mania of church building throughout the length and breadth of the land.

It was also the time when the penny catechism was to replace all existing ones in an effort on the part of the bishops to achieve greater uniformity of belief among the faithful.

The Marian devotion already deeply embedded in the tradition was to receive a shot in the arm, so to speak, from the apparitions at Lourdes and Knock.

There was a phenomenal resurgence of the missionary spirit which had flourished in the early centuries of Christianity and a dramatic increase in the number of priestly and religious vocations.

Education was served by the native religious orders.

These many developments in the native spirituality contain a mix

of gain and loss; they certainly added a new flavor to the ancient tradition.

Observations

As I said at the outset, the real purpose of my devoting a special chapter to a consideration of our Celtic spirituality is to open up this pivotal dimension of the psyche, nay, of the total Irish person for the respectful and careful consideration of Pastoral Counselors.

For too long psychology has attempted to function in its service of healing the wounded psyche and/or promoting personal growth in that area with aligning itself with the spirituality of the client. For the Pastoral Counselor, connectedness to a Higher Power is the single most potent dimension of the healing/growth process. A knowledge of the basic spirituality of a people is an excellent foundation for an atunement to the spiritual life (overt or covert as the case may be), of an individual client, of a couple, a family or group of any kind who presents for service.

CHAPTER IV

PASTORAL COUNSELING: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

IN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Scope

The scope of this chapter, as of the preceding ones, is vast.
As the title suggests the material covered in this chapter falls into
two basic units: a historical perspective and an American-based
experiential perspective.   The first of these, the historical
perspective, is presented in two segments: the Pastoral Care tradition
in the Christian churches from the beginning of the Christian Era and
then the evolution of Pastoral Counseling in North America.   I also
address the issue of terminology--Pastoral Care/Pastoral Counseling in
particular.   The second unit of this chapter, the American-based
experiential perspective, has three segments: an overview of
therapeutic models (Brinkman et al.), a review of counseling models
(Clinebell), and futuristic counseling models (An Ecological-Systems
Model and a Psychosystems Model).

Terminology

I have found the literature quite varied with regard to
terminology.   While many excellent definitions of Pastoral Counseling
are to be found--with all agreed on the necessity for both a theological
and a psychological component--there would appear to be a wide

divergence of views as to what, if anything, constitutes a

reliable/desirable boundary between Pastoral Care and Pastoral

Counseling. And that is not all. The boundaries between these two

disciplines on the one hand and spiritual

direction/mentorship/anamcharas and modern psychotherapies on the other

are presented by some sources as quite rigid, by others as flexible and

by yet another group as so porous as to be removable altogether. There

is a further related issue to be addressed: What, if any, is the nature

of the boundary between the role of the lay/unordained practitioner in

the field and that or ordained ministers? There is no consensus in the

contemporary American scene around an answer to questions such as these

and that is, I believe, a wholesome state of affairs. We are living in

an age of extensive transition on all fronts--locally and globally.

Only a very myopic vision could dare present a unanimous solution to the

complex question of ministry to/among persons living through such

universal and far-reaching change in all aspects of life. It is not

surprising that the universal confusion of our day is reflected in

unclarity with regard to the nature, purpose, and function of Pastoral

Care/Counseling. The response is essentially a healthy one, namely a

willingness to experiment with new methods and modes and techniques. A

significant element in the general confusion is the widespread religious

uncertainty which leads some to abandon the search, others to resort to

fundamentalism and still others to return to roots in ancient tradition

and practice. This wide panorama of response is a very appropriate way

of being during a period of radical transition such as we experience

today. In the midst of the confusion sign posts are identified, some of

which seem more likely, in my opinion, than others to point in the

direction of growth, freedom, wholeness and harmony in a context of

pluriformity. And there are some which would appear more suited than

others to the Irish context which is, after all, the focus of this

search.

Historical Perspective

Pastoral Care Tradition in the Christian Churches
from the Beginning

The historic roots of Pastoral Care in the Christian churches,

as I trace them here are confined to Hellenistic, Judeo-Christian, West

European and North American sources. I rely for the most part on the

framework provided by William A. Clebsh and Charles R. Jaekle in their

book Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, for the framework I use in

my developmental overview. While I find that these authors provide a

helpful map of the territory I have considerable difficulty with their

strong preference for a clear-cut separation between the role of the

pastor and that of his lay colleague in the ministry of soul care. My

personal preference is for the fusion of the two which is put forward by

people like Moore, Hillman, Clinebell and Graham. Clericalism, both

before and since the Reformation, would appear to have promoted the

split, the healing of which is called for by many today. In the

introduction to his classic Care of the Soul, Thomas Moore opts clearly

for a return to the ancient tradition.

> What I am going to present in this book, then, is a program for
> bringing soul back into life. This is not a new idea. I am simply
> developing a very old idea in a way I hope will be intelligible and
> applicable to us in this particular crucial period in history. The
> idea of a soul-centered world goes back to the earliest days of our
> culture. It has been sketched out in every period of our history,

in the writings of Plato, in the experiments of Renaissance
theologians, in the letters and literature of the Romantic poets,
and finally in Freud, who gave us a glimpse of a psychic underworld
full of memory, fantasy, and emotion. Jung made explicit what was
embryonic in Freud, speaking forthrightly for soul and reminding us
that we have so much to learn about it from our forebears. Most
recently James Hillman, my mentor and colleague, and others in his
circle--Robert Sardello, Rafael Lopez-Pedraza, Patricia Berry, and
Alfred Ziegler, for example--have presented a new approach to
psychology that is mindful of this history and explicitly follows
Ficino's advice to put soul at the very center of our lives.[1]

This is the sign post which I find most attractive and hope to

follow. First I will make my journey through the centuries guided by

Clebsh and Jaekle. In presenting an eight-epoch evolution of the

history of pastoral care Clebsh and Jaekle identify four basic elements

one or other of which predominated at any given time according as the

societal context required. The four elements are ones which continue to

have relevance today, namely: sustaining, healing, guiding and

reconciling.

Sustaining

Sustaining was the function which predominated in the art of

Pastoral Care in the early centuries of the Christian Era, during the

age of Enlightenment and again in our own day. It revolves around four

elements: (1) preservation of or "holding the line against other

threats or further loss or excessive retreat"; (2) consolation where

timing is of the essence as is evident from a letter from John

Chrysostom to a young widow in which he says that he had abstained from

writing when her sorrow was at its height so that she could have her

fill of mourning, for only then could she benefit from his consolation;

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[1]Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul (New York: Harper Perennial,
1994), xiv.

(3) consolidation, whereby suffering is put into perspective within the total context of life and the person is supported in gathering her/himself together again; and (4) redemption--an effort not only to recover the equilibrium the sufferer enjoyed prior to the crisis, but also to be open to the possibility of spiritual growth as a result of the suffering endured.

Guiding

This function was the one most frequently used from the time when Constantine first made the Christian faith the religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century right up to the late twelfth century. It had a variety of nuances ranging from advice-giving and active instruction in the Christian faith--especially during the Dark Ages--to the service of listening, much as it is practiced in present-day psychotherapy. This active listening is described by Clebsh and Jaekle as aiming towards clarification:

> the counselee unburdens himself by ventilating his inner pressures
> . . . [the pastor] reflects back to the troubled person the inner
> meaning of what he is saying, in order that he may hear clearly his
> inner thoughts when they are hidden from him, or confused, or
> equivocal.[2]

Healing

Healing was the function which took precedence over the other three during Medieval times and continued to be significant during the subsequent period of renewal and reform, though it took second place to reconciling at that time. A variety of instruments was used in healing with the sacramental system at the core. Anointing, as part and

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[2]Clebsh and Jaekle, Pastoral Care, 53-54.

independently of the sacraments, the use of relics, exorcism, magico-medicine and the ministry of charismatic healers, all had their place. Nor has this tradition died, as is clear to all who are in touch with the prevalence of faith healing in the world of today.

Reconciling

The fourth function, reconciling, became particularly relevant during the period of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the history of Christianity. "In its pastoral connotation the 'ministry of reconciliation' means helping alienated persons to establish or renew proper and fruitful relationships with God and neighbour."[3] Reconciliation was by no means new in the history of Pastoral Care. It was there from the very beginning with different emphases emerging from one stage of its development to another. Forgiveness and discipline would appear to have been two constraints. Tertullian identifies four elements of pastoral reconciliation: preparation, confession, penance and reconciliation. In the early centuries of the Christian Era the emphasis was on confession and the context was public, i.e., within the Christian community. The Irish monks were responsible for shifting the focus to private confession, a practice which spread throughout Christendom from the fifth to the twelfth centuries. In this context, the center of therapeutic power shifted to penance, with the various books of Penitentials as guide. In the thirteenth century absolution became the focus in the sacramental context. The Reformation was to see conflicting views among Protestant and Catholic pastors with regard to

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[3]Ibid., 56.

reconciliation with the Catholics holding on to the former mode. Clebsh and Jaekle believe that reconciliation has a major role to play in Pastoral Care in this present age of transition. Personally, I believe we are moving into an era of inter-faith dialogue with reconciliation as both fruit and predisposition.

Throughout the ages pastoral psychologies were built up in the context of the prevailing academic psychologies. These psychologies always found their way into the lives of the ordinary people just as they do today and so, pastors found as they still do, that problems were brought to them "dressed in the garb of contemporary psychological understanding of personhood or soul." While pastors did not themselves formulate the psychological principles, it was--and still is--important to be conversant with them in planning and executing their strategies for sustaining, guiding, healing and reconciling their flock.

One could speak of two major shifts from the early Christian times to our own day in terms of psychological emphases and within these two anything from four to eight significant nuances can be identified. The basis for the twofold division is the shift from a period when the immortality of the soul was not and then was, questioned. This change of perspective to a questioning of the soul's immortality came with the Enlightenment of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and its impact is strong, though waning, at the present time. With that major reality established I will briefly move through the other nuances as they developed, beginning with what Clebsh and Jaekle term the era of the Stoic Personality. This covers the first three centuries of the

Christian Era with its impact continuing to underpin other developments right up to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

> The pagan stoic personhood had steeled itself to do what could be done in matters over which humans had some control, and had left everything else to fortune or fate. The profoundly (if only implicitly) Christianized Roman personality . . . learned the transitoriness of all things under our control and lived with this ambiguity by drawing hope from faith in a providential deity who would bring to fruition everything beyond our control.[4]

The Christian movement came to terms with the Hellenistic and Roman cultures. The academic psychology of the stoics became the intellectual framework for pastoral psychology. Gnosticism saw the human soul as fettered by its encasement in historic time and materiality. People were encouraged to struggle against such "principalities and powers" as ruled over the world so that the spirit might be freed to deal constructively with its woes. Sustaining became the chief mode of Pastoral Care, particularly during the first century and a half when the end times were thought to be imminent. When the oppression of Christianity struck from 180 A.D. until the early fourth century, sustaining gave place to reconciling. The strong emphasis on sin, which has dogged the Christian approach to Pastoral Care all too consistently throughout the centuries, became established during this period. "Pastors laboured hard to codify major sins and their penalties."[5]

Soon the social context was to change radically and with it the focus of Pastoral Care. When Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire it became the unifier of society. The emphasis was

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[4]Ibid., vi.

[5]Ibid., 13.

laid on guiding people to behave in accordance with the norms of a new

Christian culture. This, coupled with the codification of sin which had

already begun, brought a rigidity to the gospel of Jesus which its

founder did not share. The soul-care milieu was indeed changed and

legalism was its tone color. The formulation of theoretical psychology

was now in the hands of the Christian church where it would remain for

more than a millennium. Guiding became the Pastoral Care emphasis with

a strong inductive bias during those centuries when Rome undertook the

Christianization of the Teutonic people of the North. Augustine of

Hippo (354-430) formulated a Neo-Platonic-Voluntaristic psychology,

tinged with Stoicism. This psychology replaced the predominantly Stoic

one of the earlier times and has continued to exert its influence within

the Christian churches right up to the present day: "The Latin

Christian form of personhood turned human sinfulness into a platform

from which to levitate the soul to the purifying love of God."[6]

Benedictine monasticism evolved side by side with the way of life of the

Desert Fathers and Mothers but the former was to have the more dominant

influence. A distinction developed between the educated or elite

Christians, the monks, who were guided by Benedict of Nursia's famous

"Rule" for western monks. Some sense of the divide between the monks

and the laity can be gleaned from the fact that the monks were expected

to aspire to all of Benedict's twelve degrees of humility while the

first three were deemed a sufficient challenge for the general run of

the faithful. When a Benedictine monk became Pope (Gregory the Great,

590), he promulgated his treatise "Pastoral Care" among the secular

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[6]Ibid., vi.

clergy. It served its purposes well at a time of transition and was later supplemented by the Roman Penitentials.

The teutonic peoples of Northern Europe had presented their problems to pastors as demon-possession. The sacramental system was devised to respond to this configuration of reality. Gradually an intricate system of devils, witches, spirits and angels was developed. It was during this period that a comprehensive pastoral psychology was built up based on the cardinal sins and the chief virtues. The struggle of the human soul was seen to be, at root, "a contest between temptations to pride and elicitations of humility." This thinking was to dominate the intellectual formulations of the Christian churches' Pastoral Care for more than a millennium. It was to nurture flights to mystical heights--the Rhineland Mystics, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross among others--and to spawn the shadow side of witch-murder and the atrocities of the Inquisition. The gospel parable of the wheat and the darnel was applicable to these centuries of our history no less than to previous and subsequent ones. Throughout this period the spread of the gospel of Jesus was inextricably linked with the transmission and interpretation of Roman culture which, in turn, impacted the formulation and practice of Pastoral Care:

> The early medieval pastor's kit was amply furnished for all his
> various functions, but everywhere and always he sought to guide
> troubled persons into viewing their perplexities as the church
> viewed them, and into accepting the answers and remedies that the
> church proffered.[7]

The full flowering of medieval Christendom in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries was to see a rediscovery of

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[7]Ibid., 23.

Aristotle's philosophy in the writings of Thomas Aquinas and for a time Augustinian Neo-Platonic and Thomistic Neo-Aristotelian formulations were to vie with each other in the realms of academia. This was the age of urbanization. The rising middle class--the money-using artisan bourgeoisie were presenting a new set of problems articulated in a new language. The configuration of parish was radically changed. New approaches were clearly called for to meet these new needs. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 sought to standardize the approach to Pastoral Care with measures such as the elimination of the Penitentials and the establishment of the sacramental system. Describing Pastoral Care at this time Clebsh and Jaekle speak of "The codification of pastoral care around a well-defined sacramental system, designed to heal all maladies which beset any segment of the common life."[8] This is the age which can boast of the greatest religious classic of all times--Dante's _Divina Commedia_ with its profound, subtle, poetic and refined psychological insights which have stood the test of time. In this masterpiece of creative art, Dante "conceived the culminating human endeavour as an arduous but wonderful achievement of entire integrity of Body, soul, and mind with God and his universe."[9]

By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries renewal and reform were in the air. A rich variety of interpretations and expressions of the pastoral function of reconciling were produced by the Reformation movement both in Protestantism and Catholicism--witness Luther, Ignatius of Loyola, and John Calvin: "The variety of expressions of the

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[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., 26.

reconciling function that the Reformation evoked demanded that pastors understand and be involved with the common life of ordinary men and women."[10]

Protestantism responded by encouraging a married clergy who took full social and economic responsibilities as householders. The Catholic response focused on (1) revising the education of the clergy and (2) accepting the Jesuit's social involvement as more normative than the monastic withdrawal from society. Both Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies were to be challenged and overthrown by the humanism of Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540). Individualism was to make its appearance and Ignatius of Loyola would take up the challenge with his Spiritual Exercises as a guide to pastoral care. The "faculty of psychology" was established and with it the naming of the four distinct psychological functions: (1) sense, (2) imagination, (3) passion, and (4) reason. Heretofore psychology focused on the essential nature of the soul; from now on the emphasis in psychological circles would be on "the soul's dynamic function and characteristics." The Renaissance's close alliance between psychology and religion was soon to give way to a new understanding of personhood--the Enlightenment Personality with the emphasis on "identifying the special faculties of each individual person."

The Enlightenment

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century understandings of life and the world did not necessarily rely on any reference to God and religion.

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[10]Ibid., 27.

Christianity accommodated itself to the Enlightenment by concentrating

on:

1. the immortality of the soul as the chief interest of religion

    and

2. the achievement of personal morality as the chief value of

    religion.

The immortality of the soul was questioned in the academic psychological

formulations of the day and, as ever, this soon spread into popular

psychological understanding and jargon. The Christian church, both

Protestant and Catholic, reacted; both held stubbornly to the older

forms of Christian doctrines and a decisive split emerged between the

world of psychology and religion. Until now there had been an implicit

agreement that religion had the deepest insight into and held ultimate

control over matters dealing with the soul. The Enlightenment was to

change all that. Theoretical psychology was now largely in the hands of

the laity with Pastoral Care running along parallel lines. Sustaining

was its chief function once more. The consistency with which women were

virtually eliminated from official ecclesiastical Pastoral Care

throughout the entire period of its development will stand forever to

proclaim the patriarchal blindness of the thought patterns of these

millennia. This feature of official Pastoral Care, in the Catholic

church in particular, continues to be with us, despite the influence of

feminist and liberation theologians. But there are signs of hope.

The fourth and final designation of personhood--the one which

brings us into the twentieth century comes with what is termed the Post-

Christian Era. This model has been called "modern personhood," and has

been described as: "self-starting, self-examining, capable of living

serially in many dimensions and moods and attitudes, genuinely

'polypolitan' . . . instances of personhood that hurt and hope in ways

as yet hardly described."[11]

In speaking of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Clebsh and

Jaekle point out that modern psychological theories have proliferated

with "various and sometimes contradictory schools," all of which have

shared the assumptions advanced by such philosophers as Kant, Hegel,

Feuerbach and Nietzche. A central concept among this group and their

followers is that "the notion of the soul's immortality is itself a

psychological phenomenon not to be taken as metaphysical truth."[12]

The pluralism of modern Christianity has brought with it "an array of

pastoral work . . . that educes values and norms from personal

convictions and value systems."[13]

Pluriformity of philosophical and psychological theory has been

stubbornly resisted since the Enlightenment by Christian thinking, not

primarily because it is seen as inimical to Pastoral Care but because it

attacks the traditional alliance between Christian doctrine, especially

with regard to the soul's immortality, and the pre-Enlightenment

relative uniformity of thought. But pluriformity has come to stay and

with it, the lay voice in the world of Pastoral Care. As I move to look

at the American experience I realize we must open up, not only to the

mix of lay and cleric in the field, but also to the impact of that

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[11]Ibid., vii.

[12]Ibid., 77.

[13]Ibid., 14.

variety of philosophical and psychological influences which range from
Christian to atheistic with all the multiple nuances which stretch
between the two.

My lead into the American experience has to be a recognition of
two giants in the European field, Sigmund Freud and Carl G. Jung, the
founding fathers of the psychoanalytical school and depth psychology
which have respectively exerted such influence on the world of soul-care
since they began their work in Vienna during the second half of the
nineteenth century. With them, and most especially with Jung came the
strong emphasis on the unconscious with the considerable implications
that that continues to have in the realm of the care for souls.

The American Story of Pastoral Counseling

The foregoing is the general context within which the American
experience of Pastoral Counseling developed. I present this outline in
a manner which leads up to the Loyola Pastoral Counseling training
program since it is from here that I make my own choice of approach to
the practice of Pastoral Counseling in the Irish context.

Monsignor E. Pace established the first psychology lab at the
Catholic University of America in 1891. In 1902 William James and
contemporaries initiated a new field of inquiry called the psychology of
religion. This was an intellectual pursuit, not praxis, and became part
of many theological curricula, particularly in liberal Protestant
seminaries. The psychological notions of health and disease began to
question the strictly theological meanings of such terms as sin and
salvation.

In 1909 G. Stanley Hall invited Freud and Jung to lecture in the

United States. The lectures initiated a wave of literature that had a profound impact on both medical and theological education. Of particular note was the impact of the "radical" notion of the unconscious. These events were most significant in initiating a dialogue between science and religion. The academic training of clergy gradually began to include some courses in psychology.

Around the same time two historical movements began, both attempting to bring together medicine and religion for the purpose of healing the mind and the body. The underlying conviction on the part of the leaders of these movements was that Christ heals.

In 1904 Elwood Worcester, Rector of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Boston, and some New England physicians began a clinic for spiritual healing. The movement was characterized by enlightened and sophisticated notions of healing. By 1940 however, the movement was dead, due to the failure to train ministers and Worcester's own inability to grow and change at a rate which could keep pace with the rapid developments in psychiatry. The result was that the fragile relationship between clergy and doctors broke down.

A seed has been sown, however, and was already beginning to bear fruit elsewhere. Physicians W. C. Keller and R. C. Cabot, and minister Anton Boisen were soon to develop the C.P.E. movement which is vibrant today. The movement was born of a conviction that clergy in training would best learn how to minister through being involved in the lives of suffering people, people experiencing crisis. Classical theological studies needed to be grounded in experience in the real world of human crisis.

The physicians worked toward the goals of having clergy become "social engineers" creating a new and different world (Keller) and achieving professional competence in ministry, i.e., ministers as special counselors (Cobot). Boisen's goal was not so much aimed at the training of ministers but at facilitating and encouraging research in the psychology of religion. His focus was primarily on understanding theory and grappling with the phenomenological aspects of experience. This emphasis had such clear implications for praxis that the focus there quickly evolved to just that. Clinical Training for Theology Students developed and by 1940, two thousand seminary students had training and thirty centers for training had been established.

It was thus that the 1940s registered a marked interest in Pastoral Counseling as a specialized ministry in the Christian churches. The American Catholic Psychological Association was founded in 1948 for the purpose of studying the human person from a thoroughly holistic point of view. This gave the impetus to an unprecedented wave of activity by psychologists at Roman Catholic institutions, throughout the 1950s. The publication of Fr. T. V. Moore's The Driving Forces of Human Nature [1950][14] and Charles Curran's Counseling in Catholic Life and Education [1952][15] did much to disseminate the new ideas, with Loyola University making its voice heard through the latter. Other universities were likewise involved. In 1954 St. John's University established the Institute for Mental Health with its stated aim of bringing psychiatrists, psychologists, and clergy together in an ongoing

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[14]Paper handout from "Ethics" class at Loyola.

[15]Paper handout from "Ethics" class at Loyola.

dialogue. Fordham University was to follow in 1955. Once again the stated aim was "to assist clergy in understanding emotional problems encountered in ministry and to formulate a better understanding of the relationship between clergy and psychotherapists."[16]

In terms of the universal Catholic Church's stance on the coming together of psychology and religion a major landmark was Pius XII's address to the Thirteenth Congress of International Associations of Applied Psychology in 1958. This address represented the highest level of affirmation for Roman Catholic Psychologists who had just emerged from decades of controversy regarding the integration of psychology and theology. It was followed in America by the institution of the first degree program in Pastoral Counseling at a Catholic educational institution, at Iona College in 1963. That same year saw the first conference in New York on Pastoral Counseling with leaders from the C.P.E. movement and seminary professors participating.

In the very next year, 1964, the first A.A.P.C. conference was held in the States. In 1975 the American Catholic Psychological Association was revamped and a group was formed comprising psychologists interested in religious issues. This group won the recognition as Division 36 of A.P.A. A further major development was Loyola College, Maryland's initiation of its A.A.P.C. accredited degree program for clergy, vowed religious, and lay ministers in 1975. Loyola University, Chicago, followed suit with the M.A.P.C. program at the Institute of

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[16]Paper handout from "Ethics" class at Loyola.

Pastoral Studies in 1985 and the Graduate Programs in Pastoral
Counseling in 1989.

As I know from personal experience this program represents the
integration of theology and psychology, lay and cleric, female and male,
theoretical and practical and all in a truly multicultural milieu. The
program not only provides an excellent foundational training in a wide
range of theories impacting the field but also opens the door to an on-
going professional development which the broader Chicago context is well
fitted to deliver. For me, it has disclosed possibilities for
approaching the practice of Pastoral Counseling in my native Irish
setting. I will now outline some of the options which are available in
the American Pastoral Counseling world today.

<div align="center">American-Based Experiential Perspective</div>

Once again I dare to dip my toes in the narrow on-shore waters
of a vast sea! This time I will attempt to review what seems to me to
be some of the more relevant counseling theories and practices here in
the United States at the present time. This is a daunting task indeed
in view of the proliferation of both theories and practice. It is
further complicated by the difference of opinion which exists with
regard to whether Pastoral Care, in the traditional Christian church
understanding of that ministry, should be considered to belong under the
title of Pastoral Counseling and vice versa; when that is resolved, the
question remains: where do the boundaries lie between Pastoral Care/
Counseling and spiritual direction/mentoring on the one hand and
psychotherapy on the other? Clearly we are dealing with closely related
disciplines here, all focused on personal growth, healing and wholeness,

with the explicit engagement of the spiritual dimension ranging from maximal to minimal attention according to the particular discipline in question. This being the context, I will first set out my personal frame of reference and then present some theoretical and practical models which I believe relevant to my purposes.

Towards a Definition

I have decided to use the terms Pastoral Care and Pastoral Counseling interchangeably as that is an understanding which is readily transferable to my home context. In coming up with a working definition of these terms I have relied chiefly on two sources: Howard Clinebell's Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling[17] and Wicks and Parson's Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling. In a sense, the latter, being a compendium of wide-ranging expressions on the topic, includes and extends the former, and so it has become my primary source. What has become clear to me is that there are three basic elements in the understanding of Pastoral Counseling in America today. They are as follows:

1. Technical proficiency in the practice of counseling. This gives scope to choose from a wide variety of theoretical and practical models with the possibility of opting for any one of them or combining a number of them in an eclectic style of operating. The models from which the counselor chooses are shared with other helping professions such as psychotherapy, clinical psychology, social science, family therapy, and others.

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[17]Howard Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984).

2. The ability to recognize and engage the underlying spiritual dimension in whatever issues arise in the counseling practice. This service must also be rendered in a manner which is no less professional than the first and it needs to become an integral part of the counseling process.

These two elements point to the need for professional training in psychology, theology and the practice of counseling, and in addition, they imply the capacity on the part of the counselor to function actively out of a personally operative theological framework:

> Pastoral counseling is more than a religious person helping others in distress. It is a response by a baptized person to the call to help others in a quite defined way. It is also an activity that involves the integration of psychology and theology in which . . . the theological hermeneutic must take its place alongside the psychological one and at times even take precedence over it.[18]

3. The third element is the encouragement, on the part of the counselor, of the counselee to open her/himself up "to God's free initiative of grace" in a manner which will lead to membership of her/his Christian community in a more psychologically healthy and spiritually sound manner. It is important that the Pastoral Counselor know what her/his own conscious images of God are, strive to get to know what the unconscious ones are, and have some awareness of the gap which divides the one from the other. Without this operative skill it will not be possible to recognize and engage the spirituality of the counselee and move intentionally towards spiritual growth. In this connection Wicks cites Barry Ulanov as follows: "Pastoral Counseling

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[18]Wicks and Parsons, <u>Clinical Handbook</u>, 2:2.

[is] the process by which two individuals come to identify and embrace the spirit of God."[19]

Wicks also draws attention to the fact that the ministry is no longer restricted to those who are ordained.

From the vast store of material that is available here in the States, I have chosen just three units which will at once pay respect to the range of resources which can be called upon and focus on one or more which could serve us well in Ireland. The first of these is an overview of resources from a nonspecifically-Pastoral-Counseling perspective, the second reviews much of the same material from the particular vantage point of Pastoral counseling, and the third is a more detailed consideration of one specific model which I think is particularly cogent to my home situation.

An Overview of Therapeutic Models

In 1982 a group of researchers, Brickman, Rabinowitz, Karuza, Coates, Cohn, and Kidder carried out a new and unique analysis of the contemporary models of helping. In it they provide a framework for analyzing some of the basic assumptions underlying the range of theoretical orientations which inform current practice. There was a fivefold focus to this research:

- the locus of responsibility for the past and present behavior of the client;

- how the client tends to be perceived by self and others, including the therapist;

- what type of action, if any, is required of the client to alter her/his present reality;

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[19]Ibid., 5.

- what basic assumptions the therapist brings to the situation;

- how the current therapeutic models can be grouped under the four classifications which have been chosen by the researchers.

The _modus operandi_ of Brinkman and his associates was to pose two questions to the existential counseling situation, both being problem focused: (1) Who is deemed responsible for the situation which obtains here? and (2) What will promote growth and/or find a solution to the problem? They present their findings in the form of a fourfold classification of models of helping which I will now briefly summarize.

The Moral Model

A number of current theories are seen to be grounded in this model: Reality Therapy, Rational Emotive Therapy, Existential Therapy, Person-Centered Therapy, Gestalt Therapy. The common ground which is shared is somewhat as follows:

- the client is seen to carry responsibility neither for creating nor finding a solution to the problematic dimensions of her/his present life reality;

- she/he is perceived as unmotivated to make the necessary effort to change;

- the therapist encourages the client to utilize her/his own resources to bring about a better future--no one else can do that for she/he.

There are significant differences among the various schools with regard to how to go about the actual therapeutic process, but the fundamental stance is the same.

The Compensatory Model

The theories which are grouped under this heading are the

Adlerian, the Cognitive-Behavioral and Transactional Analysis. Among

these theories the common ground is:

- the client is seen to carry responsibility for the problem but not for the solution;

- obstacles are imposed upon people's situations; it is up to the client to compensate for these difficulties in her/his particular situation, without self-blame;

- the therapist refrains from blaming the client for her/his situation and actively encourages her/him to work in collaboration with others towards a transformation of the environment in order to enjoy a brighter future.

The Medical Model

All Psychoanalytical Therapy is included here--Freudian,

Jungian, Object Relations, Self Psychology---the lot. All are seen to

have the following common characteristics:

- the client is not seen to be responsible either for the problem or for its solution. She/he is incapacitated in some way by forces beyond her/his control in the manner of a victim of a disease;

- the client is encouraged to accept this incapacitated condition without self-blame and to seek help in overcoming its undesirable consequences;

- the therapist believes that people are basically determined by unconscious motivation, irrational forces, sexual aggression and impulses and by early childhood experiences;

- the hope for an improved condition lies in a lengthy process of analyzing those inner conflicts which are rooted in the past;

- the basic therapeutic procedure is encouragement to develop a transference relationship with the aid of which clients can be helped rid themselves of the crippling effects of emotional trauma. Analysis and interpretation of the transference experience will lead to insight, which is the key to improvement;

- clients must commit themselves to a long-term intensive process if the therapy is to be effective.

As is true of the other models, there are significant variations among

the schools but the common elements hold in one form or another.

The Enlightenment Model

Before dealing with this model let me state that the use of the term "enlightenment" in this context does not bear any explicit relationship to its use in connection with the evolutionary epoch referred to earlier in this chapter. The therapeutic practices which it embraces in the context of the research under consideration here are those Therapeutic Communities which have become part of the fabric of American society in recent decades--Alcoholics Anonymous, Over-Eaters Anonymous, etc. The common threads which bind these together are:

- the client bears responsibility for her/his problem, but not for the solution;

- basic impulses are out of control and an addictive personality results;

- discipline is needed to deal with the out-of-control dimension of the life but this must come from some external source, e.g., a therapeutic community;

- clients are helped in the community context to take responsibility for their addictive behavior and its consequences and not to continue to blame others for it;

- clients are invited to turn over their lives to a higher power.

This is essentially the scope of the Brinkman et al. analysis of most of the operative therapeutic practices of the early 1980s. Attention is drawn to the fact that some practitioners operate solely out of one particular theory while others are more eclectic in their approach. No one theory or approach is recommended over and above any other.

Review of Counseling Models

Despite the fact that this review of operative theoretical

frameworks and practices encompasses much of the same material as the

previous study covered, I have decided to include it here for three

reasons:

- the review is undertaken from the particular perspective of
  Pastoral Care/Counseling;

- it comes a decade later in time, thus taking into account the
  many developments which have taken place in the field during
  those years, and;

- it identifies the operative theology as well as psychology.

In order to grasp something of the full scope of Clinebell's

magnificent contribution to the Pastoral Counseling world, one needs to

study his "completely revised and enlarged" classic, Basic Types of

Pastoral Care and Counseling. But this is not my primary source here.

The one I use, in addition to being relatively brief, is more recently

published and therefore brings us closer to the present moment, while

losing nothing of the richness of what has gone before.

Addressing the American Association of Pastoral Counselors in

May 1990, Clinebell looked back briefly over the forty years life-span

of American Pastoral Counseling and also envisioned the future. He used

a graphic image to look in both directions at once:

> The dominant theme that emerges, as I reflect on our field's recent
> history, is that of contextualizing in widening circles of healing,
> education, and wholeness. We now face an unprecedented opportunity
> as well as need to add yet another, more encompassing circle of
> caring.[20]

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[20]Howard Clinebell, "Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Toward an
Ecological Systems Model for Pastoral Care and Counseling," The Journal
of Pastoral Care, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Fall 1992).

With regard to looking back, Clinebell acknowledges the contribution
that all previous theoretical formulations have made to the specific
field of Pastoral Counseling and presents them in the form of five
concentric and ever-widening circles. Briefly his arrangement is as
follows:

> (1) The Intrapsychic Repair Model, Undergirded by Depth Psychology,
>   Individualistic Theology, and Psychology of Religion.

Clinebell affectionately recalls pioneers in the Pastoral
Counseling field during the first decade of its life and identifies
their respective sources of inspiration; Anton Boisen, Seward Hiltner
and Carroll Wise were all deeply influenced by the intrapsychic
assumptions and methods of Freud; Hiltner and Wise were also influenced
by Carl Roger's thought and "Carl Jung's depth psychology had strong
influence on other teachers during the movement's beginnings. He notes
the impact of the earlier medical diagnostic treatment model on these
early days of Pastoral Counseling's life and identifies the undergirding
theological structure as being both individualistic and focused inward.
He recalls that the discipline of the psychology of religion constituted
a bridge between religious dynamics and psychological approaches to
Pastoral Care.

> (2) The Interpersonal-Relational Model, Undergirded by Relational
>   Therapies and Theologies.

This second phase of development moves beyond the Intrapsychic
medical focus. Credit is given to Harry Stack Sullivan for introducing
an interpersonal orientation into the field in the 1940s, with Eric
Fromm's sociocultural dimension and Karen Horney's pre-feminist thought
also pointing in that direction. This shift of focus was explicitly

named by Paul Johnson in 1964 and affirmed as being more in keeping with the Christian church's religious and pastoral heritage. It was in the 1960s that role-relationship and marriage counseling were developed and these too impacted Pastoral Counseling by way of "direct therapeutic interventions in relationships." Soon social systems theory and family therapy theory were to make their presence felt. A major influence was object relations theory which shows how the introjection of significant adults in our formative years shapes our sense of self and thus influences all our subsequent relationships, including our relationship with God.

The old medical repair model began to be challenged in the Pastoral Counseling world. Carl Roger's influence brought counseling practice beyond repair to maximizing wholeness. New therapies such as Transactional Analysis, Gestalt Therapy and Psychosynthesis provided resources to make the shift.

There was growth and development also in the theological aspect of Pastoral Counseling. The biblical and theological roots of the Pastoral counseling tradition were reclaimed and with them came a reactivating of the community-of-faith context for counseling practice. The Bible was looked to for a theological understanding of psychological and spiritual sickness and health, sin and salvation and a connection was made between these realities and our relationship with self, others and God.

    (3) The Embodiment Model, Undergirded by Therapies and
        Incarnational Theologies.

This third model overlapped the development of the second. Counseling and therapy expanded its context to include the bodily well-

being of persons. The profundity of body-mind-spirit interrelationships was acknowledged and the contributions of various body therapies were engaged in counseling practice.

(4) The Cognitive-Behavioral Model, Undergirded by Learning Theory and Behavioral Therapies.

This development represents quite a different genre of influence in the worlds of Pastoral Counseling, namely, the learning theories of Skinner and others. Two basic assumptions underlie these theories:

- problems brought to the therapist are essentially destructive behavior resulting from faulty learning;

- therapy consists of applying the principles of learning to reprogram more constructive behavior.

The impact of learning theories on Pastoral Counseling is not thought to be very great to date and this is probably due to a dislike of the mechanistic, reductionistic view of human beings among classical behaviorists. Some counselors, on the other hand, recognize how far beyond these views cognitive-behavioral therapy has gone. This group sees great potential for counseling practice in the relearning methodology of the cognitive-behavioralists. Clinebell points to Helen Singer Kaplan's approach to sex therapy as an excellent use of cognitive-behavioral therapy in conjunction with psychodynamic and systemic methods, all blended with a relational dimension. Marriage and family counseling have likewise been enriched by calling on the learning theories and this is a development which Clinebell strongly affirms:

pastoral counselors and educators seeking to enable people to move from

pathogenic to salugenic belief and value system are discovering that

learning theory therapies are valuable tools."[21]

(5) The Liberation Model, Undergirded by Radical Therapy, and
Liberation and Feminist Theologies.

Clinebell expresses very clearly what it was that led Pastoral

Counselors to adopt this fifth model:

> Some of us in the 1960s and early 1970s became painfully aware that
> social pathologies were producing human brokenness on a wholesale
> scale while we counselors-teachers were working overtime to heal
> individual and family brokenness on a retail basis.[22]

Feminist psychologists and therapists have been to the forefront in

developing this model. They have emphasized that all responsible

counseling and therapy must include consciousness-raising about the ways

personal problems are rooted in sociopolitical dynamics and oppression.

This model of care and counseling looks to liberation theology

for its undergirding--Latin American, Asian, and African-American. The

ultimate therapeutic objective, which includes the dimension of the

repair of damaged self-identity and esteem, goes well beyond this to a

degree of empowerment which enables persons to take action towards

healing those social-systemic-institutional causes of their own and

other's brokenness. This course of action, taken on their own behalf,

and on behalf of/in cooperation with other like-minded persons, will do

much to continue the individual healing process.

This is where Clinebell ceases to look back and begins to scan

the horizon for future signs of hope. He notes with satisfaction that

it was this new awareness which gave rise to the formation of the

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[21]Ibid., 266.

[22]Ibid.

Pastoral Care Network for Social Responsibility, with its goals of

peace, justice and ecology and its commitment to a search for ways of

implementing this new prophetic dimension of Pastoral Care. This surely

is a significant indicator of the direction in which Pastoral Care is

headed in the United States today. The association has links with all

ten of North America's Pastoral Care associations. The necessity for a

politicizing context has been named and acted upon. In 1987 this

association found a global base with the foundation of the International

Pastoral Care Network for Peace with Justice. The extent of the North

American influence worldwide in the Pastoral Care field is indicated by

the fact that this latter group has representatives on all continents

(Antarctica excepted)--a grand total of forty countries.

It is in this context that Clinebell confidently names ecology

as the sixth concentric circle which he would like to see added to the

existing five, and he quotes the wise Native American Chief Seattle in

support of his choice:

> The earth does not belong to humans; humans belong to the earth.
> This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites
> one family. . . . Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of
> the earth. People did not weave the web of life, they are merely a
> strand of it. Whatever they do to the web, they do to
> themselves.[23]

Futuristic Models

This model is proposed by Clinebell himself in response to the

contextual needs of the 1990s and with anticipated relevance for the

twenty-first century. Its focus is on the interaction of natural and

human ecological systems. The methodology is, as yet, in its embryonic

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[23]Ibid., 263.

stage of development. Three key dimensions are outlined: basic principles, methodology, and spirituality. I shall simply enumerate the guidelines towards developing a comprehensive model which Clinebell shares as I believe they speak for themselves.

Basic Principles

1. Our personal and species survival depends on learning to love and respect the biosphere, the wonderful web of living things.

2. The brokenness of the planet is in us and in our children.

3. The brokenness and toxicity of the planet also impacts both our intimate relationships and wider social systems destructively.

4. Healing and enhancing relationships with the natural as well as the human environment is one essential focus of therapeutic concern in our counseling, supervision, and teaching.

5. The dual psychological-theological training of pastoral clinicians and educators equips us to make unique and much-needed contributions to healing the spiritual and value pathologies which are at the root of the human family's ecological-nuclear crisis.

Clinebell names the theoretical orientations he considers essential to make the foregoing principles operative:

Object relations theory linked with systems theories and creation theology, provides some understanding of this. In addition to the introjected "objects" from our human environment in the early relationships, we also internalize good and bad experiences in the natural world as we develop our sense of self. Our crucial relationship with internalized mother is paralleled by our inner relationship with Mother Earth. And our current relationship with the natural world is deeply influenced by whether these internalized natural objects are nurturing or toxic.[24]

Methodological Pointers

Clinebell cautions that these are as yet, but tentative suggestions as ways in which Pastoral Counselors and Pastoral Care

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[24]Ibid., 268.

educators may implement an ecological-systems model, and points to
reflection on a variety of personal and clinical experiences as their
source.

1. We can awaken and reenergize our own relationship with Mother
   Nature.

2. We can nature-ize the setting in which we do our wholeness work.

3. In our training and practice, we need to be aware that
   ecological angst, grief, and hope-stifling despair are present
   at some level (often subconscious) in many if not most of our
   students and clients, as well as in ourselves.

4. We can include ecological components in our diagnostic work.

5. We can help people bring to the surface, affirm as appropriate,
   and work through their deep feelings of rage and grief, guilt
   and despair, related to the self-nurture violation of our rape
   of Nature.

6. We can adopt as an essential objective of therapy and teaching,
   enabling clients/students/parishioners to develop more
   energizing healing relationships with the biosphere.

7. We can encourage clients/students/parishioners to open
   themselves up regularly to the healing energies of nature.

8. We can encourage those who seek help to become involved in some
   kind of saving-the-planet action, for their own healing and
   wholeness, as well as that of the earth.

9. In our work with parents, we can help children to become earth-
   lovers.

10. We can work to help heal the multiple spiritual pathologies that
    feed our exploitative, short-sighted treatment of the planet,
    and open up to the spiritual heart of ecologically whole,
    environmentally caring lifestyles.

Clinebell draws particular attention to two leading causes of
the destruction of the biosphere:

- grinding poverty (of those in poor nations), and

- greedy resource consumption (by us in the rich countries).

In this context he draws attention to the experience of persons who

focus their attention on healing the planet and discovered that in doing so they also furthered their own personal healing: "This discovery seems to be the long-sought bridge joining the pastoral and prophetic, the personal and societal dimensions of our ministries as two sides of one redemptive process."[25]

Spiritual Roots of the Ecological Crisis

1. The bottom line cause is alienation of our body-mind spirits from a healing empowering sense of connectedness with the web of living things. (Cf. Second Creation Story of Genesis: humankind's alienation from our organic relatedness to the natural world, also Isaiah 24:4-5.) Martin Buber's description of ecological reconciliation is compelling: "I contemplate a tree . . . and if will and grace are joined as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation and the tree ceases to be an it."[26]

2. Our alienation form the feminine aspects of the Divine Spirit and from what Jung called the feminine side of our personality. This leaves us spiritually impoverished and cut off from the spiritual wellsprings which can energize us in the uphill times and tasks of earthcaring and peacemaking.

3. Inner deadness--arising out of interconnected alienations--which blocks our celebration of the good gift of just being alive and aware.

4. Our paranoid demonizing of wild animals and wilderness places, and our projection on to them of our own rejected shadow side (including our own wilderness) making them fearful rather than potentially friendly to us.

5. Our idolatrous tribal theologies and values systems, and our ethno-centered, species-limited consciences reflecting species grandiosity, classism, nationalism, and religious exclusivity.

6. Our defensive theologies that enable us to maintain magical rescue fantasies of being saved from the brink of the abyss by a heavenly quick fix or the powerful omniscience of political or religious leaders on whom God-like expectations are projected.

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[25]Ibid., 271.

[26]Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Scribner, 1970), 58.

In the foregoing pages I have kept pretty close to the Clinebell text cited earlier. In my opinion, Larry Kent Graham's psychosystems approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling takes Clinebell's vision that one step further and so I move on to a consideration of that model.

A Psychosystems Approach

It seemed to me that this model of Pastoral Care and Counseling is very close to what Clinebell asked for at his 1990 address referred to above. In his book, Care of Persons, Care of Worlds, Larry Kent Graham pays eloquent tribute to Clinebell and proceeds to identify key elements of his own model which may not only include but go beyond his friend's dream:

> Clinebell's passion for wholeness in mind, spirit, body, relationships, institutions, and the biosphere is to be fully affirmed. to tie personality fulfillment to caring social involvement is a major gain for the field. But conceptual coherence and effective realization of these dimensions of wholeness require that they are grounded more centrally in social and systemic viewpoints and treated organically rather than sequentially and linearly.[27]

Graham sets out clearly the foundations upon which he builds his theory: process theology, liberation and feminist theology, family systems thought, and the interactional dimensions of personality theory. He identifies a number of persons whose work has been particularly helpful/challenging to him; among them the following names have stood out for me, no doubt because of my own personal interest in them: Jungian depth psychology, James Hillman's challenging contemporary development of Jungian theory, and object relations theory.

There is another influence to which Graham points as the source

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[27]Larry Kent Graham, Care of Persons, Care of Worlds (Nashville: Abington Press, 1992), 38.

of inspiration for his personal contribution to the field, namely, his experiential knowledge of the Pastoral Counseling and Pastoral Care ministry for over three decades. Initially it was his experience of increased sexual and domestic violence among his parishioners which led him to the conclusion that "the psyches of these injured and injuring persons were inextricably linked to the violent cultural patterns of our society."[28] Continued close attention to this phenomenon expanded his conclusion considerably: "all pastoral situations involve a bewildering set of interconnections between the psyches of persons and the larger forces influencing them."[29] The inevitable happened. Kent Graham set out in search of a theory which would transcend the polarities between care of persons and response to the larger social order.

The Psychosystems Model was to become his personal answer. His own definition of this system is worth quoting at this point as it will serve as a point of reference as I try to highlight its principal features in the pages which follow:

> The term, "psychosystemic," refers to the reciprocal interplay between the psyche of individuals and the social, cultural, and natural orders. This interplay is not neutral or static; it is value-laden and teeming with possibilities. The character of persons and their worlds come into being by the mutual influences of each upon the other.[30]

This definition represents a major shift while at the same time retaining continuity with Pastoral Counseling theories and practices of the past. It sets out to protect all that is best in former practices

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[28]Ibid., 13.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

with regard to care for the needs of the individual while at the same
time proclaiming the vital necessity of simultaneously attending to the
environment in which the individual lives--his is a model for
contextualized care. Graham sees the need to position the ministry of
care.

> More prominently among larger social and political interpretations
> of the pastoral situation, without losing focus of the healing,
> sustaining, and guiding needed by individuals, groups and families.
> It joins microsystemic with macrosystemic arenas of experience. It
> attempts to resolve, both conceptually and practically, the ongoing
> tension between all living things.[31]

For Graham there are two closely connected key concepts to be
kept in mind by the pastoral counselor: the internal relationship
between the person and the world and the acceptance of change as
normative with regard to all that lives in this world and to the Creator
too. Personally, I experience a kind of infectious excitement in
Graham's manner of reiterating an ancient truth: the world has fallen
into sin and brokenness but it is redeemed and in process of being
transformed by God, and we all have a part to play in that redemption.
We are invited to increase the love of God, self and neighbor and to
promote justice and responsible ecology.

> Understanding the interlocking relationship between our brokenness
> and the brokenness of the world we inhabit may help us come together
> to make and create beauty in the midst of, and in place of,
> brokenness. Such is the vision, at least, of a psychosystemic
> understanding of persons, the world, and their mutual care.[32]

Graham has no illusions as to the extent of the demands that are
made on anyone who wants to follow the path. He draws attention to the

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 16.

necessity to have a thorough grasp of the network of violence that
exists in this world, the ubiquity of its influence throughout the whole
fabric of life on the planet and the challenge which awaits all who
aspire to challenge its perpetrators:

> the network of care at the microcosmic level is rendered necessary
> and organizes itself largely in response to a massive network of
> oppression and violence at the macrocosmic level. Further, it is
> assumed that these levels are intimately related, and reinforce one
> another.[33]

Graham turns to sociologists, feminists, liberation thinkers and
"a whole host of others" to confirm his personal findings about violence
and its impact on the world. He outlines a chain of related realities:

- the pervasive influence of a variety of oppressive social
  systems in our personal identities and in the whole social
  fabric of our lives;

- our psyches and our behaviors are organized into patterns of
  domination and subordination by these oppressive systems--
  whether we are aware of it or not;

- these systems influence the definition and the practice of care.

The awareness of this chain of events has led to a great
sensitivity on Graham's part to his use of the language of care. It is
because of this awareness that he has focused on the concepts of power,
values, and justice as central to his thinking and practice. It is
because of this influence also that he invokes feminist and liberation
social ethics in his understanding of the use of power in the ministry
of care. He sees love, justice, and ecological partnership as
appropriate ways of responding to suffering persons and destructive
situations, declaring that to attempt to address the one without the
other is to fail to engage reality as it is constructed.

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[33]Ibid., 17.

Graham painstakingly, challengingly, and convincingly outlines
the theoretical foundations of his model of care, dealing primarily with
the necessity to shift from the mode of individual psyche thinking to
systems thinking. He calls the counselor to a broader understanding of
the person-world relationship than existential-anthropological models of
care require, pointing out the necessity for cooperation between the
counselor and caretaking community and in relation to the legal, social,
and economic systems--all of which have a part to play in oppression
and, therefore, in that release from oppression which is linked to
healing. He quotes Derald Sue in support of his conviction that
cultural oppression has much to do with what is often labeled
"pathology" according to the traditional approach to counseling, "the
lack of a theory on cultural oppression and its relationship to the
development of world views continues to foster cultural blindness within
the counseling profession."[34] He elaborates on the world views which
Sue observes to be operative in contemporary American society, noting
their oppressive consequences. It is from this realization that he
outlines his own understanding of systems thinking which he sees as
building on a variety of existing systemic theories and, indeed, on all
modern studies of the person which have "some way of understanding the
relationship between the person and the environment."[35] He believes
his own formulation of a systems theory makes "a creative advance" on
those on which he builds. Graham identifies four chief characteristics

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[34]Ibid., 33.

[35]Ibid.

of his personal systems way of thinking and names the impact each one of

them has on the practice of Pastoral Care/Counseling:

- an affirmation that all elements of the universe are interconnected, standing in an ongoing reciprocal relationship to one another (this leads the Pastoral Carer to respond to persons from the perspective of affirming the interconnectedness between all things);

- an affirmation that all reality is organized (the Pastoral Carer is concerned with the structured organization of persons and of the nature of the power relationship between persons and their environments);

- emphasis upon homeostasis, or balance and self-maintenance (Pastoral Care attempts to identify, stabilize, and modify the reciprocal transactions at work within individuals, and those that operate between individuals and their environments);

- emphasis upon creativity in the context, or, what Graham calls "finite freedom" (change is inherent in the nature of things, therefore attempts must be made to influence change with a view to enhancing individuals and their environments).

A further crucial factor to the understanding of Graham's model

of counseling is to appreciate his conception of soul or psyche. He

points out that he uses the two terms interchangeably and that he

applies the term to persons but not to their environments:

> I am using the concept of psyche or soul to refer to the synthesizing and creative center of the human personality. . . . It is my conviction that psyches create systems and systems create psyches. The relationship between them is synaptic, or spiritual, characterized by mutual reception, rejection, struggle, and creative accomplishment.[36]

Graham's principal concern with regard to psyche or soul is that

it be restored to its rightful place at the heart of pastoral care. He

invites us to respect it in its conscious and unconscious reality,

points to the body and the structure of the personality which it unifies

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[36]Ibid., 41.

,as its subsystems and sees its macrosystems as nature, culture, society, religion, and family. This leads him to conclude that:

> Pastoral care and counseling is therefore by nature psychosystemic. . . . Psychosystemic pastoral caregiving provides assistance to casualties and perpetrators of various forms of lovelessness, injustice, and environmental disorder. It combines restoration and transformation of persons and their contexts.[37]

Five principles of psychosystemic caregiving are enunciated as follows:

1. Organicity: "To assist symptomatic persons, the pastoral caretaker must discern and respond to the patterns of interconnectedness accounting for the pastoral situation." This principle draws attention to the necessity on the part of the counselor to become an organic part of the situation in order to help the client see that more than individual symptoms are determinative.

2. Simultaneity: "In order to promote change, the pastoral caretaker must recognize and strategically respond to the intersystemic consequences of and resistances to his or her efforts."

3. Concientization: "In order for pastoral caretakers to transform symptomatic situations, they must help careseekers combine an awareness of the impact of the social order upon their personal difficulties, and assist them to fashion strategic actions to neutralize, change, or transform the destructive elements in the social order."

   This principle provides the opening for the counselor to address matters such as racism, ageism, sexism, heterosexualism, lifestyles which are seen as issues of care as well as being of social concern.

4. Advocacy: "To transform symptomatic behaviors the pastoral caretaker lends his or her voice, and the voice of the caretaking community, to shaping public policies that promote a positive environment for the careseeker."

   This is a principle which invites the counselor to use her/his power position to share the risks of attempting to change the social order.

5. Adventure: "To help symptomatic situations change, the pastoral caretaker assists persons to recognize that God is present as an ally on the side of transformation and liberative change, and

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[37]Ibid., 45.

that such change is an expected but unpredictable gift of grace
and fruit of hope."

This principle invites the counselor to accept the "messiness"
of all of life, to recognize that our achievements are never
simple cause-effect outcomes--this includes the counseling
experience itself. Our stance is more that of a witness or
discoverer than that of an architect or contractor.

Graham sums up his expression of theoretical foundations by focusing on

the ministry of care as a subsystem of the ministry of a larger

religious community.

Specifically, then, the ministry of care provides a context in which
persons who are victims and perpetrators of lovelessness, injustice,
and environmental disorder may engage the destructive forces in
their lives so that both they and those forces may simultaneously be
healed, sustained, guided, and liberated.[38]

Graham's Psychosystemic View of the World

Process theology is identified as having had a major impact in

the development of Graham's counseling model. The term as he uses it

has to do with the way things are in the universe, understood from a

philosophical point of view. "It is an ontology and a cosmology,"

Graham says. In order to gain some understanding of Graham's map of the

world one has to appreciate how central to his vision is the process of

becoming, "concrescence." It is here that God is seen to be intimately

connected with all that is in an eternally creative manner. All I can

do here is name five elements of this theory which Graham pronounces as

in need of being underscored, though they do little to capture the

richness of his thought.

1. This view of reality abandons Cartesian-Newtonian physics in
    favor of quantum physics which declared the fundamental units of
    reality to be indeterminate electrical patterns rather than

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[38]Ibid., 48.

small particles of matter. It recognizes that novelty and
constant mutual influence is of the essence of how things are in
the universe. Personally, I share Graham's excitement at the
potential impact of this truth on the ministry of care: "It
bases our efforts to promote change on reality itself, and
provides metaphysical support for our view that love, justice,
and ecological stewardship are genuine rather than foolhardy
possibilities for this world.[39]

2. A second contribution the theory makes to building up the model
    is that it allows values to be restored to the center of
    thinking and practice. This claim is based on an acceptance of
    the fact that everything that actually comes into being, does so
    in relation to a number of contending options, with the past,
    God, and the person all active in what actually transpires. Not
    all values are the same and not all are compatible. There is a
    crucial struggle centered on values with regard to what the
    world will actually become. This brings values out of the realm
    of abstractions and puts them at the heart of the action.

3. Power is defined as "the capacity to influence and be influenced
    by the world " Like values, power is seen to be at the center
    of reality. The world itself is seen as power struggles between
    competing values. "The resolution of these power struggles will
    determine the very makeup of the universe, and hence the quality
    of its life." This leads to a pluralistic view of the universe
    while recognizing the fact that some values become dominant in
    actual experience.

4. A fourth implication of this world view is named as "the
    capability for self-determination, in the context of multiple
    influences." From this Graham draws another fundamental
    conclusion which impacts his counseling model profoundly--so
    profoundly that I will quote him directly on it:

    > Thus, human beings neither finally transcend their
    > communities, nor are controlled by them. They exist by the
    > establishment of "relative independence" in community. The
    > more the person interacts with others in community, the more
    > individual the person becomes. The more individual the
    > person becomes, the greater one's participation in
    > community. Persons and contexts create, reflect, and
    > transcend one another. The experiencing subject is viewed
    > as both determined and free, limited and creatively
    > transforming.[40]

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[39]Ibid., 51.

[40]Ibid., 52.

5. Nothing comes into being without struggle, conflict, and loss.
   This is as a result of the multiple realities contending for
   influence in the universe. Choices have to be made all the
   time. They can be for the better or for the worse as there is
   no question of predetermined choice.

Graham uses the foregoing principles to construct his

understanding of the organization of the world. He presents a graphic

six-component picture, with a commentary on each unit which is essential

to a full appreciation of the richness of his vision but I will not

include it here in the interests of moving forward with the overview. I

will point out just three core concepts and move on:

* The map draws attention to the dynamic interconnections between

  all the components of the universe.

* These components range from the microcosmic worlds of actual

  realities to include the world of persons, families, society,

  culture, and nature.

* The elements by which these are connected, maintained and

  changed are contextual organization, contextual creativity, bi-

  polar power, contending values, and reciprocal transactions.

While each of these concepts is integral to Graham's total system, he

singles out power as being of especially great importance in the

caregiving context today:

> The analysis of power is central to this theory of pastoral
> caretaking. Feminist thinkers and third world liberation
> theologians have made it extremely clear that the power arrangements
> of a society, and the ideologies undergirding them, must be analyzed
> in terms of who benefits and who suffers. . . . Persons seeking care
> are enmeshed in destructive power arrangements and seek to gain
> power to maintain their integrity and to creatively change their
> contextual situation.[41]

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[41]Ibid., 64.

In psychosystemic theory God's place is not left to chance. Process theology is applied to systems theory and the conclusion is that:

> God's reality must be reconceived in terms of a systemic and contextual coming-int-being rather than as an eternally completed being. In this view, whether unrecognized or not, God is present in every context influencing, but not determining, what is coming into being.[42]

This psychosystemic view of the world is a <u>sine qua non</u> of working with Graham's theory in practice. This being so, I will briefly recap its core concepts:

1. The universe is an interacting systemic whole which is organized throughout all its component units.

2. The component units are actual occasions of experience, persons, families, societies, culture, and nature.

3. Five interrelated connecting elements link the universe's six component parts.

4. God is systemically related to the world:

    -   God's presence stimulates the most optimal possibility for each unit of reality;

    -   God's being is influenced by what actually comes into being;

    -   God's intentionality is to bring about greater combinations of intensity and harmony of experience on the part of each unit of experience and between all elements in the world.

5. Increasing the love of self, God, and neighbor, increasing justice, and promoting environmental partnership are seen as intrinsically good ("expressions of optimal intensity and harmony").

6. Examples of genuine evil are lovelessness, violence, injustice, and environmental rapaciousness.

7. Pastoral Caretaking seeks to be an ally of God in generating greater harmony and intensity, and in transforming the quality of persons and their worlds.

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[42]Ibid., 67.

Personhood

As might be expected, psychosystemic theory has its own
understanding of personhood and a grasp of the basic elements of this
understanding is appropriate here. Process is of the essence with the
human psyche seen as "an ongoing and developing process." The
activities of the psyche are understood as the end product of several
interrelated processes, which involve the receiving dimension of the
psyche, the psyche's synthesizing or organizing dimension and its
creative and transformative dimension--all of which take place
simultaneously. Graham acknowledges his indebtedness to Jung for his
concept of self in the context of personhood. He speaks of the
influence of the conscious and unconscious elements of the self,
according to the conscious the greater power of differentiation in the
activities of the mature adult:

> Jung's notion of the individuated self is very much akin to my view.
> The individuated self is the center of the psyche that finally
> incorporates, but relatively transcends, all the other elements
> comprising the person. The individuated self refers to the
> conscious and transforming synthesis of influences from one's body,
> the personal and collective unconscious, and the historical
> experience uniquely by personalized in an individual human
> being.[43]

In the context of constant synthesizing activity, the quality of
boundaries is of great importance. Selfhood is deemed to be at its best
when boundaries are "selectively fluid, rather than porous or closed, in
relation to the conscious and unconscious elements of its own being, and
to the world in which it lives and which it shapes."[44]

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[43]Ibid., 90.

[44]Ibid.

Caregiving in a Psychosystemic Context

Graham speaks of caregiving in the psychosystemic context as a combination of strategic love and redemptive justice, thus underlining form the start the intrinsic connectedness of love and justice. In a similar spirit he presents symptoms, crises, and change as dynamically interconnected. These two sets of interconnected realities are the caregiver's tools of the trade, so to speak, with change as the heart of the caregiving enterprise. We are all too prone to view the static condition as normative of reality; here we are invited, in the context of quantum physics, to review that perception and know change as normative instead. This being so, a healthy approach to life is to seek to influence change. Symptoms and crises are to be recognized for what they are: invitations to attend to the change which is taking place in a given context in a manner which seeks "intensity and harmony"/the good. Graham's insights into symptoms, change, God's place in all of this and how the Pastoral Counselor can work with this total reality are, I think, both inspired and inspiring. All that I can do in this present context is enumerate the goals and strategies for change out of which the psychosystems approach operates. This alone gives a valuable insight into the process.

Change, Goals and Strategies

In order to set goals one has to have a picture of what constitutes desirable patterns of living. For the psychosystems counselor this picture evolves by answering two closely related questions:

What does love, justice, and ecological partnership look like in concrete operational terms?

How is lovelessness, injustice, and ecological destructiveness manifested in the daily crises and experiences of living?[45]

In response to these two questions Graham elaborates on five goals and four overarching strategies of change which guide the counselor in her/his ministry.

Goals

1. Move from contextual impairment to contextual integrity.

2. Move from power imbalances to synergistic power arrangements.

3. Move from destructive value conflicts to synchronized value orientations.

4. Move from vitiated creativity to vital creativity.

5. Move from transactional impasses to transactional effectiveness.

Strategies

In psychosystemic theory change is based primarily upon the concepts of creativity and bi-polar power. Only those who firmly believe that the possibility of change is built into the nature of reality, and is assisted by God's ongoing stimulation of new possibilities, as described earlier, can truly work towards influencing the nature of change. Graham sees this action towards influencing the nature of change as "rooted in the ministry of care." When it is so rooted it will come as a result of two interacting conditions: (1) strategic influence in the symptomatic crisis and (2) "focused responsiveness to the strategic influences employed by the caretaker or

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[45]Ibid., 99.

the caretaking system such as the congregation, hospital, counseling center, or social service agency."[46] Strategies for change are initially concerned with ensuring that both conditions are present with the second one generally requiring special attention. The action taken by the counselor towards this end is fourfold: joining, illuminating, restructuring, and relinquishing. I refer here to the diagnostic outline which Graham provides as an appendix to the book, Care of Persons, Care of Worlds. This tool is, I believe, very valuable when used in the context of the two interacting conditions named above and within the total mindset of psychosystemic theory.

I expect that it is abundantly evident that this model of Pastoral Counseling, while including previous models and many of their strategies for care of the individual, goes well beyond the individual to embrace the whole web of interconnectedness which defines our world. The model comprises a vast reservoir of resources for operating at all of the many levels that this vision of life calls for and it allows for adaptation and modification according to the requirements of distinct identifiable situations. Its flexibility is as valuable as its clarity of philosophical, theological and psychological undergirding. I can see its principles and approach to strategy transferring profitably to Irish soil and enriching the initiatives already afoot there.

Sacred Psychology

Before moving to my final chapter, I wish to name the whole world of "sacred psychology" which is being opened up in America today

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[46]Ibid., 104.

by persons like Dr. Jean Houston, Ph.D. and Dr. Barbara Ann Brennan, Ph.D. This is too big a topic to open up here but I am convinced that the insights provided by these futuristic, holistic healers are of singular relevance in the Irish context--rooted as they are in myth, mystery and the realm of the sacred.

CHAPTER V

CONTEMPORARY PASTORAL COUNSELING IN IRELAND;

CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

As I begin this final chapter of my thesis I am keenly aware
that the most I can hope to achieve is to introduce the topic of
Pastoral Counseling into the contemporary Irish context, raise some
cogent questions as to its possible future direction, and indicate my
personal preferred direction. There is no question of arriving at
definitive answers to any questions; no possibility, even, of developing
my own aspirations. In order to take this last step I need to be back
among my own people, be in dialogue with those whose lives will be
affected by any ministry plans which may evolve out of such dialogue, be
in touch with the lived life there once more, and have access to
research already done at home on this and related issues.

There are four areas I want to deal with here and now which, I
believe, will prove a useful penultimate step: (1) the Irish experience
of becoming partially a self-governing people after eight hundred years
of colonization; (2) some outstanding features of contemporary Irish
society; (3) the place of psychotherapy/professional counseling in the
community at present, and (4) possible approaches to Pastoral Counseling
per se.

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Irish Partial Self-Governance

Many factors contributed to the making of what we now experience as the phenomenon of a twenty-six county Republic of Ireland and a six county unit which continues to be governed either directly or indirectly by British rule. The Easter 1916 Rising was the most dramatic and decisive moment in a process which extended over a number of years. These years were marked by heroism, executions, bloodshed, idealism, divisions, intrigue, civil war, treaties, acts of parliament, the establishment of separate parliaments for the six counties on the northeastern corner of the country--now known as "The North,"--and the remaining twenty-six counties, now known as "The Republic," the establishment of our own form of government, Dáil Eireann (1919), the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 which confirmed partition in principle, the Anglo-Irish Treaty with partition slipped in by the back door (1921), the Civil War (1922-1923), the promulgation of our own constitutions, Bunreacht na hEireann (1937), and the final break with the British Commonwealth in 1949--an event which turned out to be more in the nature of a pyrrhic victory for us Irish, than a fitting sequel to the Proclamation of the 1916 leaders.

Volumes could be/have been written on the thirty-three years I have left behind me with these few phrases. There are moments of triumph and hours, days, weeks and years of bitterness, pain, and a sense of betrayal which haunt the national consciousness to this day and will continue to do so at least until the vile institution of partition is eroded from the lives of our people. Terence McSwiney, Mayor of Cork's seventy-five day hunger strike unto death in 1920, did not remove

it, nor did the blood-bath of the civil war which claimed the lives of
so many including the popular hero Michael Collins, affectionately known
as "The Big Fellow." It was this death, so filled with mystery and
questioning, more than anything else which perpetuated the division
between what were the two leading political parties in the national
government until very recent years, Fianna Fail or De Valera's party,
and Fine Gael or the Arthur Griffith party. Nor was this death
unconnected with the split in the I.R.A. in 1922 when two opposing units
emerged: the I.R.A. and the Free State Army. This is not the place for
any more detail on the subject. Suffice it to say that as long as
partition remains, so long will the psychic split in our national
consciousness remain unhealed.

But we have now entered into a new era of hope since August 31
of this year. It is, in many ways, the ideal context in which to
introduce Pastoral Counseling as I have described it in the previous
chapters into our society, both north and south of "the border." Peace
is not only on the political agenda once more, it is on the streets for
the first time in over twenty-five years. Our context has broadened as
equal members of the European Community (December 1993) and as citizens
of a world in which a growing number of people who "stand tiptoe"
awaiting the wonders of a new millennium. We are part of that band of
people who look to the ancient cultures of the world as a nurturing
ground for a future synthesis of all the peoples of the earth. And we
draw hope from the knowledge that our people, both north and south, find
their deepest common roots in that ancient Celticism which together with

other ancient cultures holds such promise for the future of humanity.

The evolution of partition itself has a long and complex history and cannot be adequately dealt with here. Suffice it to say that its emergence has been more as a result of British colonial policy in our country than a purely religious contention. Religion has been a useful tool for the implementation of the centuries-old "divide and rule" British policy and it continues to be effective today. A second factor to be considered is that the ecclesiastical authorities who have supported the British oppression throughout the centuries--with some notable exceptions--cannot hold themselves exempt from blame. In two courageous books to which I shall make reference later in this chapter, Fr. Joseph McVeigh documents the evidence most convincingly. So this is not really a matter of conjecture. Another reality which is pertinent here is the impact of the Civil War on the development of self-governance in the Republic. I believe that the effects of what is described in psychological terms as the "colonized personality" was subtly and destructively at work among the people who took over the leadership of "the struggle" after the brutal executions of the 1916 leaders. And this was maximally exploited by the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, better known as "the Welsh Wizard."

In his recently presented thesis on the South African experience of colonization, Dabula Mpaco applies studies on the topic by Frantz Fanon and by Steve Biko which throw much light on the Irish experience also. Among other things he speaks of what he terms "the White Mask" syndrome which I believe fits our Irish post-Rising experience if we

substitute "British" for "White." A symptom of this "personality

disorder" is that the colonized person internalizes the verdict of

inferiority, carefully nurtured by the oppressor throughout the

centuries, exhibits a lack of ego-strength, and lives in ambiguity. An

inferiority complex is developed as a result of cultural atrophy and the

destruction of one's own way of dealing with reality until the

colonizer's message that her/his way is superior to the indigenous way

is internalized and acted upon, particularly when under stress. Is

there not a connection between this description and the decision of

Griffith and Collins to sign the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 and above

all in Griffith's acceptance of British arms in 1922 to be used against

his own countrymen? And is not that outbreak of Civil War itself

further evidence of the "colonized personality" at work whereby, having

been reduced to a state of helplessness, intercommunal violence breaks

out, especially among the peasants? And how does one explain De

Valera's failure to support the decision taken by the representatives

whom he sent to Britain to negotiate with plenipotentiary powers, or his

many other changes of position before he finally settled down to form

his own political party and hold the balance of power in the country

throughout the early decades of the life of the state? It is not my

intention to over-simplify a very complex situation; nor again to

apportion either praise or blame. But I will add one final fact on

which all historians are agreed: were it not for the support of

Africans, both of Irish and non-Irish descent, in publicly declaring

their outrage at the 1916 British executions of the leaders of the

Rising, it is doubtful that any lasting gains would have been achieved

for Ireland as a result of their sacrifice. That said, let me conclude these remarks by saying that my observations on the colonized personality syndrome are simply an effort to point in the direction of an understanding of some of the sources of deepest division which continue to lurk barely beneath the surface of all Irish people--north or south of "the Border" and hold us back from the path of healing and wholeness as a people. Hopefully, the present cease fire, to which I have already referred, is an indication that healing has already begun to take place and the ministry of Pastoral Counseling will nurture its growth.

Despite the handicap of post-colonialism we are heartened by the considerable progress which has been made in self-governance in the Republic during the past seventy-odd years. Perhaps the greatest achievement is the experience of trying to do things "our way" and claiming personal responsibility as a people, both for our successes and our failures. The Single European Act of 1993 has brought a new environment within which to look to the future and a broader context in which to rediscover our Celtic-ness, but there is still an uphill pull. We have yet to recover our lost limb, both literally and metaphorically. Meanwhile, the progress which has been made will serve us in good stead, provided we can see it for what it is: a return to the rapprochement stage as a people, with much growing up to be done before we can take up our native way of dealing with life in a culturally authentic manner, one which connects with our pre-colonial tradition, yet operates out of the twenty/twenty-first century context. Truly committed persons, both north and south of the border, will have to continue to approach the

task of reunification within this broader context with determination
tempered by sensitivity, and not flinch at the price that will have to
be paid. The voice of the oppressed, together with that of their
trusted leaders, will have to continue to heard and respected and age-
old tactics of recognizing only the voice of middle class
"respectability," be that political or ecclesiastical or a combination
of both, will have to be set aside. There is reason to hope that this
is a chapter of our history which we have left behind--and we now walk
the path of unity with a courage and assurance which we have not known
before.

Contemporary Irish Society: Some Dominant Features

There are as many faces of contemporary Irish society as there
are pairs of eyes to behold that face. Since I have decided to rely
primarily on my own lived experience of over fifty years as a citizen of
the Republic, whatever I share will inevitably carry that flavor, the
emphasis will be primarily on the twenty-six counties. Let me reiterate
from the start, however, that my vision encompasses the entire island
and a deep and central awareness never lets my gaze stray too far away
from the deep psychic wound which the border constitutes. My work for
over a decade brought me into some contact with life "on the other
side," just about enough to be able to understand something of what
those who share their experience of life from that perspective are
saying, to respect it, live in essential solidarity with them, and move
in unison with them towards a unity which will be mutually liberating.

Within the Republic, there are many faces and many contrasting
realities. There is the well-heeled middle class who enjoy status,

fulfillment and all that security which leadership/membership of the monied sector secures. The professionals, the politicians and church persons (bishops, priests, and religious alike, with, as always, notable exceptions), belong here. These are the maintainers/operators of the various institutions of church and state which, for the most part, act "as lámh a chéile" (hand in hand). They/we work hard for the good of all, express genuine concern for the plight of the oppressed, support many praiseworthy initiatives to lessen their burdens and frequently make considerable donations from our "private" resources in their favor. Some from among the ranks of both religious and clergy give up the "good life" and security to which their own group social status entitles them, and live their lives side by side with the marginalized of society. Government bodies have devised "schemes" to alleviate the hardship of the underprivileged. But the gap continues to widen between "the haves" and "the have-nots," both in terms of the steadily increasing bank accounts and dwindling numbers of the former, and the dramatically decreasing material resources and increasing numbers of the latter. Something more is most assuredly being called for; can that something more be systemic change? I think so. But let me flesh out the picture a little more.

Studies have been done and reports published but an analysis of them is beyond the scope of this thesis. A flavor of the scene will have to suffice. In the course of a recent telephone conversation with a social worker friend in Ireland who has responsibility for directing social service team work in one of our larger cities, I asked what she considered the most serious social problems today. Without hesitation

she named unemployment, particularly in urban areas, and quickly added

another manifestation of the same problem in rural Ireland, namely

emigration. She was quite firm in her designation of this single

expression of systemic injustice as the root cause of virtually all the

ills she and her colleagues are called upon day after day to deal with.

She went on to talk about the heart-rending scenes that are covered by

the national media every Christmas of parents saying a reluctant

farewell to teenage sons and daughters who have not freely chosen to

seek a livelihood abroad but who are forced to do so for lack of

opportunity at home. She spoke of the rising statistics for alcohol and

other drug addictions, of the disrespect for the real needs of the

"travelling people/itinerants," and, worst of all, she apprised me of

the results of a recent bit of research conducted on behalf of the

european Community which ranked Ireland as having the second highest

suicide rate in that community. Knowing how deeply-rooted in our native

culture this young woman and her husband are, and how they strive to

share this with their two young children, I asked what impact, if any,

she thought the native cultural influence was having on everyday life in

Ireland. Her reply was interesting. She said,

> It is difficult to compete with the media. The lads want to have
> what the other kids have at school, and the trends are set by the
> barrage of cartoons which appear there. You have the turtles, the
> Simpsons . . . all imported . . . and that spreads out into clothes
> and books, and the kids want it. It's hard to compete against that.

This was another face of reality. I wanted more so I asked: "And what

about religion?" The reply was instant: "A middle-age phenomenon."

She went on to explain the amount of damage the Bishop Casey affair and

associated pedophile exposures of recent years has done among young

people. She hastened to clarify that it was not the sexual aspect so much as the hypocrisy that has disillusioned youth. The unemployment kicks in with that. She also shared that in her opinion spirituality is alive and well and is finding expression in new ways, in a more humanistic approach to life, psychological theories and the like.

While my friend is a smart, well-educated, well-balanced mother and professional practitioner, hers is but one view and I do not want to substitute it for scientific research. But other conversations with members of my family and other friends who are actively involved in the helping professions, together with a scanning of newspaper headings, corroborate my social-worker friend's findings. With regard to the ubiquity of unfreedom, both in the urban and the rural setting, the following quotation from The Sunday Independent of May 15, 1994, gives a graphic description of the present reality. The context is the brutal murder of a Dublin city/Birmingham city young woman and her seven year old son in a rural area of Ireland where she had come to live in the interests of her son's greater safety:

> The mayhem of the city seemed manageable. As long as there was some part of Ireland that told us it could be otherwise.
> Crime stalked our streets. Paramilitaries, in their other guise of armed raiders, put police and postmistresses, bank clerks and bankroll security guards at risk. Gang warfare over illicit drugs dogged back alleys. Prostitution paraded on our broad boulevards. Grannies died grappling with thugs who felled them as they took their handbags. Thieves were not content with theft, but vandalized homes before heading off with personal belongings and the hard-earned trappings of modern living. Women could no longer walk alone. Children were challenged to do drugs. And shopkeepers paid percentages to protect their premises.
> What kept us going was not just sensible adjustment for survival, but the belief that somehow it was not so bad, because there was another Ireland. The death of Imelda Riney, her baby son

Liam, and Fr. Joseph Walsh, has put paid to all that. Not surprizingly, we are not only deeply saddened, but depressed.[1]

I will call on just one more bit of recent writing to corroborate the opinions expressed in my recent telephone conversations.

The July/August 1993 edition of Doctrine and Life published an edited version of a paper which Marian Finucane, presenter of Live Line radio program, delivered at the 1992 Glenstall Ecumenical Conference. The title of this paper is "Values and Attitudes in a Changing Ireland." In the context of the previously expressed views, Marian's reflections are interesting. By way of introduction she makes some observations which give her particular context:

> The radio programme I present on RTE, Live Line, involves sitting alone in a studio taking calls from people all over the country on an extraordinary range of topics. Matters for discussion can go from the shape of tea bags to the Maastricht Treaty, from annoyance about road signs to questions concerning religion, from politics to the cost of children's clothing, to education--the full range of the things that people talk about in their own homes or in public houses. . . . I cannot but hear the extensive range of cultures from which people speak. . . . We do our best to hear what it is like being poor in Ireland today.[2]

Marian proceeds to share her findings under six headings, all of which are interesting. I find both her headings and the order in which she presents them most enlightening: Jobs and Dignity; A Religious People; Women Thinking; Moral Debates; Pressure Groups; and Learning to Listen. What a perfect stage for Pastoral Counseling! What a confirmation of the experience of my telephone conversationalists' views! But first let me share a few of Marian's fascinating reflections, all based on her own

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[1] Patricia Redlich, The Sunday Independent, May 15, 1994, 15.

[2] Marian Finucane, "Values and Attitudes in a Changing Ireland," Doctrine and Life 43 (July/August 1993): 233.

consummate listening ability (which I have personally observed on numerous occasions). I have got to be selective but I trust I am true to her message. Under "Jobs and Dignity," Marian reflects,

> In a word, the poor are alienated. People feel alienated from the institutions of state, they feel alienated because they have lost control over their own lives. they can listen to programmes, read newspapers but they sense that the consensus of those running the country excludes them. . . . So, there's a sense of exclusion and of marginalisation arising from unemployment and from the failure of the rest of society to provide systems and means of dignity in people's lives. . . . Within this bleak outlook the wonder is that human dignity, humour and decency, survive. These, the most deprived people in our community, people whose dominant interest is in their own survival, haven't lost the confidence in their equal right to express an opinion. . . . The debate that ensued by ordinary people phoning in was interesting, informed, varied, analytical. It gave me a sense of pride that Irish people don't of necessity go the narrow jingoistic route. There is a remarkable richness and diversity of views and a remarkable ability to express them.[3]

This report goes on to share what kind of "a religious people" whose who contact Live Line show themselves to be: "It is clearly agreed among those who phone in, from the atheist to the saint, that 'we're a religious people.'" The number of people who phone in on religious topics together with the depth of interest they show, by the manner in which they engage in these topics, moves Marian to endorse the verdict quoted above. What sort of a religious people we are is not equally clear but there are a few pointers: some are happy with the moving statues, cures and apparitions; others make angry pleas that we might come out of the dark ages and take an intelligent approach to our religion; very few from among the members of the upper levels of the hierarchical Roman Catholic Church will make themselves available to enter into sincere dialogue with those who seek answers to their

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[3]Ibid., 334.

authentic questionings; members of the minority churches in the Republic exhibit a "quite astonishing tolerance and fond amusement" at the diverse views expressed among the Catholics. Marian makes a very cogent observation when she shares that she has never once in all her years of listening heard a word of criticism of the gospels, while she hears criticism "over and over again . . . of priests, of clergy, of the institutional church." Her lament is that criticism from within the church is regarded as an act of treachery, there is no room for debate and the church appears to allow no space for lay independent thinking. She quotes John A. Murphy, Professor of Modern History at University College Cork, in this connection: "They have lost the intellectuals and they have never seemed to prevent their estrangement."

Under the heading of "Women Thinking," the single clearest message is that the role of women has changed radically in recent years. She pays due tribute to the significant contribution our President, Mary Robinson has made here. She also flags down the impact of feminist thought and goes on to develop the theme of male/female role reversal and role modification in a manner which says to me that there are signs that woman is beginning to hold that dignified position she knew in pre-colonial days once again in Ireland:

> If you take that Mary Robinson as President of Ireland has somehow enhanced the confidence of all women in the country, women's ordination in the Church of Ireland was celebrated in a way that perhaps they themselves don't know the scale of, by people who see women priests as a symbol of hope.

Under "Moral Debates" and "Pressure Groups," Marian covers the issues of contraception, abortion, and divorce. Her unequivocal criticism of the total absence of any proper debate on these crucial

issues is well taken. She underlines the urgent necessity for a definitive separation of the roles of Catholic Church and State. In support of her viewpoint she quotes liberal theologian Professor Enda McDonagh of Maynooth:

> Bishops and other Church leaders must be specially sensitive to the danger of manipulating, however unconsciously, citizens or politicians in areas where political judgements do not coincide with their own. The freedom of Catholic politicians to discharge their political tasks is essential to the health of democracy in Ireland and elsewhere. For that reason alone it is also essential to the health of the Catholic Church.[4]

I will give the last word on values and attitudes, the two last words, really, to Marian herself:

> Margaret MacCurtain, Dominican Sister, history lecturer and feminist, admitted to me that at times it's extremely difficult to stick it out but she has great hope that among ordinary people of God, among priests, among religious sisters and among the laity there is a groundswell of movement that eventually would percolate up. She is an optimist. There are many who feel defeated and excluded. The gospel is not the problem: it's the people who claim ownership and interpretation of the Gospel that constitute the problem.[5]

> I am, as I said, merely a listener, I listen for a living. I think it might be useful for the Roman Catholic Church to consider that listening is what's most important now--to dissent, to the women, to all of those who have questions because the reason there are questions is that answers and discourse are sincerely sought. It is not adequate any more to say, "it is the rule, it has always been so," or "It's a mystery." That denigrates the intelligence of the People of God.[6]

There is so much more I want to say here but I must be brief. My personal experience of the quality of Marian's program leads me to pay great attention to what she has to say. Her listening skills might

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[4] Ibid., 342.

[5] Ibid., 340.

[6] Ibid., 342.

well be the envy of any counselor. I want to add that I am personally aware of some of those signs of hope to which Margaret MacCurtain refers; there are prophetic voices and they include some of the bishops. My hope is based on the initiative taken by the six bishops of the West of Ireland to procure equitable treatment for that neglected area of the country in the distribution of European Community funds in Ireland. The final report of their study of the West of Ireland: Developing the West Together, A Crusade for Survival, was published in February of this year. It is professional, inspiring, and encouraging; my hope is that it may also be prophetic. Addressing the opening seminar to launch this venture, Bishop John Kirby of Clonfert expressed how the bishops saw their role in the initiative:

> We see ourselves as facilitators of a process which we hope will lead to constructive changes in the lives of our peoples. We are not experts in any of the relevant areas; we have not got executive power; we are not trying to tell others their business; quite simply we are using our collective voice to highlight a growing social problem--the problem of decline in the West of Ireland . . . falling agricultural incomes, unemployment, emigration, deteriorating social services, a poor infrastructure, a growing centralization and a sense of fatalism which all of these engender. . . . The genesis of our involvement lies in the fact that some of us were approached by people in the various parishes asking us to speak out on their behalf. They felt voiceless and they knew that we still had got a voice.[7]

I cannot leave this topic without some cursory glance in the direction of what is happening in terms of the ownership and development of our artistic and creative talents at the present time. I have found an incredibly rich expression of this reality in Robert O'Driscoll's

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[7]John Kirby, Developing the West Together, a Crusade for Survival (N.p.: n.p., n.d.), 5.

phenomenal <u>The Celtic Consciousness</u>[8]. In this context I can simply

whet your appetite to taste and see for yourself how the spirit of the

Celt lives on, despite the odds, and what treasures lie buried beneath

the frustration and despair which screams out for attention in the

alarming suicide rate to which I referred earlier on.

Pages 225-242 of O'Driscoll's collection take us through the

course of Irish history by means of a series of twenty-three annotated

plates, recently photographed and linked back, in some instances, as far

as Neolithic times. Introducing this collection Kevin Danaher, the

compiler, has this to say:

> The small selection of illustrations which follows is largely
> personal, largely idiosyncratic, and is designed to show an ancient
> tradition surviving adversity and still able to influence life in
> our own time. How ancient that tradition may be, we can only begin
> to guess. Much of its, no doubt, is of Celtic origin, but equally
> much or even more is still more ancient, reaching back and back into
> the time of the first human occupation of Ireland. Much of it is of
> later introduction, an inheritance from Viking, Norman, Flemish,
> Welsh, English, Scots, Huguenots, Palatines and even more recent
> comers into our midst, German clockmakers, Italian restaurateurs and
> so on up to the present day. Thus traditions are established and a
> vigorous tradition can readily accept contributions from others
> while retaining its own character.[9]

A delightful verbal pen and ink picture of the West of Ireland

is painted by Maire Cruise O'Brien in her treatment of the role of the

poet in Irish society from earliest times right up to the present day.

Quite apart from her scholarly treatment of her subject, the picture of

the Gaeltacht landscape and what is becoming of it in the interests of

tourism is challenging to all who are sincerely concerned both for the

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[8](New York: George Braziller, 1981).

[9]Robert O'Driscoll, <u>The Celtic Consciousness</u> (New York: George
Braziller, 1981), 224.

immediate needs of the present inhabitants and for what they can see

beyond that, in terms of the deeper needs of the soul of a people.

Maire Cruise O'Brien puts us in touch with the unbroken tradition of

Irish poetry in this respect and moves on to consider the riches of a

prose poem entitled "Cré na Cille" which encapsulates much of the magic

of Irish poetry:

> It is not altogether surprising therefore that Cré na Cille, our one
> outstanding contemporary prose work, should treat of a typical
> Gaelic mythopaeic theme: the entire narrative is recounted through
> the conversations of a community of corpses buried under the Church-
> yard clay.[10]

My next O'Driscoll quotation pays tribute to contemporary art

and architecture in the context of presenting the work of twelve

contemporary Irish Celtic artists. It comes from Richard Demarco:

> Ann Madden finds her inspiration in the megaliths of Ireland and in
> the landscape of her native land, Connemara stone, and the great
> storm-tossed Atlantic cloud formations. . . . She infuses the
> ancient megalithic forms with a modern consciousness and explosive
> sensuality, painting as much out of the depths of her own being as
> out of the depths of the mythological past, creating a "heart of
> reality" that "craves for light," with the light in turn craving
> "for further human light, 'light,' which isolates every solid mass
> simply by virtue of its inner limit--whether delible or not--lying
> within us." I am reminded of Andre Breton's statement: deeper than
> the deepest ocean is the heart of a woman. . . .
>   Brian King is an Irish artist concerned with the mystery of the
> human presence in the Irish landscape. As a sculptor he literally
> plots the ancient pathways of his ancestors, the builders of the
> dolmens and burial cairns, in an attempt to discover his own
> identity as a modern Irishman . . . the circumference of one
> civilization becomes the centre of the next, but many have turned
> away from the neat world of the contemporary art gallery in an
> attempt to perceive and express a mystery that eluded the classical
> world of Greece and Rome. What they seek in their work is . . . the
> reconciliation of spirit and matter, art and life, and art and
> technology; human energy working in harmony with the Earth Spirit

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[10]Ibid., 243.

and the cyclical power of Nature; and the release of consciousness and art from the thin layer of our twentieth-century time space.[11]

Before concluding this section I have to pay tribute to the proliferation of Anglo-Irish writing which has won award after award in recent years. There is a wide range of themes, styles and genres, some bringing the focus to bear on the contemporary scene and offering a subtle commentary through the writer's particular perceptive lens; others reach back into the ancient culture and give it a voice and relevance in today's world; still others opt for the stage and have found their artistic creations in demand throughout the English-speaking world, e.g., Brian Friel's <u>Dancing at Lughnasa</u> of recent London and New York fame. There are five characteristics which all these compositions have in common: the poetry of their language, be it prose or poetry; the flare for story, irrespective of the particular genre chosen; the use of the English language, though there may be Irish words and phrases interspersed throughout; the use of a rhythm, syntax and idiom which reflects the Irish origin of this rendering of the English language, and finally, the writers share and write from out of a common tradition, whether they live north or south of the border. In my opinion this corpus of literature is a living symbol of hope. It proclaims the possibility of a harmonious relationship between two quite distinct cultures (the Irish and the Anglo-Saxon), and thus gives the lie to the assumption that domination/oppression is the only kind of relationship which these two cultures can experience.

This brief bird's eye view of contemporary Ireland has looked at

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[11]Ibid., 550.

our reality from two distinct perspectives: that of social analysis and that of artistic expression. The latter gives us an insight into what preoccupies the soul/spirit/mind of the unencumbered contemporary Irish woman/man. An outstanding common theme is the search for a contemporary identity which is rooted in our cultural heritage. The former is fraught with frustration at being denied the basic necessities of life. Is it not interesting that Marian Finucane expresses her amazement that people whose primary focus in life is survival should be so ready to express their opinions publicly, engage their minds in struggling with the more universal truths of existence, and prove themselves highly competent in doing so? The juxtaposition of the social analysis perspective side by side with the artistic one, coupled with Marian Finucane's perceptive observation, uncovers a valuable insight for me in terms of pastoral counseling. It is of cardinal importance to be aware, when members of the first group present for counseling service, that only a very small percentage of their need is addressed when/if the immediate sources of oppression are dealt with. Their most acute and urgent need is, decidedly, to empower them to secure the basic necessities of life for themselves and those whom they hold dear. But they share the same cultural heritage and the same longing to be connected with, and give expression to it, as the members of the second group, and any counseling service which attempts to sell them short on this has been profoundly disrespectful of them as persons. This leads me into the third section of this chapter.

Counseling/Psychotherapy: Contemporary
Irish Practice

I have not had an opportunity to conduct an extensive research
of the present practice in our country. I have, however, been able to
establish a sufficient number of basic facts to enable me to move
forward towards some tentative conclusions with regard to the relevance
of the American experience to our contemporary needs.

We do not have a single accrediting body in Ireland nor is there
a licensing requirement in the manner of the American legislation.
There are a number of accrediting bodies, all Dublin based, which issue
their own membership requirements and stated goals; among them are the
following: The Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative
Psychotherapy (IAHIP), The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), The
Irish Association of Alcoholic and Addictive Counseling (IAAAC), The
Irish Association of Drama, Music and Art Therapists (IADMAT), The Irish
Institute of Guidance Counselors (IIGC), and a whole host of others.
There is no specific association of Pastoral Counselors. When I
consulted with a member of the executive committee of one of the above-
listed bodies recently with regard to what qualifications are expected
of a counselor her reply was simply, "Anybody can be a counselor!" She
reminded me of the three-year-degree program in Pastoral Ministry which
has been set up in Dublin in recent years and added that graduates have
"a loose association among themselves." (As I listened I said to
myself: "The tuatha model of organization is not dead yet, Moladh go
deo le Dia!). Our conversation moved into the "cleavage" which exists
between those involved in professional counseling and "those in the
ministry." I was told of the wonderful work which is done by "priests,

brothers and nuns," some of whom are members of the IAAAC but the general impression was that professionalism was considered the exception rather than the rule among those engaged in "the ministry." I know from my own experience that she reflected the general opinion throughout the country. When I return, I plan to research the situation more thoroughly but this overview is sufficient for my present purposes. It verifies that the field of Pastoral Counseling, as I have come to experience it here in the States, is new territory in this precise expression at home in Ireland. Decisions will have to be taken with regard to the best approach to transplanting the richness of the American experience in the most productive possible manner into this new climate. A significant part of the requisite debate will have to focus on the advisability or otherwise of inserting the professional practice of Pastoral Counseling into the traditional ministry of the Christian churches.

A very significant factor in the whole debate will evaluate the likelihood of the laity being perceived as equal partners in every sense of the word. If the prognosis in this regard is not good the more advisable course of action may well be to play safe and allow the "cleavage" to develop. A decided advantage of the former course of action is the opportunity it offers of engaging the age-old tradition of anamcharas with all its richness and of taking the message of the Second Vatican Council seriously with regard to the universal priesthood of all God's people. A high risk factor is the predominantly hierarchical, conservative and male-dominated ethos of the dominant Christian church, the Roman Catholic church. I was struck by an observation which was

shared by my informant on the present practice of psychotherapy and counseling in Ireland with regard to contact with the clergy. She had noted that while individual members of the clergy may sometimes refer some of their "flock" for counseling, their general practice differs significantly from other care providers such as social workers, teachers, or doctors. The latter will typically seek lists of the names of individual counselors or counseling agencies, whereas the former will control the referral process personally by making individual recommendations to counselors of their personal choice.

An associated matter for consideration is the wisdom of using the term "Pastoral Counseling" at all for this ministry. Confusion with pastoral care may not be to its advantage and any association with a considerable corpus of episcopal pastorals which are nothing short of downrightly oppressive of the plain people of God would not promote the cause. These are decisions which should not, in my opinion, be either taken lightly nor overlooked as they are significant for the actual practice of Pastoral Counseling in the country, both in the short term and in the longer term. I move to my fourth and final section.

Possible Approaches to Contemporary Irish Pastoral Counseling

The first question which needs to be answered at this point is, I believe, whether a transfer of learning from the American experience to the present Irish context is possible/desirable? My personal reply is a resounding, "Yes." But I hasten to add the provisos which accompany that "Yes," not in the spirit of weakening the affirmative response, but rather, all the better to ensure that the considerable

riches of the American tradition be so engaged as to empower, not
dominate, an already much-too-dominated people.

Materials from the American experience need to be selected
carefully with cultural sensitivity as a central criterion. It is my
hope that the range of material reviewed in this thesis will serve as a
useful guide in the selection process. I refer equally to materials
presented here from our native Irish culture and to those from American
counseling theory and practice. I will first address the question of
our Irish culture.

I trust it has been made sufficiently clear that there is a
multiculturality to be respected which extends back to the dim distant
days of the primal invasions; which has known multiple inculturation
experiences throughout the centuries; which continues to experience
acculturation today; which has known eight-hundred years of
colonization, and which continues to struggle with the literally
"bloody" consequences of unfinished business where the right of our
people to self-governance is concerned. Central to a respect for this
multiculturality is a recognition of the pervasive influence of our
native mythology which continues to exert its influence on the Irish
psyche throughout the millennia and which provides the most enlightening
single clue to what makes an Irish Celt "tick" right up to the present
day. Closely associated with the mythology is the nodal position of
spirituality, irrespective of its varied forms of expression from one
century to the next. And closely associated with both mythology and
spirituality is the national propensity to think and talk the
imaginative language of poetry in preference to the logical language of

prose, with all that that entails, not only in conscious artistic

expression, but in the ordinary language of everyday exchange. We

continue to be a nation of storytellers and if anyone wants to minister

to our soul's needs in the service of counseling or in any other way,

they must learn to respect and understand the language of story. We are

a people who have a natural love for learning and cannot be satisfied

with superficiality. We have a love for freedom, diversity and what

will appear to the outsider as "organized chaos" in the way in which we

like to organize our lives. We have taken to the Gospel message and its

central character "like a duck to water" but we need to be freed from

the accumulated shackles of imperialistic and monarchical administrative

structures. We have a natural predisposition for feminist/liberation/

process/meitheal theology and we are crying out for the encouragement/

empowerment to engage it in the management of our lives. We are not in

need of ready-made answers from "on high" to the questions which the

daily circumstances of our lives present to us; we deserve more respect

than that. We suffer from a pervasive identity confusion because of an

extended and brutal experience of colonization and we are in need of a

form of counseling service which is sensitive to, and capable of

addressing that reality professionally. We likewise need an approach to

counseling which is well versed in, and genuinely proud of, our ancient

tradition of equality among the sexes with more than a strong hint of a

primordial matriarchal society, emerging as it did, from the days of

Cessair and Banba of the waters, respected in our ancient Brehon Laws,

in the custom of fosterage and in the practice of matrilineal descent in

the lives of the tribes. We are not a people who invest in commercial

success or who derive fulfillment from empire-building or material

possessions. We are lovers of life as can be seen from our practice of

spending more money per capita on entertainment than any other country

in Europe. We have a propensity to cultivate altered states of

consciousness to enhance our capacity to celebrate, but when our spirit

is crushed this easily transfers into the abuse of alcohol and other

substances to drown our sorrow and mask our lowered self-esteem. Given

our volatile temperament, this can spill over into abusiveness of

persons and property, even those who are nearest and dearest to us, even

to our very selves, as recent suicide rate figures testify. The quantum

leap from our native superiority complex to the colonially-imposed

inferiority complex has nurtured a codependency syndrome in our midst

which is in urgent need of attention if we are to take our place as

equal partners among the countries of the European Community, and thus

among the peoples of the world. We need to be facilitated in gaining

access to our deepest cultural roots if we are not to be swept along the

path of materialism and thus sell our birthright for a mess of pottage.

We need to experience genuine community once more if we are to develop

an authentic Irish identity as the foundation from which to make our

contribution to the evolution of life on this planet. We need to

abandon the dualism which we acquired in relatively more recent

centuries, and return to a holistic response to the total web of life,

in the spirit of our ancient ancestors, but in a contemporary mode of

expression. These are some of our deepest-rooted needs. A response to

these is the pathway to an authentic Pastoral Counseling service which

will contribute to genuine freedom of spirit, which will be grounded in

that spirituality which as consistently surfaced as our most authentic
self-definition.

In Chapter III I outlined what I believe is potentially most
helpful to the Irish scene in the contemporary American experience, both
theory and practice. I see the Larry Kent Graham counseling model
coupled with "sacred psychology" as comprising the best of the American
tradition in terms of contemporary Irish relevance. Individual
counseling can only be effective in the contemporary Irish context if it
is contextualized psychosystemically. Its scientific grounding in
quantum physics is decidedly advantageous as is its reliance on depth
psychology and process theology. The model does not need to be
transposed into the Irish context. Rather, its framework needs to be
restructured using native talent and materials and a methodology which
involves those who opt to avail of its service in their own lives and
ministry. I see great potential in the anamchara tradition and believe
that the work done on that tradition here in the States by Edward C.
Sellner can be enormously helpful to us back home. I refer to his
Wisdom of the Celtic Saints and, even more especially, to Mentoring. The
Ministry of Spiritual Kinship.[12] I believe a recently published
survey of the practice of psychotherapy in Ireland by the current
Cathaoirleach of the IAAAC, Edward Boyne, should prove most helpful. I
am quite certain that the active engagement of Joe McVeigh, author of A
Wounded Church and Renewing the Irish Church, would be an invaluable
asset to designing a culturally sensitive and eminently practical model

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[12]Sellner, Wisdom of the Celtic Saints; Edward C. Sellner
Mentoring. The Ministry of Spiritual Kinship (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria
Press, 1990).

which could be equally adaptable to all parts of the country, north,
south, east and west. The specific contributions I can see Joe McVeigh
making to this work are three in number: an informed, native,
culturally-sensitive liberation theology, which he has already outlined
and termed "meitheal," based on the ancient tradition of neighbor
helping neighbor; a credibility in the eyes of the most oppressed of our
people, in view of his fearless outspokenness and prophetic personal
witness to solidarity with victims of systemic injustice; a passion for
genuine Gospel-inspired ministry where class or sex do not blind one to
authenticity. I see that Monica McGoldrick's presentation of a paradigm
for counselling Irish Americans can be very useful at home in Ireland
provided one keeps the more distant history of our people in mind while
drawing on her well-researched and eminently practical pointers to
presenting problems, deeper causes (extending to the experience of
colonization, but not further back, it seems to me), and possible-
culturally sensitive responses.

    And this is where I must stop. I had prepared much of Joe
McVeigh's material for inclusion here but I realize that to do justice
to it would require a whole new thesis. That will have to happen in the
home context, hopefully with the active involvement of Joe himself. My
last word is a message of sincere gratitude to all those Americans who
have made such well-honed resources available to my people and to those
of other parts of the world. <u>Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir</u>.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Pastoral Counseling.

24 Feb. 1995
Date

Director's Signature