SECTION 1
NEW FORMS AND MODELS OF MINISTRY

Editor's Introduction

When the Editorial Board envisioned the fortieth-anniversary volume of *Reflective Practice*, we thought it might be appropriate to take this opportunity to look into the future. Where do we see clinical theological training going in the next forty years? By posing the theme "new forms and models of ministry," we intended to identify those new forms and models that are emerging among us—models, forms, and trends that will shape how we do clinical theological education as ACPE-certified chaplain educators and as supervisors and directors of field education programs.

This volume begins with a forum section, that section of the journal wherein we invite people to share more personally in shorter entries. I thought it might be interesting to flesh out some of these new forms and models of ministry. What follows in section 1 is therefore a smorgasbord of short articles. Let me offer some observations and comments on what you are about to read.

By "new forms and models of ministry," the Editorial Board had in mind the broad spectrum of ministry, including congregational ministries. Yet, as inquiries and submissions arrived on my desk as editor, I found that most of the entries were from the world of chaplaincy. I should not have been surprised since most of the readers of *Reflective Practice* are chaplains or chaplain educators. Actually, I was surprised by the diversity of types and forms of chaplaincy these days. There are hospital chaplains, hospice chaplains, military chaplains, college chaplains, prison chaplains, business and industrial chaplains, police chaplains, disaster chaplains, and many others. Some of the newer forms of chaplaincy and CPE are community-based chaplaincy programs that provide spiritual care services beyond the walls of an established

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institution or organization. These newer forms of chaplaincy are included in the forum that follows. Yet, as I reviewed these and the many other inquiries that crossed my desk, it occurred to me that this impressive array of ministries could be understood as *new forms of the chaplaincy model*, not necessarily a new model of ministry.

Several respected leaders of chaplaincy-related organizations have recently suggested that chaplaincy is becoming the predominant model of ministry in the twenty-first century. A bold statement, without a doubt! They cite as evidence the steady growth of jobs in chaplaincy in contrast to the steady decline of jobs in congregations and denominationally funded work. They note that chaplaincy positions often pay better and have better benefits and more regular hours than most congregational ministries, thus attracting more newly minted clergy. Moreover, many bivocational religious leaders these days combine part-time work serving a congregation with part-time work as a chaplain. In such cases, inevitably the dominant model that guides what they do *in both settings* is that of the chaplain. I wonder how many religious leaders of local congregations operate essentially as a chaplain, not primarily as a pastor, preacher, teacher, or even administrator. Chaplaincy as a model of ministry is becoming so widespread that caregiving is synonymous with ministry. And where do religious leaders get this model? How has it become so widely embraced? Is it possible that CPE, which has been with us now for some eighty years, has shaped a whole generation of clergypersons to think, operate, and function like chaplains, regardless of their ministry context?

When this journal marked its twentieth anniversary, the Editorial Board commissioned Robert Fuller, then professor of religious studies at Bradley University, to review the first twenty volumes of the *Journal of Supervision and Training in* Ministry (the name of this journal until 2007) and reflect on the themes and material therein. Fuller's essay, which is in volume 20, is worth a second read if you can find a copy. Among many observations and insights, Fuller suggested that CPE's focus on "laws of spirituality," as reflected in the "living human document," both contributed to and paralleled the larger trend in American religious life away from traditional religious language toward a language of spirituality. Fuller did not disdain this trend. Rather, he thought it was a kind of spiritual awakening, different but similar to the spiritual awakenings that have dotted the American religious landscape over the centuries. He concluded that "clinical and counseling approaches to ministry over the past few decades have advanced a profound reorientation in Ameri-

can religious life."[1] That reorientation, he wrote, included a reorientation in language for God, a new understanding of God's covenant with the natural order, a new theology of emotion, and a new inclusiveness. In short, it offered a new way of doing pastoral or practical theology. All of these trends worked to turn an entire generation of clergy away from religion and implied judgments regarding its truth claims toward the nonjudgmental orientation of the world of spirituality. Several of the entries to follow reflect this trend; their authors minister to people outside of religious institutional structures or roles, going to people "where they are" both physically and spiritually.

Since 2000, the trends that Fuller identified have only intensified. Chaplaincy has grown in both numbers and professionalism. Chaplaincy programs have gradually given up the term "pastoral care" in favor of "spiritual care." Denominational chaplains are being replaced with interfaith chaplains. In this regard, I direct your attention to Melanie-Préjean Sullivan's story of her work as an interfaith chaplain in a traditional Catholic college as one example of this trend. The growing interest in spirituality in American culture has been enhanced by the renewal of interest in the ancient art of spiritual direction in mainline Christian circles and in the meditative practices of Buddhism and Hinduism. Spirituality has become the normative way of being religious. What is true in the world of religion is mirrored in the larger culture. Religious pluralism, augmented by an increase in immigration and interfaith marriages, has grown in the last twenty years. Younger Americans are less religious in formal and conventional ways. Yet, they still hunger (maybe more than ever) for a spirituality that is vital, that works, and that is convenient and meets their needs. Those who are "spiritual but not religious" now have their own niche in American religious life. Certainly, chaplains deserve credit for ministering to all people, but they especially minister to these "spiritual, but not religious" folks, people alienated from traditional institutional religion. Maybe this trend will reach its zenith in what Trent Thornley argues in his description of the San Francisco Night Ministry—that everyone, whether they are religious or not, has a right to spiritual care. A universal human right to spiritual care . . . another bold statement!

Influence of Pastoral Psychotherapy

When I was in seminary, the emerging model of ministry was that of the pastoral counselor or pastoral psychotherapist. Pastoral counseling paral-

leled the CPE movement, sharing many of the same values and assumptions but also charting its own path. In those days, we were all reading Carl Rogers, Rollo May, and Paul Tillich. The parallels between the Christian message and psychotherapy seemed obvious. So, as I formed my understanding of what I was to do as a young minister, I kept returning to the image of healer, or growth facilitator, or, in short, counselor. I used all of my elective classes in seminary to fill up on counseling classes, and I even stayed on an extra year to add more course work in pastoral counseling (called pastoral theology then). Therapy or personal growth was the model that shaped my understanding of ministry. For me, "counseling" became more than just another activity in ministry but a perspective on all of ministry. Eventually, or maybe inevitably, this model of ministry led me into specialized ministry instead of congregational ministry. As I reflect back on my professional journey, I can clearly see that the pastoral counseling movement, like the CPE movement, reflected and maybe even sparked the spiritual awakening that Fuller described in his 2000 essay. Since then, however, pastoral counseling has dissipated as a movement, and the task of integrating spirituality and psychotherapy has been taken up by the broader world of professional psychology. "Spirituality" is now a staple in the curriculum and professional education of psychotherapists. Spirituality is rapidly becoming the normative expression of religious sentiment.

Based on my professional experience as a pastoral psychotherapist, I have two more observations to make. First, compared to the CPE movement, pastoral counselors have more sharply and uniquely located the activity of God in the private conversation between patient and therapist and in the inner dynamics of the client. The Divine-human encounter is optimally experienced not in the conventional forms, rituals, and communal activities of religion but in the privacy of the therapist's office. Or, as one of my colleagues said recently, "God is not out there but in here" (gesturing to herself). This is another aspect of the shift Fuller was describing, the increasing privatization of religion, a shift paralleled by and perhaps contributed to by the rise of psychotherapy, in particular pastoral psychotherapy. Secondly, in the growing privatization of religion, we must also acknowledge the decline of ritual as the primary vehicle of healing. Chaplains and spiritually integrated psychotherapists provide spiritual care by talking with patients. In past centuries in America, and still in traditional religions around the world, the primary vehicle of healing is the ritual, not the conversation, and most of these rituals are community rites. Many have noted a decline of ritual in the secular cultures of the West, but "decline" is misleading.

While there has been a decline in prescribed, formal rituals, there has been a rise in creative, individualized, and self-made rituals, or as I would say, ritual in service of the conversation or arising out of the conversation. Many CPE educators will recognize this issue as one that surfaces with students from traditionally religious backgrounds, who initially approach spiritual care through the vehicle of a ritual and must be taught to step out from behind the ritual and have a conversation with the patient.

The next 20 years

Thinking about the next twenty years of this journal, I believe many of these same trends will continue and that new trends, issues, and challenges will arise that we can now only imagine. Two issues seem relevant and pressing.

Traditional theological education has done well at training spiritual caregivers. And CPE, in particular, has done an outstanding job at training seminarians to be good listeners, compassionate and authentic. The new forms and models of ministry that are described in this section, if they are a representative sample of what is emerging out there, suggest that we need to train future seminarians to be entrepreneurs/administrators as well as caregivers, whether we are preparing them for social justice work, for missionary activities, for new forms of congregational life, or even just for learning how to market chaplaincy services. In addition, institutional employers are pressing existing chaplaincy programs to do better at explaining or justifying their services to administrators or donors and to do so in the language of business, not spirituality. This will not be easy. It is difficult because caregivers and entrepreneurs/administrators are essentially different personality types. But we who are in clinical theological education are good at teaching people how to live with conflicting impulses, ambiguous roles, and messy dynamics. Already there are a few experiments in how to train chaplains to "think like entrepreneurs"—to master the basics of marketing, strategic planning, multi-year budgeting, public relations, fundraising, and employee performance reviews.

The other issue that seems to be on the horizon is the ambiguous relationship between chaplains and their denominations. Today's chaplains are employees of medical institutions, the government, nonprofit organizations, and even for-profit large corporations, and increasingly these employers are doing what denominational bodies traditionally did. Clearly, they are deter-

mining work hours, job descriptions, performance reviews, and compensation levels for their clergy employees. In some circumstances, they are also doing what denominational bodies used to do—establishing ethical standards and holding chaplains accountable to said standards, providing a supportive community of peers, evaluating whether people are qualified to be chaplains, determining what constitutes success in ministry, and sanctifying persons as "called" by and representative of a particular faith group. Most chaplains willingly agree to such terms and conditions in exchange for job security. But all this begs the more profound question, Do chaplains need a denomination? Indeed, some employers are hiring lay people as chaplains or ministers "commissioned" by parareligious organizations. Will denominational endorsement for chaplains become meaningless or even unnecessary in the near future? A related issue also surfaces: What is the value of a master of divinity degree for ministry in the new model of interfaith chaplaincy? In this emerging post-denominational era, do we still need chaplains to be trained in the particulars of one denomination? Maybe all future chaplains will need is a certificate in spirituality (interfaith spirituality) and, of course, a CPE residency. It seems that the eventual complete disconnect of chaplaincy from religious denominations might be the final step in the decades-long trend that Fuller and others have pointed to, a trend away from religious language and denominational loyalties and toward the language of spirituality and its transdenominational nature.

The phenomenal rise of chaplaincy as the predominant model of ministry in the twenty-first century inevitably leads to many questions. I have touched on just a few of them. I celebrate the arrival of chaplains in the last twenty years, and certainly in the last forty years of the life of this journal, as a professional, respected, effective, and widely embraced form of ministry that meets the needs and religious sensibilities of people of the twenty-first century. At the same time, with success comes a new set of questions and issues, and these will fill up the pages of this journal over the next twenty years.

Scott Sullender
Editor

NOTES

1 Robert Fuller, "Rediscovering the Laws of Spiritual Life: The Last Twenty Years of Supervision and Training in Ministry," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry*, 20 (2000), 25.