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Bukal Life Care Journal seeks to publish articles from a variety of viewpoints. As such, it must be understood, that the viewpoints expressed in these articles are those of the authors, and not necessarily that of Bukal Life Care & Training Center, its Board of Trustees, or its staff.

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BUD-LIFE !!!

By Cesar G. Espineda

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines critical tasks, issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the *male* mid-life years. It will draw on the works of Erik H. Erikson, Daniel J. Levinson et al., Evelyn Eaton-Whitehead and James D. Whitehead, James W. Fowler, and Victor E. Frankl.

An investigation of this particular period is also an exploration to look at my own inner world, to examine my unexamined self, and reflect whether there is an ultimate value and meaning in my identity and existence in mid-life.

Or, is it presumptuous to articulate that in my mid-life years, I am experiencing a BUD-LIFE moment, akin to the blossoming of nature in springtime?

Mid-Life and Its Experience in the Life-cycle

There are hints, signals, warnings, growth, and crisis which are manifested to an individual in mid-life, whether in terms of one's self, love, work, dreams, commitment, family life, relationship, and sense of time, which an adult needs to pay attention to. There are issues in mid-life which are of vital importance not to be dismissed or ignored. These issues can cover career development and consolidation, concern for adolescent and adult children, reassessment of commitments and accomplishments, responsibility for aging parents, recognition of the inevitability of one's aging and death. As they are real issues which a mid-lifer has to face and contend with, either as an opportunity, threat, or both to one's self, identity, and integrity, these tasks and issues can, at the same time, facilitate growth and creative challenges to the individual's development in mid-life years.

The Seasons of a Man's Life focuses on the study of middle-class American males and offers, perhaps, the most useful accounts of mid-life transitions. Levinson's presentation of the mid-life helps to map out the major phases of adult development. Levinson divides the mid-life into two distinct periods, transitions, eras, or phases, namely, (1) early adulthood and (2) middle adulthood (pp. 71-313).

The Early Adulthood Phase covers the approximate age span of twenty-two to forty years. This phase is marked by the entry of the individual in his twenties into the adult world of vocational and familial responsibilities. This is a critical time when decisions are made about one's occupation, love relationships, marriage

possibilities, and preferred life style. Such decisions, according to Levinson, coincide with the framing of a 'dream.' The dream represents the individual's major aspirations and values regarding the perfect example of personal fulfillment. The content of the dream has something to do with vocational and economic success in the world. It is largely interpreted in terms of promotions, income, status, and social influence. As the individual in his early adulthood continues his life and place in the world, a major task in his adult development will have to do with making adjustments and modifications in the dream he has formulated. This is to better accommodate the actual life's experiences he encounters in his living and relationship with others in the world.

The Middle Adulthood Phase begins at about forty and continues to the age of sixty. This is the period when one leaves middle age and enters late adulthood. The transition between early and middle adulthood consists of many features which are revealed in the individual's psychological, physical, and psychosocial make-up. Among these features are the following:

- The growing awareness of a gradual diminishment in one's bodily vigor combined with periods of doubt and partial dissatisfaction with the unfolding of one's chosen dream.
- The muscle tissue is no longer as supple and resilient as in the youth years.
- For women, it is not uncommon to find their hips and thighs going soft. For men, their hair begins to grow thinner and a belly begins to grow around the midsection of their bodies, which seemingly indicates less attention to dietary regimens or exercise.
- The eyesight begins to weaken and prescription reading glasses are needed to navigate the pages of a newspaper or book.
- Birthdays become signs (hints, warnings) of how one is growing old and are no longer milestones in the process of growing up.
- There is a marked shift within the sequence of generations, namely: younger colleagues come to ask advice; one's children are now old enough to face adult questions and challenges themselves; adults typically find themselves 'parenting their parents, helping them make financial decisions, moving them to smaller apartments or nursing homes; attending to them during serious illness or death.
- There is no longer an older generation in the workplace or neighborhood to turn to for assurance and comfort; these must now be found within. In other words, basic trust in life cannot be acquired from older authority figures any longer and must instead be found through one's personal reflections in life.
- The necessities of child care, mortgage payments, and responsibilities toward one's spouse's preferred life style make it all but impossible to make sudden changes.

- For the first time, the mid-lifer is in a position to predict his economic and vocational future with reasonable accuracy. Careers are sufficiently established that one's position on the ladder leading to 'the top' is evident.
- There is, finally, a realization that the 'dream' will never quite come true, and so the 'dream' becomes modified and adjusted to more realistic paths toward self-fulfillment.

Questions in Mid-life

The mid-life, as a different and another phase in the life-cycle, is confronted with questions which are related to one's self, with others, and the world. The questions are more inward in orientation and most often have something to do with one's adult identity, relationship with one's spouse, family, task, occupation, and reassessment or modification in one's dream. As Levinson points out the 'dream' of the youth years is not the 'dream' of the adult years. Among the questions which are commonly asked in mid-life, the following seem to be the most basic but significant:

- Who am I?
- What have I done with my life?
- What do I get from my job, my spouse, my family?
- What do I give to my job, my spouse, my family?
- In the remaining years of my life, what do I most want to accomplish and do I want to remain committed to the persons and tasks I am currently tied to?

What is quite evident in these questions is the fact that they are questions about life — the meaning and purpose of life; questions which perhaps were not paid much attention to in the previous years of one's daily existence. Confronted with a crisis, psychological, and physical waning and warning signs of one's body and one's relationship with one's self and the world, the mid-lifer turns inward to face questions which perhaps he never took seriously in life until now. In his questionings, he struggles for answers. This is either death to one's growth or a BUD-LIFE – a new springtime in his life cycle processes.

Mid-life Growth and Possibilities

While it is true that the 'dream' of the adult in his mid-life is drastically altered, assaulted, modified, or adjusted, it is also true according to Levinson that in the forties of life, the individual can be capable of freeing one's self from the socialization process, so that growth can instead become truly inner directed.

The mid-life period can be the flowering of one's self - a BUD-LIFE! It can be the golden age of one's self, especially if the mid-lifer had incorporated, what Erikson (1967) calls, the 'schedule of virtues' in the life cycle process of one's growth. Virtue is 'something vital that animates, and is 'the soul' of something" (pp.17-18). And love, care, and wisdom are central virtues of adulthood (1994, p. 115). Such virtues

are growth and possibilities which the mid-life years are capable of attaining and integrating in one's life.

It is in mid-life that an adult, having secured a vocational identity, can bring a sense of accomplishment and pride. It is in mid-life that an adult can discover or rediscover that his family brings excitement and endless opportunities to feel loved and needed. The accumulated knowledge and experience of the mid-life can make up for what has been the waning of one's youthful exuberance. In mid-life, growth and possibilities especially in terms of professional advancements can, indeed, take place. It is the period, says Levinson, where one's display of uniqueness and individuality can be most prominent. It is in this period where the mid-lifer is most capable of outgrowing his socially conditioned view of himself. It is a chance to get hold of what Erikson calls 'the unity of oneself'; to become an active master of one's environment.

Psychological and Religious Issues

Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead (1995) in *Christian Life Patterns: The Psychological Challenges and Religious Invitations of Adult Life*, named personal power, care, and interiority as three psychological issues which are dominant themes in mid-life (pp.112-132).

Personal Power

The middle-aged individual "wants to be, needs to be, effective in the tasks that define her or his work" (p. 114). The combination of competence and experience places the mid-lifer in authoritative positions in his or her life or workplace. The mid-lifer's desire for responsibility, willingness to assume leadership, the ability to take control create channels through which one's personal power is both manifested and put in the service of a larger social world. Responsibility, leadership, and 'to be in control' are motivating factors which allow the middle-aged individual to exercise what Erikson calls the "active mastery of the environment."

Care

The middle-aged individual "wants to be, needs to be, responsible for others. The mature person needs to be needed" (Whitehead, 1995, p. 114). Care is generativity in the developmental life-cycle of Erikson. It is the middle adulthood in the stage of human development and it has the psychosocial task of 'making be and taking care of.'

Erikson (1980) claimed that adult individuals are concerned about the next generation. They establish and guide it. Adult individuals are not directed solely towards their own generation but more so of the needs of the generations to come. To beget and bring up children is not *all* of what generativity is about. True generativity asks for the adult to be altruistic, to be caring, to be nurturing of the others in the environment. "Generativity, then, is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation, although there are individuals who,

through misfortune or because of special and genuine gifts in other directions, do not apply this drive to their offspring” (p. 267). True generativity also looks at the needs of the adult himself. As Erikson says, “mature man needs to be needed, and maturity needs guidance as well as encouragement from what has been produced and must be taken care of” (p. 267). The terms productivity and creativity are two popular synonyms for generativity, which, according to Erikson, are *not* substitutes for generativity.

Interiority

The issue of interiority in mid-life, according to the Whiteheads, can be quite frightening for some adults. This is the movement inward; a journey inside of one’s self; the ‘peek’ into one’s soul. It can be frightening as the mid-lifer can begin to focus more on what is within — what is happening within one’s self. If the early adulthood phase allowed the individual to pursue outward goals, interests, and commitments, the middle-aged years invite the mid-lifer to reflect more and perhaps reassess one’s needs and values. It is an invitation to re-examine one’s direction and purpose in life. The act of introspection can take time and it can be experienced as ‘middled-aged depression’ according to the Whiteheads. The ugliness of such an experience can make the mid-lifer avoid the issue of interiority altogether to the detriment of his own growth. Detrimental as the experience can be, mid-life can also prove to be a new or fresh challenge to one’s developmental growth; it can reawaken one’s potentials and possibilities in mid-life years. Truly, a BUD-LIFE!

The interplay and interconnectedness of these three psychological themes are, according to the Whiteheads, what can bring challenges to the mid-life years. The experience can challenge the individual mid-lifer in the second-half of life’s journey and avoid what Erikson calls ‘stagnation or self-absorption’ in one’s human development.

The Search for Meaning in Mid-life

The middle-aged individual no longer considers identity as his paramount concern in this stage of his development. The adult has moved from his concern of identity, to care and integrity, as his major concern in mid-life. His manner of questioning has also changed from ‘*Who am I?*’ to ‘*What does it all mean?*’ The need to find and establish identity has given way to the need to discover whether one’s identity has any ultimate value or meaning in life’s journey.

The psychologist and founder of logotherapy, Victor E. Frankl (1984) described eloquently the significance of the ‘search for meaning’ in adult life. It is Frankl’s thesis that there are three interacting dimensions in human life: the bodily, the mental, and the spiritual (p.105). For Frankl, the spiritual dimension should not be forgotten and should occupy an important role in human development. To ignore this component in the name of ‘science’ is to miss that which makes an individual a truly human person. Of all the three dimensions it is the spiritual dimension that most directly affects the individual’s health or illness and the individual’s sense of

fulfillment or frustration. It is the “will-to-meaning” and *not* the “will-to-pleasure” (the bodily dimension), or the “will-to-self-actualization” (the mental dimension) that is the primary motivational drive in human life.

At the very core of human life is the fundamental responsibility of fulfilling a unique mission or vocation in life. According to Frankl, this meaning in life can be discovered in three different ways: (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering (p. 115).

If these are the tasks identified by Frankl in finding meaning in one’s adult life then James W. Fowler (1981) in *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, can speak to mid-life years as well. In adulthood, the many developmental tasks spontaneously actuate the individual to grow in ways similar to those stages of faith pointed out by Fowler in “Stage Four” and “Stage Five” (p. 180) of his enduring work.

Stage Four in Fowler’s faith-development is “Individuative-Reflective faith” and “thinks in terms of the impersonal imperatives of law, rules and the standards that govern social roles” (p. 180). In its critical reflection, “Stage Four” form of faith-knowing has this to say:

[it] regards meanings as separable from the symbolic media that express them In face of the liturgical ritual or a religious symbol the Individuative-Reflective person asks, ‘But what does it *mean*? (emphasis Fowler’s) If the symbol or symbolic act is truly meaningful, Stage 4 believes, its meanings can be translated into propositions, definitions and/or conceptual foundations. (p. 182)

This demythologizing strategy, according to Fowler, which seems to be natural in “Stage Four,” ushers both gains and losses. The ascendant strength in this stage “has to do with its capacity for critical reflection on identity (self) and outlook (ideology) (pp. 182-183). The dangers are inherent in its strengths: “an excessive confidence in the conscious mind and in critical thought and a kind of second narcissism in which the now clearly bounded, reflective self over-assimilates “reality” (quotation Fowler’s) and the perspectives of others into its own world view” (p. 198). Erikson identifies the crisis of intimacy vs. isolation with this period.

“Stage Five” form of faith-knowing is what Fowler calls “Conjunctive Faith.” This stage is “ready to spend and be spent for the cause of conserving and cultivating the possibility of other’s generating identity and meaning” (p.198). The image of ‘to spend and be spent’ in this stage allows for the following movements to occur in the adult’s form of faith-knowing: the recognition of the sacrament of defeat and the reality of irrevocable commitments and acts; the striving to unify opposites in mind and experience; the generation and maintenance of vulnerability to the strange truths of those who are ‘other’ and; the commitment to justice is not limited any longer to the confines of tribe, class, religious community, or nation (p.198).

The “Stage Five” form of faith-knowing, as it is in “Stage Four,” has its own share of strength and weakness in mid-life cycle. Fowler offers the following observation:

The strength of this stage comes in the rise of the ironic imagination — a capacity to see and see in one’s or one’s group’s most powerful meanings, while simultaneously recognizing that they are relative, partial and inevitably distorting apprehensions of transcendent reality. Its danger lies in the direction of a paralyzing passivity or inaction, giving rise to complacency or cynical withdrawal, due to its paradoxical understanding of truth. (pp. 119-211)

The “Stage Five” form of faith-knowing, with all its positive dynamics and contributions to the faith-definition of an individual, is not where the adult should stop in his search for meaning in life, since this stage according to Fowler remains divided. There is a call to radical actualization of faith-knowing and Fowler calls it as “consolidative” and “universalizing” forms of faith-knowing (pp. 119-211). In this stage, the world is re-envisioned by the mature adult in light of his mid-life experiences. This is the task of the late adult years.

Mutuality and Responsibility in Mid-life Interaction

There are many factors which determine the developmental growth, crisis, or ego-strength of every individual in the life-cycle theory of Erikson. Such factors are biological, social, cultural, or the combination of all. While there are two axes colliding with each other in the epigenetic viewpoint, there is also a *mutual activation* in the process of growth. An individual who so activates and has been activated “will also acquire the experience that *truly worthwhile acts enhance a mutuality which strengthens the doer and the other* — a mutuality which strengthens the doer as it strengthens the other. Thus, the ‘doer’ and the ‘other’ are partners in one deed. Seen in the light of human growth, this means that the doer is activated in whatever strength is *appropriate to this age, stage, and condition*” (1994, pp. 233).

Mutual activation or mutuality is the idea that growth happens to an individual when the individual helps others in the environment. For example, the act of the father in helping his son achieve a sense of identity is never a solitary act since, in such a process, the father is, in turn, helped by his son to achieve his sense of generativity rather than a sense of stagnation. The couple in love in their young adulthood or old age helps each other develop their sense of intimacy.

The principle of actuality states that in the act of giving one’s self in losing one’s self, in fusing one’s identity with the other in the environment that, at the same time, growth takes place in one’s self. Real love is activated in one’s self when the individual escapes self-centeredness and turns one’s energies to caring for the others in the environment. Growth and fulfillment are experienced when others experience growth and fulfillment in themselves. Human growth has this paradox in Erikson’s life-cycle theory. Its arrival “depends from stage to stage upon a network of mutual influences within which the person actuates others even as he is actuated, and within which the person is inspired with active properties even as he inspires

others (p. 165). This whole process of mutuality leads to a healthy growth in the life-cycle of the individual.

The developmental growth and ego-strength is never mastered by an individual without the active presence and cooperation of the others in the environment. There are no self-made individuals in the life-cycle theory of Erikson; no one is an island in the process of growth. The developmental growth, crisis, or ego-strength depends so much on the relationships or influences which the individual benefits from and contributes to the lives of others in the environment. Like cogwheels that only move forward by meshing or interconnecting with others, every individual requires other people (our parents when we were young, friends during our teen-age years, a lover during our young adulthood, children during our parenting years, and God — however conceived — as we face the final crisis of the life-cycle (Fuller, 1988, p. 18).

Every step in the growth process is really *one* of mutual cooperation. But the growth cannot be forced on someone if that person does not decide to grow, just as any individual in the environment is not a self-activating person. The necessity of choosing is deeply ingrained in the life-cycle theory of Erikson. At the heart of his epigenetic principle is the proposition that individual life proceeds in stages — in a sequence of events — and each event builds upon the other. Individual growth and development has two axes: positive (strength) and negative (weakness) — colliding each other, and must choose which developmental growth or task to take. If the positive axis is chosen, then developmental growth takes place. If one chooses the negative axis, then developmental crisis sets in. For the individual to be a healthy and fully functioning adult, what is needed is more of the positive (strength) axis and less of the negative (weakness) axis in the environment. Human developmental growth rests on this principle.

Such is the developmental choice of the individual in Erikson's life-cycle process. Wonderful as it is, Erikson also affirms that no crisis is completely resolved. A crisis of intimacy, for example in adulthood, may take place at any given time in the second half of life. But the resolution of the earlier crisis will pave the way for the mastery of the crisis in the following stage of human development.

Individual growth, except perhaps at the earliest stages, despite the pressures of biological and cultural factors, and despite the result of prior crises in the life of the individual in the environment, is always to some degree the doing of one's self. The growth of any individual does not happen outright. It is a process of development and is the outcome of a cycle of decisions. It is more than a product of environmental forces.

It is in losing one's self that one finds one's self. It is in helping others to grow that one attains growth. It is in caring for the younger generation that one becomes a fully functioning individual in the environment. The self is defined by the others and vice-versa. The individual person in Erikson is someone which the existentialist-phenomenologist calls 'being-in-the-world.' It is when the 'I' is an *embedded*

participant in the **'Thou'**, and vice-versa, that both will continue to grow and evolve in their life-cycles. The merger of two distinct identities in the service of each other is what promotes growth. It is the principle of mutuality in human development.

It is in creating others, opined Jane Kopas (1994) in *Sacred Identity*, that we are created at the same time. This process is *not* either/or, but *both/and*. It is in the sphere of *mutual influence* that individuals create and are created by each other (pp. 85-86). This is mutuality — the principle of growth and fulfillment in the life-cycle framework of Erikson. It is a mutuality which is a responsible growth in interaction with others in the environment.

Conclusion

The mid-life years in the life-cycle are a life that is full of vital issues and challenges to an adult. It is an era which contradictions, paradoxes, tensions, conflicts, and possibilities can arise. It could be a delicate period for some, while for others, it could be a transition which invites more life-growth rather than death and endless desert. It could be the arrival of springtime – a BUD-LIFE! For still others it could be the beginning of autumn of discontent. It could be the sunset boulevard for many others as well.

While it is true that there are cultural, biological, and psychological factors which can either promote or hinder mid-life growth, what is important to remember is that the mid-life years are a separate period in the life-cycle. It has its own corresponding anatomy to be looked at and dealt with. To own and address that anatomy in a manner that is responsible would be to face the reality of one's being-in-the-world.

John Henry Newman (1801-1890), a prominent leader in the Oxford Movement and literary figure, once said that the only permanent thing in this world is change. And to change and change often is holy! Indeed in mid-life, the individual person has to make internal and external retooling and recalibration in one's self. There are needs, values, and priorities, which have to be reevaluated, readjusted, reformed, or reenvisioned to fit one's life toward a more meaningful existence and relationship with others and the world. It is truly the mark of an adult individual when the adult is able to acknowledge one's inner and outer changes and meets life's challenges in the world with rational exuberance, pride, and dignity. It is not an easy task and can demand a lot of energy and creativity.

Erikson (1980) defined greatness as having two components: effective leadership and success. In this definition, Erikson tried to examine and emphasize the ego strength of the individual — 'how a person managed to keep together and maintain a significant function in the lives of others' (p. 53). The mid-lifer can embrace this 'greatness,' since it is in mid-life years which leadership, success, and significant influence on one's peer, family, or younger generation can be prominently displayed. The attainment of this 'greatness' will depend on the support of a nurturing and nourishing environment, and the choices the mid-lifer will make for or against one's growth, individuality, and uniqueness.

A BUD-LIFE is an enduring opportunity - a dwelling in possibility - more than a threat or danger to one's identity and meaningful existence!

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*"In order to pray correctly, we must be able to listen to the other person. Those who cannot hear another person are also no longer able to hear God's Word...or to pray! Our love for another consists first of all in listening."
-Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

The Vicissitudes of Spirituality

By Raymond J. Lawrence

This is an abridged work originally in *The Healing Power of Spirituality: How Faith Helps Humans Thrive*, J. Harold Ellens, Ed., Santa Barbara, CA, Praeger, A Division of ABC-Clio, 2010. Reprinted with author's permission.

Any thoughtful discussion of spirituality must confront first the problem of language. Words through time do not stand still; their meanings often shift, sometimes radically. Spirit and its derivatives, spiritual and spirituality, are words that have been debased in common usage, and thoughtful persons must grieve the debasement. Arguably no full-blooded person would relish being labeled a spiritual person in current usage unless the adjective was carefully reframed in advance. Spiritual, along with spirit and spirituality, are words that, in current English usage, have lost much of the power they possessed in times past. Historical evolution has not been good to them. They are words that typically stick in the throats of sensible persons.

On the other hand, and regrettably, spirit, spiritual, and spirituality are essential words in current discourse, at least until such time when appropriate replacement words can be put into use. Any attempt to put new and more properly descriptive words into play in common usage would be a hazardous and probably impossible assignment. The evolution of language does not readily open itself to such direct action.

In the meantime, and we all live in the meantime, the task before us must be a kind of etymological rehabilitation project. We can show from whence a spirit as a concept came, and how it has evolved into its current ghostly self, a mere shadow of its earlier life as a concept. And besides that, we must simply wait for spirit's redemption, or for the arrival of another set of more adequate words.

Spirit and its derivatives have migrated in the course of centuries and this migration has brought them a present—in English at least—to the unhappy incorporeal world, a world separated from the physical and from the body. Spirit in earlier times signified the vital and animating principle of physical life. The bodily locus of spirit and its derivatives was the lungs or breath. Animated and vital persons breathe deeply. Persons without spirit are effete and without vigor—of shallow breath, so to speak.

We see the remnant of the conflict between the original meaning of spirit and the later evolutionary degradation of the word in the contradictory connotations of spirited on the one hand and spiritual on the other. '*Spirited*' inherits its connotations from earlier usage, and connoting life full of itself; while '*spiritual*' connotes the modern revisionist meaning of mental incorporeality. As Tillich points out, the use of spirited to describe an untrained or unbroken horse is the only modern use of spirit that bears a resemblance to its ancient roots.

Spiritual's connotation of mental incorporeality is actually perverse, worse than mere loss of meaning, in that it is not simply a slippage in meaning but a radical reversal of meaning.

In Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the words that are translated into English as spirit all have associations with the lungs and breathing (*ruah*, *pneuma*, and *spiritus*, respectively). In current English, this association with lungs and breathing is mostly lost. The bodily locus of spirit is no longer lungs or breath. The word has migrated to the cerebrum, and the ghostly world of mental incorporeality.

Benjamin Blech and Roy Doliner in a book about Michelangelo (p. 197, *The Sistine Secrets: Michelangelo's Forbidden Messages in the Heart of the Vatican*. New York: HarperOne, 2008), in discussing Michelangelo's painting of Adam's creation on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, capture the profound original meaning of spirituality. But of course they do not use the word spirituality. The authors intelligently sidestep the problem with the word spirit by translating *ruah hashem* (literally, "spirit of God" in Hebrew), as "the Divine life force."

The language problem is not exclusively an English problem; it is a Western Christian problem. Spirit abandoned the body as a consequence of Christianity's gradual but relentless elevation of mind and mentality at the expense of the body and sexuality in particular. We see this language migration clearly in Germanic languages. *Geist* is the Germanic word used to translate Latin's *spiritus*. *Geist* moves from a vital and animating principle to disembodied ghost. *Geist* in German became ghost in English. Ghosts have no body, no flesh; ghosts do not partake of sexual pleasure. Ghosts are pure spirit, in the perverse corruption of the original meaning of spirit.

The 16th century vernacular translations of biblical and liturgical texts from Hebrew, Greek, and Latin into English rendered "holy spirit" (*spiritus sanctus*) as "holy ghost." Until the mid-20th century, Holy Ghost was the proper name in English of the third person of the trinity. Subsequently, Holy Spirit has supplanted it in most English language usage. However, the change in language has not actually succeeded in countering the disembodied connotations of Holy Ghost. Spirit remains as incorporeal as ghost. Norman O. Brown, in *Love's Body*, put in succinctly and provocatively when he wrote: "Good bye Holy Ghost, *veni creator spiritus*." Brown was suggesting by innuendo, and I think correctly, that by reverting to the Latin we might recover the connotation of spirit as a vital and animating life force.

Unfortunately, we cannot force language to mean what we want it to mean, or force it to mean what it meant in earlier generations. Connotations that words carry are ineluctable and impervious to manipulation. Connotations of words have lives of their own. It would be helpful in so many ways if we could force spirit in common discourse to refer to the vital and animating principle of life rather than ghostly incorporeality. But the power to do that is virtually nil.

Paul Tillich has contributed much to clarify the meaning of spirit as it was once used in earlier religious tradition. Spirit, according to Tillich, is the union of meaning and power. His definition is elegant in its simplicity and profundity. Thus, there are many spiritualities, many constructs of meaning combined with power that provide persons with animating vitality. Not all spiritualities are admirable. Most spiritualities are flawed in one way or another.

One of the most vividly spiritual movements of the 20th century, and one of the most flawed, was the Nazism of the National Socialist German Workers Party under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, who designated himself *fuhrer*, “leader” in German.

It is noteworthy that Hitler took his leadership title directly from the otherworldly Catharists of the medieval period who assigned the title “*fuhrer*” to their leaders. Catharism was the Christian sub-group that was declared a heresy, and was brutally crushed by Papal authority in one of history’s religiously inspired genocidal campaigns. Catharism carried the medieval church’s negativity toward sexual pleasure to its logical extreme, but they carried it too far for the church’s leadership when they challenged the authority of Roman Catholic leadership.

In the Catharist worldview, purity was the mark of high calling. The name Cathar itself derives from the Greek word for clean, *katharo*. The cleanliness theme was largely directed at the presumed dirtiness of sex. The Cathars were expected to abstain from sexual intercourse in order to be clean spiritually and physically. Hitler himself was a fanatic about such cleanliness. He cleaned up Germany by exterminating Jews, who were portrayed as sexually dirty, and Gypsies as well. He forbade any publicity about physical contact with his paramour, Eva Braun. The pairing was for the other world to come, committing suicide together when the war was ending. Romeo and Juliet, as well as Tristan and Isolde, are Catharist myths of love too pure for this fallen world. Each pair dies just prior to sexual consummation, their marriage made not for this world but for the world to come. Adolf and Eva were a pair of Catharist originals.

The spirituality of the Nazis is not to be dismissed too lightly. In spite of its well-known demonic character exemplified in its eagerness to exterminate anyone or any group that it viewed as its enemy, the movement provided both meaning and power to Germans who were deeply affected by more than a decade of national humiliation. It answered a profound need for persons who were experiencing meaninglessness and powerlessness in Germany of the 1920s and 30s. The humiliation of defeat in World War I, unemployment, and an ineffectual government

infused large sections of the German population with feelings of impotence, the opposite of meaning and power. The point is that persons will seek spirituality, meaning, and power wherever they can find it, and often what they find is in retrospect dismaying.

In his three-volume *Systematic Theology*, Paul Tillich provides specific markers that go beyond the basic definition of spirit as the union of meaning and power. Authentic spiritualities as opposed to spurious spiritualities are characterized, according to Tillich, by a commitment to love and justice.

Tillich is quite explicit that there are misguided, even demonic spiritualities with which we must contend. He argues that authentic spirituality is rooted in love on the one hand and justice on the other. Absent these two basic characteristics, the claim to spirituality is fraudulent. Or the extent to which they are absent determines the quality of a particular form of spirituality. Love and justice thus becomes the standards by which all spirituality is measured. Every particular spiritual construct, including Christianity, is subject to critique for any failure to measure up to standards of both love and justice.

In addition to love and justice, Tillich gives four more specific guiding principles by which spirituality should be assessed: awareness, freedom, relatedness, and transcendence (p. 238, *Systematic Theology: Life and the Spirit; History and the Kingdom of God*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

Awareness is in large part self-awareness, and implies some familiarity with one's unconscious. Self-awareness is closely allied with psychodynamic or depth psychology, but as Tillich points out, certainly has historical roots much older than psychology and psycho-analysis, which are modern inventions.

Freedom is detachment from objects and also detachment from the law. No law can address every concrete situation in the human experience. Religious people often become subservient to and oppressed by law, shamed by their own legalistic posture. Tillich follows Martin Luther's mandate that evangelical freedom permits us to "sin boldly."

Relatedness is the capacity to break through the walls of self-seclusion, isolation, introversion, and hostility. It requires conquering both self-contempt and grandiosity, and requires placing oneself in the human community as one being among us.

Transcendence is the subjective experience of participation in the holy, also referred to by Tillich as the vertical dimension. For Tillich, the experience of the holy cannot be circumscribed by any particular religion, tradition, dogma, or practice. The subjective experience of participation in the holy may in fact inspire a critical stance in relation to a specific religion. As a subjective experience, transcendence cannot be quantified.

If we follow Tillich's exposition on the character of spirit and spirituality, we have a specific basis for weighing what might be considered authentically spiritual and what should not be. Nazi spirituality, for example, would not measure up on a number of counts. While it met the standard of the union of meaning and power, especially the latter in the short term, it failed utterly on the standard of justice and love, providing a modicum of care and equity only for those within its racial group, with notable exceptions of outliers such as homosexuals and mentally deficient persons, who were exterminated in great numbers. And it failed miserably the tests of love and justice directed toward other ethnic groups and nations, Jews and Gypsies in particular.

The burden of evaluating the authenticity of the various claims to spirituality is a complex one. Testing for spirituality is comparable to testing for table manners. It is a highly subjective undertaking. Awareness, freedom, relatedness, and transcendence do not readily submit to quantification. Neither do standards of love nor justice. Furthermore, there is no question of objectivity testing any alleged source of an experience of the holy, or the transcendent, or the vertical dimension. Only people or matter can be tested.

A great amount of money has been thrown recently at research designed to measure the impact of a presumed spiritual power at work in persons or in the world. Such research has attempted to discover the power of prayer for sick patients, both with and without the patients' foreknowledge. Such research is misguided because there is no way to double blind God or any presumed transcendent power. Research can be conducted only on controlled subjects or objects. Neither God nor any other presumed transcendent power is subject to research controls. Research stops, so to speak, at the water's edge. The only objects, energies, or creatures human beings can test are ones that dwell in earth or space. Any presumed action being taken in this world that is alleged to originate in a Divine realm is not subject to scientific testing.

The infamous \$2.4 million research project led by Herbert Benson, MD, and the Mind/Body Institute near Boston, which was completed in 2006, is an example of misguided notions of spirituality (p. A21, "Faith-Based Medicine," Raymond J. Lawrence. *New York Times*, April 11, 2006). The research proposed to measure the effectiveness of intercessory prayer. In reality the research was designed to assess the activity of God is bizarre as such an investigation may be. The subjects of the research were divided into three groups:

1. Persons informed that they were prayed for by strangers
2. Persons informed that they may or may not be prayed for by strangers
3. Persons who were not prayed for at all

The official results of the research found that intercessory prayer was medically ineffective. In fact, those patients who were not prayed for actually had slightly better health outcomes than those who were, but not quite enough to be considered

significant.

The Benson study was wrong-headed from its beginning in its attempt to measure the presumed actions of God. The designers of the study were operating under the premise that spirituality is some kind of mental relationship with an object in the ghostly world, and a relationship that enabled them to access and make the use of that other world. Such research will never produce results because it is based on the false premise that God is a mechanism or a control subject that can be tested.

Had Benson and his colleagues set about to measure spirituality as love and justice, awareness, freedom, relatedness, and a sense of the vertical dimension, they may have been able to find positive results in the health course of their subjects. Of course, that sort of measuring would be exceedingly complex, perhaps even impossible. It is not farfetched to presume that persons who experience love, are committed to justice, are self-aware, feel themselves to be free, relate well to others, and have a sense of the transcendent, will have measurably better health outcomes than those who lack all these attributes. It has been shown that certain persons, especially children, fail to thrive when deprived of loving care.

If a caring individual provides counsel and comfort to someone in trouble, there may be some way to measure the relative beneficial effects of the counsel and comfort. But such measurement remains purely on the human level, on planet earth, and is in no conceivable way any measurement of transcendent or Divine will or power.

We can assess the marks of spirituality as enumerated by Tillich, highly subjective though they are. There are some ways to measure power, love, and justice. The measuring is not readily quantifiable in the ways that oxygen levels can be measured in the air. However, power and impotence can be distinguished and given some kind of relative grade. Love can be measured roughly speaking, especially as compared with hate and abuse. Justice is perhaps the easiest of the three to measure, as it is closely related to equity. If one person has immense resource of wealth and the neighbor has hardly any, in a minimal survival mode, we probably have to conclude that justice is absent. If one is always forced to walk and another always has access to transportation, it does not take a sophisticated instrument to calculate injustice.

Unambiguous agnosticism and skepticism is required in regard to any intervention from another world by a god or any supernatural power. Even if there were such an intervention it would be entirely beyond the ability of the human mind to assess. Such thoroughgoing agnosticism does not nullify all religious values. On the contrary, it focuses spirituality and religion where it ought to be focused, on the question of what is good for human beings and all life. Life, justice, awareness, and a sense of transcendence are the marks of an authentic spirituality.

As long as religion or spirituality presents itself as an instrument for manipulating an unseen world, it dissipates its energy on froth. Religious people can praise God for

creating the world and for commanding love and justice. Religious people cannot expect any Divine intervention against the laws of nature on behalf of anyone. Even if in the unlikely event such interventions occur, it would be impossible to assess them and decide what they meant to us.

The baseball player who points to God as he rounds the bases after a home run, implying that God has empowered him to do such a thing, is both trivializing the will of God and making a claim that no one can assess. He could just as well kill his brother and claim that God had empowered him to do so.

After Herbert Benson, Harold Koenig, MD, emerged as the preeminent spokesman and guru for what has subsequently become the spirituality and medicine movement. In a certain way, the movement was seen to be a boon to religious professionals who were beginning to feel less irrelevant in the medical context. Many chaplains welcomed with open arms Koenig and others who seemed to be taking seriously their commitment to religion in the medical context. The word from medical science to the effect that religion, or at least spirituality, is a significant player in the struggle for health, signaled what promised to be a welcomed alliance.

On a closer look, intractable problems emerged. Koenig endorsed the same kind of mechanistic prayer research that Benson supported, research that sought to show, for example, that multiple persons praying for the same outcome will produce tangible results.

More broadly, it became clear that Koenig and his allies represented a positivist approach to religion. That is to say they presented a worldview implying that God is in his heaven answering or not answering prayers on the order either of a cosmic coin machine or a government bureaucrat tallying up the votes cast for each petition. In that worldview, sometimes the requests do not get through, but if enough good people send off messages, good results will be forthcoming. Put another way, the positivist assumptions promoted by Koenig and others boldly declared that spirituality is good for your health. In reality, spirituality, however defined, can be either good for you, bad for you, or neither, and deciding which is which is no simple matter.

Let us suppose we encountered a physician who traveled about the country with the positivist message that surgery is good for you. We would all be incredulous at such an outrageous claim. Of course surgery is beneficial, depending on one's predicament, and depending on the physician, and certain other variables such as the reliability of the infrastructure. So surgery is beneficial, depending on many variables. And depending on the variables, surgery can also be devastating, even fatal. Thus, the blanket claim that surgery is beneficial is patently false, so false that no self-respecting physician would make such a claim. Assessing the benefits of any given spirituality is immensely complex. And yet we observe physicians such as Koenig traveling about the country proclaiming spirituality as beneficial to health.

When Koenig applies the same positivism to spirituality, he does not seem to be aware that he presents himself as astonishingly indiscriminating. Spirituality in general embraces a trainload of phony claims and superstitious assumptions, along with the kind of spirituality Tillich writes about. The task is to decipher what is what. Koenig's blanket endorsement of spirituality is lacking in discrimination. Another problem with the Koenig movement is, paradoxically, the devaluation of spirituality and religion. Koenig advocates that physicians take spiritual histories on their patients, histories that he originally proposed would take five minutes, and which he later reduced to two. Physicians, after all, have many demands on their time. Yet even the most clinically astute religious professional, or chaplain, would not dream of doing a religious history in five minutes, much less two. Religious language is often impenetrable, and tricky at best, often shrouded in mystification. Physicians are not trained in religion, and even if they were, they would not get a religious history worth the label in five minutes. If physicians can get a spiritual history in so brief a time without any prior training, why would anyone need to invest years in the study of religion and theology?

The new spirituality and medicine movement is so dominated by physicians and nurses that one must wonder if it is not a covert attempt to diminish those who have actually studied religion seriously.

A further example of Koenig's reductionist approach is his emphasis on intercessory prayer to the exclusion of everything else in religion. Intercessory prayer is only one of many types of prayer and prayer itself is merely an aspect of spirituality and religion, but for Koenig it seems to be the big timber. It is as if Koenig seeks to distill religion into a simple easy-to-access useful commodity, one designed to make life more comfortable.

Koenig published his account of a consultation on a clinical case in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, June 14, 2002, titled "An 83-Year-Old Woman With Chronic Illness and strong Religion Beliefs." In that account we can observe Koenig's approach to religion and what he considers its relevance to health. The piece consists of a case presentation by Dr. Risa B. Burns at Medical Grand Rounds at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. The patient is referred to as Mrs. A and her primary physician as Dr. M.

Mrs. A has multiple chronic, progressive, and debilitating medical problems, including painful spinal stenosis and arthritis. She lives alone without assistance and is still able, but barely, to perambulate with the use of a cane. She testifies to chronic pain. Despite numerous medical interventions, she has experienced no relief. Dr. M, who has been treating her for 15 years, reveals that medical consults consist of the patient reporting her pain and the physician acknowledging that there is not a lot that can be done even to relieve the pain. In spite of traditional medicine's inability to offer much hope, as Dr. M puts it, she is "an incredible spirit."

Mrs. A reports that she relies on her faith in God and her prayers, which have gotten

her through tough times and even on occasion relieved her pain. She adds: "Whenever you pray, you will get healing from God. But you must have that belief. Because if you don't believe in God and turn your life over to him, it's nothing doing. You can't just pray... It don't (sic) work like that. You have to really be a child of God... some people are really sick, really sick and going to doctors and hospitals, and still they stay the same. So I think praying helps a lot."

The questions presented to Koenig were: (1) To what extent should physicians be encouraging or discouraging such beliefs as Mrs. A holds? (2) Is it appropriate for the physician to use the religious beliefs that Mrs. A has professed as part of a therapeutic treatment plan for the patient?

Koenig responds that the patient should be encouraged in her religious beliefs as much as possible, and that the physician should incorporate such a use of religion in the treatment plan. He points out that Mrs. A copes with her illness by using religion. Mrs. A believes that her religion makes a difference, and thus so should the physician. He adds that religion helps her cope, and that she may rely on religion more than medicine. In summary, Koenig adds, "Keep it up!"

The first thing to notice here is that Koenig is not listening to the patient, remarkable in that he is a psychiatrist. The troubling aspect of Mrs. A's self-reporting is that her own words condemn her. Since, as she puts it, only those who are truly children of God are healed, how does she understand the fact that she is not healed, but is declining irreversibly? That discrepancy should be noted and explored by someone.

The foundation of both clinical medicine and clinical chaplaincy is attention to the data at hand. The disjunction between Mrs. A's words and her condition is stark and to say the least, invites exploration. However, it is an exploration that will not likely be accomplished in ten minutes. One might speculate for instance that Mrs. A is actually burdened by some regret or conflict and that she feels she is paying her debt through her illness. Or there may be many other possibilities that account for the discrepancy between Mrs. A's decline and her belief that those who are truly children of God are healed. Or perhaps Mrs. A's religious talk means very little to her, that she is just repeating popular religious jargon. We do not have enough data to know. However, it is certain that Mrs. A's own declining condition and the healing power of prayer and faith that she professes to believe in are in stark contrast. On the face of it, Mrs. A seems to be describing herself as condemned by God.

The obvious need here is for someone to sit down and spend some time listening to Mrs. A with the intent of penetrating the apparent disjunction between what she says about healing and her own declining health. No physician these days has the time or training to sit long enough to accomplish such a task. Of course, a trained clinical chaplain might, but there is apparently no chaplain in the case conference.

Koenig's contention that Mrs. A's religion should be reinforced and included in the treatment plan is incomprehensible. His position is that any kind of religion that the

patient reports to be helpful should be reinforced, even if the evidence of its effectiveness is inconclusive. He has a quite unsophisticated, indiscriminating approach to religion. Had Mrs. A reported that she was religiously eating the leaves off her oak tree and that made her feel better sometimes, we should presume that Koenig would tell her to keep it up.

Koenig does finally recommend that Mrs. A be referred to the chaplain, but he follows the recommendation with an astonishing aside. If the patient does not want to see the chaplain, then the physician should “take a few minutes to listen to the patient’s spiritual problems.” Again he trivializes the role of the chaplain.

Most alarming in this case is the implication that Koenig as a physician arrogates to himself the authority to decide what kind of religion is beneficial to the patient. The referral to the chaplain becomes a kind of afterthought.

If Koenig were some sort of 21st-century Freud working spiritual transformation in the psychotherapeutic process, his disdain for religious professionals might be understandable, or even appropriate in many instances. Many chaplains and ministers are profoundly unqualified clinically. However, Koenig is no latter-day Freud, and his use of religion and spirituality is astonishingly superficial. It boils down to the addition of prayer and belief in God as a supplement to clinical medicine.

On a parallel track to the spirituality movement runs the *Seelsorge* tradition, variously translated as cure or care of souls. It is substantively the same as the spirituality tradition, but uses different symbols, particularly the symbol of the soul. Like the language of spirituality, it must be read as poetry, not science. Like spirit, the soul does not submit to scientific examination. Scientifically speaking, the soul may not exist. The preeminent psychologist James Hillman, author of *The Soul’s Code: In Search of Character and Calling*, (New York: Random House, 1996) among many other works, stands in the tradition of Tillich. Soul for Hillman is what spirit is for Tillich. It is about character and calling, not about some other world.

The tradition of *Seelsorge* has similar ambiguities and unexamined innuendos and connotations to the spirituality tradition. As with spirit, it is useful to note the etymology of the words. *Seele*, the Germanic word for soul, was a translation in turn of Latin *animus*, Greek *psyche*, and Hebrew *nephesh*. Soul as a word thus has an even more complex history than spirit. With each translation, the connotations of the word changes, sometimes a little, sometimes quite a lot. When *nephesh* is rendered *psyche*, a radical change occurs. *Psyche* in Greek thought and philosophy is in dualistic relationship with body, *soma*. Thus the distinct body-soul polarity in Greek. The Hebrew does not connote such dualism. *Nephesh* is arguably better translated into English as “person” rather than “soul.”

When the Jewish religious texts were translated into Greek, *nephesh* was often translated *psyche*, but it does not quite work. We see the mismatch, for example, in

I Corinthians 15:44, when Paul writes that the soul-ish (*psychichos*) body dies, and the spiritual (*pneumatichos*) body is raised up. Greeks and their later followers would not want to support the idea that the soul dies.

Psyche in Greek culture is the immortal Divine spark in human beings that flees the body in death. Christianity largely adopted that construct, but it is at variance with the Jewish and Christian biblical texts where the soul is not elevated at the expense of the body. Such dualism led to the negative valorization of sexual pleasure in Christendom, a negativity not found in the biblical texts. The Jewish religion even today, faithful to its origins, makes a unique contribution to culture by its generally positive view of sexual pleasure. Later Christianity adopted for the most part the Greek view rather than the biblical view, with unfortunate consequences.

Herbert Anderson in a 2001 paper (“Whatever Happened to Seelsorge?” Herbert Anderson, *Word & World*, Vol. xxi, No. 1, Winter 2001) argues correctly that cure and care of souls is a more powerful metaphor than spiritual care. Anderson rightly decries the recent abandonment of soul care, cure of souls, and pastoral care and counseling in favor of spiritual care. But Anderson shoots himself in the foot by insisting that soul is objectively linked to the transcendent and to Christianity. Anderson rightly argues for soul as a more powerful category than spirit in the present context, but he goes on to claim Christian ownership of soul, and unabashedly promotes Christian triumphalism. He argues that pastoral care should focus on Christ and tell stories of God. While he does not say where he would find such stories, he presumably means stories in the Bible or in Christian tradition. He also downgrades the value of psychology for religious professionals, thus minimizing the value of self-awareness, one of Tillich’s components of spirituality. Anderson is a religious positivist. That is, he writes about God as if God and his realm are just other aspects of the human experience and Christianity the one true religion handed down from on high.

A new organization proposing recovery of soul emerged in the clinical pastoral training, aka the clinical pastoral education (CPE) movement, in 1990 as the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP,) (cpsp.org). It is noteworthy that the claim was not recovery of *the* soul. The claim of seeking recovery of soul was made in the context of perceived degeneration in the clinical movement brought on by conformity, political correctness, bureaucratic intransigence, and the acquisition of money. Loss of soul was the diagnosis and recovery of soul was the proposed cure. Recovery of soul was a metaphor for increased individuation, the value of dissent, respect for personal idiosyncrasy, disdain for the accumulation of wealth, and the creation of a grass roots power structure as opposed to the usual imperial corporate bureaucracy. Recovery of soul, then, stood for a galaxy of values that were seen to be nurturing to a richer personal and organizational life. The language of recovery of soul could just as well be replaced by the language of spirituality, particularly as defined by Tillich. However, CPSP did not wish to join the emerging spirituality movement and saddle itself with the effete connotations currently associated with spirit.

The CPSP community would agree with Anderson in its preference for soul over spirit as a guiding symbol, but it would not generally be sympathetic with Anderson's confident correlation of soul and the Christian God. Anderson's position is much to essentialist, or positivistic. If there is a God, and doubting the so-called existence of God is always acceptable, he does not permit such bridges between the Divine and the human to be built either for Christianity or any other religion. There is no bridge because there is none there to find. All religious people have to live with the possibility that God is merely a construct of human longing and forlornness.

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God and Human Suffering

by Patricia Martinez

Two Stories of Pain and Suffering

a. Fely's story. Fely's baby dies at 4 months old, her first born. She is inconsolable and keeps asking, "Why did my baby die? What have I done?" The parish priest comes to the wake and consoles her with these words: "You should not be sad. You now have an angel in heaven. God has taken your baby to be with him. He has his reasons for doing so." Fely is filled with disgust at what the priest says. She asks him to leave saying, "I do not need a baby in heaven. I need my baby here, in my arms."

b. A wife's story. A beautiful, wonderful, generous lady faces a broken marriage which ends in divorce. She confides to her niece, "I think God is punishing me. I entertained the idea of becoming a sister but I did not answer his call. That is why my marriage does not work."

What is common to these two stories? When suffering or tragedy strikes, people ask, "Why?" There is a search for an explanation to be able to understand the suffering. The explanation given is: God is the cause. Usually, these explanations are meant to defend God; to show that he has good reasons in causing the suffering or allowing it to happen.

- In Fely's case, He allows Fely's baby to die. We do not understand it now but everything that happens has a purpose: to fit God's plan
- In the second story, the suffering is a punishment for not doing God's will. Suffering and tragedy are punishment for sins we have committed.
- suffering is also sent by God to test our faith. In fact suffering brings us closer to God, teaches us a lesson, and makes us realize how much we need him, etc.

The explanations given have negative effects on the victim. In the first story, the effect is anger, disgust. In the second, the effect is guilt. Instead of helping, they cause more suffering on the part of the victim. Such explanations can even lead to a loss of faith because they are so angry with God .

These explanations pose problems in our present day world. For most people, to say that God sends/causes/allows suffering to test people, to teach them a lesson,

or to punish them is to make of God a monster. This is a behavior we even find immoral and indecent in people. Why then do we impute it to God?

Our Image of God

All these explanations come from a particular image of God. The way we see God affects how we interpret life and, necessarily, how we view suffering and cope with it.

From what image of God do we get the above view on suffering? This image sees God as a supreme, omnipotent Being who created the world with its own laws. This world is separate and distinct from God. God is up there in the heavens. However, from out there, he intervenes occasionally in the world and human affairs, especially in answer to prayer, right worship and correct behavior. He has a divine plan and everything has to happen according to that plan. Since he is powerful and omnipresent, he is also in control. And his justice demands that he rewards the good and punishes the evil. Since God is perfect, he is unchanging, unmoved, and unaffected.

Again, more and more people have problems with this particular way of looking at God. For instance, a God who created the world with its own laws but who intervenes and suspends these laws once in a while, makes of God a capricious being with whom we can only relate as victims, or as servants who must please him, or placate him all the time to gain his favor and avert his wrath . Why does he intervene sometimes, and sometimes does not? If God is good and powerful, why does he not avert suffering disaster and accidents all the time?

How about the unimaginable and pervasive suffering of the innocent? The suffering of millions of people deprived of a decent humanity; the grinding poverty not only in nations but in an entire continent, victimizing the weak and defenseless; women and children abused, degraded, and exploited. And of late, we have been made aware of the abuse and degradation of our planet earth. Modern day men and women cannot reconcile this reality with an image of God who is just, powerful, and omnipotent. They cannot make sense of a good and loving God causing suffering, allowing it to happen or sometimes intervening and sometimes not. They are asking questions: "Is God really like that? Does he really cause or allow all of this suffering and misery while standing aloof, unaffected and unmoved? Why is there suffering? Is it possible that God does not want us to suffer? Is it possible that there are no reasons, that suffering simply happens?"

Present-day Search for Ways of Speaking of God

Confronted with radical suffering, especially the suffering of the innocent, there is, today, a search for new ways of speaking of God that are relevant and meaningful. These people who want to be faithful to their faith traditions yet attentive to contemporary experiences of suffering look at the above image of God and ask, "Is there something missing/not taken into account in this image of God? Are there other elements in our faith tradition and in scriptures that were not paid attention to

or played down?

One such person is Harold Kushner, a Jewish rabbi. His son, Aaron was diagnosed with progeria, a disease that causes fast aging. This experience of intense suffering and pain led him to ask questions about the image he has of God.

What is the process Kushner went through?

1. He owns his experience of suffering. His son Aaron has progeria. He is going to die. He looks different from all the other children of his age. People stare at him, speak in whispers, etc. Aaron is an intelligent boy and he knows, he feels, he suffers. Kushner shares Aaron's suffering. Like every other victim of tragedy and pain he also asks that poignant question? "Why, God, why Aaron?"
2. He brings this experience of suffering in dialogue with his faith and asks, "What has my faith to say about this?" He grew up with a particular image of a God who is omnipotent, all-wise, all powerful, just (a God who rewards the good and punishes the evil) and good. If God is all good and all powerful and just, why did he allow this sickness to attack Aaron? He cannot make sense of a powerful, good, and just God doing this to an innocent child.
3. He questions his image of God. Not that it is wrong; rather, his experience of undeserved suffering puts the whole idea of a God who rewards the just and punishes the evil, into question. Aided by new insights in biblical studies, he finds there some elements that have not been paid attention to or that have been buried under some presuppositions which are time-bound and culture-bound. He looks also at other sources; science, philosophy, and contemporary theology.

For instance, the explanations for physical and natural evil have been examined in the light of science. Physics has come to recognize that there is relativity and randomness in the world even as there is order and pattern. If this is so, can we still insist that there must always be a reason for everything? Does God will evil and suffering? Is it part of God's plan? Are genetic defects willed, caused by God? Can we not simply say, it just happens, part of the randomness in the world?

4. He makes a choice. He chooses for what is human and for a God who wills life and not death. "Forced," he said, "to choose between a God who is powerful yet causes suffering and a God who is good yet powerless to avert suffering," he chose the latter. Powerlessness should not be understood as an antithesis to power. Rather, it is an expression of the freedom of God to respect the autonomy of creation, the freedom of people, and to be in solidarity with the suffering.

This leads him to a new experience and understanding of God. Instead of a God who is unmoved and unaffected, he discovers a God who feels strongly with and for his people and for the whole of creation; a God whose relationship with the world is not a relationship of control but rather of love. And if God loves, then he must

necessarily be affected by whatever happens to the beloved. Then, he must be moved by what is happening to Aaron. Instead of asking “Why did God do this or Why did God allow this?” he asks, “Where is God in my suffering?”

Why do I give so much time to this process of arriving at a new way of speaking of God in the face of human suffering? I am convinced, that we should allow our image of God to be challenged by our contemporary experiences of suffering and pain. We should dare to expand our horizons and to blaze new trail by allowing our contemporary experiences to put questions to our faith expressions. This is what Kushner did. This is what the author of the Book of Job did. This is what a number of contemporary theologians are doing. For me, this is the only way, if we are to accompany our suffering brothers and sisters, and make our language about God meaningful and relevant.

The question we can no longer escape is, “How do we speak of God in the midst of all of this suffering, the degree and cruelty of which we have never known before? How do we speak of God in the face of the suffering of the cosmos?”

Some theologians propose that we begin to speak about a **Suffering God** to a suffering humanity and a suffering cosmos.

The Suffering God

What can help us understand better this idea of a suffering God?

Abraham Heschel, a Jewish Rabbi and theologian, looks deeply into his Jewish tradition, especially the prophetic tradition, and finds there that the prophets did not speak about their idea of God. They spoke about the situation of God. They were so in touch with their own situations and experiences and that of the people, especially situations of injustice and oppression, that they intuitively felt certain that they were in the situation of God. Heschel calls this, the **Pathos of God**. He describes this pathos of God as the way in which God is affected and moved by the events and suffering in history. Because of creation and the covenant (both with humans and creation, see Gen 9:9-10), God is interested in the world and human beings, to the point of suffering when we and his creation suffer. God relates and responds to events in history with grief, gladness, anger, compassion. Compassion in Hebrew is *rachamin* coming from the root word *racham*, meaning womb. At no other time is a mother so intimately, physically one with her child as when she carries it in her womb. They share the same breath. What the mother goes through, physically, emotionally, mentally, affects her child in the womb. What happens to the child affects the mother. Mother and child, parts of each other, are one. The new cosmology images God as fecund, source of life. Creation emerges from the womb of God. That is why God cannot but be compassionate. Meister Eckhart writes, “Whatever God does, the first outburst is always compassion. The new creation story sees this compassion rooted in the fact that we, and all creation are all of one piece. If this is so, then compassion involves the realization that the other is in me and I am in the other; knowing the need of the other even without him or her

expressing it, and doing something about the situation no matter the cost. That is why the compassion of God is almost always expressed as a challenge and call to justice.

Compassion, furthermore, happens not outside of experience, from a position of power and condescension. Rather, as Henri Nouwen writes, compassion asks us “to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in the brokenness, fear, confusion and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears...be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless.”

While Catholic theologians see this involvement of a compassionate God expressed in the Incarnation of Jesus (he shared our humanity, all of it), Jurgen Moltmann sees this involvement of a compassionate God manifested par excellence on the cross, where suffering and pain have descended to the depths of godforsakenness and death. Into this pit of nothingness, God enters to bring us salvation and new life.

Faced with the radical suffering of the poor and marginalized in Latin America, Liberation theologians argue for the solidarity of God with his suffering people.

Elizabeth Johnson looks at the experiences of women and find these experiences helpful to understand a suffering God. Two of these experiences are experiences of grief and experiences of degradation.

a. Experiences of grief and sorrow:

There are, in Scripture, texts which give meaning and power to experiences of grief. In Isaiah 16:9-11, we read, “ Therefore, I weep with the weeping of Jazer for the vines of Sibmah; I drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeah; for the shout over your fruit harvest and your grain has ceased. Joy and gladness are taken from the fruitful field; and in the vineyards no songs are sung, no shouts are raised; no treader treads out wine in the presses; the vintage-shout is hushed.”

The context of this text is the outbreak of war. God grieves and weeps and his grieving and wailing is as deep as the grieving and wailing of the people. He grieves and cries not just for people who are broken and killed, but for the land that is devastated and laid waste. In the book of Jeremiah, God weeps not just for Israel but for the enemy as well. Jeremiah 48:31 says, “Therefore I wail for Moab; I cry out for all Moab; for the people of Kir-heres I mourn.”

A rabbinic commentator notes that after the Red Sea flowed back and killed the Egyptians, the Israelites were rejoicing on the shore. The angels too were rejoicing in heaven and they told God, “Let us have a party!” But God, looking down on the dead bodies of the Egyptians strewn on the shore, wept and said, “No, they are my people too.” God grieves for the destruction of the enemy. That is how wide God’s compassion is.

The same theme about a sorrowing, solitary God is found in the book of Ezekiel

(Ezek. 10:18-23) where the glory of God leaves the temple and goes with the people into exile as their companion in disaster and humiliation.

b. Experiences of degradation

As described by Elizabeth Johnson, In addition to women's experiences of grief and sorrow, there is a deeper, more dehumanizing feminine experience that can help us understand this image of a suffering God. It is the experience of degradation of women; a suffering that destroys their human dignity and even life itself. The degree of their degradation invites the compassionate God to enter into their suffering; it points to the depths of compassion and solidarity of the suffering of God because, very often, in these situations, there seems to be no solution, just silence, and as Elizabeth Johnson so poignantly expresses, just "the terrible sense of the mystery of evil and the absence of God which nevertheless may betray divine presence desecrated." Hence, when a woman is battered and abused by her husband, God is there battered and abused. When a woman is raped and humiliated, where is God? He is there being violated. We can multiply these experiences of radical suffering and ask, "where is God?" He is suffering with the victim

In a small book entitled, *NIGHT*, Elie Wiesel, a survivor from Auschwitz, narrates an experience. Three Jews, (two old men and a young man) were being flogged and finally hanged before their eyes. The two old men died immediately. But it took 30 agonizing, cruel minutes before the young man expired. While this was happening, a man behind Elie Wiesel groaned and asked, "God, where are you?" to which query Elie Wiesel heard a voice from within him answer, "He is right there before you, tortured, flogged and hanged."

There is also a suffering that destroys the person; that brings about despair. How do we speak of God to such people? Brennan Manning, an author, writes about his minister-friend who suffered severe reversals in his life. He resigned from his church, abandoned his family, and fled to a logging camp. One winter afternoon, as he sat shivering in his aluminum trailer, the portable electric heater suddenly conked out. That was the last straw in a string of miseries. Shouting and cursing, "God I hate you" he sank to his knees weeping. There in the darkness of faith, he heard God within him say, "I know, it is okay." And God wept with him. The minister stood up, and started home. No amount of explanation, etc. could make this man go home, turn his face against despair, and start life anew. Indeed, only the powerlessness of a compassionate, solitary and suffering God could.

The Suffering of the Cosmos

Our planet is withering,. Because of the degradation and plunder of the earth caused by human decisions and actions, the whole cosmos is in travail. It is suffering. Yet, this is a suffering which we can avoid, which we can solve by living in a more friendly way towards our universe.

But the suffering of the cosmos is not just inflicted upon it by humans. The new cosmology makes it clear that suffering is also inherent in the cosmos. The universe

systematically breaks down some of its achievements in order to arrive at more creativity and more complex forms of life. Usually after these so called cataclysmic events, the diversity and complexity of life in our planet increases. Our very own planet earth came about through the explosion of a dying star, the supernova. The mammals saw the day when the dinosaurs were wiped out. The new cosmology says that there have been at least 5 mass extinctions in the history of our planet earth and we are in the middle of the 6th. The question that is being asked now is, "How do we speak of God in view of the suffering **inherent** and **inflicted** in the cosmos?" Gloria Schaab in a recent book, *The Creative Suffering of the Triune God*, says that "God suffers in, with, and under the creative processes of the cosmos with its gradual unfolding in time."

A Different Image of God

Sensitive to present day human and other than human experiences, and supported by new insights in biblical studies and scientific discoveries, we have shown how present day theologians speak of God as a suffering God. This language about God obviously comes from a very different image of God. Instead of an all-powerful, all-wise, omnipresent far away God, we have the image of God as an encompassing Spirit, "in whom, we live, we move and have our being" as St. Paul puts it in Acts 17: 28. The universe is not separate from God but in God, even as God is not outside creation but within creation enabling it to evolve and to develop to become always more and more. God is not out there, intervening every now and then, but right here, a presence within our everyday life, empowering us to grow and achieve our fullest potentials.

In the Abrahamic traditions, this image of God was already present side by side with the previous idea of God we spoke about. But the image of the omnipresent, omniscient God got the upper hand because of the worldview at that time. For instance, a God in heaven was understood differently then than it is now. For the people in ancient times, heaven was not far away. The universe was thought of as having three layers; heaven which is the dome, earth which is the floor and the underworld which is below the floor. For them, a God in heaven was not necessarily a far away God. Heaven was very close. Today, we experience heaven as so far away. The space around us is simply unlimited. Scientific discoveries tell us that the stars and galaxies are constantly moving away from us and from one another. We live in an expanding universe.

Conclusion

Harold Kushner tells a story:

A youngster came home from school having been taught the biblical story of the crossing of the Red Sea. His mother asked him what he had learned in class, and he told her: "The Israelites got out of Egypt, but Pharoah and his army chased after them. They got to the Red Sea and they couldn't cross it. The Egyptian army was getting closer. So Moses got on his walkie-talkie, the Israeli air force bombed the

Egyptians, and the Israeli navy built a pontoon bridge so the people could cross.” The Mother was shocked. “Is that the way they taught you the story?” “Well, no”, the boy admitted, “but if I told it to you the way they told it to us, you’d never believe it.”

The boy understood the basic story. God is on the side of his people wanting to be free. The boy understood instinctively that if he has to be faithful to the story, he needed to retell it. The same is asked of us today in speaking of God and human suffering. Like this boy, all that we are given is the basic story about God and his relationship with people and the world. To be understood by men and women of today, to be effective and relevant, we need to retell the story. We have to fill in the details, aided by our present experiences, and the new data afforded to us by biblical studies, science, philosophy, theology; data that were not accessible to our ancestors in the faith. Otherwise, instead of helping others, we increase their suffering. We become a burden, and like Job’s friends, we become “sorry comforters” rejected by God himself.

It will not be easy. We should be able to let go of our previous idea about an outsider God who is powerful, in control and intervening in the affairs of this world; a God to whom we run for solutions. We need to gradually open ourselves to another image of a God who is involved in our history not in a relationship of control but in a relationship of freedom and love; a God who is affected by what happens to us and to his creation. We need to dare to speak of a suffering God who translates his compassion into solidarity with those who suffer; whose words are heard in the eloquence of a silent presence that promises strength, courage, and hope that because he is with us, suffering does not have the last word. The last word, rather, is life.

Let me end with two stories.

The first is a story about how a husband and his three children accompanied the wife and mother when she was diagnosed with cancer. Confronted with this very painful reality, this family decided to live to the full, every precious moment given to them; promising to one another that they will share everything; the sorrow and the pain, and all the information about the disease: Is it getting worse? Is she getting better? etc. But most of all, the husband, the children and friends gifted her with their presence. The important thing in this story, is the support this lady found in her family and friends. Is this not God keeping vigil with her, suffering with her, through the support of family and friends? A compassionate God giving her comfort and strength? Promising her that suffering is not the last word?

The second story is about a religious sister. When she was a small child, her spine got damaged through an accident. But she never mentioned it to her mother. She learned to live with her pain. As if that accident was not enough, three succeeding accidents happened on the same damaged spine. Lately, her superiors suggested to her to undergo surgery. Either of two things can happen: she gets well, or she becomes paralyzed. This sister sought discernment. Her decision: she will undergo the surgery. She said, “All these years of pain and suffering, I have always felt that

God was there, suffering with me. That is why I could live fully. Whatever happens, I am not afraid anymore. If I will become paralyzed, I know I can still **do** something and **be** someone for others, from my bed.” Her retreat directress, could only embrace her and say, “I will keep you in my heart.” In the powerlessness of that embrace, and in those words, this sister felt the love and compassion of a suffering God poured out.

This sister’s experience of a God who is in solidarity with her suffering, transformed her into a woman who was ready to face the future even if it would entail further suffering. The compassionate love of a suffering God has entered her pain and empowered her to overcome discouragement and despair. It has given her comfort and hope. The suffering, compassionate God says to her, “Hindi ka nag-iisa”. Knowing we are not alone, spells all the difference.

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Divine Intervention: The Flight of Elijah in Dialogue with Crisis Care

By Robert H. Munson

Pastoral Care is considered a field of practical Christian Theology, the integration of theology and the social sciences. In practice, however, this integration is somewhat doubtful. As noted by Richard Muller, there is commonly a disconnect between practical and theoretical theology. There is commonly little attempt at an honest integration of Biblical interpretation and the social sciences in the development of principles of pastoral care (or other practical ministries). Commonly, pastoral care is drawn from a spotty collection of Bible verses, or drawn from the social sciences and then justified with a similarly weak set of Biblical proof-texts. Correcting this issue is far beyond the scope of this paper. A far more modest goal is to seek to demonstrate through a Biblical passage the benefit of dialogue between the Bible and the secular work in pastoral care.

The story of Elijah fleeing from Jezebel is a classic story of a man in crisis. The Biblical story is found in I Kings 19:1-18.

The Crisis

The first part of the story is the crisis. In chapter 18, Elijah is victorious. Although ostensibly a contest between God Jehovah and the Phoenician god Baal, humanly speaking, it was a contest between the prophet Elijah and the priests of Baal, or Elijah versus the royal family, Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah's victory appears to be short-lived. Arriving at the palace gates in the royal city of Samaria, Elijah discovers that rather than admitting defeat, Queen Jezebel has sentenced him to death. Elijah responds decisively... by running away.

Some find this response strange, feeling that Elijah (a spiritual warrior if there ever was one) would laugh off such a threat. However, Elijah was a real human not a movie character. He had just completed a hugely physically and emotionally draining ordeal. Seeking the crown of victory, he discovers that the battle is not over and his life is still in danger. This is a crisis. According to Caplan, a crisis is "an acute human response to an event wherein psychological homeostasis (balance) has been disrupted; one's usual coping mechanisms have failed; and there are signs and/or symptoms of distress, dysfunction, or impairment." Under the circumstances, Elijah's response was normal. Additionally, some might argue that Elijah's response demonstrated a lack of faith. A prophet of God should trust Him for protection, might be the argument. However, the Biblical text does not describe one lacking in faith. His response to the crisis was to run (with his servant) to Mount

Horeb (also known as Mount Sinai). Mount Sinai was where Moses met God. Running to where he believes he will meet God is not a lack of faith. Rather, it is a faith response to a crisis. When an individual goes through a crisis, oftentimes they will seek out the situation, location, or symbols that makes him or her feel close to God.

Safety and Security

Elijah ran and God remained silent. He and his servant arrived in Beersheba far to the south. Although he was physically in a safer position, outside of the region that was ruled by Ahab and Jezebel, he was tired, hungry, and showing signs of giving up. Leaving his servant behind, Elijah went deep into the wilderness, a very inhospitable land. At this point in time, God steps in. Through an angel, Elijah is given adequate rest, food, and drink to restore him physically. Then the angel encouraged him to continue on to Mount Horeb. One might wonder why God did not speak to Elijah directly at this point rather than make him continue his journey. There is no answer given in the text. Perhaps Elijah really needed to be in the correct place to speak to God. Neither should symbols be underestimated, nor should timing be forced. Physically safe, fed, rehydrated, and rested, Elijah continued his long journey to Mount Horeb. Finally, he arrived at the mountain and found a cave to enter and rest. Finally, he felt safe and secure.

Ventilation and Validation

God now speaks, but only to encourage Elijah to share his thoughts and feelings. Elijah expresses his sense of being a failure and being alone. While previously, Elijah said that he wanted to give up and die, there is no mention of this. In fact, God asked what Elijah was doing there, and Elijah did not answer, he simply expressed (ventilated) his own frustrations. God did not correct Elijah or attack his "bad attitude." Rather, at this point, God demonstrated His power to Elijah, but with the curious note that God was not in those miraculous events. Rather God was in the gentle whisper that asked again, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah, again, did not say why he was there, but repeated his frustration. In a time of emotional upheaval, the calm and gentle voice that asks us to share our feelings without seeking to invalidate these feelings, is a great help toward healing.

The demonstration of power to Elijah seems strange... a bit of a drift away from a text that seems to be focused on emotional healing. However, perhaps that is the point. Elijah, presumably, chose Mount Horeb, not only because it was far away from those who wanted him dead, but it is where God demonstrated Himself to Moses with power. Yet in the story, Elijah appeared to be unchanged by the experience. God's relational interaction appears to be more effective in giving Elijah what he needed than receiving what he thought he needed.

Planning and Preparation

Having given Elijah the opportunity to reach an emotionally and spiritually safe place to seek Him, God gave him words to prepare for the future. God gave Elijah new

work to do, and a plan to accomplish His work through training a replacement. It was only at this point that God corrected a misunderstanding of Elijah... there were many others like Elijah who remain faithful. Even though Elijah felt like a failure, God made it clear that his work has not been in vain, and there was a positive future role for himself, with support from others. The future would be different than the past, but not necessarily bad.

Dialogue

I see similarities in the crisis response developed by the National Organization of Victim Assistance (NOVA) and that described in I Kings 19. After an introductory section, the crisis counselor is supposed to go through a process of three steps with the victim:

1. **Safety and Security.** Ensure that the victim is taken away from a dangerous place to a place of physical safety. Ensure that the victim is secure emotionally and can share honestly and confidentially what he or she has gone through.
2. **Ventilation and Validation.** Give the victim the freedom to talk about his or her experience and feelings without passing judgment. Help the victim realize that the feelings felt are understandable and normal under the abnormal circumstances.
3. **Planning and Preparation.** Help the victim stop simply looking backward but make some steps (even baby steps) in developing a new plan and preparing to develop a “new normal.”

It is best not to view the Bible as a “crisis care manual.” The Bible may be seen as God's revelation of His work on earth. It is, however, not the sum total of truth regarding pastoral care, counseling, and psychology. I have heard it said that considering the Bible as the only textbook of human psychology is a “high view” of the Bible. But that is only true if that is the intention of the work. If my van is broken down, I would not rely exclusively on the Bible for information for vehicle repair. The Bible makes no claim to having exclusive truth about van repair. It is certainly not a “high view” of the Bible to suggest that it does. A Biblical passage should not be used as the “full” understanding of crisis care response, or any other aspect of pastoral care and counseling. Additionally, outside works (secular or religious) should not impose their interpretations on the Bible either. Rather, there should be dialogue. I believe that this passage provides an ample opportunity for dialogue in the area of crisis care. Dialogue, according to Martin Buber, does not require relativizing one's beliefs, or coming into a conversation without beliefs or a perspective, but rather that each accept the other with mutual respect.

The passage in the Bible of Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb provides a lot of insight regarding the religious caregiver's possible roles and behavior in dealing with a crisis. The passage does not justify the NOVA model for crisis response. The NOVA model does not provide the single lens through which to view the passage. Rather,

each comes together to support and challenge each other... and more importantly... challenge us. The findings of crisis counseling gives a possible model for interpretation of the Elijah passage. Perhaps it may give insight into other crisis narratives in the Bible. But what about in the other direction? What does this Biblical story offer as areas for profitable dialogue with crisis care? Three areas are considered-- these are divine role, faith, and use of symbols in crisis care.

Divine Role. God is seen as active in the crisis response in the Elijah passage, in some ways distant and in some ways imminent. God provides for the needs of Elijah, and yet allows him to wander and wonder. The passage shows God as willing to accept criticism. It also shows God as one who is loving and concerned. God is seen as the God of signs and wonders, yet prioritization is placed on God's listening and speaking. Perhaps the most striking is God's patience to work with the process rather than attempt a quick fix.

Faith. A crisis of faith is often thought of as an event that pulls one away from God. However, this passage shows a crisis of faith that actually draws Elijah closer to God. Existential doubt (doubt regarding personal meaning and motivation) can be healthy and lead to personal/spiritual growth. A religious crisis caregiver should not assume that a crisis of faith is bad. Rather, he/she should provide an environment where the struggle can be handled in a supportive, non-judgmental, and positive way.

Use of Symbols. The passage shows Elijah seeking out Mount Horeb. Since Mount Horeb is where God spoke to Moses in power, it appears to have been a symbol of faith and strength for Elijah. Likewise, the text seems to suggest that Elijah needed to experience the power of God in a tangible way. This power did not need to be part of the solution, but act as a comforting symbol. Both of these God provided. God even helped Elijah reach Mount Horeb. While the story shows God working with these symbols, it also showed Him challenging them. God sent an angel to Elijah in the wilderness showing that God can reveal Himself anywhere. Likewise, God's show of power, while perhaps meeting some need in Elijah, clearly was less impacting on him than God listening and speaking to him. One is reminded of Jesus speaking to the centurion. Jesus commended the centurion for understanding that He did not have to be at the side of the sick individual to provide healing. The symbol of physical presence was not needed. However, when Jesus met others, such as Jairus, who needed the symbol of presence for his faith, Jesus responded without judgment. As religious crisis caregivers, we should utilize the symbols that are important to the individual, but not in such a way that the symbols become talismans, creating dependency.

I believe that theology and the Bible provide important dialogue in counseling and crisis care. Without this dialogue, important perspectives are lost, and opportunities to minister within a faith context are inhibited.

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CPE Testimony

by Ptr. Fongoh Godwin Tohnain

My name is Fongoh Godwin Tohnain, I'm a Cameroonian – Africa. I was privileged to undergo the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) training in the summer of 2010 while doing my Bachelor of Theology degree program at the Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary. I'm thankful to God for the privilege.

The CPE training has been to me a faith-clarifying experience. With my involvement with all kinds of people in various conditions in the hospital, jail and neighborhood, it has confirmed to me that God is a loving Father to everyone. He can heal all manner of diseases and yet, He chooses to heal only some. In some situations, he chooses to heal, and others, He comforts and/or strengthens. This conclusion is a result of praying with many patients in the hospital--- some persist in their illness, some die, and yet others in critical conditions survived.

Above all, CPE has helped me to know myself better. That's why the image I use for my CPE training is a mirror.

A PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL JOURNEY:

-By Jehny M. Pedazo

2011- Pastoral Guidance & Counseling in the Philippines

There are a lot of needy people with troubled souls who need to be actively outreached. This realization became clearer to me once I started pastoral and spiritual counseling in relation to Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), and because of my affiliation with BUKAL Life Care & Training Center (BLCTC), which necessitates me to share my services in the jail, hospital, school, church and community. Yes, counseling needs a missionary approach for its value to be fully acknowledged by the public as an indispensable resource. This is especially true in the Philippine setting, wherein the mention of the term “counseling” has still a slight social stigma attached to it, because people have this limited idea that one goes for counseling when they have problems or mental and emotional disturbances. In order for the negative connotation to be dismantled, counselors ought to engage the general population and dispel ignorant notions on the purposes, services, and other aspects of counseling. I, for one, committed myself to pastoral counseling because of the knowledge of what it feels like to be so much in need of guidance yet ignorant and fearful about whom to approach and trust. In those times I faced crises, especially in my younger year. Looking back I know now how helpful it would have been to receive counseling from someone who has that dedication, sense of mission, and good training. But then, I didn't know where to find such, so it's a tremendous help if counselors can be more outgoing in the sense that they place themselves in various settings of imminent need.

I also sensed fruition of such broad-based counseling reaching an international scope when a counselee told me that she used to receive counseling through the Internet from counselors in the U.K. and another Western country. It was they who suggested to her after some time to seek out a local counselor because face-to-face counseling has advantages that online, distant, and cross-cultural counseling does not. The counselee, at first, may have preferred the anonymity and privacy that online counseling provided for her to an extent; but she heeded her foreign counselors and found BUKAL LCTC's website. In a sense, that is a manifestation of international counseling partnership, although our center does not have established contact with those specific foreign counselors. But, through the counselee, we have a productive relationship, no matter how indirect. There's a support network fostered because of the access that computer-internet technology provides. The international

counseling community is proving its good sense of responsibility in putting the welfare of the counselee first, and by keeping that focus, instead of being isolated to their own territories.

It's vital that counseling is delivered as a service accessible throughout the lifespan, since it is not only school-age children who need to be guided. At all phases in human life, assistance in reflection, encouragement, and informational services related to the counselee's issues are essential to selecting best options in life. It will also be better if counseling is recognized as a lifelong resource, not merely "kid's stuff" (for lack of a better term). Even the adult and elderly should feel comfortable and unrestricted to ask this kind of help when necessary. They should not feel constrained by the fact that their ages are expected to be wiser; therefore, without need for counseling.

Lifelong accessibility to counseling is also advantageous because it can secure continuous follow-up in intra- and inter- personal development. It should allow for a person to be maximally supported in such a way to enable him to fully realize most, if not all, of his/her potentials.

As the trends of healthcare services change, counseling that emphasizes prevention of mental & emotional problems is a most beneficial strategy for the sake of counselees. It may be a cliché to state that: "Prevention is better than cure," but it holds true in any case, for who would find pleasure in unnecessary suffering? Soul ailments are not disregardable occurrences or stuff that we can set aside without significant consequences. They must be addressed too, even as we pay attention to our physical health. By preventive measures we mitigate avoidable crises and the toll it takes on the individual, his families, and others affected, such as his workplace.

Versatile and thorough preparation, as well as specialization in particular forms of guidance are necessary because all sorts of people from all sorts of backgrounds need guidance and counseling. Variegated know-how and experiences enable the counselor to relate to and understand the counselee, especially if they have had parallel undertakings. That can then affect a counselor's status because it builds a positive reputation to have a good rapport with counselees, and be engaging and therapeutic for them.

Now, in the Philippines, with the licensure implemented, counseling has become a serious and regulated profession. That is good in the sense that those who practice it should gain standard and credible qualifications. Counselees ought to receive the most professional and ethical guidance available. But still, passing licensure exams, getting the continuing professional education, and having accepted credentials does not guarantee that the counselor has therapeutic impact. Becoming a licensed doctor, for example, does not assure that one is caring and beneficent to patients. I believe the legitimate counselor is the one who applies wisdom in his own life, although he is not necessarily perfect, and utilizes his own challenges to minister to

others' needs. But it's also vital to the counselor to be part of an organization that continually motivates him to upgrade his counseling keenness and know-how.

It's now 2011, and the second decade of this third millennium in history has begun; I bet counseling still has a long way to go in the improvement of its services and delivery. I'm glad to be part of a counseling center which caters locally to my own countrymen and is affiliated internationally with a larger organization, the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP). I actually shifted courses to prioritize counseling subjects, because I strongly believe in the unquestionable value of encouraging words and moral support to a person's being. Calling and self-actualization trumps monetary gain. I can at least bear with material limitations for now, but self-fulfillment is a constant longing and it must be appeased some way, somehow and at least sometimes before practical living concerns. When I was deciding on a Master's degree to take up, I chose Psychology because I wanted specialization in my own passion, since from a young age I've always wanted to know how the mind works. My plan was to merge my undergraduate degree with my Master's degree and at least become a psychiatric nurse. But now, in this season of my life, I feel called to pastoral counseling. I'm enjoying the fulfillment and sense of "this is me" despite challenges at home, at work and in me. I don't know what my future in counseling entails. I leave my fate in the all-encompassing protection, responsibility and love of God; although uncertainties can be troubling if I let them worry me. But as for the future of counseling in general, I'm optimistic that its positive developments and influences shall be far-reaching.

2012- Identity Crisis vs. Identity Revelation, The Accomplishment of Being

"Self-forgiveness" is an often overlooked need. One keeps looking for what's lacking and/or impeding progress (psycho-spiritual, and more), neglecting to give attention to the God-created, uniquely meaningful, self that needs to be "given" care before it can sincerely and profoundly minister healing to others too. Recently, I've learned to practice forgiveness or grace for myself, especially when the realization came that I had transformed into my own abuser: self-medicating myself with worldly remedies to alleviate my soul-wounds while I neglected the need for treatment. Those soul wounds were of the past, but I needed to return to forgive myself, or else their ghosts would keep following me. Love is not full without justice; the past cannot rest in peace without resolution or closure, a lot of which is redeemed through forgiveness (or "saved by grace"). I cannot remove the speck from another's eye if not until first removing the log from my own eye. How can I judge my brethren rightly if my heart's vision is obstructed by misplaced emotions? How can I follow the Great Physician's humble footsteps if I don't recognize my own wounds that need treatment and keep bleeding, while staining instead of really helping? *For, all sin and fall short of the glory of God.* Divine grace works by the virtue of accepting and receiving forgiveness first, something one can only choose for oneself alone; it's a decision between life and death.

In continuing CPT (Clinical Pastoral Training, aka CPE), God has molded me not only to keep achieving the goals CPT is designed for in general: self-awareness, counseling competency and theological integration. But, more so beyond “recovery of soul” is wholeness of being. It is step-by-step transcending and emanating beyond, from what is physical, superficial and temporal, to the core of my identity and integrity--my inner person: the spirit within me that’s immortal and purely of the Divine, through the medium of my soul, which is the mid or integrating aspect of my total self.

My major reference of God is through the human life of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He gives me the opportunity to glimpse Him by reading and learning with the critical plights of persons I get the privilege to care for: living human documents about God’s interventions. God in His incarnate form through His Son left a pattern for me to recognize and understand that part of my nature He built that is unseen and intangible yet incorruptibly and indestructibly infinite - my God-given spirit. I would never understand this dimension of my creation as a human being with bare science, which seeks to measure and explain through limited, earth-based and mortal methods. How can I help others if I do not desire, recognize, and humbly strive for my own need to be whole?

I started out an unbeliever in CPT two years ago, and I usually don’t give time, energy and resources to something I start out not believing in. My Pastoral Counseling journey is a Divine intervention. I was skeptical, even cynical, of the mix of Psychology and Theology; my persuasion was that psychology should be left a pure science, and faith is to be separate in order to be holy. I humbly admit now that the way I gave my respects to faith and psychology was Phariseic or hypocritical, born out of a secular mindset-- corruptly erratic and unfruitful and unproductive. Now that I’m able to integrate both, I’m secure and confident that I’m practicing and sharing my potential and gifting in an encouraging, prosperous and abundantly multiplying non-selfish manner of love, faith and hope – planting instead of burying; as a seed that surrenders and releases itself to the ground – not only for my God-given life, but also for others.

I believe I’ve finally learned to use my talents well in “reverence” for my “Sensei” (Master/Teacher), instead of continuing in the false security of hiding my God-given talents because my authority issues dictated me to inordinately “fear” my heavenly Father, of whom I felt and assumed was a difficult-to-satisfy-and-please perfectionist. I was mishandling control over my life; yet God didn’t, doesn’t and won’t ever let go of my hand. I’m truly His child in this journey-process of breakthrough from “glory-to-glory.” He is omni- or ever-present even in seeming silence, even in the times I feel lacking, or empty, and lonely. He is omniscient or all-knowing, and by my side, even when the unknown and the uncertainties frighten me. He is omnipotent, all-powerful and Almighty in the battles that I face, whether inside through conflicts or struggles, or outside with oppositions, persecutions, being misunderstood, etc. So, I thank God for empowering me to take the risks of the

processes of CPT: to be vulnerable to others, to be assessed or judged whether or not they get me right, to be care-fronted, and to choose changes- even if they excruciate – so that the truth of who I am, the virtually authentic Jehny Martin Pedazo can live to thrive uninhibitedly.

God: *“For I know the thoughts & plans that I have for you...thoughts & plans for welfare & peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome...Then you will seek Me, inquire for and require Me as a vital necessity and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you and I will release you from captivity...”* -Jeremiah 29:11, 13-14

I chose not to be a prisoner anymore of my outside identity/shell-cocoon: family status, educational background, career, intellect, physique, etc.; all of which had blinded me to limit my becoming/fulfillment, even if appearances give the assumption that I can be dismissed as privileged. I thank God for inspiring me as I gradually opened the eyes of my heart to not only imagine, but experience and live out the alternative of my core or innermost identity: to move and have my being “in Spirit and in Truth.”

I’m a valuable treasure-temple composed of spirit, soul and body because my Creator formed me as such, nothing less, nothing else. All else in me– expectations, reputation & roles – are external manifestations (allusions/shadows/ glimpses/mere images) to my truthful & eternal existence of being with God. I’m blessed with these things for the benefit of others and ultimately, God’s glory.

I’m favored to be given this “kudawaru” (a Japanese term pertaining to an endeavor through which a person performs with passion, obsession & perfection/idealism) for the marriage of psychology – the study of the soul – and theology – the study of God (and spirit). At several points of hardship I asked: “What am I doing here?” I entertained the feeling of giving up. But, I know full well that this ministry of God, this aspect of how He particularly designed me to fit in His Master plan, has let me arrive to “have and enjoy life and have it in abundance to the full ‘til it overflows” – Jn.10:10. I decide to grow through it in whatever ways possible that God gives as my life prevails to blossom and bear fruits in His care as I stick close to the Vine.

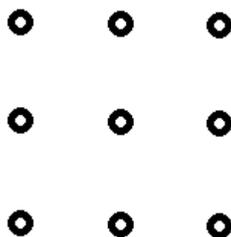
If others communicate life & love God stored/invested in them through singing, dancing, cooking, etc., my main expressions of God’s ministry in me are Pastoral Psychotherapy and writing. I believe He & I, in unity or agreement, are touching others meaningfully in good ways with His art in my life. Love should be like art & art should be like love; they should move or touch someone else to appreciate “zoe,” or life, more.

Where I am Now: A Personal Reflection in Clinical Pastoral Education

By B.D.

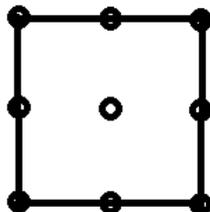
B.D. is a 4-unit graduate of the CPE Program and a Master of Divinity degree from Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary. This was written as part of the fourth unit evaluation. It is printed here with permission.

It is hard to figure out where I am now with my personal goals without giving first the background of my situation at the beginning of my CPE journey. Let me illustrate my life before and my life now using a “nine-dots puzzle” to show how I improved and figured out where I am now. The puzzle asks one to connect the 9 dots using only 4 straight lines without taking the pen from the paper. Solving this puzzle following these instructions gave me a lot of struggles in finding the solution.

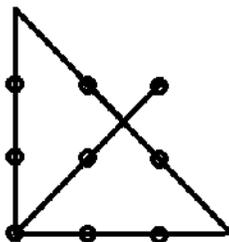


“Finding the solution” to my own issues and working out my own personal improvement also gave me a great deal of struggles and failures. Unseen issues before hindered me in improving my whole personality as well as my ministry. My low self-esteem always dragged me down, maintaining my low opinion of myself. I had a strong sense of insecurity that affected me whenever one of my members would leave the church. My self-abasement was very high, causing me to lose confidence, harming my pastoral authority. Consequently, I had a tendency to be abused and manipulated, adding to my emotional, physical, and spiritual burn-out. My theological persuasion has always been strong and I often would be quite discriminatory to other beliefs. I felt that my belief was superior to the beliefs of others. I embraced the notion that true believers are only those people who have the same faith as I have. Thus, I used to label people as unbelievers—even those who belong under the umbrella of Christianity.

Having all of these issues put me into a dilemma. My frame of mind would take the 9-dot problem and create a box with four lines. This would not work because one dot would always be left unconnected. My mindset would always bring me back to this attempted solution. My unperceived issues would provide me with limitations that I did not even acknowledge. Without exploring my own mindset and opening myself up to other possibilities, I was bound to repeating the same errors.



The third puzzle illustrates how I moved beyond my dilemma allowing me to experience great changes in my life. Every problem, every dilemma, every dead end I find myself facing in life, only appear or unsolvable inside a particular frame or point of view.



The puzzle illustrates my personal growth in where I am now in my personal goals. Enlarging the frame or field around the dots makes the problem vanish and new opportunities appear. Figuring out my real issues and working it out were the ways to enlarge my frame. That is what I experienced in CPE. I figured out my codependency issue that caused my low self-esteem, self-abasement, caretaking, and insecurities. Since the beginning of my CPE journey I have been excited and working hard to achieve my personal goals, putting every issue into balance. I became a great gardener tending my own garden of life. Until last year I was intimidated, judgmental, easily hurt, very sentimental, and easily manipulated. With no boundaries set, I had the tendency to be hurt and abused by others. I consider all of these issues as weeds in my garden. These same weeds, however, can turn into good and add to the beauty of my garden if controlled, and worked into the design of the garden. I had to find balance and control in the various issues in my life.

Now I have been working on my issue of co-dependency by setting boundaries for myself because I know that these boundaries are important for recovery. Having

weak boundaries seem to cause me to pick up or absorb other people's feelings, almost like a sponge absorbs water. I believe setting useful boundaries does not complicate life, but simplifies it. Setting a boundary to me means having lines and limits establishing and marking my personal territory that includes my body, mind, emotions, spirit, possessions, and rights. Developing a healthy boundary is my responsibility. It is a way to develop my sense of roles with my family, ministry, others and myself. Thus, this is what I am doing until now and will continue doing as long as I live. So far, there are several important things that I consider for setting my own boundaries:

- ⌚ First, I need to identify my limits with people. The most important person to notify regarding my boundaries is myself.
- ⌚ Second, I need to listen closely to myself to hear what I am saying. Taking care of myself should be my priority.
- ⌚ Third, my actions should be consistent with my boundaries. Although people may not respect my boundaries, I should not be affected by this or give up because setting my boundaries is to take care of myself, not controlling others.
- ⌚ Last, I learn to identify what hurts and stop the pain.

On the other hand I need to remind myself that setting up a healthy boundary doesn't mean constructing a blockage to protect my territory. It doesn't mean to become hyper-vigilant but to put it into balance.

Aside from setting boundaries to work out my learning goal, I consider another area that helps me a lot. It is the term DETACHMENT. It doesn't mean detaching from the person I care about, but from the agony of involvement.

I cannot begin to work on myself, to live my own life, to feel my own feelings, and to solve my own problems until I have detached myself from the object of my obsession. Attachment can take several forms such as mental attachment. For instance, one can be worried about or preoccupied with a problem or person. Other forms can be emotional or physical attachments. Caretaking or enabling a person can dominate a life. Therefore, detaching myself from being a caretaker or enabler allows me to be responsible for myself.

Other things may become visible along the way in my journey. I am working hard to find out all of my issues and put them into balance. I can say that I am growing, my perception, regarding my personality and theological beliefs, is broadening. My mind framing has extended and is open for continued growth and change if necessary. This is who I am and where I am today.

Hospital

by Ptr. Ricky Tenepere

Ptr. Ricky is a CPE Graduate. He wrote this poetic reflection in response to a unit of CPE he completed in 2009.

My God, you are like a hospital to everyone.

Every patient who has different illnesses and pain,

If we come to you we are so much welcome to be treated and cared for.

The doctors, nurses, and other medical staff are always there,

And wherever the patients are located Lord, you are there.

Emergency room, delivery room, private room and ward---

You are there, O God; we experience your love and care.

You serve us with love and your care like the pillows,

Blanket, and soft bed foam if we are in pain and illness when we lie down---

The place where we could experience rest and comfort.

And whatever the status of every person Lord, the poor, middle class or rich,

The newly admitted one, some who needs checkup, the terminally

sick or those in ongoing recovery,

Those having pain and before the treatment or surgical operation.

Especially those people those on their last breathe on this earth, oh Lord

We experienced the same care that you showed to others.

We always experience all this things when we come to you our God.

Claiming My Voice

by R. A. Taylor

R. A. is a graduate of CPE both with Bukal Life and another organization.

After several years ministering in the Philippines, I wanted to share with you about my experiences when I first got home. I went to the grave of my dad and, as I tried to share my feelings, I felt that at any moment he was going to come up and grab me... FEAR talaga, sobra...so i just stood there waiting. After saying what I wanted to say which was

"You no longer have a hold on me." "I will do what I want to do"

"Yes, I know you love me, but your love I didn't like."

"I hated you for hurting me."

I left. I didn't feel anything change but I remember a mentor saying, 'Let your VOICE be heard.' My next visit a week later, I felt peace-- no fear-- but the love of my dad, and I could see him weeping, and asking forgiveness to me. We both were crying. I forgave him, and now I'm able to see dad as an awesome person in the sense of his love for God and how he helped so many people

My dad was talented in many ways. He and some other pastors started a bible school, started summer church camps, built an apartment building and church (Calvary Baptist), in which we kids also helped. I'm so glad that I now see my dad as a wonderful person, and I choose to build on the beauty. THANKS BUKAL LIFE for opening my eyes. BUKAL LIFE showed me CARE. What an inspiration. BLESS ALL THOSE INVOLVED.

*Every experience God gives us, every person He puts in our lives, is the
perfect preparation for the future that only He can see.*

-Corie Ten Boom

Bukal Life Notes

History

Bukal Life Care & Training Center came into existence through two previous organizations, “Shepherd’s Oikos” and “Bukal Life Ministries.” “Shepherd’s Oikos” was the name selected by the CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) at Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary (April and May 2009). This team was led by group facilitator, Rev. Joel Aguirre. They chose the name for the ministry work of the team. When the CPE internship was completed, some of the team decided to continue ministry work under the “Shepherd’s Oikos” name, particularly in the form of pastoral care seminars.

Bukal Life Ministries began in response to Typhoon Pepeng which did a great deal of destruction in Northern Luzon in October 2009. Bob and Celia Munson, Joey and Gracia Mercedes, and Angie Gomez initially formed the group (others joining later) to minister to disaster response workers as well as families hurt by the storm, particularly in Benguet Province. Some of this work continued into February 2010. A considerable amount of the ministry work was in crisis counseling. Because of the overlap of ministries of Shepherd’s Oikos and Bukal Life Ministries, as well as some overlap of personnel, it was initially decided that Shepherd’s Oikos would be a ministry of Bukal Life Ministry. However, at a subsequent meeting, two changes were made. The first was to retire the name “Shepherd’s Oikos” because the name’s meaning is not clear to those outside of a seminary environment. Second, since one of the major ministries of Bukal Life Ministries would be to continue with CPE and crisis counseling training, and other aspects of pastoral care education, it would be beneficial to set up a pastoral care and counseling center which provides the structure and support for the educational ministry.

After more discussions on the name, the final consensus for the name of the center was “Bukal Life Care & Counseling Center”. A board of trustees were chosen and Bukal Life Care & Counseling Center, Inc. became a legal entity with the SEC in the Philippines in June 2010. October 2010 was the grand opening of Bukal Life Care & Counseling Center Inc. Although this was the grand opening, the center existed and operated on a limited level well before this. May 2011 saw our formal recognition by the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy as a certified training facility for CPE. In June 2011, we started ministering in Manila. In October 2012, the board decided to change the name of our organization to Bukal Life Care & Training Center, Inc.. This keeps our name more in line with our priorities of “Life Care” (chaplaincy, pastoral care, crisis care, and social ministry) and “Training” (CPE/T, disaster response, pastoral care, parenting, and other types of training programs and seminars).

Meaning of Corporate Name

It was our goal that Bukal Life Care & Training Center would have a name that helped to explain who we are and what we believe we are called to accomplish. “Bukal” is both a word and an acronym. As a word, “bukal” is the Tagalog word for “spring”—that is, a source of fresh flowing water. As an acronym, the letters relate to other Tagalog words.

B alikatan	Working should-to-shoulder
U gnayan	Networking
K aagapay	Coming alongside
A t	And
L ingap	(providing) Care

Our Vision

To foster communities of healing, hospitality, and wholeness.

Our Mission

To provide practical training services and holistic community care for both individual and community transformation and healing.

Our Motto

“Spiritually Aware, Clinically Competent”

www.bukallife.org

www.bukallife.wordpress.com

Authors

Cesar G. Espineda Dr. Espineda is a pastoral theologian, clinical pastoral supervisor, and educator. His extensive pastoral-missionary work and cross-cultural experience in different parts of the world have served as the foundation for his teaching, mentoring, and supervision of lay and ordained professionals of all faiths in multicultural and interfaith setting in the art and practice of clinical pastoral education and training (CPET). He is a faculty in the joint doctoral programs (Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Psychology) between the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (www.cpsp.org) and the Graduate Theological Foundation (www.gtf.org). He is Director of CPSP Philippines, and Chair of the CPSP Accreditation Committee of Training Centers in the USA and overseas.

Raymond J. Lawrence Jr. is the founding father and the General Secretary of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy. He has been an Episcopal minister for almost half a century. His most recent teaching position was as Director of Pastoral Care at New York Presbyterian Hospital, Columbia University, a position he held for fifteen years. Previously he held positions at St Luke's Episcopal Hospital, Houston, St. Joseph's Hospital, Houston, and New York Methodist Hospital. He has published widely in scholarly journals, and his opinion pieces on religion, ethics, and social values have appeared in most major newspapers in the U.S. His previous book, *The Poisoning of Eros: Sexual Values in Conflict*, was published in 1989, and was the winner of the 1990 Book Award at the World Congress on Sexuality in Caracas, Venezuela. In 2007 Praeger Press (Greenwood Publishing) published his *Sexual Liberation: The Scandal of Christendom*.

Patricia Martinez is a member of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICM). She has been in the teaching apostolate both in their ICM Secondary Schools and in the Inter-Novitiate Program of the different Novitiates in Baguio City. She has also been in Pastoral work in Belgium and in the island of Siquijor. At present, she is the archivist of the ICM Sisters in the Philippines. She also is on the Board of Trustees of Bukal Life Care & Training Center.

Robert Munson is administrator and co-founder of Bukal Life Care & Training Center. He serves with his wife, Celia, as missionaries under the Ambassador Program of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board. He is a graduate of Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary (Doctor of Theology). His dissertation was a grounded theory analysis of the use of medical mission events as part of long-term church outreach. His wife, Celia, is a CPE supervisor (and serves as Training Coordinator) at Bukal Life Care & Counseling Center. They have three children (Joel, Rebekah, and Esther), and reside in Baguio City, Philippines.

Jehny Pedazo is the Life Care Coordinator of Bukal Life Care & Training Center. She is a registered nurse; member of the Philippine Nurse's Association, and Commission on Graduate of Foreign Nursing Schools, Int'l. She has completed the academic requirements and comprehensive exam for Master of Art in Teaching Psychology, and the academic requirements for Master of Arts in Guidance and Counseling, both at the University of the Cordilleras. She is trained in Disaster Relief Chaplaincy, and has completed four units of Clinical Pastoral Training (June 2010 - Oct 2011). She is a certified Associate Clinical Chaplain and Associate Pastoral Counselor by the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP). She is a part of Mountain Light, Assembly of God Church.

Photo Album



Bukal Life Team with Dr. Lawrence at our Manila Symposium, March 2012



Cagayan de Oro Training and Work with Flood Victims, January 2012



CPE Summer Intensive Batch, 2012



Bukal Crisis Response Team in Cagayan de Oro for the Typhoon Sendong Relief Jan 2012



Bukal Family with Dr. Cesar at May 2011 Symposium



Staff Meeting