Do Spiritual Practices and Ascetical Theology Have a Place in Clinical Pastoral Education?

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Summary

This essay explores of the contribution of ascetical theology and spiritual practices to clinical pastoral education. Ascetical theology is concerned with spiritual growth and personal development of the gifts of each individual in order to foster the spiritual practice of prayer in all its aspects.

> *Any responsible theology today must be: mystical and prophetic; aesthetic and ethical-political; contemplative and committed to action.*[1]

The question posed as the title of this article has been with me since I took a course in spiritual direction over a decade ago. Since then, a number of questions and concerns have surfaced in my attempts to incorporate ascetical theology into my thinking and practice as a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) supervisor.

- When the concepts and spiritual practices informed by ascetical theology are taken seriously, how do they impact the CPE curriculum design and methods, the supervisor-student relationship, and the student's integration of self and theory at the level of practice?
- To what degree might the inclusion of concepts and spiritual practices prescribed by ascetical theology impact the quality of care provided by religious professionals?
- How does the current focus on spirituality provide a window of opportunity for exploring the relationship between pastoral and ascetical theologies in the context of CPE?

Answering any one of these questions will require much more space than allowed here. They are, however, a necessary starting point in an exploration of the contribution of ascetical theology and spiritual practices to clinical

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pastoral education. Ascetical theology is concerned with spiritual growth and the personal development of the gifts of each individual in order to foster the spiritual practice of prayer in all its aspects. This article is the result of my reflections on ascetical theology over the last decade and includes several years of experimentation, contemplation, and dialogue with students and colleagues from a broad array of healthcare disciplines. First, I will begin with a brief description of my personal context and biases.

Personal Context

I am an aging baby-boomer, a Caucasian male, the eldest of five siblings, married with two children with roots in western New York, outside of Rochester, in the rural canal town of Spencerport. I thrived during the rock-and-roll era of the 1960's; survived as a participant in the Vietnam war during the early 1970's; and suffered a mid-life crisis in the 1980's, which resulted in a dramatic change of careers. A rather lengthy pilgrimage ensued, resulting in a family move from New York to California, and then to Houston, Texas, where we resided for over twenty years. Currently, I am "semi-retired," living in northeast Texas and continuing to supervise CPE programs on a part-time basis.

My work experience spans both worlds of science and theology. During the first half of my work-life, I provided technical support to a variety of engineering firms involved in the design and testing of military and photographic systems. In the second half of life, I served the Church as a minister and CPE supervisor, training ministerial students and lay-people in the art of pastoral care. Theologically and religiously, I identify with the Reformed Protestant tradition, as expressed through those scriptures and creeds, and have practiced in the life and worship of the Presbyterian Church. I have an appreciation for existentialist perspectives because they help me to make sense of the *pathos* that occurs in the context of illness and suffering. Although I write as a Christian, I share with every religious tradition a passion for social justice, environmental issues, and peace in the world; as well as a commitment to forming the best religious leaders we can. Although I write from the experience of supervised clinical pastoral education, I believe that this perspective on spiritual practices will be of benefit in other supervisory contexts.

Historical Context

The themes examined in this essay have a history. Other Clinical Pastoral Education supervisors have tackled the subject of spiritual practices from

their own unique perspectives. Many of their contributions, which focus on the role of spirituality and spiritual practices in the context of CPE are contained in the *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry,* volume 18 from 1997. These articles are noted in the endnotes in annotated bibliographic form.[2] However**,** the primary historical starting point for any discussions about spirituality and CPE is the White Paper entitled, "Professional Chaplaincy, Its Role and Importance in Healthcare," published in 2001 as a joint publication of the five major pastoral care associations from the United States and Canada. The purpose of the paper is stated in the Introduction: "As a consensus paper, it presents the perspectives of these bodies on the spiritual care they provide for the benefit of individuals, healthcare organizations and communities." It continues: "Throughout this paper, the word *spirituality* is inclusive of *religion; spiritual care* includes *pastoral care*.[3] The White Paper further explains that *spirit* is a natural dimension of all persons and it defines the nature of spiritual care.

In recent years, the meaning of the term *spirituality* has been debated by many healthcare professionals from diverse disciplines. For example, in response to the White Paper cited above, Herbert Anderson raised a caution that the essential elements in the term *pastoral* might be lost if it were to be superseded by the term *spiritual.* Anderson asked: "Whatever Happened to *Seelsorge* (the care of the souls)? Behind this question is a presumption: it matters how we describe the work of ministry."[4] He argued for the recovery of soul precisely because it most adequately connotes the core of an individual before God. Anderson expressed his concern this way:

> Because the emphasis on spirituality tends to replicate individualism in this culture, metaphors of spirit often promise more about unity and community than they can deliver. At the same time, spiritual care is in danger of being trapped in abstraction because of its emphasis on the higher volitional and affective dimensions of being human.[5]

The debate continued in 2004 when a guest editorial written by Lucy Bregman was published in the *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling*. She argued that

> The quest for the true essential meaning of spirituality is a fool's errand. What practitioners such as chaplains and pastoral counselors need to attend to is the much more interesting and useful task of mapping its current applications, and pondering why they have succeeded even as the term itself continues to be fuzzy, confusing, and yet widely appealing.[6]

It seems, in retrospect, that both Anderson and Bregman are prophetic with respect to the concept of spirituality. Presently, *spirituality* is the pre-

ferred term used by chaplaincy departments and individual believers alike for describing their relationship with the transcendent. It is a "user-friendly" term whose definition can be customized to meet the user's context. Indeed, "spiritual care" has superseded "pastoral care," and being"…spiritual, but not religious" is the common jargon used by a significant number of believers to describe their relationship with God. Within the pastoral care movement, there is another ongoing struggle as chaplaincy departments face the choice to be spirit-led or data-driven. I propose that ascetical theology has something to offer to those living and working in such an environment.

Key Definitions

In order to provide the reader with a common vocabulary from which this discussion can take place, I've chosen to define the following key concepts:

Spirituality: The faithful response to God's love, as a life-long expression lived in accord with the commandments: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."[7]

Spiritual Direction: "It is the positive nurture of a person's relation with God, the creative cultivation of charismata, the gifts and graces that all have received. It is the opposite of the sort of pastoral care which assumes that religion can only offer little bits of help in emergencies: the ambulance syndrome."[8]

Ascetical Theology: "That body of doctrine which subserves to the development of prayer, together with those mental, physical, and psychological disciplines that tend to support it."[9]

Education: "Derived from the Latin *educere* which means to lead forth, as to draw out, a student's potentiality. The analogy to spiritual direction is that its aim is to develop innate gifts and graces, and at the same time direction occasionally requires that someone who knows something must tell it to someone who does not."[10]

Pastoral Care: "Pastoral care consists of all the ways a community of faith, under pastoral leadership, intentionally sponsors the awakening, shaping, rectifying, healing, and ongoing growth in vocation of Christian persons and community, under the pressure of the in-breaking kingdom of God."[11]

Spiritual Practice is a disciplined exercise of faith that deepens religious identity and engenders the human capacity for trust, patience, courage, and hope.

Spirituality as an Organizing Principle

When the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) and its cohorts stated in their 2001 White Paper that *spiritual care* includes *pastoral care*, the door was opened for the term *spirituality* to be used as an organizing principle in clinical pastoral supervision. That shift, in turn, makes it possible to explore using ascetical theology and spiritual practices as resources for CPE. In order for spirituality to serve this purpose, it must be defined theologically, historically, and concretely. Admittedly, by choosing to define spirituality from the Judeo-Christian tradition, it may appear I have limited my audience to those from my particular faith tradition. This is not my intent. The point here is not to find a definition of spirituality that fits all. Rather, *I* respectfully acknowledge the real differences in belief systems, and the distinctive cultural and historical contexts that exist among human beings as they face the daily challenges of life and faith (or no faith, for that matter). I believe that many of the concepts and practices described below, informed by ascetical theology, can be adopted and adapted by other faith traditions.

I chose to relate spirituality directly to fulfillment of the commandments to love God, neighbor, and self in order to establish a working relationship between pastoral and ascetical theologies. Both theologies focus on two sets of relationships described by the commandments: self and God; self and neighbor. At the risk of over-simplification, ascetical theology has tended historically to focus on the self-God relationship, while pastoral theology has tended to focus on the self-neighbor relationship. The goals for each theology are not mutually exclusive: both seek to enable the believer to experience the fulfillment and blessings of both relationships. To accomplish their respective goals, each theology provides a unique range of practices, developed over many years in the context of various Christian communities. Ascetical theology informs the art of spiritual direction, while pastoral theology informs the art of pastoral care. Spiritual direction and pastoral care, in turn, both function as ministries of care—healing, reconciling, and guiding—all for the purpose of fulfilling the commandments to love God, neighbor, and self.

By suggesting that there is "a place for ascetical theology" in the context of CPE, I have no intention of re-writing ACPE goals and standards. Nor am I concerned that the inclusion of ascetical theology as a dialogue partner with pastoral theology in the context of CPE might negatively impact the supervisory-student relationship. I believe I can establish a positive role for

ascetical theology without confusing the roles of CPE supervisor and spiritual director.

Spiritual Direction and CPE Supervision

Spiritual directors and CPE supervisors have several things in common. Martin Thornton, a British ascetical theologian, makes this distinction: "There is an art of direction as there is an art of pastoral care. Both assume a wide range of knowledge to attain competency, including a good grounding in general theology. It is the practical application with which we are to be concerned."[12]

As professionals, both spiritual directors and pastoral supervisors have been provided specialized training for the purpose of serving and equipping others on behalf of the Church. Both are concerned about spiritual formation, a term described by Gerald May in *Care of Mind/Care of Spirit*: "*Spiritual formation* is a rather general term referring to all attempts, means, instruction, and disciplines intended towards deepening of faith and furtherance of spiritual growth."[13] Functionally, they share several broad areas of expertise that are employed when helping others; didactic and process education (individual and group), discernment and guidance, encouragement and support, coaching and modeling, etc. Both pastoral supervisors and spiritual directors have theological training and are familiar with a wealth of religious and theological resources, including but not limited to: theological and devotional writings, prayer and meditations, worship and hymnody, historical writings, and cultural practices. Their respective knowledge bases usually include a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the human condition and include insights and knowledge from psychology, sociology, medicine, and administration. Both professions typically provide their services to individuals and small groups on a contractual basis. Both share a concern with the interior life of their student or directee.

Spiritual directors and clinical pastoral supervisors are both open to multi-religious traditions and perspectives. The success of both CPE supervision and spiritual direction depends on the ability of both the mentor and student or directee to discern the will of God as mutual disciples. In this respect, both professions seek to foster a dialogical relationship in which each can learn from one another. The spiritual director, as well as the CPE supervisor, values the role of "not-knowing" as an appropriate way of learning and teaching. There is, inherent in both approaches, a strong commitment to the ethical use of power in human relationships. Finally, there is within both professions an acknowledgement that spiritual growth is effected pri-

marily through the action of the Spirit. This means, among other things, that the spiritual director and the CPE supervisor are attentive to the work of the Spirit in the context of the relationship. Therefore, it is appropriate in the practices of both professions—within the context of the covenant agreement with the student or directee—to inquire about his or her prayer life and experience of God for the sake of spiritual growth.

There are, however, several distinctions between the professions of spiritual director and clinical pastoral supervisor. First, clinical pastoral supervision focuses on both professional and personal development toward a specific ministry role. Typically, spiritual direction is focused on an individual's relationship to God, without necessarily explicit attention to a specific ministry role. Second, CPE supervision provides a curriculum within a clinical setting, for the purpose of providing the student the opportunity for supervised practice. Spiritual direction, on the other hand, *is* primarily attentive to the divine-human encounter and does not provide a setting for specific professional training. Finally, CPE supervision occurs within a nationally accredited training program, with set standards, goals, and objectives. Spiritual direction, as an emerging profession in itself, is just beginning to develop standards for practice and criteria for certification beyond the spiritual life of the director or the covenant established in the process of forming a covenant for spiritual guidance.

The following composite from my own experience illustrates how ascetical theology might inform the supervisor-student relationship. The student comes to the individual supervision session with a problem: the inability to visit assigned patients. Or, in another possible scenario the student avoids the supervisor altogether and the supervisor discovers the problem through a clinical staff member. From the perspective of the supervisor, the student's action (or inaction) may be interpreted as "resistance," understood as a learning problem and/or a problem about learning, depending upon how the problem is experienced by the student.[14] Several interventions are available to the supervisor. The supervisor might invite the student to explore the nature of their resistance by listening to what it feels like for the student to experience such a personal dilemma. Encouragement and coaching may come into play as supervisory support, in an attempt to build a learning alliance for the purpose of helping the student overcome the problem. The supervisor may also employ a tactic of "walking with" the student through the resistance by accompanying the student onto the patient floor and making visits with the student. No doubt there are many other teaching strategies available to the supervisor.

When concepts and practices from ascetical theology are employed by the supervisor, the role of the supervisor undergoes a nuanced change. The supervisor, while maintaining the primary role as educator, takes upon herself the role of pastor/theologian. An educational problem becomes an opportunity for theological reflection for the supervisor and student. It may be the case, for example, that the student's learning problem is also a personal crisis of faith. Perhaps the exposure to suffering has challenged the student's concept of God, resulting in doubts about the efficacy of prayer. Perhaps the student is experiencing doubts about his calling, given the difficulties with carrying out the responsibilities of visiting the sick. The student's initial anticipation and excitement at the prospect of performing actual ministry has waned over a brief period of time, only to be replaced by a spiritual dryness. These are the kinds of spiritual issues for which ascetical theology offers resources for the supervisor and student. In addition to the educational interventions employed by the supervisor, prayer may be offered by the supervisor. Daily journaling becomes another spiritual practice offered to the student. Perhaps a specific reading, focusing on the nature of suffering and grief might be suggested to the student. The educational problem, when placed in a theological context, may also help the student to "normalize" their learning problem as one which regularly occurs in the lives of all religious professionals. Ministry can be a fulfilling vocation even though it is also hard work, requiring constant attention to one's spiritual state.

Ascetical Theology and CPE Curriculum

Not only are there several commonalities between spiritual direction and CPE supervision, there are also some elements drawn from ascetical theology already incorporated in the typical CPE curriculum. I have three in mind: *regula*, *oscillation theory*, and *dual syllabi*—reflecting upon how these three concepts inform CPE curriculum design and methods may result in richer, more nuanced supervisory and student learning experiences. For the purpose of clarity, I treat each of these concepts from ascetical theology separately, although it is best to understand them as interrelated and intended to be used as a single pedagogical strategy.

Regula

Martin Thornton defines *regula* in this way: "curative religion is based on *regula*, which is a system whereby a series of conscious acts of prayer lead to habitual recollections, the basis of which is spiritual direction involving the

application of ascetical theology"[15] One way to think of *regula* in the context of pastoral education is to consider its method of providing the student with "habitual recollections" as the means to spiritual growth and competency. This method already exists in CPE programs in the form of regular and repeated reflection. For example, the clinical verbatim is a habitual process in which recollection, reflection, and repetition are employed as educational strategies. The verbatim is an intentional clinical practice, where learning takes place through the reflection required to prepare and present experiences for feedback, coupled with the shared reflection which takes place in the group process. Ideally, reflection leads to critical action whereby theory is integrated at the level of clinical practice.

From the perspective of pastoral formation, the student experiences and demonstrates competency in the art of pastoral care. When the verbatim process is examined from the perspective of ascetical theology, however, the emphasis is not necessarily on competency but rather on spiritual growth. Obviously, the two foci are not mutually exclusive. The value of the verbatim is enhanced, serving a dual purpose when it is understood as *regula*. The verbatim becomes a spiritual practice, as well as an educational tool. This expanded understanding of the verbatim process may offer opportunity for greater creativity as the supervisor and student together seek to fulfill the goals and objectives of CPE. I would note that reframing the verbatim process in this way does not necessarily lower resistance for the learner. It simply places resistance to writing and presenting a verbatim in a different light when the verbatim is recognized as a spiritual practice. The fact is that spiritual practices, whether they are clinical verbatims or prayer, are often difficult to perform and maintain and in themselves reveal our true spiritual state. Supervisors and students alike may find it difficult to embrace a lifestyle of regular spiritual practices.

Regula plays another important role in the context of CPE. Consider that on a daily basis, the pastoral supervisor and student together encounter many of life's challenges in the context of ministry. The typical fast-paced, helter-skelter workplace with its almost constant demands places the ministry professional in a precarious dilemma. How can one develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle and remain spiritually centered in such a setting? When the typical components of a CPE curriculum (verbatim, devotions, didactic, small group, and individual supervision) are placed within the construct and understanding of *regula*—the very nature of *regula* mediates a rhythm, structure, and stability necessary for learning and professional development. The clinical pastoral supervisor, through the design of the curriculum, by incor-

porating the concept of *regula*, is not unlike the mother hen who protects her chicks from the turmoil and dangers that lurk out in the world. Whenever the students experience the wisdom of conscious habitual recollection (*regula*), there exists the possibility that they will incorporate spiritual perspectives and practices into their personal and professional lifestyles.

Oscillation Theory

Along with *regula*, ascetical theology also employs *oscillation theory* in its understanding of spiritual growth. The term *oscillation*—which means to swing like a pendulum; to move to and fro between two points—has been adopted by ascetical theology and informs many of the spiritual practices prescribed through spiritual direction. These oscillations are what define spiritual health—for example, the movement between the *via negativa* and *via positiva* is normative for the spiritual life. The *via negativa* includes those seasons of life and moments where the believer may experience the absence of God, best described by words such as: spiritual dryness, suffering, disorientation, or walking through the valley of shadows. During such trying experiences, lament and grief often accompany the believer. On the other hand, the *via positiva* includes high points in the spiritual walk with God, where God's presence and purpose are powerfully evident, and the blessings associated with being close to God are experienced daily. Joy, clarity of purpose, creativity, and peace often accompany the believer. Both spiritual journeys *(via negativa* and *via positiva)* by virtue of their seemingly opposing perspectives, have important lessons to teach us, valuable spiritual gifts to impart; making up the foundational experiences that are essential for spiritual development toward maturity. In summary, all of life is rhythmic, seasonal, with alternating seasons of hope and despair, joy and sorrow. All major religious traditions and cultures recognize this ebb and flow movement of life. In the context of CPE, *oscillation theory* can be employed as a guiding principle for curriculum design.

For example, using psychology and theology as the two points on the pendulum, the clinical pastoral supervisor invites students to participate in a two-part workshop. In the first part, the students would complete a psychological tool such as the Kiersey-Bates Temperament Sorter[16] for describing personality types. In part two, they would complete a theological tool like Holmes-Ware Spirituality Wheel[17] for describing spiritual preferences. Both descriptive tools are presented in relation to each other, as complimentary, yet distinct. Hopefully, by moving back and forth between two perspectives, the supervisor and students gain valuable insights into their

learning styles, personality development, and spirituality styles. In the process, they are exposed to the differences in personalities and spiritual preferences that exist within the group. This creates the possibility for dialogue, which is itself a form of experiential learning. Of course, this experience may be both frightening and liberating for students, particularly for those who may come from rather parochial backgrounds. The movement between the two models also provides the students with the opportunity to discover new ways to relate their spirituality with their personal development.

Oscillation theory, by its very nature, challenges students to work with dialectic themes, experiencing the tension that is inherent in life, faith, and the very nature of truth. They learn to move from a static view of reality and truth to a dynamic view that must take into account shifting views, diverse worldviews, as well as an ever-growing accumulation of new knowledge—describing a complex world where oscillation is the norm and things are not what they seem at first glance. *Oscillation theory* has the potential to help the learner develop the capacity for patience and trust and fosters curiosity for the sake of learning.

Dual Syllabi

While *regula* and *oscillation theory* have to do with process, *dual syllabi* has to do with curriculum content. It supports the assertion that content matters in the education of potential pastoral care providers. In order for CPE students to become competent in the art of pastoral care, it is necessary that they become familiar with a broad range of knowledge; including, most notably, theology and the social sciences. The concept of *dual syllabi*, when applied to curriculum design, provides a method for presenting multiple fields of knowledge to the students in ways that help them to become proficient at considering multiple perspectives. In the previous section, I demonstrated how *oscillation theory* can inform pedagogy when two fields of knowledge (developmental psychology and ascetical theology) are presented in tandem. For this discussion, I am primarily interested in demonstrating how the *dual syllabi* concept supports the presentation of ascetical and pastoral theologies as conversation partners.

I believe that ascetical theology, with its particular appreciation for ancient forms of wisdom and spiritual practice, provides a unique way for organizing and relating ancient wisdom to the modern practice of pastoral care. Obviously, pastoral theology can also lay claim to ancient knowledge, but tends to lean more heavily upon current approaches to describing pastoral

care. Using the *dual syllabi* approach, both ascetical and pastoral theologies can be organized and presented according to the sub-categories: "ancient" and "modern." This assures that the students will be exposed to both ancient and modern forms of ascetical and pastoral theologies and that they will have the opportunity to incorporate both forms in their lives and ministries. The students will gain an appreciation for the historical developments that have contributed to both theologies and the ways in which they inform pastoral care. I have purposely avoided providing the terms, "ancient" and "modern" with actual chronological labels—for our purposes, such precision is not necessary. To employ the *dual syllabi* concept, I am utilizing illustrations of four basic schemas, outlined below, that help to organize the learning material.

Schema A:

Pastoral Theology	
Ancient	*Modern*
St. Gregory the Great[18]	Ralph Underwood[19]
The Book of Pastoral Rule	*Pastoral Care and the Means of Grace*

For this schema, I chose two writers who provide a theological basis along with the practical pastoral care skills in order to emphasize the relationship between theory and practice. The ancient-modern paradigm provides the students with a historical perspective of how pastoral care as a ministry has developed over the centuries.

Schema B:

Ascetical Theology	
Ancient	*Modern*
St. Augustine[20]	Sr. Macrina Wiedercker[21]
The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love	*Seasons of Your Heart, Prayers, and Reflections*

In this schema, I employ two devotional writers from the Roman Catholic tradition who demonstrate how ascetical theology can inform daily spiritual practice. This schema provides students with reflective resources from any number of faith traditions. The students can then incorporate these spiritual resources in the lives and ministries.

Schema C:

Modern	
Pastoral Theology	*Ascetical Theology*
Donald Capps[22]	Donald Capps[23]
Giving Counsel: A Minister's Guidebook	*The Poet's Gift: Toward the Renewal of Pastoral Care*

This schema presents to the students the works of one pastoral theologian who spans both fields of knowledge (pastoral and ascetical theologies). The implication for students here is that both fields of knowledge can play a role in the development of their personal professional lives.

Schema D:

Topical "Grief," Modern	
Pastoral Theology	*Ascetical Theology*
Alan Cole, Jr.[24]	Nicholas Wolterstorff[25]
Good Mourning: Getting Through Your Grief	*Lament For A Son*

This schema addresses the topic of grief from pastoral and ascetical perspectives respectively. The pastoral perspective provides helpful insights into the nature of grief, along with suggested pastoral interventions. The ascetical perspective presents grief as an existential struggle to find meaning and consolation in the context of a deep personal loss. Topical categories presented in conjunction with the *dual syllabi* approach can be a useful method for presenting multiple perspectives.

These schemas are only suggestive. Any number of variations can be created in which both pastoral and ascetical theologies are presented. One way to support the *dual syllabi* approach is through the curriculum bibliography. The typical CPE curriculum contains bibliographies that support the *dual syllabi* approach, but tend to be limited to pastoral theology and the social sciences. Adding "ascetical theology" and "ancient-modern" bibliographies to the curriculum provides ready-made resources that support the concepts drawn from ascetical theology.

As a teacher in the art of pastoral care, I have become increasingly interested in the ancient-modern schema because of a concern I have about the significant number of incoming CPE students who lack exposure to, or

knowledge of, the rich pastoral care resources that have been developed over the centuries. The temptation is to leave out the ancient in favor of the modern. The *dual syllabi* approach, working in concert with *regula* and *oscillation theory*, helps ensure that the theological voices of the past are heard and, hopefully, incorporated into the life and ministry of the student.

Conclusion

The primary goal of CPE is to equip and train the student so that he or she becomes competent in the art of pastoral care. In the context of CPE, student competency is determined in accordance to specific goals and standards. The standards employ a particular language that tends to describe functional capacities of the student, with descriptive phrases such as: "ability to reflect theologically," "pastoral competence," "openness," "familiarity with one's own tradition," "familiarity with social science models," and "integration." These are descriptions of personal and professional development that the pastoral supervisor in ACPE hopes will become evident in the life and ministry of each student over the course of training.

From the perspective of ascetical theology, the word *competent* has its counterpart—the word *wise*. In truth, as a CPE student, if there was one thing I desired to become—even more than competent—was a wise person. Today, as a clinical pastoral supervisor, that desire still resides deep within me. This brings me back to the beginning of this article, where I chose to define spirituality as the fulfillment of the great commandments to love God, neighbor, and self. I then argued that spirituality could best be demonstrated in life and ministry when both ascetical and pastoral theologies inform the art of pastoral care. Ascetical theology—with its inherent interest in learning how to live wisely within the rhythmic cyclical realities of life, with its focus upon the interior life of the soul/spirit, and with its appreciation of the ancient voices of wisdom—has much to offer those who are called and equipped to incarnate the love of God. There is, indeed, a place for ascetical theology in this venture we call supervised pastoral education for the profession of ministry.

NOTES

1. David Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other: The Inter-religious Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman, 1991), 52.

2. The following articles, which focus on the role of spirituality in CPE, can be found in the *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 18 (1997):

Marsha Fowler and Brenda Peterson, "Spiritual Themes in Clinical Pastoral Education," argues for the replacement of the typical learning contract with a spiritual theme-based contract for the CPE student.

Elizabeth Liebert, "Accompaniment in Ministry: Supervision as Spiritual Formation," argues for the inclusion of the Holy Spirit in the supervisor-student dyad. The supervisor's role, in a limited sense, includes an intentional focus on the student-divine relationship.

Joan Murray, "Relationship with God as a Dimension of Pastoral Supervision," argues that the key issue for examining the CPE student's formation is the student-divine relationship, which needs to be intentionally addressed through the curriculum and the supervisor-student relationship.

Kenneth Pohly and Marilyn Evans "The Multidisciplinary Nature of Pastoral Supervision: Integrating, Supervision, Counseling, and Spiritual Direction," argues for a three-pronged understanding of CPE supervision: as a pastoral act; as an exercise for concern for the whole person; as a formational process.

Barbara Sheehan, "Supervision and Spirituality from the Perspective of CPE," argues that CPE is rooted in the spiritual. Supervisees and supervisors who enter into this educational process are persons of faith who make a covenant to learn and grow in pastoral formation, pastoral competency, and pastoral reflection.

3. The Association of Professional Chaplains, The Association of Clinical Pastoral Education, The Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education, The National Association of Catholic Chaplains, The National Association of Jewish Chaplains, "A White Paper: Professional Chaplaincy, Its Role and Importance in Healthcare," Larry VandeCreek and Laurel Burton, eds., *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 55, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 81–97, accessed April 15, 2013, http://www.healthcarechaplaincy.org/userimages/professional-chaplaincy-its-role-and-importance-in-healthcare.pdf.

4. Herbert Anderson, "Whatever Happened to Seelsorge?" *Word & World* 21, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 32, accessed April 15, 2013, http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/21-1_Therapy_Theology/21-1_Anderson.pdf.

5. Ibid., 37.

6. Lucy Bregman, "Defining Spirituality: Multiple Uses and Murky Meanings of an Incredibly Popular Term," *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 58, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 157.

7. Harold Lindsell, Matthew 22:37, 38, *Harper Study Bible: Revised Standard Version* (Grand Rapids:, MI, Zondervan Press, 1971), 1476.

8. Martin Thornton, *Spiritual Direction*, 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: Cowley Publications Inc. 1984).

9. Rodney J. Hunter, ed., *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 1218.

10. Thornton, *Spiritual Direction*.

11. James W. Fowler, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), 27.

12. Thornton, *Spiritual Direction*.

13. Gerald G. May, *Care of Mind/Care of Spirit: A Psychiatrist Explores Spiritual Direction* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982).

14. David A. Steere, ed., *The Supervision of Pastoral Care* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 43–45.

15. Thornton, *Spiritual Direction*.

16. David Kiersey and Marilyn Bates, *Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types* (Del Mar, CA.: Prometheus Nemesis Book Company, Inc. 1984).

17. Corrine Ware, *Discover Your Spiritual Type: A Guide to Individual and Congregational Growth* (Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1995).

18. George Demacopolous, *The Book of Pastoral Rule: St. Gregory the Great* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007).

19. Ralph L. Underwood, *Pastoral Care and the Means of Grace* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993).

20. Henry Paolucci, ed., *St. Augustine: The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love* (South Bend, IN: Regney/Gateway, Inc., 1962).

21. Macrina Wiederkehr, *Seasons of Your Heart: Prayers & Reflections* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991).

22. Donald Capps, *Giving Counsel: A Minister's Guidebook* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001).

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