Soulness and the Liminal Work of Soulcare

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A recent invitation to join a political advocacy group caught my attention because it included a reference to Rikers Island Penitentiary in New York City. The email contained this sentence: "Rikers is a place dangerous to the flesh, a place where surviving turns you inside out, and erodes your soul." That statement evoked memories of my own experience of clinical pastoral education at Rikers in the summer of 1967, shortly after the assassination of Malcolm X, which was similar to that statement. This description of the experience of inmates at Rikers Island Penitentiary points to three commonly held dimensions of being human and to three ways one can be wounded: *bodies* are vulnerable and can be injured; even if one survives physically, one (one's '*self*') may be turned inside out; and beyond harm to the body or self, there is soul erosion—damage to the core of one's being or *soul.* When held together, these images—body, self, soul—contribute to understanding 'human' as a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual unity. When these struggles are dealt with by distinct specializations of care (medical, therapeutic, pastoral), human wholeness is often overlooked and fragmented. There may be general agreement on the importance of the unity of

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the human one, but there is little consensus on how to speak of it—hence, this essay.

The Challenge of Rethinking Soul

When I first wrote about recovery of soul in a 1994 book of essays on anthropology honoring James N. Lapsley, I proposed that rethinking the soul would enhance and deepen theological anthropology and reconnect the present work of care with the rich tradition of *seelsorge* (the care of souls). A paradoxical view of soul, I suggested, would provide an understanding of the nature of human nature that is deep enough and broad enough to encompass the diversity and complexity of being human, both from the earth and before God.[1] I continued to promote the idea of 'salvaging soul' when I wrote about recovering the ancient practice of *seelsorge*[2] and the importance of *soul repair* as a way to address the moral injury of returning servicemen from Iran and Afghanistan.[3] In response to the shift from 'pastoral' to 'spiritual' as the preferred modifier of 'care' in religious practice, I argued that the use of spiritual care not rooted in communities of belief and practice risks becoming captive to popular spirituality or may unwittingly reinforce American individualism.[4] None of these 'stellar' essays has prompted a movement toward *soulcare* or changed the course of modern spiritual care. So, you might ask, why make another attempt at 'salvaging soul' with yet another effort at putting new wine in old wineskins?

Four developments in the last decades suggest that rethinking soul and the nature of human nature is both necessary and complicated: (a) *recontextualizing religious diversity* has reintroduced practices in American culture that presume a transcending presence in human life and the centrality of the divine-human relationship; (b) *neuroscience has reconfigured our common assumptions* of human uniqueness and reset our discussions about soul; (c) the successful *dominance of science and technology* continues to flatten and narrow human life, measuring success by standards of cost efficiency and policies determined by instrumental reason; and (d) although individualism may be among the more remarkable achievements of modern Western civilization, *centering on the self* has led, according to Charles Taylor, to an abnormal and regrettable self-absorption.[5] Although each of these challenges is worthy of extensive discussion, the impact of neuroscience on finding

language to express the bio-psycho-socio-spiritual unity of the human one is perhaps most consequential.

Our bodies and embodied brains are the bearers of human particularity. The gift and challenge of neuroscience is that human capacities once ascribed to soul are now understood as activities of the embodied brain. If this is true, then soul, like body, is finite. Ancient dualisms are no longer theologically attractive if soul cannot exist without body or brain. This perspective is articulated by the editors of *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature* in this way: "Soul [is]a functional capacity of a complex physical organism, rather than a separate spiritual essence that somehow inhabits the body."[6] Being bodies comes with a risk, however. Because we are an inseparable unity, wounded flesh and soul erosion and a self turned inside out are also interconnected. The human organism as a whole is vulnerable.

The human one, however, is more than body or embodied brain. Simply put, 'we have bodies' as well as 'we are bodies.' Whenever I say 'I have a body,' I acknowledge a transcending capacity or agency. The central paradox of human life is this ability for symbolic thought that transcends nature while at the same time being embedded in it as creatures of nature who die. The human existential dilemma, as Ernest Becker graphically put it, is that we have the capacity to imagine ourselves a little lower than the angels only to be reminded that we are worms and food for worms.[7] We are regularly in the world, fully creatures of creation, and yet not confined by that world. We are *'something more'* than bodies. Because the transcending human function or agency is attributed to *self* more than soul, I begin by considering current understandings of the self.

The Paradoxical Self

In common speech, what we mean by *self* is both simple and complex. I once received a generous note from a student who penned at the end "hug your wonderful self for me." I was mildly embarrassed and then puzzled by the assignment. The presumption that the self is 'something' that 'I' can 'hold' gave it agency outside of the 'self' I should hold. When we say 'I had an experience,' that is self speaking. 'I wouldn't think of doing that myself' or 'there is more to me than you know' are both self statements. 'This pain is mine' is speech about self, as well. The thoughts I am having at this moment

are not essential to being who I am. I could be having other thoughts and still be my 'self.' We attach *self* to preferred virtues when we describe people as self-confident with necessary self-control and an abundance of self-esteem and appropriate self-possession but not too much self-centeredness.

The construction and reconstruction of theories of *self* over the last decades has been a central theme in modern Western psychology and a major influence on the development of pastoral or spiritual care. Goals like self-actualization or self-esteem or self-expression have undergirded distinct approaches to pastoral care but have also generated theological debate on the appropriateness of such focus on the self.[8] Although modern views of self generally include characteristics such as contextual, temporal, relational , embodied, and fluid, the self is most accurately described with paradox. Paradox, as I am using it here, is a self-contradictory statement or proposition that on further investigation may nonetheless be true. (a) The self is both the object of experience and the experiencing subject. (b) As a constructed reality, the self is a mixture of external influences and internal conditioning factors. (c) The self is immanent in the community and connected with the earth, and yet at the same time the self transcends itself, takes risks, and knows itself as object. This paradoxical understanding of self is kept alive by preserving at least four interconnected, overlapping dialectics.

- The self is a subject that has *continuity* through changing circumstances or mental processes, and yet the self is an object constantly *changing or being changed.* The continuity of the self or self-sameness is also in the community's memory.
- The second paradox holds in tension *agency* and *communion.* "Agency refers to the individual's striving to separate from others, to master the environment, to assert, protect, and expand the self. . . . By contrast, communion refers to relating to other selves in warm, close, intimate, and loving ways and participating in something larger than the self.[9]
- The third paradox identifies self as the unifying *center* or *core* of an individual—what is distinctive to one's personal identity—and as the *circumference* or *boundary* that encloses multiple dimensions of the conscious and unconscious self. The core of the self gives it form or identity and makes it possible for a self to be in community without fear of losing 'itself.' The circumference makes

room enough for many 'multiple selves' to abide together in one personality.

- The fourth overlapping dialectic keeps autonomy and intimacy, identity and community reciprocally linked. The self is not only uniquely *autonomous* but also inescapably *communal.* An individual is simultaneously a social self, living in response to other selves, *and* an autonomous self both responsive to and responsible for the living with others.

In her book *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and the Self*, Catherine Keller introduced an evocative distinction between a 'separative' and a 'soluble' approach to the self. Keller argues that as long as male myths dominate our understanding of being human, the 'separative self' was the norm and the 'soluble self' of women was derivative. "In contrast to the soluble self, which dissolves in relation, the separative self makes itself the absolute in that it absolves itself from relation."[10] Transcendence is linked to the separative self and immanence to solubility. Human fullness is both. For that reason, the complex and sometimes painful struggles of our time to think about being human in ways that unite rather than divide will take us inevitably to process and paradox.

Multiple Selves

The logical extension of overlapping paradoxes of the self is the recognition that a 'multiplicity of self' is a sign of health. Each individual is a more or less integrated, mysterious collation of multiple selves. When British pastoral theologian Ewan Kelly explored the self as a resource for spiritual and pastoral care in *Personhood and Presence*, the chapter titles include The Beloved Self, Waiting Self, Sexual Self, Vulnerable Self, Mortal Self, and Powerful Self.[11] This recognition of the multiplicity of selves has implications for the ministries of care and the formation or supervision of those ministries. The interaction of individuals, each with a multiplicity of selves and multiply constituted needs, will require intense attentiveness and a willingness to live in mystery and wonder. If multiplicity of self is the norm, ordinary human encounters will be more circular than linear and formative conversations will need to be more nuanced regarding the diversity within as well as between human persons. *The 'something more' in human life is within as well as without.*

The willingness to explore unknown or seemingly 'foreign' parts of our selves is the prelude to a greater understanding of the Other. In an essay in an earlier volume of *Reflective Practice*, Pamela Cooper-White makes a convincing argument that empathy for actual others in our relationships would be enhanced when we are able to embrace the parts of our multiple selves that we tend to ignore or avoid altogether. In order to form pastoral leaders for a diverse world, she contends, we need to be more attentive to the varied, sometimes unknown, strangely diverse dimensions of each of each self. She concludes her essay with this incontrovertible claim:

> The extent to which we can be aware of our inner multiplicity and take seriously the hosts of voices crying from the margins of our own unconscious life may well be the extent to which we are able to recognize and withdraw projections that demonize, dominate, and exclude actual other persons in the context of political life. In so doing, we participate in the eternal conversation that most brightly reveals our creation in the image and likeness of God.[12]

Embracing multiplicity within the self is a creative option and a compelling challenge in a time when fear of the Other threatens to destroy the fabric of modern societies.

The Problematic Self

Early in the 1970s, Christopher Lasch labeled the malady of that time a 'culture of narcissism' in a book with the same title.[13] Lasch regarded narcissism as the state of mind in which the world appears as a mirror of the self but also as a synonym for selfishness. Behavior in the 'me decade,' as the 1970s were sometimes called, seemed on the surface to illustrate narcissism and the preoccupation with self. On closer examination, however, this preoccupation also revealed an emptiness or poverty of self. These deep feelings of emptiness and isolation were compensated for with grandiose self-inflation or frantic sexual expression or fantastic religious experience. In a 1984 publication, Lasch modified his earlier judgment and identified the self in American society as a *minimal self* "uncertain of its own outlines, longing either to remake the world in its own image or merge into its environment in blissful union."[14] This struggle is magnified, Lasch argued, in a society of mass production and mass consumption like ours in which image is everything, reality is virtual, and selfhood is indistinguishable from

the surface images we create to achieve what we want. The current political climate in the United States has demonstrated that this minimal self is still a present and pervasive reality. The impulse to protect a fragile self may lead to excessive grandiosity or self-preoccupation. We also compensate for deep feelings of emptiness and isolation with self-inflation or by depending excessively on positive feedback in school or the workplace.

The self remains a problem in our time because internal poverty leads to difficulty in maintaining an inner core or the unity of 'self-states' in the face of increasing external stress. When therapists diagnose a personal problem as a boundary issue, they often have in mind this inability to make necessary distinctions between self and world. On the other side, the development of the profession of personal trainer is a consequence of this social pressure for a marketable self-image. In a consumptive, market-driven society, the longing for authentic selfhood is often perceived to be in opposition to personal survival. The self is what it appears to be. Although emptiness or 'poverty of self' might seem to be a logical contradiction if the self is a collation of multiple selves, the 'depleted self' remains a pervasive modern dilemma.

Very few scholars have thought more about the vicissitudes of the modern self than Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor. What Taylor wrote in 1991 about the confluence of instrumental reason and the preoccupation with self-fulfillment remains astonishingly relevant for our present time. Although individualism is considered by many to be the finest achievement of modern civilization, its dark side, according to Taylor,

> is a centering on the self, which both flattens and narrows our lives, makes them poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others or society. . . . The sense that lives have been flattened and narrowed, and that this is connected to an abnormal and regrettable self-absorption, has returned in forms specific to contemporary culture.[15]

Human life loses depth and richness when it is flat-lined. And when a 'flattened' sense of life devoid of transcending impulses is linked to the elimination of traditional or commonly held social arrangements and social structure, everything is up for grabs. Taylor also worried two decades ago about the negative social consequences of linking 'instrumental reason' with unchecked technology and economic disparity. When the demands of economic growth are used to justify very unequal distributions of wealth or

make us insensitive to the environment, disaster may not be far away. The erosion of soul is everywhere evident.

From Self to Soul

Many of the observations made by Charles Taylor have been replicated two decades later in a compelling new book (2015) by Mark Edmundson entitled *Self and Soul: A Defense of Ideals.* If truth be told, and it should be, I would not have written this article without the empowering support of Edmundson's analysis of the social consequences of an "ideology of self" dominating this society and mandating a need for the "resurrection of soul." This long quote from Edmundson describes what happens when the preoccupation with self creates a cultural context we can recognize that is driven by desire but without hope or ultimate meaning.

> When the goals of the Self are the only goals a culture makes available, spirited men and women will address them with the energy that they would have applied to the aspirations of the Soul. The result is lives that are massively frustrating and not a little ridiculous. People become heroically dedicated to middle-class ends—getting a promotion, getting a raise, taking immeasurably interesting vacations, getting their children into the right colleges, finding the best retirement spot, fattening their portfolios. Lives without courage, contemplation, compassion, and imagination are lives sapped of significant meaning. In such lives, the Self cannot transcend itself.[16]

I believe Edmundson's assessment is correct. The self cannot fix itself. The "resurrection of Soul" that he seeks is essential in a "Self-obsessed culture" in order that we might rediscover the ancient ideals of courage, compassion, and the contemplation of truth. I believe these same ideals need to inform the work of soulcare as well. Whether it is a conversation with a dying patient or the pastoral care of someone in a financial crisis or the young person in a congregation struggling with sexual identity or sorting out our own worry about politics in this land, the challenge and gift of soulcare is to provide a transcending vision that enables people to live with hope and courage in times not hospitable to soul.

Self and Soul is admittedly a polemical book. Edmundson links the three great ideals of Western culture—courage, compassion, and contemplation—with Homer, Jesus, and Plato, respectively. These ideals, he argues, are threatened by the culture of self that Shakespeare inaugurated and

Freud legitimated. According to Edmundson, Freud sought to demystify what we call soul by labeling it as the seat of 'illusion' and by persuading us that self is all there is. Courage and compassion were ideals that created more grief than good. "Freud replaces the quest for compassion and courage with a quest for a certain kind of self-knowledge."[17] Along the way, the world shrinks to a size determined by internal conflict. The modern self, as Edmundson describes it, desires, plans, strategizes, makes deals, and engages in open conflict with the culture of soul. In the absence of ideals, all therapies are about learning to live with half a loaf by converting hysterical misery into common, everyday unhappiness. Here is how Edmundson concludes his discussion of Freud:

> Freud commended a self-aware, literate, and deliberative life beyond illusion. But to have any measure of depth, it turns out, a human being must take 'illusions' like compassion and courage seriously. One must work through the blandishments they offer and then decide to live without them in a life that may be severe but is full of integrity.[18]

Despite the negative personal and social consequences he attributes to the dominance of self, Edmundson acknowledges that most of us need a self to protect soul. Jesus and Socrates were undefended in the world but did not live long. That is the risk of being soul, which Edmundson refers to as living in the "State of Soul." There may be more forlornness than joy, more angst than delight, more conflict than peace, more suffering than happiness for soul people who live without props and without illusions. And yet for each act of courage or compassion or contemplation, there is joy beyond mere happiness, compelling intimations of higher ideals, and an awareness of the "resurrection of Soul." We discover once again that it is the 'something more' of *soulness* that makes human wholeness rich and enduring.

Soulness

Like self, soulness is neither a substance nor a thing. It is embodied and finite. On that, there is general agreement. Soul is more a state of being, as Edmundson puts it, that invites us simultaneously to probe the depths of the human struggle and yet ascend the mysteries. "The State of Soul, when perfectly realized, is united, fully present, and in a certain manner exists outside of time."[19] Instead of Edmundson's State of Soul or the complicated, ancient image of soul, I propose we consider soulness. Some years ago, I

used the word *childness* to circumvent words like childlike or childish in describing the 'quality or character of being a child.'[20] Similarly, soulness, as I am using it, is a metaphor for the qualities or characteristics of being soul; it avoids the pitfalls of ancient dualisms. Like the self, soulness is paradoxical; it is in time and out of time, singular and plural, separable and soluble, empty and full, at the edge and centered. Moreover, soulness is an image that encourages us to resist the impulse to objectify soul. The language of soulness is embodied in poetry and song in a way that is ambiguous enough to circumvent demands for logic in favor of more evocative images of what is the core of being human.

Embracing soulness is risky because practicing its ideals (compassion, courage, and the quest for truth) can be dangerous. The goal of self, as Edmundson describes it, is to risk little and live long. People who live behind high-security fences or doors with triple locks and alarms or ministers who distance themselves from people by desks or formal structures or excessive busyness may be safer, but they endanger soulness. Many of us know all too well how easy it is to flee from life in order to avoid death or the reality of human finitude or the personal cost of compassion. The consequence of developing self-protective devices or defensive maneuvers is isolation. All too often we are willing to settle for information rather than wisdom. When pressed, we choose individualism over compassion and safety over courage.

Soulness makes it possible to retrieve the transcending dimension in life without losing our earthy connection. "It takes a broad vision," Thomas Moore wrote some years ago in *Care of the Soul*, "to know that a piece of sky and a chunk of the earth lie lodged in the heart of every human being and that if we are going to care for the heart we will have to know the sky and earth as well as human behavior."[21] Soulness invites us simultaneously to probe the depths of the human struggle and yet ascend the mysteries. More than psyche, person, or even self, soulness remains for me the best description of this fundamental human paradox: the human one is from the earth and from God. This bio-psycho-socio-spiritual unity of being human is articulated clearly in Hebrew scriptures when it is said that kidneys rejoice (Proverbs 23:16), the soul thirsts and hungers (Psalm 42:2), and souls long for the Lord (Psalm 84:2a) While the self provides us with insights into the shape and form and agency of the person, soulness invites us to consider the depth of the mystery and the ambiguity in the human one. Soul is connected with lofty longings for God *and* with that which is most physical and

shadowy in ourselves. Soulness helps to keep alive the paradoxical mysteries that mirrors reveal: the juxtaposition of light and darkness, earth and sky, human and divine that embody the grandeur of human life.

Implications of Salvaging Soulness

What are the implications, both for pastoral care as well as for formation and supervision for ministry, if soulness is the normative way of thinking about the human one before God? Three possible foci emerge. The first focus explores the diagnostic or assessment issue. The second reconsiders our understanding of soulcare. The third recognizes that soulness is needed for the work of ministry today.

Assessment or Diagnosis

If soulness is the dominant way of understanding the human one before God, how shall we speak of the trouble or distress that prompts someone to seek spiritual care? What new descriptive categories might chaplains add when they chart a patient sick enough to be in the hospital? What categories for assessment correspond with soulness as the dominant image of the human one? What language can we use to articulate the pain of a wounded or suffering soul? Medical diagnoses will remain. Standard psychological diagnostic terms like depression and narcissistic or borderline disorder will continue to describe struggles of the self, but those descriptions need to be deepened when the conflict is not only with internal demons but also with God. Ordinary ways of measuring health and well-being are insufficiently ambiguous to capture the deeper anguish of soulness. As I mean it here, ambiguity refers to the multiple meanings, contradictions, and mystery in human life at its depth. To be a lover of souls, our own included, we need to have more appreciation for human complexity and mystery. And, our diagnostic categories must be ambiguous enough to capture the contradictions of soulness.

To provide a framework for responding to soulness suffering, I propose the development of a typology of soulness maladies. A malady is not a sickness but a condition that involves suffering or the increased risk of suffering that makes one susceptible to sickness. A person has a malady if the harm he or she is suffering does not have an identifiable, sustaining cause distinct from the person. A malady suggests that something is wrong, and

that may be all we know at the beginning. We may only be able to say 'it is not well with my soul' or 'I don't know what's wrong, but I have not been myself for some time.' The benefit of developing a typology of soulness maladies is fourfold:

1. It depathologizes the human plight. Parallel words such as affliction or brokenness or woundedness or disorder are about the plight of the soul but not necessarily about pathology;

2. It demedicalizes human suffering. Not everything that causes pain is sickness or disease. The recognition of 'something more' needs to be added to medical categories;

3. It depsychologizes the human struggle. A lost or troubled soul is not a psychological assessment. We are invited to think about what souls suffer in categories;

4. It remoralizes human trouble. Sickness of any kind is often a moral crisis prompting harsh self-judgment or blame.

A typology of soulness maladies might include the following: cynicism (lack of trust), despair (linked to 'the dark night of the soul'), loneliness (perhaps the central modern malady), fear (more than anxiety, because we have reasons to be afraid), anger, and demoralization. In addition, we need to explore the power of story to express the mystery of soulness. The language of soulness is story and song and paradox, more than carefully delineated, statistically verified diagnostic categories and is the window to its essence.

Soulcare Is Liminal Work

The paradox of soulcare is that we walk with people between two worlds. We are familiar with the stuff of life, we know fully and deeply the stories that come from our very messy human struggles, and at the same time we are *theotokos*, bearers of God. In an unpublished address to priests in Chicago shortly before his death, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin spoke eloquently of the liminal character of soulcare. "We are not dispensable 'functionaries' in the church; we are bridges to the very mystery of God and healers of the soul. When we claim this identity unapologetically, we not only find ourselves; we also provide the church and our culture with the sustenance they require." Being a religiously oriented caregiver is unavoidably liminal work. We are constantly building bridges between these two reali-

ties—between the human story of struggle and joy and the mystery that is God.

In order to be a mediator between the all-embracing, ever-elusive mystery of the divine and the ordinary stuff of human life, we need to be in habitual contact with the mystery of God while standing in the midst of human pain and struggle. To be a bearer of the mysteries of God, we need to hold up the great images, stories, and pictures of salvation and restoration that lie at the heart of sacred stories. We also need to know fully and deeply the human stories that come from the very messy struggles of our lives and participate fully in the suffering of those we serve. Doing both—standing in the human story and the divine story—is the difficult liminal work of soulcare. In order to prepare caregivers to be liminal persons who are able to build bridges between the human and the divine, those who do the work of formation and supervision must also be bearers of the mysteries of God and specialists in the human soul.

However we may understand human wholeness and the human one as a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual unity and whatever language we might fashion to identify soulness maladies, the divine-human connection is the central context for ultimate meaning and the foundation of the work of soulcare. The challenge is to find language that is psychologically sophisticated about the human struggle and yet attentive to the human need for transcendence, for 'something more.' Although caregivers work intentionally to maintain self-understanding while establishing empathic bonds of care, the focus is not only on the human relationship but also on the divine-human relationship in which the caring moment takes place. This common ground does not eliminate the need to honor personal boundaries in the work of soulcare. Nor does it diminish the importance of paying careful attention to the dynamics of a pastoral relationship. It does, however, locate the relationship within a larger communal context. Every man and woman is of value in the presence of the God. "No one is intrinsically better than anyone else. *We owe each other loving-kindness.*"[22] When care is rooted in soulness, the relationship begins on common ground and moves away from the isolating power of personal pain to wider commitments of responsibility and accountability in the world.

The Minister's Soul

If soulness is the dominant image for the psycho-socio-physical-spiritual unity of an individual, if emphasis on soul turns care in a collaborative direction, if the language describing human pain and suffering is less technical and more poetic, and if care is more conversational because we owe each other loving-kindness, then we need to ask how patterns of formation and supervision need to change. At minimum, attending to the soulness of the caregiver and the supervisor is about virtues as well as competence. The minister's soul is regularly endangered by temptations to power and pretense. For that reason, the enemy of soul is deception. As people of faith, we are free to live without pretense because we believe that human soulness is ultimately hidden in God, whose graciousness touches everything with mercy—even the minister's and the supervisor's soul. Embracing soulness begins with living consciously in the presence of God.

There are many qualities of *soulness* that shape the capacity of a person to be a liminal person in a time of crisis. I can only choose one. Caregivers help people imagine what they cannot see. According to Edmundson's reading of the poet William Blake, imagination fueled by love and compassion has the potential to transcend and maybe even transform the societies and human lives trapped in 'the State of Self.' "The human quest is to use love and the power of imagination to burn away the Self."[23] Imagination is also needed in our time in order to envision new possibilities when the old, dependable props of traditional religious and social practices are gone or when predictable patterns of ministry no longer work. The task of caregivers and supervisors alike is to take people from the familiar to the unfamiliar. It takes courage to relish unpredictability as the arena in which God continues to make all things new. In the process, we ourselves may not know what new thing God is doing in the world. Vision and imagination often depend on the willingness to be surprised—by the world, by the people with whom we minister, and by God who is doing a new thing.

One Final Word

Through the process of writing this essay, I have been convinced that the unchallenged preoccupation of self in this society for power and pleasure and security and status and money and health has created a crisis of

soul that challenges structures committed to care and human well-being. We don't have to be inmates in a prison such as Riker's Island Penitentiary to experience soul erosion. The world as it is, Edmundson argues, is not adequate to the needs of soul. Threats to the well-being of soulness are pervasive and personal. In a curious way, even the increasing frequency with which soul is used in the secular media to identify something that is endangered or missing in ordinary human activity demonstrates a need for soulness. Social patterns of self-obsession regularly block efforts to achieve hope and peaceableness through acts of courage and compassion. As Edmundson puts it,

> Soul lives not only for itself, but also for others. The acts of the Soul benefit suffering men and women. Exertions of Soul help deliver them from danger, hunger, ignorance and sometimes, by example, from the sorrows of living exclusively within time.[24]

I find this mandate for salvaging Soul and for forming and supervising caregivers in soulness for soulcare most compelling, and I invite you to give it consideration.

NOTES

1   Herbert Anderson, "The Recovery of Soul," in The Treasure of Earthen Vessels: Explorations in Theological Anthropology, ed. Brian Childs and David Waanders (Louisville: Westminster JohnKnox Press, 1994), 208–23. See also Herbert Anderson, "The Paradox of Being Bodies and Having Bodies," The Bible Today 29, no. 3 (May 1991); Herbert Anderson, "In-Corporated Souls: Human Wholeness in Community and in the Presence of God; The Theological Anthropology of James Ashbrook," Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry 16 (1995): 128–36; Herbert Anderson, "Toward a Constructive Anthropology: Hiltner's Paradoxical View of Persons," Journal of Psychology and Christianity 4, no. 4 (Winter 1985), reprinted as "A Paradoxical Understanding of Persons" in Turning Points in Pastoral Care, ed. LeRoy Adens and J. Harold Ellens (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990).

2   Herbert Anderson, "Whatever Happen to Seelsorge?," Word and World, 21, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 32–41.

3   Herbert Anderson, "Introduction to Symposium on Moral Injury and Spirituality," Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision for Ministry 33 (2013).

4   Herbert Anderson, "Spiritual Care: The Power of an Adjective," Journal of Pastoral Care 55, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 233–37.

5   Charles Taylor, The Malaise of Modernity (Concord, ON: House of Anansi Press, 1991).

6   Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy, and H. Newton Malony, Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature (Minneapolis: Fortress Press,

1998), xiii. See also Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul and Human Nature: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2008).

7   Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973).

8   Rodney J. Hunter, ed., *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990). This dictionary contains sixteen pages and thirteen entries devoted to consideration of the self and two pages and two entries on soul. Although each particular exploration of self is subjected to critical assessment, the necessity for self-understanding or self-knowledge is not.

9   Don McAdams, *The Stories We Live By: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self* (New York: Morrow, 1993), 71.

10   Catherine Keller, *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism and Self* (Boston: Beacon, 1986), 26.

11   Ewan Kelly, *Personhood and Presence: Self as a Resource for Spiritual and Pastoral Care* (London: T & T Clark International, 2012).

12   Pamela Cooper-White, "The 'Other' Within: Multiple Selves Making a World of Difference," *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* 29 (2009): 23–37.

13   Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979).

14   Christopher Lasch, *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), 19.

15   Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 4.

16   Mark Edmundson, *Self and Soul: A Defense of Ideals* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 50.

17   Ibid., 222.

18   Ibid., 245.

19   Ibid., 15.

20   Herbert Anderson and Susan B.W. Johnson, *Regarding Children* (Louisville: Westminster JohnKnox Press, 1994), 10–11.

21   Thomas Moore, *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), 20. See my article on "Recovery of Soul" for further discussion of earlier reflections on soul. All the articles I have written on soul are available at my website, herbertanderson.org.

22   Edmundson, *Self and Soul*, 190, emphasis added.

23   Ibid., 201.

24   Ibid., 217.