

UNDERSTANDING
PASTORAL
COUNSELING

ELIZABETH A. MAYNARD
JILL L. SNODGRASS

EDITORS

UNDERSTANDING PASTORAL COUNSELING

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Elizabeth A. Maynard, PhD
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Editors



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PROLOGUE

During the first half of the 20th century, psychology infused American culture: Returning veterans, manual laborers, housewives, businessmen, and Americans in a plethora of cultural contexts read popular psychology, sought counseling, and embarked on the journey toward self-realization. Ministers studied Freud. Seminarians embarked on clinical education in hospital contexts. Divinity schools and seminaries began offering courses in psychodynamic theory. In response to these and other cultural shifts, “pastoral counseling,” an approach to mental health care grounded in the ancient art of Judeo-Christian soul care, quickly developed into a formalized profession. Ministers established pastoral counseling practices both within and outside congregational contexts. The American Association of Pastoral Counselors was formed and offered standards detailing who pastoral counselors were and what they did. Pastoral counselors positioned themselves alongside an increasingly diverse group of mental health professionals. Clinebell (1966) published the first edition of *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth*, perhaps the most widely read book on the subject. Pastoral counseling emerged as an approach to mental health treatment and a specialized ministry predominantly offered by clergy in Judeo-Christian traditions.

The clarity and popularity of the discipline, however, did not endure. By the time I (Snodgrass) began my own pastoral counseling training in 2005, who pastoral counselors were and what they did were markedly different than during the discipline's nascent days. “What makes pastoral counseling *pastoral*?” This query was posed so frequently during my (Snodgrass) doctoral studies in spiritual care and counseling that it quickly became rhetorical. The question was not intended to elicit a definitive, static answer, for a universal definition of pastoral counseling was elusive. Moreover, a post-modern outlook and propensity to deconstruct cautioned us against explanations that claimed to be true for *all* peoples in *all* places.

During graduate school, I (Snodgrass) enjoyed reflecting on the *pastoral* nature of pastoral counseling with colleagues and mentors. The discussion was generative, and the explanations offered resulted in as many questions as answers. I embraced the ambiguity of the discipline.

Then in 2011, we (Snodgrass and Maynard) both joined the faculty of Loyola University Maryland, and I (Snodgrass) was tasked with teaching “Introduction to Pastoral Counseling” in a CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs)-accredited program that prepares students to become licensed clinical professional counselors. The shift in position, from student to professor, from pastoral counselor-in-training to fellow of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, compelled me to cultivate a different view on and experience of the discipline's ambiguity. Although studying the discipline's history and debating its future remained an engaging pastime, we (Snodgrass and Maynard) realized that if pastoral counselors-in-training could not succinctly define what made their

counseling practice *pastoral*, they simply abandoned the adjective. They graduated from the program, became licensed and employed, and left pastoral counseling to the generations before who fit the mold that, long ago broken, has yet to find new form.

We needed help. We wanted to educate students not only about the practice of pastoral counseling 50 years ago but about what it is today. Myriad excellent articles were available to aid in this effort, but large holes still remained. There did not seem to be a text that offered a comprehensive overview of the diversity of who pastoral counselors are, our psychospiritual frameworks of understanding, and our ways of intervening (Cheston, 2000). Although now in its third edition, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling* (Clinebell & McKeever, 2011) is not the definitive text that it once was because it no longer reflects the diversity of pastoral counseling practices and practitioners. We began voicing our concerns with colleagues teaching, supervising, and practicing pastoral counseling and quickly realized that our longing for a comprehensive text portraying the landscape of pastoral counseling today was felt by many.

This volume originated from a shared desire to articulate what makes pastoral counseling *pastoral* in an age of increasing religious diversity, rapid changes in managed health care, and technological capabilities that unite peoples across cultural and geographic divides. This text does not posit a static, universal understanding of pastoral counseling. Rather, it illuminates the diversity within the discipline that is already occurring and offers suggestions regarding how pastoral counselors can navigate the changing landscape of mental health care in our current context to maintain unity amid our diversity.

The authors are long-term clinicians and educators as well as doctoral-level pastoral counselors-in-training; professionals trained in psychology, marriage and family therapy, social work, and counseling; and religiously endorsed and lay adherents of a variety of religious traditions. This multiplicity of voices and perspectives reflects what pastoral counseling is today as well as where the discipline is headed.

Pastoral counseling continues to evolve from its origins as a specialized ministry to an approach to mental health care offered in a wide array of contexts, including both religious and secular settings. Pastoral counselors, while sharing a common identity, are also bicultural as the result of our training and spiritual and religious commitments. This is a pivotal time in the field as practitioners and academics assess both the history and future directions of the discipline, consider the place of pastoral counseling alongside allied professions, and even explore new language to describe the work of pastoral counseling. This introductory text, aimed at an audience of pastoral counseling professionals, students, and allied professionals in ministry and mental health settings (clergy, psychologists, social workers, and professional counselors), provides an overview of key issues in the history, current practice, and future of pastoral counseling.

The text is organized into seven sections. In addition, for faculty and other professionals choosing to adopt the book as a course text, an electronic Instructor's Manual is available featuring sample syllabi, assignments, class activities, and tools to evaluate student understanding of the material. **Requests for the Instructor's Manual can be made by e-mailing textbook@springerpub.com. The appendices mentioned in Chapter 27 are available for download from Springer Publishing Company's website: www.springerpub.com/maynard-snodgrass.** The text itself begins with Chapters 1 and 2, which offer an introduction to the discipline of pastoral counseling by outlining a brief history of pastoral counseling as well as an understanding of how the discipline maintains unity amid the vast diversity of practices and practitioners.

The next three sections are modeled after Cheston's (2000) "ways paradigm" and detail pastoral counseling theory and practice according to three precepts: a way of being, a way of understanding, and a way of intervening. The first of these three sections explores pastoral counselors' ways of being. Chapter 3 addresses the common roles and functions of pastoral counselors as mental health professionals whose identities and/or practices are grounded in both religious and lay contexts.

The second of these three sections describes pastoral counselors' ways of understanding. Chapters 4 and 5, respectively, describe understandings of the human condition and suffering that are often shared among pastoral counselors. In Chapter 6, the uniqueness of pastoral counselors as bilingual mental health professionals, professionals who, based on their training, speak the languages of both psychology and religion, is explored, and a description of how the integration of languages occurs is given. Chapter 7 elucidates how pastoral counselors understand the art of diagnosis in relation to more dominant models of conceptualizing psychopathology and disease. Because spiritual assessment is a key element of effective pastoral counseling practice, Chapter 8 presents methods and tools pastoral counselors can employ to aid in such assessments. Chapter 9 describes the common spiritual and theological content, both explicit and implicit, that arises in pastoral counseling and guides the reader in attending to these themes. Finally, because pastoral counselors are themselves multicultural and exist in increasingly multicultural contexts, Chapter 10 explains how pastoral counselors can navigate the liminal space that arises within cross-cultural encounters.

The fourth section presents the ways of intervening common to pastoral counseling. Chapter 11 offers the reader a sense of the interventions employed by both pastoral counselors and allied mental health professionals, whereas Chapter 12 depicts the distinctiveness of interventions unique to the discipline. Chapter 13 then differentiates pastoral counseling from spiritual direction, a related but discrete discipline that is also grounded in the ancient practice of soul care.

The book's fifth section reflects the religious diversity present among pastoral counselors and those they serve. Based on the assertion that every individual occupies a unique religious location, both within and outside religious traditions, Chapter 14 explores how pastoral counselors can compassionately and ethically counsel in the midst of religious difference. Building on this recognition that all counselors and clients possess different religious locations, the next six chapters present understandings of pastoral counseling from the perspective of distinctive religious and/or cultural traditions. Chapter 15 focuses on a Torah-based approach to counseling within the Jewish faith. Chapter 16 explores pastoral counseling within an Islamic tradition. Chapter 17 offers a Buddhist approach to pastoral counseling grounded in an understanding of the counselor as *kalamitra* or spiritual friend. Chapters 18 and 19, respectively, depict conceptions of pastoral counseling in relation to Hinduism and Native American spirituality. Finally, Chapter 20 focuses on pastoral counseling with queer-identified persons, individuals whose sexual and/or gender identities are fluid or do not conform to traditional binary understandings of gender and sexuality.

The sixth section of the text illustrates special issues in pastoral counseling. These special issues further exemplify the distinctiveness of pastoral counseling as evidenced by the functions of referral, consultation, and collaboration (Chapter 21); the education and supervision of pastoral counselors (Chapter 22); and the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Chapter 23). In recognition of our increased technological abilities, as well as the dearth of mental health resources available in some geographic regions, Chapter 24 guides the reader in understanding distance counseling and how to engage in an ethical distance counseling practice. Finally, because the

traditional focus of pastoral counseling has been on the counsel of adults, Chapter 25 presents literature in the area of childhood studies and offers implications for the theory and practice of pastoral counseling.

The seventh and concluding section of the text builds on the theory and practice of pastoral counseling as presented in the first sections by offering a prophetic call for the future of the discipline. In Chapter 26, the reader is invited to consider how the core values of the pastoral counseling tradition might be abandoned, amended, or retained in an effort to move the discipline into the future. Chapter 27 illustrates one model for incorporating pastoral counseling within an integrative, medical context of care. New practices such as these may continue to increase as a result of the changing landscape of managed care and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Finally, Chapter 28 offers a reflection on pastoral counseling from beyond the discipline from the perspective of the psychology of religion and spirituality. Understanding how relationships can be formed among and between allied professionals will be an important component of moving the field of pastoral counseling into the future.

At the conclusion of each chapter, the reader is presented with a series of questions for critical reflection. We hope that these questions will help to generate discussion about the theory and practice of pastoral counseling as well as where the discipline is headed. We are grateful to the many authors who helped to nurture this book to fruition and the clients, counselors, and communities who will carry the discipline forward into the future.

Elizabeth A. Maynard and Jill L. Snodgrass

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PART I: AN INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL COUNSELING

Jill L. Snodgrass

1

PASTORAL COUNSELING: A DISCIPLINE OF UNITY AMID DIVERSITY

When I was 6 years old, my maternal great-grandmother died. She lived 400 miles away, and I don't recall seeing her much or being particularly affected by her death. My middle sister, however, at age 11, was quite struck by this loss. It was not that she grieved, *per se*; rather, she developed existential anxiety and became aware, as Tillich (1952/2000) would maintain, of her own finitude, thus struggling to muster the courage to be. I, of course, did not understand this event in those terms at the time; however, I knew something was "wrong with her" as she begged me, night after night, to share her twin-sized bed.

My parents, concerned for their middle daughter's well-being, decided to make an appointment for her to meet with our congregation's pastoral counselor. Rev. Arnold Schaper, PhD, an ordained United Church of Christ minister, operated a pastoral counseling practice from the congregation's ancillary building. At 6 years old, I didn't understand how, exactly, "Arn" could help my sister. I knew he was a representative of the church, a person of faith. I knew he had a kind and caring disposition. I knew my family respected him. And I knew he was tall. Surely these were the characteristics of someone who could help. I was hopeful that he could lessen my sister's anxiety and free me from the nightly captivity of her twin bed. Eventually, it worked.

In many ways, Arn represented the archetypal pastoral counselor of the early 1980s: male, European American, Protestant, and ordained. After pursuing theological education and earning an MDiv, he served in a church for many years before earning a doctorate in humanistic psychology. He provided pastoral counseling services to the community with the fiscal and material support of a congregation. He personified what J. Claude Evans (1983) described as the norm of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC): "that its membership is mostly white, male, Anglo-Saxon, Western and middle-class" (p. 587).

Pastoral counselors with a long tenure in the discipline may recognize Arn as a representative of what Townsend (2009b) refers to as the metanarrative or "grand narrative": a time in the discipline when there was a clear definition of what pastoral counseling was and who pastoral counselors were (p. 10). Townsend claims, "If you had asked me in 1979 what pastoral counseling was, I would have had a swift and certain answer" (p. 1). For those with decades of clinical practice behind them, as well as pastoral counseling educators, it is easy to romanticize the past and long for a clear metanarrative about the discipline and practice of pastoral counseling.

In the past, greater clarity may have existed about the discipline and practice of pastoral counseling. However, this understanding was created, perpetuated, and represented by those at the center, and not the margins, of practice. As Townsend (2009a) asserted, this clear definition of pastoral counseling obscured the plurality of the practice and rendered "non-European-American contributions invisible" (p. 39).

Panikkar's (1979) exegesis on the Tower of Babel can serve as a helpful metaphor for understanding the blessings that may result from the end of pastoral counseling's metanarrative. As recounted in Genesis 11, following the flood, everyone on Earth spoke one language. The people settled in Shinar and attempted to build a tower of brick, a tower reaching to the heavens that would declare their unity and prevent the spread of the people. But God confused their speech, and the sole language gave way to the "babel" of languages. God diversified the languages in an act of privileging plurality. Pastoral counselors at the center of practice in the 1950s to 1970s may have claimed to speak in a singular tongue and envisioned a monolithic tower representing the theory and practice of the discipline. But just like those who settled in Shinar, pastoral counselors at the center "thought themselves to be alone bearers of a flag with absolute standards" (Panikkar, 1979, p. 199) rather than recognizing that "there is no territory belonging exclusively to the pastoral counselor" (Patton, 1981, p. 230). The people who settled in Shinar were made to abandon "the dream of a unitarian," monolithic language and to accept plural tongues and diverse languages (Panikkar, 1979, p. 199). Similarly, pastoral counsels have been challenged to move beyond a grand narrative toward recognizing the plurality present within the discipline and fostering communication and communion among those allied in the goal of nurturing greater psychospiritual well-being within and among today's societies.

Rather than offer yet another grand narrative of what pastoral counseling is and who pastoral counselors are, the goal of this chapter is to describe the plurality present within the discipline, summarize the discipline's use of the adjective *pastoral*, and offer a broad, fluid understanding of pastoral counseling. The chapter then explores the diversity of professionals engaged in pastoral counseling, the characteristics of those professionals within the ever-expanding landscape of mental health care, and the settings in which pastoral counseling most often occurs. It then elucidates the commonly held spiritual assumptions influencing pastoral counseling practice as well as their impact on practice. Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining a clarion call for pastoral counselors to embrace the discipline's unity amid its diversity by "building roads of communication . . . [and] communion" among partners allied toward common goals (Panikkar, 1979, p. 199).

WHAT MAKES PASTORAL COUNSELING "PASTORAL"?

In teaching graduate courses in an introduction to pastoral counseling, I often joke with students about the common misunderstandings we hear when sharing with others that we are aspiring or practicing pastoral counselors: "I'm so glad! A lot of pastors are really messed up. It's so good that you can help them." "Does that mean you work in pastures?" "Are you a minister?" "Is that like counseling sheep or farm animals or something? Are you like the horse whisperer?" Although the adjective *pastoral* may be multivalent or even ambiguous to many in today's culture, the shepherding metaphor on which it is based is grounded in early religious traditions. The adjective *pastoral* refers to the metaphor of the shepherd present in Jewish and Christian scriptures; shepherds are key figures throughout these sacred texts. Moses spent time as a shepherd. David, a young shepherd, was chosen by God to become king. God was

depicted as a shepherd in Psalm 23, highlighting God's caring and protective natures. Jesus, "The Good Shepherd," guided, protected, and gave his life for his "sheep." And Abel, Abraham, and Rachel spent time in the pastures caring for and guiding their flocks. The adjective *pastoral* not only refers to this rich religious heritage but also indicates how, through "careful listening, through sensitive responses, and with compassionate understanding, the pastoral counselor shepherds persons into a new grazing land, leads people to cooler waters" (Blanchette, 1991, p. 31).

Townsend, in Chapter 2 of this volume, chronicles the Judeo-Christian history of the discipline of pastoral counseling and demonstrates why the adjective *pastoral* was relevant to the profession given both its historical roots and the religious identities of many pastoral counselors in the 1940s to 1950s. However, as noted earlier, the definition of "pastoral counseling" operant in those early days reflected the practice and its practitioners at the center and not those at the margins; early definitions of pastoral counseling failed to recognize the plurality of practices that were already occurring, and pastoral counselors, much like those who settled in Shinar, only opened their ears to hear the voices of those who spoke the same language and sounded just like them.

As the discipline burgeoned and grew in the mid-20th century, multiple understandings of pastoral counseling were already emerging. For example, in the 1966 edition of *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling*, one of the most widely read books on the subject, Howard Clinebell differentiated *pastoral counseling* from *pastoral psychotherapy*. He understood pastoral counseling to be more short term and needed throughout the life span and pastoral psychotherapy as a long-term enterprise employing "reconstructive therapeutic methods" to address the growth debilitation that occurs from early life deficits (Clinebell, 1984, p. 26). In 1980, Carroll A. Wise, a pioneer in the modern pastoral counseling movement, contended that use of the term *pastoral counseling* was an effort to put up a fence that said more about who was out rather than who was in. Pastoral counselors who constructed these fences worked to prevent clergy from offering spiritual care to the mentally ill and psychiatrists from attending to matters of religious belief. According to Wise,

Pastoral "counseling" has been defined by several methods. One is by building professional fences. In this method, one group says, "This is my province. You stay out." Such fences may be supported by certain cultural sanctions or practices. The point is that such a method aims at exclusion. (p. 5)

Not only does building this fence promote the belief that religious leaders should not care for the psyche, but it also furthers the fallacy that mental health professionals should not attend to a client's spiritual or religious beliefs.

Wise and Clinebell were both European American men, both Methodist pastors, and both faculty who taught pastoral care and counseling at Methodist seminaries. In many ways, they were at the center of pastoral counseling and represented the meta-narrative or "grand narrative" of who pastoral counselors were (Townsend, 2009b). Yet their understandings of the theory and practice of pastoral counseling were distinct in numerous ways.

As previously stated, privileging a monolithic understanding of pastoral counseling, both *who* does it and *what* it is, was an attempt, much like the Tower of Babel, for pastoral counselors to make a name for themselves. One way in which many in the discipline have attempted to respect difference and honor diversity, while not discarding the core theories and practice of pastoral counseling, is by renouncing the term *pastoral* altogether due to its Judeo-Christian heritage. The adjective *pastoral* is

considered by many to be limiting and narrow. As Doehring (2006) contends, if *pastoral* is understood to refer to the care provider, then it “cannot be used to describe the [counsel] offered by Buddhist, Muslim, or Hindu caregivers” (p. 6). In contexts with rich religious diversity, many hospitals and other organizations have opted to replace the adjective *pastoral* with the seemingly more inclusive term *spiritual* (Doehring, 2006). Hospitals have changed the names of their pastoral care services departments to spiritual care services, for example. Pastoral counseling centers, including many affiliated with the Samaritan Institute, have dropped the adjective *pastoral*, replaced it with *spiritual*, or abandoned it all together.

In addition, many individuals who were trained in pastoral counseling now prefer monikers with less religious heritage and, in some cases, more. They identify as spiritually integrated counselors, spiritually integrated psychotherapists, or spiritual counselors, or they opt for titles such as pastoral psychotherapist, Christian counselor, or Bible counselor. Others have chosen to adopt the titles granted through their licensure, such as marriage and family therapist, social worker, or professional counselor, although their academic training and degrees were in pastoral counseling.

Therefore, for many individuals and institutions with ties to pastoral counseling, the shift from “pastoral” to “spiritual” was considered an attempt to recognize the plurality of practice and practitioners and to value diversity and inclusion. Bruce Rogers-Vaughn (2013), however, posited a compelling argument indicating that neoliberalism is driving the shift in discourse from “pastoral” to “spiritual.” Neoliberalism is a capitalist approach to economics that promotes privatization, reduction in social services, free trade, and a trickle-down approach to the distribution of wealth. Neoliberalism favors the privatization of health care rather than universal or comprehensive approaches. Therefore, Rogers-Vaughn argued that the verbiage of pastoral counseling has changed from “theology, pastoral, and soul” to “spiritually-integrated and best practices” because the core tenets of the discipline have been replaced with “neoliberal-friendly terms” that reflect the only grand narrative that remains—that of the “free market” (p. 6). Pastoral counseling, according to Rogers-Vaughn, has abandoned theological reflection and the practice of soul care and is focused instead on best practices, which are largely determined by efficiency and render the counselor a tool of production more than a spiritual companion. Whether one agrees with this assessment or not, semantics and neoliberal economic pressures are among many factors that have contributed to the fragmentation of pastoral counseling.

The Fragmenting of Pastoral Counseling¹

The tower, the monolithic understanding and approach to the discipline, that many pastoral counselors worked to build was destroyed long before its completion, causing pastoral counselors to scatter and settle in different environs. In addition to the destruction that resulted from semantic changes and the shifting landscape of health care, other dynamics have contributed to the fracturing of a monolithic understanding and practice of pastoral counseling over the past 30 years. First, ordination and religious endorsement have served to fragment the discipline. The AAPC emerged in the early 1960s from a desire to formalize pastoral counseling as a distinctive practice and to “set and maintain standards for individual pastoral counselors and pastoral counseling centers” (Van Wagner, 1992, p. v). This included the creation of membership standards or qualifications to establish structures of accountability and constrain the laxity of practice that was growing within the discipline. As membership standards were discussed and later concretized in 1963, it was simply assumed that “pastoral

counselors were by definition ordained ministers" (Townsend, 2009a, p. 28). According to Evans (1983), "The emphasis on ordination during the AAPC's early years came from the supremacy of psychoanalytic theory, with its origin in 19th century patriarchal culture and from the patriarchy of the priesthood still dominant in the majority of churches today" (pp. 587–588). Therefore, early membership standards requiring ordination or religious endorsement resulted in the marginalization of many women, and some men, whose traditions denied them such status on the basis of gender, race/ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation.

The discipline was further fragmented due to a schism that developed regarding how pastoral counseling relates to the life of the local congregation. As most pastoral counselors practicing in the 1950s to 1980s were ordained and serving in what was considered a specialized ministry, questions about the appropriate contexts of pastoral counseling emerged. According to Townsend (2009a), in the mid-1950s, "pastoral counseling claimed a model of ministry that was increasingly segregated from general parish ministry. . . . Many believed the most appropriate place for counseling was a clinic or center separated from broader congregational life" (p. 23). The distance between the church and the pastoral counseling office grew, both literally and metaphorically. For a compelling overview on the divide regarding "private practice," the reader is referred to Van Wagner's (1992) brief book *AAPC in Historical Perspective 1963–1991*.

The schism relating to congregational affiliation emerged, in part, from questions about accountability. Who was the pastoral counselor, functioning in a private practice, accountable to, if not the congregation or denomination? This question was considered in the late 1980s to early 2000s with changes in both licensing and managed care. Whereas pastoral counselors-in-training with seminary education were previously eligible to sit for mental health licensing examinations in most states, this privilege was rescinded in many states (Greider, Clements, & Lee, 2006). In addition, without licensure, many pastoral counselors were no longer eligible for reimbursement through managed care (Townsend, 2009b). As Marshall writes in Chapter 26 of this volume, "Maintaining clinical work as a pastoral counselor who does not carry any other professional license made the work increasingly difficult" (p. 436). For this and other reasons, most modern pastoral counselors-in-training attend training programs that prepare them to become licensed mental health professionals in a variety of allied professions, thus contributing to the pastoral counselor's bicultural identity.

Each of these issues presents challenges to the discipline. As a result of these and other concerns, pastoral counseling has not been able to achieve "unity without uniformity and diversity without fragmentation" (Lalonde, 1994, para. 1). Without a tower, without universal understandings of pastoral counseling theory, practice, and training, the discipline has failed to "[build] roads of communication . . . [and] communion" (Panikkar, 1979, p. 199). According to Townsend (2009a), "To avoid fragmentation of the field, pastoral counselors must develop theories and theologies of difference that allow mutual respect and room for multiversal practices" (p. 63). Toward this goal of fostering unity amid diversity and combatting fragmentation, a fluid definition of pastoral counseling is in order.

Creating Unity Amid Diversity: Definition(s) of Pastoral Counseling

Pastoral counseling is an approach to mental health care that draws on the wisdom of psychology and the behavioral sciences alongside spirituality/religion/theology.² Pastoral counseling focuses on the promotion of well-being, symptom alleviation,

increased coping, positive behavioral changes, and improved relationships with self and others, and it “regards changes in one’s spiritual life, one’s values, meanings, and ultimate commitments” (Clinebell, 1984, p. 373) as central.

Pastoral counselors are *bilingual* because they are trained in the languages of both spirituality/religion/theology and psychology. Pastoral counselors integrate the languages of spirituality/religion/theology and psychology by using a diversity of methods (see Chapter 6 in this text by Doehring for further explanation of the various ways pastoral counselors integrate these languages in assessment and intervention). In addition, for reasons of spiritual or religious belief and/or in response to client concern and context, pastoral counselors may place primacy on one language over and above another (van Deusen Hunsinger, 1995).

Pastoral counselors are *bicultural* because they have graduate training in both religious/spiritual/theological education and a mental health discipline. These disciplines have distinct but related cultures, with the former housed more in the humanities and the latter in the social sciences. Pastoral counselors’ religious/spiritual/theological education and competence are perhaps the discipline’s foremost distinction. According to Doehring (2009),

What makes us unique in the field of mental health is that we draw upon our theological education to understand our own spirituality, and the spirituality of those we counsel. . . . Our theological education, including its ongoing process of spiritual formation, makes our counseling different from other mental health professionals. (p. 7)

Because the term *theological* refers only to the study of God and therefore excludes the study of many religious and spiritual traditions, I find the term to be too narrow. Yet if this adjective is broadened to include religious and spiritual education as well, then I concur with Doehring (2009) that the primary uniqueness of pastoral counselors is our formal, most often, graduate education in spirituality/religion/theology.

In addition, pastoral counselors are often drawn to spiritual/religious/theological education and the discipline of pastoral counseling in response to “a call” in their lives, whether or not that call is understood to be from God or a transcendent source. This means that pastoral counselors’ own faith and spiritual/religious commitments often guide them toward pastoral counseling as well as or rather than other allied mental health disciplines. Nevertheless, pastoral counselors are spiritually, religiously, and theologically flexible and curious. According to Wise (1980), maintaining this flexibility can at times be challenging as it is not simply the regurgitation of “intellectual learning of ideas and systems as presented in the classroom or in a book” (p. 62). Rather, “it requires the growth of the [counselor] in his emotional and spiritual life, the accumulation of insight and understanding into processes and relationships, and the formulation of these insights in theological [spiritual/religious] concepts” (pp. 62–63). The task of pastoral counseling is not to apply static doctrine or sacred texts to clients’ presenting concerns. Rather, pastoral counseling entails a more nuanced art of integrating spiritual/religious/theological and psychological wisdom in response to the uniqueness of each client’s beliefs and situation.

In addition, pastoral counselors’ bicultural identities are often formed by their own religious cultures alongside the cultures espoused by their clinical training programs, which may be in one of many allied mental health disciplines such as social work, marriage and family therapy, professional counseling, or psychology. For

example, where I teach at Loyola University Maryland, the pastoral counseling program is accredited by both the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and the AAPC. Therefore, students are formed with bicultural identities as clinical mental health and pastoral counselors with psychological and spiritual/religious/theological education.

Many believe that the distinction of pastoral counseling is about the identity and formation of the pastoral counselor rather than about the practice itself. For example, on the basis of his study of 85 pastoral counselors "selected for maximum variation of religious affiliation, race, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, sexual orientation, social class, training history, and location of current practice" (p. xi), Townsend (2009a) reported that the majority of participants indicated that "pastoral is who I *am* [emphasis added], not what I *do* [emphasis added]" (p. 60). However, in exploring the participants' pastoral identities, many of the identity markers were practices shared by most allied mental health professionals: "bringing my spiritual self into the room," "asking the big questions about meaning in therapy," or "being in relationship" (p. 61). The idea that pastoral counseling is about "who I am" worked better in the early days of the profession when all pastoral counselors were ordained religious leaders, formed in similar theological and psychological ways. Today, in seeking to recognize the unity amid the diversity of the discipline, pastoral counseling cannot be defined solely by the identities of its practitioners. In an attempt to recognize the unique practices and contributions of pastoral counseling within the vast landscape of mental health care, it is important to articulate pastoral counselors' way(s) of being with clients in counseling, way(s) of understanding clients and common clinical concerns, and way(s) of intervening in therapy (Cheston, 2000). This, indeed, is the overarching goal of this text.

PASTORAL COUNSELORS AND OTHER ALLIED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The bulk of this text focuses on what pastoral counselors *do*, and less attention is spent addressing who pastoral counselors *are*. Therefore, we now turn to explore the diversity of professionals engaged in the field and who pastoral counselors are in relation to other allied mental health professionals. As previously stated, when the AAPC created membership standards in the early 1960s, it was assumed that all pastoral counselors were ordained or "religiously endorsed" (C. Doehring, personal communication, June 11, 2014). Today, the number of religiously endorsed pastoral counselors entering the profession is markedly decreased; unfortunately, the AAPC does not maintain statistics indicating the percentage of religiously endorsed members (B. Nyman, personal communication, July 28, 2014). In Chapter 3 of this volume, Maynard and Parker articulate the common roles and functions of pastoral counselors whose identities are grounded in secular rather than religious contexts. Therefore, it is important now to note briefly the uniqueness of religiously endorsed pastoral counselors.

Religiously endorsed pastoral counselors are, like all pastoral counselors, bilingual and bicultural. They speak the languages of spirituality/religion/theology and psychology, and they are formed in two related but distinctive cultures. Religiously endorsed pastoral counselors are, however, ordained, licensed, or commissioned by their religious traditions or communities. Therefore, they are accountable to the religious organization and, at times, to an ordaining community to which they are called. They may be *acharyas* (Buddhist teachers), *rinpoches* (Tibetan Buddhist teachers),

rabbis, imams, deacons, ministers, pastors, priests, or a plethora of other religious leaders. According to Doehring, "What distinguishes religiously endorsed counselors is that their endorsement makes them accountable for how they use their [spiritual, religious, and] theological education and formation in *publicly* representing their religious tradition" (C. Doehring, personal communication, June 11, 2014). In most cases, pastoral counselors are accountable to both their religious organizations and mental health organizations and to licensing boards.

Although licensure laws vary by state, pastoral counselors, like most allied mental health professionals, are also accountable to state licensing boards and cannot practice based solely on their religious standing or accountability to religious orders or organizations. In states where licensure may not be required, it is often very difficult for pastoral counselors (and other mental health counselors) to join insurance panels, which is required in order to see clients wishing to use insurance. Therefore, many aspiring pastoral counselors, both those with and without religious endorsement, opt to attend accredited programs that prepare them to meet state licensing requirements. As previously noted, this contributes to pastoral counselors' bicultural identities as they hold degrees such as MFT, MSW, MS, MA, PhD, and PsyD.

Often as a result of their academic training and the degrees earned, pastoral counselors are active in a variety of professional organizations. Although attention has been paid in this chapter to the AAPC and its historical role in the concretization of the discipline, pastoral counselors are also active in Division 36: the Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality of the American Psychological Association (APA); the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) that is affiliated with the American Counseling Association (ACA); the Society for Spirituality and Social Work; the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS); and other professional organizations and associations. Membership and activity in these organizations reflect pastoral counselors' bicultural identities and, according to Townsend (2009a), "Thinking about multiple pastoral identities holds more promise for the field's future, especially as it continues to diversify and migrate away from institutional identity lodged only in AAPC membership" (p. 63).

Formation, both within and beyond academic training and participation in professional organizations, is an important part of ongoing development for all mental health professionals. Formation is the "set of experiences that act to structure knowledge by shaping a perceptual field and cognitive-emotional interpretive framework[s]" (Townsend, 2006, p. 31). Formation results from external and internal, conscious and subconscious, dialogue between theory (or structured knowledge) and practice (or experiences). The formational processes of religiously endorsed pastoral counselors are unique and differ from the formation typical among pastoral counselors whose identities are grounded in secular rather than religious contexts. This is because for many, but not all, pastoral counselors, their formation as religious leaders precedes their formation as mental health professionals. Religiously endorsed pastoral counselors have most often spent years dedicated to a religious or spiritual formation process. This commonly entails religious/spiritual education and study, spiritual direction as it is understood within the tradition, supervision of ministerial practice, and reflection on integrating one's spiritual, emotional, relational, financial, and physical health toward greater well-being. Although formation differs markedly among religiously endorsed pastoral counselors from diverse spiritual and religious traditions, the continuing formational journey of becoming a pastoral counselor is often built on a solid foundation of mutual accountability between the individual and her or his religious organization. Bidwell and Marshall's (2006) book *The Formation of Pastoral Counselors:*

Challenges and Opportunities is a helpful resource for educating the reader on how the formation of pastoral counselors has changed as fewer pastoral counselors undergo the formational processes related to religious endorsement.

THE SETTING AND CONTEXT OF PASTORAL COUNSELING

Given the multiplicity of professionals engaged in pastoral counseling, it is no surprise that pastoral counselors operate in a diversity of settings and contexts. For millennia, spiritual and religious leaders offered care and counsel to and on behalf of their spiritual/religious communities. It was not until the 1950s, however, that pastoral counseling became a specialized form of ministry. As explained by Townsend in Chapter 2 of this text, pastoral counseling in the 1950s was predominantly conducted by religiously endorsed professionals, mostly Protestant clergy, and often occurred in church settings. The advent of pastoral counseling as a specialized ministry was accompanied by an increasing sense of professionalism that often entailed adopting a secular, medical model of care and moving one's practice beyond the walls of the church. Therefore, according to McClure (2010), "Over time, pastoral counselors' identity and work was less aligned with religious communities and more with the secular medical and psychological body" (p. 85). This shift away from the congregational or parish context influenced both the theory and practice of pastoral counseling. On the basis of his analysis of the pastoral counseling literature published between 1949 and 1999, Stone (2001) concluded that:

most of the pastoral counseling theorists studied either fail to demonstrate a good grasp of the kind of counseling that occurs in parish ministry, or they show little interest in it. Many seem more in tune with classical theology, psychotherapy, or specialized pastoral counseling than with the counseling that happens in local congregations. (p. 187)

Although counsel outside the congregational setting often entailed charging fees for services and was thus a theologically contentious issue, it was also believed that "clients were more likely to be honest outside the walls of the church, client confidentiality was easier to protect, and counseling could be unconstrained by theological, ideological, or practical boundaries usually associated with the church and its clergy" (Townsend, 2009b, p. 2).

In the past 30 to 40 years, however, many pastoral counselors have sought to reclaim the contextual influence of the church. As previously mentioned, many criticisms were leveraged against the discipline of pastoral counseling for distancing itself from parish and congregational contexts. However, there has been a growing recognition in the discipline that communal and systemic factors exert tremendous influence on an individual's mental and spiritual well-being. Therefore, numerous community pastoral counseling centers have reclaimed the congregational context and are now housed in religious buildings, most often churches, in exchange for the provision of free or reduced-fee counseling services to congregants. Religious communities offer hospitality to pastoral counselors and counseling centers and then depend on them as a referral resource. According to Kelcourse (2002), "In response to congregational needs, church based and Samaritan counseling centers have arisen around the country" (p. 144). Such relationships between congregations and pastoral counselors are often experienced as mutually beneficial and considered a mission or outreach to the

community by some congregations. Recounting the experience of Dan Moseley, senior pastor at Vine Street Christian Church in Nashville, Tennessee, Kelcourse wrote,

While those who came to his church for counseling generally did not join the congregation, the church based counseling center was recognized as a significant service to the community. Members of other churches, grateful for an effective referral, felt even greater loyalty to their own minister and congregation than before. (p. 145)

Nevertheless, with changes in managed health care, “pastoral counselors increasingly find their vocational home in public agencies rather than churches or church-related centers” (Townsend, 2009b, p. 9). As licensed mental health counselors, pastoral counselors often work alongside a diversity of allied mental health professionals in academic counseling centers, nonprofit counseling agencies, hospice and bereavement organizations, youth services bureaus, Veterans Affairs medical centers, government-supported agencies, correctional institutions, retirement communities, hospitals, shelter contexts, and more. Given that many of these settings are public or “secular” in nature and, as such, do not often overtly support the integration of spiritual/religious/theological wisdom within mental health care, pastoral counselors are at times challenged to retain the uniqueness of their bilingual and bicultural approach to mental health care. However, an increasing number of mental health professionals now recognize that clients’ spiritual/religious beliefs affect their mental well-being. Moreover, culturally competent practice requires the acknowledgment and incorporation of clients’ various cultures (i.e., ethnic/racial, educational, sexual, religious) within the counseling process. Therefore, it is hoped that the push toward greater cultural competence, in addition to the growing religious diversity in most U.S. regions, will, in time, contribute to the wider acceptance of incorporating spiritual/religious/theological wisdom within mental health care in public and private agencies alike.

THE DISCIPLINE’S SPIRITUAL ASSUMPTIONS

After describing the discipline of pastoral counseling in all its diversity and outlining pastoral counselors’ bilingual and bicultural identities, it may seem hypocritical to posit any assumptions or beliefs shared among pastoral counselors. However, the following three assumptions about human nature seem to fit with most pastoral counselors, even though they are conceptualized uniquely within each counselor’s spiritual or religious tradition and lived experience. They are the belief that humans are inherently relational, humans are co-created, and humans are both blessed and deprived.

Humans Are Inherently Relational

Every religious and spiritual tradition possesses its own creation story. Whether one believes that the world was formed when a cosmic egg was split in two, when a rival god emerged from the primeval ocean, when a singular deity spent a week forming life *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), or a plethora of other beliefs, most pastoral counselors concur that creation is interconnected. For pastoral counselors, whose work with

humans reveals the positive and negative impacts we have on one another, this recognition of the interconnectedness of creation is witnessed in the intrinsic relationality of all humans (Cooper-White, 2007). Human beings are born from relationship, in relationship, and spend a significant amount of life's energy navigating relationships with self, other, and, for those in theistic traditions, God. According to Cooper-White (2007), "Human beings are thus connected with all creation and with one another, knit into the entire fabric of creation, and interwoven in an unfathomably deep and wide 'living human web'" (p. 39). Pastoral counselors' recognition that humans are inherently relational influences how individual, couple, family, and community problems are assessed and the interventions employed.

Humans Are Co-Created

In the 1940s and 1950s, pastoral counseling drew heavily on psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theories (Clinebell, 1984). In the early days of pastoral counseling, the counselor was often viewed as the "expert" who possessed the ability to uncover aspects of the client's psyche that were considered previously inaccessible to the client and to direct the client toward health and wholeness. The modern pastoral counseling movement was also highly influenced by client-centered therapy and the educative approach to counseling advocated by Carl Rogers and Seward Hiltner. This approach drew "more and more of the solutions to the situation out of the creative potentialities of the person needing help" (Holifield, 1983, p. 304). The client was considered to possess innately the aptitude to move from self-realization to self-actualization.

Grounding these theories, as well as most approaches to pastoral counseling, is the belief that humans are co-created. We do not become who we are in isolation. As inherently relational beings, we are continuously created in and through relationship. Moreover, although pastoral counselors are grounded in a variety of spiritual and religious frameworks, most do not believe that life is fully scripted or predetermined. Humans possess agency that allows us to create our own stories and, with varying degrees of control, to influence our life courses. Writing from a Christian perspective, Wise (1980) contended that "man [*sic*] as a creature has the power to take a hand in the creation of himself by utilizing and fulfilling the potentials which God has placed in him" (pp. 34–35). As relational beings, at times we benefit from cooperating toward this end with a counselor whose unique expertise also aids in cocreating our journeys. "The pastor[al counselor] has no blueprint of what another person should be" (Wise, 1980, p. 35) but works alongside clients, from his or her own expertise, to help clients to move toward their desired goals and outcomes.

Humans Are Both Blessed and Depraved

Pastoral counselors regularly encounter clients attempting to cope with the pain, suffering, and heartache of the human condition. Spiritual and religious traditions most assuredly differ in their understandings of why humans suffer. Yet whether suffering is perceived as the result of original sin or attachment, divine wrath or fate, most pastoral counselors concur that, at least in some ways, humanity is depraved. Humans will suffer and commit sinful and evil acts, some more egregious than others. Nevertheless, pastoral counselors are also witness to the myriad blessings in clients' lives. Again, whether this is understood as God's favor, coincidence, or the direct result of

hard work and perseverance, most pastoral counselors concur that “good” and “evil,” however broadly understood, exist simultaneously in individuals, communities, and all creation. As Fox, Gutierrez, Coffield, and Moulder note in Chapter 4 of this text, this is the paradox of human existence. Therefore, recognition of humanity’s goodness and depravity requires humility on the part of the pastoral counselor. Wise (1980) wrote that the pastoral counselor is “called upon to accept his [*sic*] basic humanity and to experience within himself the truth that ultimately he stands in the same need as others, and that he has the same potential for sin and illness [and I would add blessing] as do all others” (p. 32). Pastoral counselors are more apt to recognize in others the creative potential toward both creation and destruction, good and evil, if they first identify it in themselves.

BUILDING ROADS OF COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNION

The metanarrative or “grand narrative” (Townsend, 2009b, p. 10) of what pastoral counseling is and who pastoral counselors are no longer holds true (if, indeed, it ever did). Therefore, given the diversity of spiritual/religious/theological backgrounds and training experiences among pastoral counselors, the religious diversity of clients, and the religious heritage of the term *pastoral*, why retain the name *pastoral counseling*? Is use of the name today, as Wise (1980) contended 35 years ago, simply an attempt to build a fence and keep people out? It seems that fences and towers have never truly served the discipline. Therefore, as we strive toward unity among the diversity of practices and practitioners of pastoral counseling, the adjective *pastoral* must be changed or redefined.

Yet fostering connection and unity amid such diversity will not be accomplished by something as simple as a name change. Because there is currently no clear consensus regarding a new moniker for pastoral counseling, perhaps an attempt at redefinition is in order. Pastoral counseling is “pastoral” on the basis of the training, formation, and spiritual/religious/theological orientations of pastoral counselors—that is, “who we are” and “what we do,” as well as the uniqueness of our assessments and interventions. Pastoral counselors recognize that “whether or not we are religious, all persons inhabit a particular location relative to religion” (Greider, Chapter 14, p. 235). This means that all counselors and clients possess distinct religious locations, and thus all clinical encounters, even those between two Methodists, two Orthodox Jews, or two Muslims from the Shia Ismaili tradition, are interreligious. Pastoral counselors employ distinct methods of integrating psychology and spirituality/religion/theology (see Chapter 6 by Doehring, this volume). Pastoral counselors have unique ways of listening for and responding to implicit and explicit spiritual and theological themes in counseling (see Chapter 9 by Snodgrass and Noronha, this volume). Finally, although pastoral counselors draw from the same schools of psychotherapy and utilize therapeutic modalities identical to those used by most mental health professionals (see Chapter 11 by Hanna, this volume), there are also distinct interventions employed in pastoral counseling (see Chapter 12 by Jones Davis, this volume).

In order for the discipline of pastoral counseling to move forward with unity amid diversity, pastoral counselors of various faith traditions, working in various contexts, and trained in various cultures, need to engage in greater communication and communion with one another. I urge you to read and reflect on Chapter 26 of this volume, written by Joretta Marshall, which outlines in a prophetic manner the values of pastoral counseling that can help to move the discipline into the future. In addition, the reader is encouraged to:

- Seek out religiously diverse dialogue partners. Form a case consultation group or cultivate a supervisory relationship with someone doing the work of pastoral counseling (as defined previously) who may or may not identify as a pastoral counselor—for example, a Christian counselor, a spiritually integrated psychotherapist, a social worker serving in a Jewish community center, a Torah-based therapist, a biblical counselor, or a Buddhist psychotherapist. In addition, remember that diversity within religious traditions can be as great as that found among them.
- Commit to ongoing spiritual/religious/theological education. Pastoral counselors do not impose their own spiritual/religious/theological views or assessments on clients. Rather, such wisdom is created collaboratively through critical reflection with clients and communities. Although counselors are committed to continuing clinical education, most do not put forth the same effort to continuing spiritual/religious/theological growth. At least not formally.
- Attend the annual meeting of an allied professional organization such as APA's Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (Division 36), ASERVIC, the AAPC, the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, and others. Most pastoral counselors are bi- or multicultural as a result of their training and professional memberships. Pastoral counselors, with their training in spiritual/religious/theological reflection, have much to offer to colleagues in other organizations but also much to learn from them.
- Consider your title. If you were trained as a pastoral counselor and have dropped the *pastoral* adjective, consider reclaiming it. You no doubt had a compelling reason for doing so; however, the future of the discipline is dependent on many voices and perspectives coming together to influence both the practice and the public's perception. Your uniqueness is an essential part of the whole. Or, if the description of pastoral counseling presented earlier mirrors your own practice and you do not identify as a pastoral counselor, reflect critically on why this is. Perhaps this is a culture in which you are already acculturated and may benefit from greater engagement with. As Patton (1981) asserted,

The goal of pastoral counseling is never simply unimpaired function, but function *for* something, for one's commitments and meanings. The pastoral counselor is not the only health practitioner who has this understanding of healing. He or she is, however, the only one whose role and identity, as well as function, *represent* [emphasis added] this understanding. (p. 230)

- Advocate on behalf of the discipline. Doing this requires knowing enough about the unity and diversity of pastoral counseling and counselors that one can confidently share with others "who we are" and "what we do" (Townsend, 2009a). Speaking out on behalf of the discipline entails more than serving clients and connecting with other professionals. It includes affecting our communities by responding to current events from a psychospiritual perspective, facilitating workshops and serving on panels within secular and religious communities, contributing to the local chapters of organizations such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness or Active Minds, and volunteering to participate in events such as the National Depression, Alcohol, and Eating Disorder Screening Days. Advocating on behalf of the profession entails influencing federal policies that affect both mental health providers and consumers; forming partnerships that enable pastoral counselors to provide services to underserved and marginalized populations; correcting misconceptions, which may result from religious discrimination, about the practice of pastoral counseling

among individuals, allied mental health professionals, and wider communities; and helping emerging professionals to navigate the landscape of managed care by getting credentialed for insurance panels.

Pastoral counselors, like the people who settled in Shinar, have been forced to abandon "the dream of a unitarian," monolithic discipline in favor of recognizing plurality and fostering communication and communion among those allied in the goal of nurturing greater psychospiritual well-being within and among today's societies (Panikkar, 1979, p. 199). Therefore, pastoral counselors are called to the work of continuously defining and redefining who we are and what we do, communicating with allied mental health professionals and consumers about who we are and what we do, and challenging the construction of fences and towers that may result in greater exclusion than inclusion.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Do you feel the profession should retain the use of the term *pastoral* or replace it with something more inclusive, such as *spiritual*? Why or why not?
2. What are uniquely pastoral ways that a counselor can "be" with, understand, and therapeutically intervene in clients' lives?
3. According to Snodgrass, pastoral counselors share core spiritual beliefs that humans are inherently relational, humans are co-created, and humans are both blessed and deprived. How do these assumptions relate to your own religious/spiritual tradition and lived experience? What implications do these assumptions have for you as a pastoral counselor?
4. Do you currently (or will you in the future) identify yourself distinctly as a *pastoral* counselor? Explain your reason(s) for this decision.

NOTES

1. I am indebted to Loren Townsend for his use of the verb *fragmenting* to describe the discipline of pastoral counseling in his Opening Convocation at Louisville Seminary on February 5, 2009.
2. It is inaccurate to say that pastoral counselors draw on the wisdom of theology, because not all pastoral counselors or clients identify with theistic traditions. In the same way, it is inaccurate to say that pastoral counselors draw on the wisdom of religion, as, for example, some contend that Buddhism is a "philosophy" and not a "religion." For this reason, spirituality/religion/theology are each essential to pastoral counseling practice in various contexts.

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