Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Liz Robinson and all the gifted pastoral carers like her who do not need to theorize as I have but just do it with openness and spontaneity.
Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge firstly, with great affection, Dr Michael Wilson, then Lecturer in Pastoral Studies at the University of Birmingham, for setting me on a broad and inclusive vision early in my intellectual life as a priest. He encouraged me not to avoid taking the secular seriously as a basis for modern pastoral care and spirituality.

I acknowledge Bishop Bruce Wilson for first challenging me to read John Macmurray, a challenge I took up only partially initially but which later became a passion. I also acknowledge with appreciation members of the John Macmurray Fellowship for their support and encouragement.

I am equally indebted to the work of Heinz Kohut and wish to acknowledge with appreciation the Australia and New Zealand Association of Psychotherapy, especially Dr Russell Meares, for the training in self psychology and the conversational model which turned my practice of supervision and pastoral care on its head.

I am grateful also to my supervisor Dr Brendon Stewart for his patience and his challenge to take ‘friendship’ seriously as a concept.

I acknowledge with great appreciation my colleagues in Clinical Pastoral Education, especially Mary Waterford and Barbara Hall for their immediate support. I also acknowledge the many people who have attended training in Clinical Pastoral Education units that I have run over the years, with whom I tested and explored my ideas; and especially the Multifaith group whose interactions and responses to my philosophy are part of this presentation.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support and colleagueship of Geoffrey Hunter in our work together in pastoral care, and, Georgina Hall, for reading parts of the text and making helpful comments.
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>CPE</td>
<td>Clinical Pastoral Education</td>
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<td>First Person Perspective</td>
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<td>SPP</td>
<td>Second Person Perspective</td>
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Abstract

Pastoral care or its equivalent is part of the traditional means by which people within a community attempt to remain connected to each other positively and personally. Such personal community is modeled on the family; and the original pastoral carers are the parents of a well functioning family. In so far as God or the gods are then seen as standing in relation to the community as parents stand in relation to a family, so pastoral care has been founded in religion and theology. Pastoral care as such is then seen as an expression of God’s love and care, administered through appointed people within the community for the community’s sake. It is intended for the individual emotional and spiritual support of persons, including the overcoming of problems and difficulties, and the ongoing support of relationships, along with the subordination of the negative to the positive within and between different members of the community. Its theoretical basis is centred in the attempt to think an adequate conception of God as a symbol of the community’s unity of will and purpose.

In a modern multicultural and multifaith society such as Australia in the twenty first century, in which adherents of the great religious traditions mingle side by side within a culture that is strongly secular and favours no one tradition over any other, good and effective pastoral care as a support for the personal side of living together in community is nonetheless greatly needed and increasingly appreciated. Such pastoral care if it is to be inclusive of all the traditions that make up Australian society cannot be based exclusively in the doctrines or theoretical ideas of any one of those traditions. It ideally should be founded in the secular, while being open to and inclusive of the ideas and experiences of people from all traditions. It needs a theoretical base that can contain such inclusiveness and yet give clear understanding and direction to the role and function of pastoral care.

*Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care* proposes such a theoretical base, centred in the attempt to think an adequate conception of the Self rather than God as a symbol of personal and cultural unity; such a conception must necessarily include the capacities for moral, aesthetic and intellectual judgments as distinctive of being a human person. Based primarily on the philosophy of John Macmurray, the thesis proposes a conception of the Self as Agent as being adequate to a philosophy of pastoral care in a secular, multifaith society. Such a conception contains within it the conceptions of the Self as Subject and the Self as Object. Thinking then of the Self from the point of view of action enables the instituting of primary friendship as the central concept of personal community and pastoral care; a re-thinking of the relationship between religion, the arts and the sciences; the re-conception of religion as the processes governing interpersonal relationships, including the extension of those relationships out into idealized Others such as saints, gods and God; and the detailed analysis of the relationship between action and reflection as found ubiquitously in life and very specifically and consciously in Clinical Pastoral Education, the primary form of training in pastoral care in Australia.

The adequacy of this theory or philosophy for multifaith pastoral care is tested, as part of the thesis, in a pilot multifaith training group. The group met over ten weeks and was representative of the major religious traditions in Australian Society. The philosophy was presented in the group along with workshop activities typical of an introductory unit of Clinical Pastoral Education. A report on the group and its findings is included. In general terms the philosophy was found to contain and not conflict with the various traditions represented in the group. It was seen as an adequate basis to further explore multifaith chaplaincy and pastoral care within a society such as we have in Australia.
Introduction

Chaplaincy and pastoral care ‘is a profession in transition’. It has traditionally been an initiative within individual Christian denominations seeking to keep in touch with members of their own church or group within hospitals, nursing homes, jails and schools. It now wants to be a professional caring modality in its own right apart from but including churches and religious organizations, working in both stipendiary and voluntary capacities in the general life of the community. It wants to take its unique place within our secular society alongside other caring modalities such as social work, community work, and general counseling, specifically to help ‘meet the religious, spiritual, emotional and pastoral needs’ of the general community. (Note1)

The general community however is no longer largely Christian. It is multicultural and multifaith within a broadly secular society. This is the context within which modern pastoral care in the community is seeking to establish itself as a profession in its own right. There is a growing recognition that to be fully accepted as a caring modality within the broader community, and to be in the position to be supported by Government and funding bodies generally, the profession of pastoral care needs a theoretical base that is inclusive of our different traditions, including secularity and atheism.

Many in pastoral care feel the movement toward a common theoretical basis for chaplaincy and pastoral care across all traditions is inevitable. This is reflected in the exploring if not embrace of multifaith pastoral care in different professional associations such as the Australian Health and Welfare Chaplains Association and the Australia and New Zealand Association of Clinical Pastoral Education. It is also seen in the organizations linked with government that oversee chaplaincy and pastoral care such as the Civil Chaplains’ Advisory Committee in NSW and the Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria. In fact, Queensland has now constituted the Multifaith Health Care Council that began its work in 2006. In November 2005 Australia’s first multifaith Tertiary Chaplaincy Forum opened in South Australia,
incorporating the three major universities in that state. In my own bailiwick, the newly formed Pastoral Care Board of the ACT has been constituted intentionally to include representatives of all the major world traditions.

I would go further. To my mind a theory of multifaith pastoral care is not only inevitable, it is desirable and necessary if the profession is to fully complete the transition it is in and take its place in society alongside other caring modalities.

This then is the challenge my thesis is addressing. How can people from different faith and spiritual backgrounds, admittedly united in a commitment to care for others emotionally, spiritually and religiously, work and train together in paid and volunteer capacities as the vocation and ‘profession’ of pastoral care and chaplaincy?

My thesis is that such a challenge cannot be met without a common philosophical basis that makes clear the nature of pastoral care and its relationship to human nature and community, and is able to accommodate and include the various empirical traditions that make up our multifaith and secular Australian society.

*Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care* seeks to fulfill, or at least begin to fulfill, this theoretical need. The framework offered also lays the foundation for a reframing of the most widely used training method for chaplaincy and pastoral care, Clinical Pastoral Education.

For all the difference in belief and practice that is found between the different religious traditions in our society, there is a common commitment to values that enable human community to form and function, and love and care are two of those values. So a theory of multifaith pastoral care can immediately assert a central and unifying commitment to acts of love and care that can give it focus, regardless of tradition. I argue that ‘friendship’, considered philosophically, adequately carries the sense of this common commitment of love and care, but not only as a happy circumstance between individuals; rather as an ‘intentional’ commitment by specific people, namely in this case chaplains and pastoral carers, in their emotional, spiritual and religious support of struggling individuals and communities.
People who relate together positively form friendship. Friendship is the relationship closest to the relationship of care and love we enjoyed with our parents, but in its most developed form it requires that the friends feel free and equal toward each other while intending the good interest of the other in their actions. This is primary friendship or friendship of the good. The other major forms of friendship derive from this and follow the form of the personal, a central concept in this philosophy; friendship of pleasure and friendship of utility. These two forms are dependent on their mutuality and reciprocity to be sustainable, because they are friendships in which the underlying motive is ultimately egocentric. Only friendship of the good has genuinely positive motive and leads to genuinely heterocentric actions which are not calculated on an ultimate return to the self; primary friendship in fact contains and is constituted by the other two in a genuine mutuality that does not have the strain that friendships built only around pleasure or utility can have. Pastoral care in this thesis is founded in the concept of primary friendship.

Even a well functioning family needs the intention of positively motivated actions and friendship to be present, at least within the parents, to enable the personal community of the family to cohere, and have ways and means to stay together positively. To say that pastoral care is intentional friendship is to say that pastoral care intends the actions that enable personal community, that enables open personal engagement between people, which necessarily includes all that those people bring to those engagements, the pain and hurt and misunderstanding that has negatively shaped their lives by their becoming entrapped in withdrawal from relationships, along with the joys and triumphs and the gathering of inner resources that have helped them cope.

To focus pastoral care primarily in intentional friendship marks a fundamental shift in its traditional theoretical base. This highlights two important issues in understanding this thesis.

Firstly, whereas traditional pastoral theory has been theological and centered in ideas and concepts of God, in this thesis the self becomes the primary focus of our theoretical concern. While pastoral care as a form of care is universal and has its
origins in family life and its personal extensions into the wider community, it has only been formally reflected on as a function and discipline of religious organization within the western church. It became theoretically based in theology, in official thoughts about the nature of God, and practically based in the religious and ritual functions of the church.

Making the self the primary focus for pastoral care, consequently takes pastoral care out of theology into a philosophical anthropology; not a scientific anthropology, for as we shall see, intentionality and action are key concepts in an adequate conception of the self for my purposes, and intentionality and action cannot be adequately incorporated in a scientific appraisal of the world. This shift in no way lessens the importance of the word ‘God’ in human life. It simply grounds pastoral care in a concept that we can all share as human beings in a secular, multifaith society, regardless of our religious tradition, if any.

Secondly, this thesis, however, does place pastoral care within the religious functions of community life. This needs some clarification in this introduction, because in Australian society in 2007, religion is not a term that many people want to use. Even those who belong to religious groups seem to increasingly prefer words like spirituality to religion in describing this aspect of life. Such a position is argued trenchantly for instance by Bruce Rumbold, a well known writer in pastoral care, in his paper *From Religion to Spirituality* (Rumbold 2002).

However, I want to reclaim religion as a central and essential aspect of pastoral care, and in so doing refine our understanding of it; it has become an abused and misunderstood aspect of human community and life. I will be using religion in a way that directly connects it to the concept of the Self that I am proposing, and re-instates its fundamental importance as that form of reflection that focuses primarily on the behaviour and interactions, especially communicative interactions, that occur between people in community. I advocate the use of ‘religion’ as a form of reflection that stands in equal relationship with the other two fundamental forms of reflection in our culture, the sciences and the arts. This is not new at all; it is a return to our own philosophical tradition in the west. But it is an understanding of religion that is not currently well understood in a culture that focuses so completely on the
supremacy of science in human affairs. In fact, in the concept of the self I am presenting, pastoral care properly conducted is a true expression of religion in culture in its fullest and most positive and generic form.

However, I make a clear distinction between religion as it finds outward expression in a community, and religion as an inward process that contributes to the inner structure and relationships that constitute the individual’s soul or inner life. It is this second expression of religion that is the particular focus of multifaith pastoral care in the community, and its clear delineation allows pastoral care practitioners to develop skill in helping people connect to their inner resources when facing difficult situations regardless of the person’s spiritual or religious tradition or beliefs.

So pastoral care in a secular multifaith society, as I am proposing it in this philosophy, is made up of acts of intentional friendship in which the carer is positively motivated through his or her own convictions and commitments and is trained to act intentionally in a way that is based in the interests of the other person. The modern pastoral carer is sensitive to what a person believes, not for the content of what he believes necessarily but for the value the person invests in that belief and the place that belief has in determining the person’s actions. The carer is especially sensitive to inner relationships that positively structure the other’s inner world. Most of all, the modern pastoral carer works with a concept of the self as primarily an agent, someone who intentionally acts, and who is only secondarily a subject who feels and an object who is thought. In fact, an essential process in the formation of a pastoral carer is learning to think about what we do from the point of view of Action, and how our feeling and thinking contributes to that action.

In developing this work, and its implications for pastoral care and the training of pastoral care practitioners, I am indebted primarily to three thinkers, with side way glances at a number of others. The first is the Scottish philosopher, John Macmurray; the second is the psychoanalyst and founder of the self psychology movement, Heinz Kohut; and the third the philosopher and father of psychology in the United States, William James. None of these thinkers are recognized as theologians, although the final form of Macmurray’s philosophy has been called a
natural theology and James’ *The Varieties of Religious Experience* remains seminal in the study of religion.

Macmurray died in 1976. From his work I take: his concept of the Self as Agent as a concept that is genuinely adequate for a philosophy of pastoral care, in which action is served by reflection, practice by theory; that the person is not an isolated ‘I’ but primarily an ‘I-You’ that is formed in personal relationships; that action is logically related to feeling and thinking, as is religion to the arts and the sciences, a logic he called the form of the personal; that religion is essentially and primarily about human interaction within personal community, and the transformation and subordination of the negative to the positive; that our primary knowledge in life is the knowledge we use of each other in our interactions, which we access as we reflect-in-action; that in our actions we determine ends through feeling and means through thought; that intention and motive can be conceived quite separately; that the motive of an action can be either a conscious or unconscious feeling within us, but the intention is always conscious and is formed principally from our knowledge of the other; that actions, including communicative actions can be heterocentric or egocentric, and can be analysed in terms of motive and intention; that rationality and objectivity allow self transcendence and apply not only to our thinking functions but to our feeling and acting functions equally as well; that self transcendence interpersonally is empathy and is the basis of positive relationship with other people, especially friendship; and friendship contains and is constituted by freedom and equality.

Kohut died in 1982. What he offers this philosophy of pastoral care is his central concept of self object relations that form the structure and resourcefulness of the soul or inner life of the person, and the implications for the person if these inner relations are undeveloped or inadequate; the internalizing not only of significant others and our relationships with them, but our sense of inner relationship with everything we imbue with personal meaning, including places, objects, music, food, pets, and most especially from the second-person standpoint, which is a central concept to this philosophy, cultural and religious figures that we idealize and which contain us, including, for some, a sense of cosmic narcissism and ‘God’.
William James died in 1910. I take from James his basic understanding and ‘bottom-line’ conception of religious experience as spontaneous inner conversation with an idealized ‘other’ that might for some be an idealized notion of their own self rather than any god or God or god-like figure; and his notion of ‘over-belief’.

There are important connections between these three thinkers whose ideas most inform the theory or philosophy of pastoral care I am proposing. This is important to me. Important ideas unfold in time; they have rootedness and history and appear in human consciousness in hints before a full bloom. The connection between Macmurray and Kohut is clear enough; both saw the centrality of the ‘I –You’ relationship in the formation of personal being. James and Macmurray are connected through the primacy of action in their thought, and in the idea of a logic beyond and further to an organic dialectic. In fact, James appears to predate Macmurray both in the latter’s idea of the ‘form of the personal’, and in the primacy of action (note 2).

It could be argued that modern pastoral care began with the Clinical Pastoral Education movement in the 1920’s when a Congregational minister, Anton Boisen, suffered a psychotic breakdown and in his rehabilitation was befriended by a psychiatrist trained in Freudian psychoanalysis. Boisen purposed to use the peer group, case study, action/reflection method, then being used in the flourishing world of psychoanalysis, in training chaplains in pastoral care. Freud himself saw the connection between pastoral care and psychoanalysis, and advocated the pastoral care worker as a possible model for his plans to institute lay analysts (note 3). So from the start modern pastoral care has existed in a tension between traditional ideas and ‘the means of religion’, and the ideas associated with psychoanalysis and the emphasis on conversation as the means to effect care and support and comfort. At times this has been an unhappy tension, but less so the more our disparate and fragmented society has been seen as the locus for modern pastoral care in its own right. However, Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care, while being written from within CPE practice, proposes a theoretical basis within a universal understanding of religion and not psychology or psychoanalysis, as has been the case more or less since Boisen. At the same time it retains many of the insights that these disciplines and others have given us. This marks a shift back to understanding
pastoral care’s origin in family, and religious and personal community terms. It also
marks the beginning of a re-framing of the theory of CPE out of the world of
psychoanalysis and other psychological emphases, modulated by theology, into the
everyday world of religion and human relationships as I propose them in this thesis.

Unlike psychoanalysis, and for that matter counseling and therapy generally, where
the person withdraws from the actions of their real life to seek support, pastoral care
engages others in the immediacy of their life, in their everyday relationships, with all
its challenges and difficulties. We are out ‘in the field’. It is necessarily conducted
within the norms of interpersonal communication in real life, and relies on the
capacity of the carer to ‘think and feel and act on his or her feet’; it does not have the
luxury of sitting in silence as might happen in therapy and counseling while deep
reflection goes on. Good pastoral care is about being real within a positive motive
towards others in such a way that intentions are formed and acted on that have the
other person and their situation as the prime determinants of the pastoral action.
There are no strings attached, and no fees charged. The knowledge used is
knowledge about human beings and their relationships, both knowledge in reflection
but more particularly knowledge that is available to the carer while they are caring;
in other words, knowledge in action. The more the carer can act with the
spontaneity and ease of friendship the better. But it is intentional friendship;
positively motivated action determined by the reality of the other person, for no other
reason than that individual is a fellow person in the community that is our shared
humanity. This is modern pastoral care. In this sense, it is a practical application of
what Macmurray claimed was the core of his whole philosophy, and the heart of
personal life. He wrote:

The simplest expression that I can find for the thesis I have tried to maintain
is this: All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and all meaningful
action is for the sake of friendship. (Macmurray 1957, p.14)

My own motivation for this work comes pre-dominantly from my professional life as
a Clinical Pastoral Educator. But lying behind this is a much older need to find a
more inclusive way to think about myself, and the other human beings with whom I
share the planet; human beings together regardless of but not denying the great
differences that exist between us in culture and religion. This is coupled by a need also to give some intellectual justification to my own experiences of love that came to me and still come to me in my experience of life and the world in a way that is not necessarily connected with any one tradition if not in some way connected to them all. In fact my first experience of love in the universe was in a public park, completely removed from any religious gathering. In this respect, like many now in our European traditions, my primary commitment is to being a caring, open human being on an ever shrinking planet; a member of a common humanity in which Christ, Moses, the Buddha, and the Prophet, amongst others, are all fellow members. My sense of intimate relationship within myself is principally with Christ and a more general sense of ‘God’ whom I mainly call ‘Father’, but not to the necessary exclusion of any other figure who attracts me and offers me ideals, ideas, challenge, sustenance, mirroring, and support, from family members to favourite teachers, to friends and lovers; the two living figures I most admire are the Dalai Lama and Nelson Mandela, and although I do not converse with either of them within myself, images of them and words they have said, along with associated feelings, flow in and out of my stream of consciousness from time to time and support me. I understand myself as a religious person at home in secular society; a secular religionist, if you like, a way of thinking that will become clearer as we proceed.

The ideas behind this thesis have been presented to many training groups as they have developed over time, but for the purpose of this presentation and its evaluation, the group is a specific training group set up under the auspices of ACT Health as a pilot multifaith training group entitled ‘Caring Together’. A full time Observer was present, and his report is included in this presentation. The methodological idea was to test in an actual multifaith training group the adequacy of this philosophy to contain us all in our different traditions while giving us a common focus and understanding of pastoral care in a modern secular, multifaith setting.

The group met for 10 days over 10 weeks. It consisted of:

- Three members of the Christian community, one a former chairperson of the ACT Churches Council (Presbyterian), another, the coordinator of the multifaith chaplaincy at the University of Canberra (Baptist), and the third,
someone with a background in eclectic spirituality who does not identify with any one tradition exclusively.

- Two members of the Jewish community in the ACT, one the President of the community and the other a chaplain in the multifaith chaplaincy at the University of Canberra.
- Two members of the Muslim community, one the President of the Canberra Islamic Centre, and the other a senior member.
- One member of the Buddhist community, a senior member of the Rigpa association.
- One member of the Hindu community, the vice president of the Mandir Society of the ACT
- The Trainer (Anglican), Assistant Trainer (Catholic) and the Observer (Uniting Church).

The training consisted of group sessions, skills presentations, role plays, presentations of a pastoral visit written up as a verbatim, typical of an Introductory Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, as well as the Talks and Papers which presented this philosophy of pastoral care. The Talks and Papers formed a series of didactics intended to give a philosophical rationale and background to multifaith pastoral care and its training which could give some intellectual substance to our common commitment to love and care in the community. While the participants were invited to evaluate and comment on the whole experience, they were specifically invited to engage and comment on the effectiveness of the philosophy of pastoral care presented in relation to the beliefs and practices of their own tradition, and whether or not they thought their own tradition might in the future encourage potential pastoral care practitioners from their own communities to undergo training using this philosophy. In other words, does Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care present an adequate basis for the continuing development of a framework for the profession of multifaith pastoral care in the community? The Observer’s report is included in the text.

*The chapters that follow are re-arranged and edited versions of the talks and papers. I have retained the presupposition, in the main, that I am writing for members of a training group, but edited out personal references which I used*
didactically and as a way of softening my intellectual emphasis. The talks and papers were followed by discussion sessions to reinforce and connect the ideas presented.

The text is divided into 4 Parts. Each chapter of each part begins with a synopsis. The synopses, presented here, can be read as a brief and connected summary of the philosophy of intentional friendship, a basis and foundation for multifaith pastoral care in our secular society.

**Part A: Setting the Scene**

Chapter 1 - Pastoral Care in the Community: What is it? Modern pastoral care in the community is a unique caring modality with characteristics not necessarily found in associated modalities, such as counseling, therapy, social work and community work. It can also be differentiated from traditional pastoral care within churches and religious organizations, including chaplaincy. It has a unique relationship with a generic meaning of ‘religion’ that is introduced, to be developed later, a meaning that is substantially different from popular understandings of religion that are currently found in Australian culture.

Chapter 2 - Tradition and Understanding. Interpreting the meanings of what people are saying is at the heart of interpersonal communication; this phenomenon is central to pastoral care, as it is to our engagement with each other in this training group. It also touches some of the most important intellectual discussion of the twentieth century in the field of hermeneutics. Both in this group, and in pastoral encounters generally we are seeking what Gadamer called ‘an ideal interpretive community’ and Habermas ‘an ideal speech situation’, where we attempt to understand the Other and his tradition more fully, and in so doing we can come to understand ourselves and our own tradition more fully also. At the same time we seek a sense of the objectivity or reality of what we are saying and hearing, and the degree to which it helps or hinders our engagement with the world.

**Part B: The Basic Paradigms**

Chapter 3 - The Form of the Personal. Thinking of the self primarily as an agent constituted as an ‘I-You’, and not only as an isolated ‘I’, allows a third logical form
to emerge, as in the philosophy of John Macmurray, alongside the mathematical
form of identity and the organic form of dialectic that structure our inorganic and
organic apprehensions of the world respectively. The form of the personal structures
all aspects of personal life, from seeing the universe as material, organic, and
personal, to culture as constituted by the sciences, the arts and religion, to persons in
community as an ‘I’ a ‘You’ and a ‘He, She, It’, to understanding the Self as a person
who acts, feels and thinks, to the individual as an ‘I, Me and Myself’. We can think
of the Self from three different but integral perspectives, the first, the second and the
third personal perspectives.

Chapter 4 - The Motives in Our Lives. The form of the personal can be applied to the
formation and structure of our feelings and motives, differentiating between those
feelings that are formally negative and those that are formally positive; one is the
basis of necessarily egocentric behaviour and actions that constitute the first and
third personal perspectives of the Self, the other the basis of heterocentric behaviour
and actions that constitute the second person perspective. The movement between
them, paralleling the movement between action and reflection, is identified as the
rhythm or pattern of withdrawal and return, a fundamental aspect of our engagement
with the world at all three levels, especially the personal. Knowledge and
understanding at the level of the personal is the goal of pastoral care, to best inform
our pastoral actions.

Chapter 5 - Friendship. Aristotle’s analysis of friendship remains central to our
understanding, at least in the European tradition. In form, it exactly illustrates
Macmurray’s form of the personal. The crucible of friendship is in the relationship
between mother and child, and in the complex movement between self interest and
interest in the other, egocentricity and heterocentricity, friendship takes us to the very
heart of the human condition. Friendship of the good or primary friendship is the
intention and goal of pastoral care, and the outcome of true religion, formally
speaking.

Part C: Religion and Pastoral Care
Chapter 6 - Reflection and Self Transcendence. A unique capacity of the human person is the ability to objectify the world in reflection and to understand and engage it rationally. But whereas our culture tends to think such objectivity and rationality belongs only to our capacity to think, which finds an ultimate if not absolute form in science through the scientific method, Macmurray shows that we can and need to be equally objective or rational in our feeling and acting functions. This capacity for objectivity Macmurray called self transcendence, which finds its fullest form at the personal level in the capacity to act empathically in the interest of another person. Whereas a scientist self-transcends in his relationship with the physical and material world, and an artist in relation to the world of form and organism, a religionist self-transcends in relation to personal life in community. He or she is an expert ‘non-expert’ in helping and supporting human community, and enabling its members to live together positively. This is pastoral care.

Chapter 7 - Religion as Outward and Inward Processes. Religion can be thought of as having both an outward and an inward emphasis. The outward arises within the external relationships we have with others, including cultural and religious heroes some of which we may consider divine. But these figures can also be internalized as relationships we carry within ourselves; this constitutes the inward emphasis of religion. Pastoral care within religious organizations tends to focus more on the outward rather than the inward; modern multifaith pastoral care in the community on the inward. However as we change the locus of pastoral care to the community life of our institutions, multifaith pastoral care has the potential to also facilitate outward processes as well.

Chapter 8 - The Structure of Our Inner Life. The structure of our souls or inner life at the personal level is formed through our relationships with other persons or objects that we imbue with personal meaning. These relationships, which are internalized as inner self object relationships, can be analyzed according to the form of the personal, as has been unknowingly done independently by Heinz Kohut and J.L.Moreno. The pastoral care practitioner becomes skilled at relating to this inner structure within pastoral conversation, because it constitutes a person’s inner resourcefulness and resilience, and conversation imbued with this positive feeling in a relationship where
the carer shows genuine regard and interest can completely alter their capacity to cope with their situation.

Chapter 9 - Belief and Religious Identity. Religious identity has traditionally played an important role in our understanding of ‘who we are’, but often worked defensively in helping us to know ‘who we are not’. The emphases of different forms of religious belief can be analyzed according to the form of the personal, just as can the different types of belief. Primary belief is about what we know in interpersonal relationships, secondary belief and tertiary belief in what we apprehend through feeling and thought respectively. Primary belief is largely expressed through action; secondary and tertiary belief is reflective and hence problematic and is validated through action. Tertiary belief about the world is what James referred to as ‘over-belief’; both science and theology are forms of over-belief. It does not play a large role in interpersonal activity except where the belief lies close to our sense of self and identity. Pastoral care seeks to be expert in primary knowledge, and in relating to the personal meanings a person may place in their over-belief.

Chapter 10 - Illusion and Religion. Illusion and delusion are important forms of belief. Overcoming illusion in life is the way to personal growth and self transcendence. This is Macmurray’s understanding of illusion. It is an inevitable part of the rhythm of withdrawal and return, entrapping only if we are unable or unwilling to test our beliefs formed in reflection through action in the engagement of the real. This understanding stands in contrast to Freud’s, and is closer to the views of Kohut and Winnicott. Pastoral care practitioners need to be skilled in managing illusion in their own practice, and in appreciating how it might be at work within those they visit.

Chapter 11 - The Inner Conversation. Internalized self object relationships that carry positive feeling form the positive structure of the soul, and are the basis of inner resource and resilience. We can talk inwardly to such figures as we might talk to ourselves, and we can talk outwardly as if they were there with us. This is the basis of prayer as real everyday activity and not just a formal aspect of some people’s lives. Internalized second person perspective relationships in which there is a degree of idealization are more likely to become conversational or prayer partners, ranging
from people we know to cultural figures who traditionally embody accepted values and virtues, such as Christ, the Buddha and God. Even atheists will have internal figures they have inner connection with, if only an idealized sense of themselves.

**Part D. Implications for Pastoral Care Training**

Chapter 12 - Motive and Intention. CPE has its origins in Freudian interpretation of behaviour, modulated by theological reflection. This presupposes a dualistic world of mind to matter, theory to practice in which motive and intention are virtually the same thought. Overcoming this by making Agency primary, as proposed in this philosophy, allows motive and intention, along with attention, to be grasped as related but distinct aspects of our experience. This in turn allows a completely different analysis and interpretation of pastoral actions, and a shift in focus in supervision away from making the unconscious conscious to the intentional growth through reflection on the trainee’s pastoral capacities.

Chapter 13 - The Pastoral Carer in Reflection. Learning to reflect on a pastoral visit after the visit is over, and drawing others into that reflective process, namely a supervisor and a supervisory peer group, is the basic method of CPE. Learning to think from the standpoint of action and agency alters the focus of this reflection to what is known of the patient by the carer, what is known of him or herself, and what is known of the relationship between the two; and how that knowledge can be checked for error and increased by reflection, so that the carer can return to visiting having learnt more about all three points of attention, increasingly able to use that knowledge while they are actually acting.

Chapter 14 - Reflection- and Knowledge-in-Action. The central skill in good pastoral care is being able to reflect-in-action that makes knowledge-in-action available while in the act of visiting. This capacity grows out of the practice of withdrawing to reflect as described in chapter 13, and in learning to let the reflection process go on within so that we are paying attention primarily to the patient, secondarily to what is happening in ourselves, and thirdly to what is happening in the relationship between us; all on the run as it were.
Chapter 15 - *Self Revelation in Pastoral Care*. Pastoral care as intentional friendship, unlike other caring modalities, subordinates the impersonal to the personal. Self revelation is then an essential aspect of the skill base of the pastoral carer, but always within the intention to care and act in the interest of the other or patient. The relationship intends freedom and equality, and this finds expression in the carer not being caught up in needing to ‘fix up’ the patient, but to befriend them, letting them go as much and as easily as joining them for the moment in their life’s journey.

**Notes**

1: From the Executive Summary of *Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy Provision Within Metropolitan Health and Aged Care Services in the State of Victoria*, Holmes and Carey, 2005, Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria, Inc., Melbourne, Australia.

2: For instance, in a quite fascinating disclosure in the *Varieties*, James tells of his experience of taking nitrous oxide to induce transcendental experience at one stage of his life, bearing in mind that, like Macmurray, he held a great aversion to idealism, especially the Hegelian variety.

Some years ago I myself made some observations on this aspect of nitrous oxide intoxication, and reported them in print. Once conclusion was forced upon my mind at that time, and my impression of its truth has ever since remained unshaken. It is that our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final that leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question – for they are discontinuous with ordinary consciousness. Yet they may determine attitudes though they cannot furnish formulas, and open a region though they fail to give a map. At any rate they forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality. Looking back on my own experiences, they all converge towards a kind of insight to which I cannot help ascribing some metaphysical significance. The keynote of it is invariably a reconciliation. It is as the opposites of the world, whose contradictoriness and conflict make all our difficulties and troubles melted into unity. Not only do they, as contrasted species, belong to one and the same genus, but *one of the species*, the nobler and better one, *is itself the genus, and so soaks up and absorbs its opposite into itself*. This is a dark saying, I know, when thus expressed in
terms of common logic, but I cannot wholly escape its authority. I feel as if it must mean something, something like what the Hegelian philosophy means, if one could only lay hold of it more clearly. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear; to me the living sense of its reality only comes in the artificial mystic state of mind. (James 1902, p.378, his emphasis)

What James is describing cannot be the Hegelian dialectic, and he of course would have known that. In Hegel's dialectic the positive throws up its opposite which resolves in a third, also positive to its own negative and so on. But it could be said that James is suggesting Macmurray’s *form of the personal*, a positive that takes up and absorbs its opposite into itself; a positive that contains and is constituted by its own negative?

Further to this, Pragmatism, of which James was a foundational thinker, is interested in the place of action in relation to thought.

For what seriousness can possibly remain in debating philosophic propositions that will never make an appreciable difference to us in action? And what could it matter, if all propositions were practically indifferent, which of them we should agree to call true and which false. (James 1902, p.434)

In summarizing *pragmatism*, James writes:

Thought in movement has for its only conceivable motive the attainment of belief, or thought at rest. Only when our thought about a subject has found its rest in belief can our action on the subject firmly and safely begin. Beliefs, in short, are rules for action; and the whole function of thinking is but one step in the production of active habits. If there any part of a thought that made no difference in the thought’s practical consequences, then that part would be no proper element in thought’s significance. To develop a thought’s meaning we need therefore only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce; that conduct is for us its sole significance; and the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference in practice. To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, we need then only consider what sensations, immediate or remote, we are conceivably to expect from it, and what conduct we must prepare in the case the object should be true. Our conception of these practical consequences is for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all. (James 1902, p.435)

This is the principle of pragmatism as James saw it; it is of course, with some argy-bargy on a few terms, the basis out of which Macmurray’s philosophy grows. Macmurray in fact uses the word ‘pragmatic’ in his analysis, but his meaning is essentially different to James. I make these connections in the hope that taking the personal seriously, as do all three thinkers, is all part of a cultural ground swell whose time has come. But it does seem that in two key ideas in Macmurray’s philosophy, namely the primacy of action and the form of the personal, he is pre-dated by James. As far as I can see Macmurray does not refer to James in his writing.
3: Freud in his postscript to the pamphlet *The Question of Lay Analysis* written in 1927 drew a direct parallel between lay analysis and pastoral care. He wrote:

A professional lay analyst will have no difficulty in winning as much respect as is due to a secular pastoral worker. Indeed, the words, ‘secular pastoral worker’, might well serve as a general formula for describing the function which the analyst, whether he is a doctor or a layman, has to perform in his relation to the public. Our friends among the protestant clergy, and more recently among the catholic clergy as well, are often able to relieve their parishioners of the inhibitions of their daily life by confirming their faith – after having first offered them a little analytic information about the nature of their conflicts. (Gay 1995, p.682)

Clinical Pastoral Education has been strongly influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis, much along the lines suggested here by Freud. As noted above, *Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care* is written from within CPE practice but with a theoretical basis within a universal understanding of religion and not, in psychology or psychoanalysis. The latter are used within this framework however.
Part A

Setting the Scene

The following two chapters introduce the idea of pastoral care in the community; and the role the training group can play in helping us to understand the hermeneutics of people communicating personally and effectively together, something that is also the goal of pastoral care.
Chapter 1

Pastoral Care in the Community: What is it?

Synopsis: Modern pastoral care in the community is a unique caring modality with characteristics not necessarily found in associated modalities, such as counseling, therapy, social work and community work. It can also be differentiated from traditional pastoral care within churches and religious organizations, including chaplaincy. It has a unique relationship with a generic meaning of ‘religion’ that is introduced, to be developed later, a meaning that is substantially different from popular understandings of religion that are currently found in Australian culture.

‘Caring Together’ is a multifaith training program in pastoral care for people from any faith or spiritual tradition, or none for that matter, who would like to register as pastoral care practitioners for work within the community, in either a hospital, nursing home, school, jail, the courts or simply on the streets of any local shopping centre. I want to make clear what is meant by pastoral care in the community, and to differentiate it on the one hand from other caring modalities to which it bears some resemblance such as counseling, therapy, and community and social work, and on the other from the pastoral work we associate with particular church denominations or religious organizations, which is often called chaplaincy. In this training program pastoral care in the community will be closely associated with the cultural phenomenon of religion; but given that religion and its place in the economy of ordinary life has been largely lost to our understanding in modern secular Australia, some time will be taken to make clear the nature of religion in its formal sense as I am using it; in other words we will be thinking of religion in its generic meaning apart from but including the various empirical manifestations of universal religion to which we give names like Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Moslem and Hindu. This realigning of pastoral care and pastoral care training in a multifaith context with religion is radical; for nearly a century pastoral care has been more allied with psychology and psychoanalysis than religion, at least within our European traditions. This radical re-alignment is made possible I think by the continuing rise and success of secular culture in countries like Australia which can look at religion dispassionately from a neutral viewpoint, and so allow a deep searching for the underlying principles. Some of the theories of religion that have emerged are
reductionistic (note1), but some are very clarifying, and I will be using what I think is one of the best analyses of religion in a formal, general and cultural sense in presenting the background philosophy to this training program in pastoral care.

It can be argued that pastoral care is as old as human community. It is the necessary care shown to all members to help them feel part of a community, to feel loved and accepted within the network of personal relationships that make up that community; and it is the caring actions needed to help members resolve difficulties, heal hurts, reconcile differences and forgive transgressions in personal inter-actions within the community. It is love and care that is positively motivated for the good of the community and all its members; it comes ‘with no strings attached’. Its goal is to ensure that the community can subordinate fear and hatred to love and care so that the community thrives and is a place where people can celebrate their belonging to each other and so feel a common unity.

The original model of personal community is the family, and parents are the original pastoral carers. They relate equally to each member of the family. The parents act to ensure the welfare of each member and of the family as a whole, and if someone is in difficulty they go out of their way to support and help them through that difficulty so that they can take their place again within the community of the family. If two or more members of the family have fallen out with each other and are hurt and angry, the parents move to support, and to reconcile and enable forgiveness. They use their wisdom and their knowledge of the children to help them return to positive relationships from their fearful and angry withdrawals. Ideally the children feel loved and accepted unconditionally so that the expression of negative feelings is not normally accompanied by the fear that these will jeopardize relationships; but ideally it is accompanied by the expectation that they will want to return to positive relationships and the love and care such relationships create.

All personal community where people are together for the sake of each other as persons, and not for some functional reason only, have a similar structure to a family, and pastoral care is an essential process within such a community, whether named as such or not. So a village had its priest, rabbi or mullah and the community gathered as a community around such figures to celebrate its life together and to work through
the relationship difficulties that detracted from capacities to subordinate the negative to the positive.

Even when a group exists for mainly functional reasons, say a business organization, attention to the personal side of life will help the group be a place where the employees want to be. In other words, wherever people live and work together and relate personally, pastoral care is in principle needed to help the group cohere and remain intact against disintegrating forces, usually generated by people’s fear, anger and illusory thoughts. Love and care tend to breed love and care; fear and anger tend to breed fear and anger.

These are some of the very same functions in the formal, generic sense of religion as it has been proposed in the analysis of the philosopher John Macmurray. This may come as a surprise to some given that religion in our culture has been largely reduced to arguments about belief, arguments between the beliefs of different ‘religions’, but arguments also with science, which has become the accepted adjudicator of truth and falsity in the mainstream of our culture. This has helped us lose sight of religion in its proper and original role; other factors are behind this as well, and these will become more obvious as we proceed, the most obvious being that a great deal of religion obvious in the world today breeds fear rather than overcomes it. But for the moment I want to introduce you to the idea that both religion and pastoral care are about people in community being able to live together in a way in which they can celebrate a sense of common unity and know how to deal with disjunctions and disunities, so that there can be an ongoing subordination of destructive motives such as fear and hatred to the positive motivations of care and love.

Religion has been traditionally the bearer of symbols that give a people a common sense of belonging together, and pastoral care in one form or another has been its servant. But this has not been a static process. Inherent in all religion is the need to embrace the whole, and as the whole has shifted over time, so the various religious traditions have moved to grasp this new whole, by various means both peaceful and non-peaceful. We have now reached the point however in our ever diminishing world where all religious traditions exist within our One world, and none of them can necessarily claim any precedence over any other, at least not within secular culture.
It is the neutral place of secularity that makes such a point in religious history possible. It has the potential to force all traditions to look to common foundations and symbols of our human unity, and this is happening at both global and local levels. In the words of John Macmurray,

> the religious mode of reflection… arises from the problematic of personal relations. It follows that it provides the basis for the resolution of the problems of such relations – for the problems which beset community. In its primitive form religion refers to an actual community. It is the religion of a tribe, or – since there is plenty of primitive religion still – a nation. Now any human community is maintained by the loyalty of its members. Its religion centres in those corporate acts in which its members celebrate their fellowship in the common life. The effect of this ceremonial is to bring to consciousness in all the participants their union with one another, and to associate this with rejoicing. So there is mobilized, in each member, a positive motive for maintaining the community, for standing firm in loyalty; for refraining from such action as might endanger its unity, and for defending it against its enemies. If enmities and disunities already exist, they are minimized or suppressed.

But there is a religious irrationality in the limitation of community to a particular group. There is nothing in the relations of persons which demands, or even permits, of such limitations. Consequently, the development of religion reaches a point at which this potential inclusiveness is realized, and the universal religions appear. They represent the discovery of the implication of all religious reflection, that **the basis of human community is common humanity**. (Macmurray 1986, p.60, my emphasis)

The full import of these words may take some time to fully emerge in this training program and make sense; so I invite you to be patient about this. Religion has now to deal with a common humanity, which means going beyond or deeper than our different religious traditions to the foundations that undergird them all. For that reason, let me say that the presence of members of the major universal religions working and caring together in a highly secularized society in a world that already has a strong sense of unity at the economic level at least is I think a very significant and important expression of both our common humanity and our human community.
A common humanity implies a common religion or approach to religion, and this terrifying possibility either defensively raises the barriers higher between different empirical religions, or it forces us to give up our defensiveness about our own particular faith and to look more deeply at the function and role of religion generally, and in particular how this has worked in our own tradition and history; and what role and function it needs to perform in the world that is emerging. Macmurray’s analysis does exactly that, to which I have added some other considerations particularly relevant to the caring modality we are philosophizing about, pastoral care in the community. We are a microcosm of the world here in our own Australian society and for that matter this gathering here in this training program in pastoral care is a microcosm of that microcosm; thinking globally is now forced upon us as we act locally.

Religion in the way I am presenting it is a positive process about people living personally together with ways and means of overcoming the negative. In fact of course religion has been grossly misused in the past, just as science has, and has been the justification of entirely destructive actions and behaviour where the motivation has been fear of difference and defensive anger. Religion has often been used by political forces for its own ends. Defensive religion is not inclusive although it does work to extend its influence, to grasp and control a greater whole; and what tends to justify this defensiveness is the need to have people ‘believing’ the same things about all the big questions of our existence. Such a mark of belonging has been easy to use by people who seek power. The mark of unity between people has been a common creed or way of thinking, which leads to a common ritual and religious celebration and way of feeling. What we are doing in making pastoral care the common focus of our work together is focusing primarily not on our thinking, our beliefs, or our feeling, our spiritual practices, but on our actions in the community in relation to other human beings, and we are saying that to fulfill the role of pastoral care these actions need to be motivated by love and care, and need to be inclusive; otherwise it cannot fulfill its role. It is not denying the importance of how we think (believe) and feel (ritual practice) or the quest for truth and beauty; but we are making these aspects of our being secondary to our capacity to intentionally act under positive motivations. If we find our sense of unity and common humanity in our positively
motivated actions, we will give up our need to feel and think the same; in fact we will come to enjoy our differences and to see the common threads of truth and beauty in all our traditions. After all, all the major universal religions have helped to sustain vast cultures and civilizations; they have proven their value as particular manifestations of religion. It is not too much to say that they have all in some sense drunk from the same well to achieve the same ends; personal community that can sustain itself against fragmenting and destructive forces without and within.

So I put it to you that we as a group of representatives of the world faiths in this very local setting can celebrate our unity in our common commitment to act together pastorally for the benefit of people in the general community in the spirit of care and love; and nothing we think or feel need be compromised as we enjoy our different backgrounds, insights and understandings. We continue to think and feel differently and to share this with each other, as we work together in the common religion of care and love, which are intentional acts about which we can both feel and think from within our different traditions, and from within our common secular culture.

Pastoral care in principle is as ancient as counseling, therapy, and community social work are relative newcomers in society’s attempt to support people and find ways and means to overcome breakdown and difficulty in people's lives. Counseling and therapy have many background theories guiding their work, and although psychotherapy in some forms is now open to and uses spirituality and spiritual practices, this theory has not normally included religious ideas or practices; if anything there has been an intentional denial of the validity of religion, which has its roots in the clash with science and such analyses of religion as that of Freud’s.

Such therapy is focused on the individual in his or her difficulties in life, when they have withdrawn to get help. Except in the case of some marriage and family counseling, the other ‘players’ in the person’s life are not there in person, but only in the images conjured up by the client’s stories. The counselor will never meet the people in the person’s life, and his or her interaction with the client will be limited to the relationship they have in the counselor’s rooms. The counselor or therapist is like an ‘off the field and out of sight’ coach dealing with the client out of the action and the network of relationships that make up the person’s personal communities and
relationships. He is professionally detached from the client and only enters personal relationship with him or her in so far as this serves his impersonal and objective assessment and subsequent decisions on treatment and therapy. The counselor or therapist is normally paid for his work on a fee for service basis.

Pastoral care is closer to community and social work in that the latter also initiate actions in the interest of the other person, and consequently are not on a fee for service basis either; and there is a counseling side to both community and social work that engages the individual’s feelings and thoughts. While many community and social workers may be interested in spirituality and religion, it is professionally inappropriate for them to use this background in their work; although spirituality as such is being increasingly written into social work theory. But like the counselor and therapist, the community and social worker is predominantly interested in the other person for professional reasons and hence his or her impersonal or functional relationship is dominant over their personal relationship. They only enter personal relationship with a client for the sake of impersonally helping that client have his or her needs met; never for the sake of the personal relationship in and for its own sake. They are expert in helping the client meet his or her needs at physical and emotional levels. They are not ‘playing coaches’, or ‘off the ground and out of sight coaches’, but coaches who walk up and down the side line as it were, keeping themselves personally ‘free’ from their clients by maintaining a detached impersonal stance.

Pastoral care practitioners on the other hand are ‘playing coaches’. They are expert non-experts who understand life religiously and spiritually; which is a way of saying that in pastoral care the impersonal is always subordinated to the personal. The personal side of life for pastoral care is primary. The pastoral carer does not engage someone to fix them up for a fee, but to connect with them emotionally, and spiritually as a separate free person; to establish a positively motivated but equally balanced conversation and relationship in which the other person feels heard and engaged and genuinely focused on; and to respond in that relationship in a way that is in the interest of the other person. In other words the pastoral carer engages the other in the spirit of friendship for the purpose of relating helpfully, and perhaps healingly; he or she relates to the reality of the other person and his or her life. The pastoral carer practices intentional friendship, not to have his or her needs met but to
be available emotionally and spiritually to the other person; but the relationship of positive engagement or friendship has the qualities of both freedom and equality. As the person makes him or herself known in self-revelation, the pastoral care practitioner wisely reciprocates; but always with the reality of the other person determining the carer’s intentions moment by moment. The paradox with pastoral care is that it is a highly skilled form of intervention in people’s lives, requiring genuine maturity and capacity to be present to others, but looking entirely normal and ordinary with no claim to expertise or authority. The other person feels free to disclose as an equal; not waiting for an answer from an expert. It is has something of both the ancient Greek vision of friendship of the good, and Christ’s injunction to be ‘as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves’. Consequently pastoral care needs to be supported by the whole community in which it does its work. Pastoral care only really works when the underlying motive is transparent and positive; like a mother’s love, care with ‘no strings attached’.

The distinction between the different forms of care can be expressed in the language that will be introduced in this philosophy. We can say that the care offered by doctors, counselors, therapists, social workers, and welfare workers is third-personal. It is centred in the objective and impersonal, or agent-neutral, care of the person. The carer is regulated not by what the person values or prefers, but by what the carer believes would really benefit him; this of course, however, has to work within the person’s values and preferences. Pastoral care is second-personal; it is regulated by what the person values or prefers, and the meanings the person is putting to his or her experience. In the words so often heard in pastoral care training, ‘we are not there to fix anything up’. We are there to engage personally with at least true respect, recognizing the other’s full personhood and dignity including their inherent authority as a person within their relationships. This is done within the presupposition of the primacy of love in human experience as the ultimate form of care in which we are accepted regardless. Pastoral care does not evaluate or appraise; it relates and engages. However, we do not neglect or negate the welfare side of care; but we do subordinate it to the quality of the relationship we seek to establish with the person.

So it is that pastoral care in the community has some fundamental differences from other caring modalities; it is directly interested in friendship and the personal side of
life, and it works with understandings of the human condition that are both religious and spiritual. How then does it differ from pastoral care as it might be found in churches or religious organizations, where it is often referred to as chaplaincy? Chaplains certainly practice pastoral care; but they also have a number of other functions such as preaching and teaching. But more importantly they are authorized by a particular religious organization and therefore have a representative role which carries institutional authority. They are ‘experts’; they are expected ‘to know’ about religious matters. This carries with it quite different cues for the people they work with in pastoral care, and consequently brings forth quite different ‘transferences’.

The interaction between chaplain and patient is circumscribed by certain religious assumptions that play an important role in supporting the patient, but it can also inhibit a freer and deeper interchange around the emotional and spiritual implications of the patient’s situation; however much the patient appreciates the chaplain’s visit. The patient is less likely to feel free and equal to an official representative of a religious organization who represents the agreed beliefs of that organization.

Chaplains who are genuinely effective as pastoral carers are often men and women who have in a sense transcended their representative and institutional role and have the capacity to present themselves simply as a caring person, full of wisdom and life experience. As we shall see this carries authority, but it is a mutual second person authority grounded in freedom, equality and at least dignity and respect, if not a fully positive motivation of care and love; it is not an institutional authority (note2)

So the major difference between a pastoral care practitioner in the community and pastoral care in a religious organization is that there are no spiritual or religious assumptions in pastoral care in the community. Each person is met on his or her own terms. To put this another way, and not entirely fairly; in pastoral care in the community the religious focus is on the inner processes of the individual, and in chaplaincy on the external processes that make up that particular religion to which both belong. In organized religion as represented by chaplains, the inner thoughts and feelings of its members are in principle subordinated to the external doctrines and ritual practices of the particular empirical religion; in pastoral care in the community the inner thoughts and feelings of the patient are the very substance of the inner religious process to which the pastoral care practitioner relates, and any externalizations in the sense of collective doctrine or dogma, or ritual and spiritual
practice is secondary and subordinated to the individual’s actual experience and inner life. The full implications of this for the practice of pastoral care in the community will gradually unfold as we proceed. A good chaplain combines both emphases in his ministry.

In this first chapter (originally presented to the training group as a talk) I have wanted, with broad brush strokes, to set the parameters of what pastoral care in the community means as practiced by multifaith pastoral care practitioners, and to note its unique differences from other caring modalities and pastoral care as practiced within specific religious organizations. I have proposed that pastoral care is *intentional friendship*, but this is not to disguise the fact that good pastoral care is a highly skilful process guided by a knowledge best described as *wisdom*.

In the next chapter, I raise some of the issues of interpretation we face as people coming together from different traditions around a common interest. The *intentional friendship* we seek to offer in pastoral care is also the sort of friendship we need to find together in this multifaith training group, as we explore the subtle interactions of meanings and motives in our conversation together.

**Notes**

1: A recent example of a reductionistic treatment of religion is Pascal Boyer’s *Religion Explained: The Human Instincts that Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors* published in 2002. He portrays religion ‘as a mere consequence or side-effect of having the brains we have’, and we not only understand religion better as our knowledge of cognitive processes grow, but we can better understand ‘our mental architecture by studying the human propensity to religious thoughts’. The world view within which a scientist like Boyer writes is one in which matter is the fundamental given that gains complexity in the wonder of evolution to organic life and ultimately to human life in which the greatest capacity to emerge is our ability to think scientifically and hence rationally. This is the opposite of what we actually experience as individuals born into a human family, where the communal and personal is our first discrimination in our relationships with our parents and siblings, from which we come to discriminate life forms other than human, like the family pet. The discrimination of inorganic or material objects is the last to emerge, with much of these still imbued with personal meanings throughout life, and not lumps of mere matter. The tension in our culture between science and religion is in large measure a tension between the competing priorities of the impersonal and the personal. Science affirms the impersonal, religion the personal. Macmurray
affirms the necessity of both but the priority of the personal, and leaves how this might be so within an evolutionary world to our ongoing understanding. But he does assert that science has boundaries and is not an ultimate and complete form of knowledge, and that if we are to understand ourselves as free and self determining in our intentions and actions then evolutionary theory in the end must be philosophical also and not only scientific. The distinction between the personal and the organic is as profound for Macmurray as the distinction between the organic and the inorganic, where the difference is life itself.

2. A recent important discussion of the nature of second personal relationship and its inherent authority is given by Stephen Darwall in *The Second-person Standpoint: Morality, Respect and Accountability*. 
Chapter 2

**Tradition and Understanding**

**Synopsis:** Interpreting the meanings of what people are saying is at the heart of interpersonal communication; this phenomenon is central to pastoral care, as it is to our engagement with each other in this training group. It also touches some of the most important intellectual discussion of the twentieth century in the field of hermeneutics. Both in this group, and in pastoral encounters generally we are seeking what Gadamer called ‘an ideal interpretive community’ and Habermas ‘an ideal speech situation’, where we attempt to understand the Other and his tradition more fully, and in so doing we can come to understand ourselves and our own tradition more fully also. At the same time we seek a sense of the objectivity or reality of what we are saying and hearing, and the degree to which it helps or hinders our engagement with the world.

Pastoral care in the modern sense is in large measure the process of understanding or grasping the meaning to someone of what he or she is saying to us and responding in a way that the person finds helpful and indicates that we have understood them; that we have grasped that meaning. In this way the conversation unfolds within a sense of conjunction and possibly intimacy so that the person feels a sense of interest and trust, and risks saying things that are really on their mind. They sense our openness and positive motivation. The meaning we sense in what the other person is saying, or possibly doing, may be at a number of levels, from a fairly superficial grasp of their intention in the moment in what they have just said, to a profound understanding of their life purpose.

As pastoral carers we have a fundamental interest in such things as understanding, meaning, intention, motive, purpose and how these aspects of the human experience effect actions and communication. This takes pastoral care into some very important issues, such as the relationship of a person to his or her tradition, and the meaning of what they disclose as compared to what is heard by someone else who does not share in the same tradition. We once used to ask, how can an Anglican understand what a Catholic really means when he or she discloses some aspect of their faith? That seemed challenge enough. But we are now beginning to ask the question, one that is in principle central to this multifaith training group, how can a Buddhist, for instance, grasp the significance of what a Moslem or a Protestant means when they disclose their thoughts and feelings around some significant event
or idea or text? We are living at a time when there is an intermingling of tradition at all cultural levels, particularly in a country like Australia, and such questions are inescapable.

At the same time, tradition of every sort is under challenge if not threat from the emergence and now virtual hegemony of secularization, at least in countries like Australia. Secularization is a complex phenomenon, a major influence being the virtually absolute reference point of the impersonal scientific observer and experimenter and the accumulated objective knowledge of science and the technology it creates. This is considered an ultimate form of reason and rationality. This has become in our European tradition and its offshoots, and increasingly for all other traditions, the platform from which judgments are made as to what really counts as knowledge and truth and hence meaning. This has now been built into a social tradition, secularization or secularity, which at best looks at all religious and cultural traditions equally and inclusively, and at worse attacks them and undermines them, sometimes for good reason.

In its best sense, secularization offers a form of consciousness on foundations that do not necessarily owe anything to religious tradition or authority of whatever variety; in fact for some it represents the emancipation from religious culture that controlled the west until the seventeenth century and still holds sway over much of the rest of the world. For some, including John Macmurray, this amounts to a revolution.

….. we must accept the fact that we are in a revolutionary process, which has broken the conscious connection with the historic past, and that we have to build afresh. Moreover, the break with tradition goes very deep – deep enough to involve the religious tradition of every culture in the world, including our own. And we should not forget that no tradition can be re-established once it has broken down. Our traditions must carry us: we cannot carry them. When they cease to control action automatically, they cease to be traditions. (Macmurray 1986, p.64)

Not everyone would share Macmurray’s sense of such a radical break; there is hope in our traditions’ capacities to transform and continue to engage, and not breakdown. But the challenge is not trivial. For those of us active within religious communities,
we are certainly effected by the secular nature of Australian society but we still work hard at our religious texts to try to understand them and their relevance to us today, and we do this within traditions that set rules, even if implicitly, for our interpretations. The traditio alongside scripture and the magisterium have been the guides from the earliest days of how we should interpret the faith within Christendom, and each great culture and tradition has similar processes at work. But perhaps it would be true to say that European religious tradition has been the hardest hit by securality, and we have seen the emergence of many new religions as such and in particular the phenomenon of spirituality as something over and against religion. Anything goes and this is becoming the tradition!

We should not confuse securality with secularism, although at times the boundary can be elusive. Securality has an arguable base in that it asserts the supremacy of reason and rationality in the deciding of what is true and to be believed, especially as it manifests in science and the scientific method. Secularism goes a stage further and states that rational scientific discourse as manifested in the positive sciences, is the only form of real knowledge and all other claims to knowledge and belief should be dismissed or ignored. Such claims to knowledge are subjective whims not objective truths. There was a significant cultural reaction to this emphasis on objectivity of course; it resulted in an exploration of the subjective in many disciplines, and as a result became a cornerstone of what is called modernity in our European traditions. In large measure this has now passed over into post-modernity characterized by a complete relativism which amounts to cultural forms of solipsism, so disavowed by earlier philosophers as it applied to the subject’s relation to its object. Meanwhile the positive sciences have little need to be interested in this philosophical reaction to their influence, and proceed regardless. They now occupy a place of real social and cultural authority, and as secularization can be seduced by secularism, so scientific enquiry can be seduced by scientism.

Some philosophical discourse followed the positive sciences in a very narrow understanding of truth and certainty, but not all by any means. One discipline in particular emerged that is important to our interests in this chapter, namely hermeneutics, the science (using the term in the broad sense characteristic of German philosophy in the nineteenth century) of the interpretation of texts. It began with
biblical and religious texts but eventually spread to any text. In fact one of its founding fathers, Friedrich Schleiermacher, defined it as ‘the art of rightly understanding the speech, chiefly in written form, of another’ (note 1). The notion of text has been gradually widened in its subsequent history, including the idea made popular in pastoral care some years ago that we are all living human documents to be seen and understood through a hermeneutical process.

Probably the most significant thinker in the tradition of hermeneutics has been Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer believed that we come to an understanding of the subject matter at issue through conversation, and this can be thought of as both the interaction between people and the engagement of a text or cultural object. A dialogue emerges that has its own dialectic which brings both parties into question in a mutual disclosure. For Gadamer a conversation is

… a process of two people understanding each other. Thus it is a characteristic of every true conversation that each opens himself to the other person, truly accepts his point of view as worthy of consideration and gets inside the other to such an extent that he understands not a particular individual, but what he says. The thing that has to be grasped is the objective rightness or otherwise of his opinion, so that they can agree with each other on a subject. (Gadamer 1979, p.347)

The thing to note here is that Gadamer is suggesting that another way to objectivity about the truth of an idea or belief is through open conversation. Knowledge arises out of interaction. We each bring prejudices and presuppositions to encounters, ways of seeing something through our tradition which is like an ‘horizon of understanding’. In conversation, as Gadamer means it, we come to understand a horizon that is not our own in relation to our own. Our own prejudices and understandings are put to the test. We seek to learn from the other and in so doing some one else’s horizon is critically encountered as we discover their standpoint. Their ideas then become intelligible, without our necessarily having to agree with them. We come to terms with the other person and appreciate their world. And as this is also happening with the other person, we experience a ‘fusion of horizons’; but an interesting fusion in that at the same time we experience our own tradition more fully.
The horizon of the present is being continually formed, in that we have continually to test all our prejudices. An important part of that testing is the encounter with the past and the understanding of the tradition from which we have come…. In a tradition this process of fusion is continually going on, for the old and new continually grow together to make something of living value, with either being explicitly distinguished from the other. (Gadamer 1979, p.273)

In our encounter with the other we can also cultivate a reflective process, in the sense of a distancing or even alienation from both the ‘text’ and the tradition. This becomes an indispensable part of the hermeneutic process and allows us to look at the text objectively, while at the same time to become aware of our own presuppositions. We always bring presuppositions to the ‘text’ we are trying to understand, and this is as much about the presuppositions of our tradition as about our own subjectivity; our attempt to understand is ‘more like an ingress or intrusion into the process of tradition in which the past and present are continuously mediated’ (note 2). In other words, the tradition is a process in constant formation and transformation through the hermeneutic process; there is never a final understanding except as an ideal or end to which we are headed.

Gadamer published his main text on hermeneutics, *Truth and Method*, in 1960. In 1967 Jurgen Habermas published a criticism that led to a famous debate between the two thinkers. Habermas is considered by some the most significant European intellectual in the second half of the twentieth century. His thought covers many fields, but he is identified most with the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School. Habermas refused to embrace post-modernity. He believed the appropriate next stage from the inescapable problems raised by modernity’s focus on subjectivity was to focus on inter-subjectivity, the same reaction in principle as Gadamer, and seen also in figures like Martin Buber and John Macmurray, not to mention Heinz Kohut and the so-called inter-subjectivists within psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Instead of the isolated subject confronting the objective world, Habermas proposed the model of human beings in dialogue with each other as the foundation for emancipatory social thought. He counters the objectivity of scientific or instrumental rationality or reason with the idea of communicative reason, an idea and process not dissimilar to
Gadamer’s idea of conversation. Whereas Gadamer talked of an ‘ideal interpretive community’, Habermas proposed the ‘ideal speech situation’.

Although Habermas and Gadamer were clearly thinking along similar lines, Habermas was critical of Gadamer’s attitude to tradition, and hence authority and what Gadamer called prejudice. Despite tradition for Gadamer being something that is continuously in formation through the reflective distancing of the interpreter, the conversation is going on within the tradition, which gives tradition an overall or transcendental role in the process of understanding and meaning, as can be seen in this famous quote from *Truth and Method*.

That which has been sanctioned by tradition and custom has an authority that is nameless, and our finite historical being is marked by the fact that always the authority of what has been transmitted – and not only what is clearly grounded – has power over our attitudes and behaviour…. The validity of morals, for example, is based on tradition. They are freely taken over, but by no means created by a free insight or justified by themselves. That is precisely what we call tradition: the ground of their validity…. tradition has a justification that is outside the arguments of reason and in large measure determines our institutions and attitudes. (Gadamer 1979, p.249)

This is what Habermas objected to in Gadamer’s understanding. It is not enough for a reflective space to be present within the hermeneutical conversation within the tradition. For Habermas the tradition, rather than being the great nurturer of the horizons of our understandings, can be the distorer and oppressor from which we need emancipation. Habermas is suspicious of tradition and the authority it can uphold; it can distort communication and hold us back from finding our freedom and wholeness. Tradition should be itself subject to reflection, critical reflection from a place outside the tradition; while it would be true to say that for Gadamer reflection is always in the end subject to tradition. There is a joke in Anglican/Catholic circles that Catholics in the Mass like to say the Creed after the Sermon so the Creed can correct the Sermon, whilst Anglicans like it the other way round so the Sermon can correct the Creed! In this sense Catholics are Gadamerians and Anglicans Habermasians. Gadamer’s attitude to tradition was non-reflexive and therefore binding rather than liberating in the opinion of Habermas.
What Habermas wants is a critical distancing from tradition that allows questioning of dogmatic forces; as well as the ongoing separation of knowledge and authority. This is a great challenge for people steeped in Church tradition, and perhaps religious tradition generally. Dogma and authority in such tradition have been fundamentally important, to be honored not escaped from. What Habermas is concerned about though is that people will accommodate to authority even to the extent of saying black is white, and dogma becomes not a secure containment but a set of beliefs justified by external organizational authority serving the interests of those in power. All society can be vulnerable to this phenomenon. It was all very well for Gadamer to uphold the historical base of our understanding within our tradition; but at the same time we need to apply a critique to our historical understanding to rid it of what is oppressive and not true within it. To do this we need some sort of objective ground for self-reflection and criticism that is universal in its scope. The secular pursuit of knowledge and belief that was justified not by authority but by a rational method in part gives us such an objective ground. But it is not enough to be the basis of our life together. For Habermas this objective ground must lie also in such things as social justice, communicative action and the appropriate attitude toward nature; and I want to add, processes like pastoral care in the community as well! So Habermas opposes tradition with critique and understanding with reason. Whereas Gadamer would say that reasonable understanding emerges in the course of dialogue derived in the spirit of the tradition, Habermas proposes reason as communicative action guided by a methodology of communicative ethics in which the tradition is subject to reflection. In this, I think he is close to the philosophy of John Macmurray.

A third important hermeneuticist, Paul Ricoeur, proposed something of a rapprochement between Gadamer and Habermas in which he maintains the mutual importance of both the tradition and its critique. The in depth hermeneutic which is the unfolding of the tradition needs a critical hermeneutic to make clear its entrapping untruths, while the critical hermeneutic itself needs the depth hermeneutic to ensure it remains connected with its own raison d’etre and not go off on a life of its own where it can become in turn oppressive. What is true and of value in any tradition or cultural heritage needs creative renewal as much as the tradition needs
the weeding out of what is unhelpful and oppressive within it. This will be so for all our religious traditions. Hence Ricoeur’s approach has been called a Creative Hermeneutic of Suspicion. I hope we can be on the lookout in the course for such ‘wheat and tares’ in different traditions represented in the group, particularly as they might influence pastoral care.

Our discussion of hermeneutics has bearing on both our training in multifaith groups and in our work in pastoral care generally in a number of ways. We each come from well established religious or spiritual traditions; even if we ourselves may not feel we could adequately represent that tradition, it is nonetheless ‘an horizon of understanding’ which guides our lives. By the same token we each live in the secular society of Australia, which as I have already suggested is itself now a tradition with certain premises and presuppositions including those that might be antithetical to our religious premises and presuppositions (note3). At the same time, we each have our own inner life with its own idiosyncrasies formed not only by the tradition in which we were raised but by our own life-stories, particularly the primary relationships that have influenced us most. Ideally, we want to meet in the spirit of pastoral care, which as stated at the beginning of the chapter, is about meeting each other as openly as possible and where our interest is primarily in the other person not ourselves. We want to understand and appreciate each other as different persons; and we want to understand the meanings of what we say to each other, not only the meaning that I think I mean when I say something to you, but also, as Gadamer puts it, its ‘objective rightness’. In other words we want our training group to approach what Gadamer called an ‘ideal interpretive community’ and Habermas an ‘ideal speech situation’. This is a challenging thing to be doing; it is in effect as Gadamer called it ‘a fusion of horizons’. This is not a syncretism; we actually are seeking to understand each other and each other’s worlds, and if we are successful in this and Gadamer is right we will also come to understand our own ‘horizon of understanding’ and our own selves better as well. Such interaction is also the stuff of pastoral care, especially the modern practice of pastoral care we are considering in this thesis.

The risk is that in the process we might come to be critical of some aspect of our own tradition and our own beliefs, not because someone has argued us into agreement but
because in the to and fro that is the hermeneutical process a sense of what is objectively the case emerges and we know it to be the truth of the matter. If this happens we don’t have to abandon our tradition or anything like that, but rather let the disclosure be part of the transformation process that is part and parcel of a tradition’s unfolding anyway. In the mix will be secularity as well and this is very important. In one sense Macmurray’s sense of a revolution has to be right. All traditions now have to rub up against a society that tolerates all and adopts none because it has its own sense of certainty about how to decide what is to be believed and what is not; and this is not all bad by any means. The justified principle behind secularity, namely objectivity, is perhaps the very principle we need as part of the platform outside all traditions whereby we can apply a Habermasian critique. Where our secular society is wrong however is that it thinks objectivity and rationality are only capacities of our thinking function and apply only to rational thought particularly science. I will be arguing with Macmurray that rationality or objectivity applies as much to both our feelings and our actions, and this makes all the difference.

So we can be Gadamerian in our discussion together and our seeking to understand each other. What we do in the group in this regard will be training in itself for our work with patients and families in pastoral care. But we can be Habermasian as well. We can discover a place to apply a critique to our traditions and the tradition of secularity, and when I suggested pastoral care fitted in well with Habermas’ methodology of communicative ethics and action I was serious. As we will be examining in greater detail later, pastoral care intends the welfare and well being of the other; but more than this, our motive is positive, with no strings attached. We are doing what mothers have always done best; caring regardless. Such action needs no further justification. It is the basis by which we can bring our beliefs and practices into a common critique. This commitment to positive communicative action is what unites us in our different traditions.

To illustrate this critique bluntly: any belief that encourages me to act against another person for my own self interest is a belief under critique, however much self interest now runs society; any belief that keeps me withdrawn and not engaged with life positively is under critique, however much that belief is part of my tradition; any
belief that isolates me from life and plays into my egocentricity is under critique, however much that belief comforts me; any belief that leads me to defensively assert my own rightness regardless, as opposed to someone else’s wrongness is under critique, however much I may feel justified in doing so; and so on. The subtleties and complexities of interpersonal communication implied by these critiques are the very substance of what we will be calling second personal conversation, where the wills and intentions of free and equal persons interact and influence one another. The affirmation of love and genuine heterocentricity as the basis for such critique, expressed religiously for some in the belief that God is love, is the ultimate ethical basis of communicative action and at the same time the critique of any tradition. This is an objective rationality; if it is not yet clear how this can be so, I hope that it will be by the end of the course. It means that the work of pastoral care is entirely rational and reasonable.

So reason, rationality and objectivity are central to this whole process we are examining. I have tried to show however briefly that both Gadamer and Habermas have been concerned to show another understanding of objectivity and hence rationality in hermeneutics and critical theory to counteract the secular understanding of rationality as the prerogative of disinterested thought that finds its final form in science and scientific method. John Macmurray sought the same widening of our understanding of rationality in his concept of self-transcendence. Self-transcendence is the capacity to set the centre of interest outside oneself, and so to act in terms of the nature of the object. He argues that this capacity is our rationality. Science and scientific method is a fully formed self-transcendence at the level of thought. But such a phenomenon applies equally to the feeling aspects of our reflective capacities. The truly great artist self-transcends as completely as the scientist as he feels the integral beauty in a scene from nature or the implicit feelings in a person and gives expression to this in a painting, a sculpture or a piece of music.

So also a person can self-transcend in his or her relationship with another person, by ‘putting him or herself in the other’s shoes’ and acting toward the other positively out of that experience. Self-transcendence in relations between persons is empathy, which is both the capacity to truly ‘see’ the other person and his or her meanings, and the wisdom to know how to respond in a way that is in that person’s interest. It will
be Macmurray’s ideas that will take us further into the question of objectivity as it applies to interpersonal relationships and pastoral care, rather than Gadamer or Habermas; but I hope you can see that in looking at pastoral care we are looking at some of the most important and fundamental issues that confront us in the world today, issues that have engaged some of the world’s most important thinkers.

In so far as we want our training group and our pastoral encounters to approach an ‘ideal interpretive community’ or an ‘ideal speech situation’, it is worth noting some of the characteristics that need to be present in the encounter and the group that will help foster the right conditions for real dialogue and conversation in the hermeneutical sense. These characteristics apply equally to pastoral care encounters. Following Burbules such characteristics include:

**Concern**: In being with our partners in conversation, to engage them with us, there is more going on than talk about the overt topic. There is a social bond that entails interest in, and a commitment to the other.

**Trust**: We have to take what others are saying on faith – and there can be some risk in this.

**Respect**: While there may be large differences between partners in conversation, the process can go on if there is mutual regard. This involves the idea that everyone is equal in some basic way and entails a commitment to being fair minded, opposing degradation and rejecting exploitation.

**Appreciation**: Linked to respect, this entails valuing unique qualities that others bring.

**Affection**: Conversation involves a feeling with, and for, our partners.

**Hope**: While not being purely emotional, hope is central. We engage in conversation in the belief that it holds a possibility. Often it is not clear what we will gain or learn, but faith in the value of education carries us forward.

(Burbules 1993, p.19)

It is also important that we are prepared to suspend our assumptions. We do not ignore our assumptions, but we hold them ready for exploration. We are looking to understand each other and perhaps arrive at a common meaning, and this requires our readiness to hold many points of view in suspension. It is also important to accept that we are equal; we are colleagues in this enterprise of training together for pastoral
care, part of which is a mutual quest for understanding and insight. The fact that the group is facilitated does not alter this. In Macmurray’s terms we are to be a personal community in which each of us finds freedom, equality and friendship, religious values in the truest sense of the word ‘religion’. Such an inter-subjective space will offer us many insights into who we are, how we have been formed, and what it is we need to grow into and learn in order to become effective pastoral carers in the community; our secular, multifaith community. Our pastoral care in such a community is the creating of just such inter-subjective spaces between us and those for whom we care in intentional friendship.

Notes:


2: Taken from Bilimoria’s paper above, p. 5.

3: A recent powerful example of this, now on the best seller list, is Sam Harris’ *Letter to a Christian Nation* (2006), which I will refer to later.
Part B

The Basic Paradigm

The basic paradigm and its applications, as suggested by and developed from the philosophy of John Macmurray, are introduced. It can order our thinking about ourselves and the universe and the cultures we live in from the point of view of the personal, rather than the organic and developmental paradigms that still largely inform our sense of self, and the physical or material paradigms characteristic of the mathematically organized sciences. The self as agent formed in ‘I-You’ relationships, in which the person constantly withdraws and returns within personal community, is the concept of the human person that informs this philosophy of pastoral care.
Chapter 3

The Form of the Personal

Synopsis: Thinking of the self primarily as an Agent constituted as an ‘I-You’, and not only as an isolated ‘I’, allows a third logical form to emerge in the philosophy of John Macmurray, alongside the mathematical form of identity and the organic form of dialectic that structure our inorganic and organic apprehensions of the world. The form of the personal structures all aspects of personal life, from seeing the universe as material, organic, and personal, to culture as constituted by the sciences, the arts and religion, to persons in community as an ‘I’ a ‘You’ and a ‘He, She, It’, to understanding the self as a person who acts, feels and thinks, to the individual as an ‘I, Me and Myself’. We can think of the self from three different but integral perspectives, the first, the second and the third personal perspectives.

The Form of the Personal was the name given by John Macmurray to his Gifford lectures on natural religion in the 1950’s in Glasgow. In those lectures he had two primary objectives; to argue that we should no longer think of the self as primarily a thinker but as an agent, and that we should no longer think of the self as an isolated ‘I’ but as necessarily an ‘I-You’. Both these points had or were about to be taken up by other philosophers and psychoanalysts.

As many before him, Macmurray saw the rise of modern science as a major paradigmatic shift in European culture. In it our capacity for thought came to the for, thought that was stripped of the subjective in order to be objective; and this objectivity was assured when thought was reduced to mathematical logic, the logic of identity. When knowledge could be couched in the tautological certainty of mathematics we could be sure we were dealing with physical reality and this was verified in our successful experimental actions. In such a world Galileo and Newton framed their famous theories. The self that corresponded to such a world was a thinker; and thinkers do not deal directly with physical realities but with images of those realities that the Thinker has in his mind such as mathematical symbols. This raised the philosophical dilemma of how we could be sure of the world’s actual physical existence. Descartes through his method of radical doubt argued that we could be certain of our own existence as thinkers because we must exist to be able to doubt our own existence (note 1). But his attempts to get from there to the reality of an external physical world remained quite unconvincing. This set up the famous...
Cartesian duality between our selves as immaterial thinkers certain of our existence and the physical or material world that science increasingly knew about objectively but whose actual existence had not been adequately argued for philosophically.

Then scientists came to consider not only the inorganic physical world but the organic world of living organisms, and this corresponded philosophically with the rise of the Romantic movement and its idealist organic philosophies. The world was now conceived teleologically as something that was evolving, as were the various forms of life within it. Philosophically this called for a new logic, and a new conception of the self that could adequately correspond to such a world. So instead of the philosophy of identity in which identical units (such as atoms) were mathematically differentiated through the different relationships they had with each other, the form of the dialectic emerged in which a positive element implied or threw up its negative and in the interaction between the two a third element emerged which in turn was positive to its negative and so on until the implied end or absolute was reached. The philosopher Georg Hegel’s formulation of this dialectic became the most quoted form, popularized by saying that a thesis implies its antithesis and together they form a synthesis. In this way everything could be accounted for in the unfolding of the Spirit into the World, to be synthesized then in human consciousness, presumably in Hegel’s absolute philosophy (Hegel 1977)

The important general point culturally however is that the world and the self were now seen as entities which develop. They have changing form; we and the world are organic. This way of seeing the Self remains the assumption in most of the various developmental theories of the Self to this day, from Erikson to Fowler and beyond (note1). Science responded to the challenge to understand and explain living organisms by the theory of evolution and mathematically through biochemistry. This left philosophy trying to grasp a concept of the self in which the self was both subject and object to itself, and developed over time. What had to be taken into account was not only that the self thought but that the self felt, and that it was through feeling that development and form were apprehended within the self. That such a process went on regardless, as implied by the organic philosophies, as all part of a great unfolding seemed to deny the reality of the individual person and his or her capacity to be self-determining. This subordination of the individual person to a great dialectical
development was offensive first to the philosopher Kierkegaard and the Existentialists that followed him, but also to thinkers like James and Buber and significantly for us, Macmurray. The dialectical philosophies could not account for the individual in his or her own decisions to act and presumably potentially develop through that action.

Macmurray’s solution was to think of the human person as primarily an agent and secondarily as a thinker and feeler. An agent is someone who acts intentionally, who determines the present from an indeterminate future through his or her actions. Once we allow that human actions effect and change both the world and the acting person, we have gone through another paradigmatic shift that is more than inorganic and organic. Macmurray called this third phase the personal. There are important implications in all this; the self as agent includes the self as thinker and feeler, but not the other way round, and the duality that existed between the self as subject and the self and world as object, represented in concepts like mind and matter, nature and super-nature, is overcome. Our existence and the existence of the world is given to us in our experience when we act; there is a mutual resistance and support that we feel through our sense of touch and anticipate through our sense of sight, and the knowledge we have in this interaction is our primary knowledge. We cease philosophically to need to prove our or the world’s existence; existence is a predicate anyway and cannot be proved; it is given in action. But even more importantly by seeing the Self as agent we can re-find the centrality of actions in life and from this the place of religion in human affairs within a personal universe. As self determining persons we know our wholeness most when we are acting intentionally and spontaneously under the guidance of our thoughts and feelings.

The effect of transferring the centre of reference to action, and at the same time its sufficient justification, is that man recovers his body and becomes personal. When he is conceived as agent, all his activities, including his reflective activities, fall naturally into place in a functional unity. Even his emotions, instead of disturbances to the placidity of thought, take their place as necessary motives which sustain his activities, including his activity of thinking……it ends the solitariness of the ‘thinking self’, sets man firmly in the world which he knows, and so restores him to his proper existence as a community of persons in relation….. the personal relation of persons is
constitutive of personal existence;…there can be no man until there are at least two men in communication. (Macmurray 1999, p.12)

What Macmurray needed now was a logical form for the personal that corresponded to a personal universe, as the dialectical form corresponded to an organic universe, and the mathematical form of identity to a physical or inorganic world. It was there immediately in the fact that when we act we do not cease to reflect, to think and feel. In other words our actions contain our thinking and feeling; but at the same time our thinking and feeling determine our actions. So our actions contain and are constituted by our thinking and feeling. This is the form of the personal.

When we stop acting to reflect on what we are doing, we are no longer engaging the world with our bodies; we have withdrawn into our thoughts and feelings to consider our actions. When we have made our choices we return to our action. However on the other hand when we are acting we do not stop reflecting, in other words, thinking and feeling. This is reflection-in-action. The importance of understanding that we reflect as we act and that this is a capacity that can develop is central to pastoral care and pastoral care training.

In action I am in direct contact with the things that I perceive. I operate upon them. This is construed as positive. But when I stop acting to reflect I withdraw into myself and operate on ideas, images, and concepts. This is construed as negative in relation to action. This allows the form of the personal to be expressed abstractly as a positive that contains and is constituted by its negative.

However reflection has two components; it is doubly problematical. We can reflect predominantly through our feelings or through our thoughts; normally both in determining further our action. Of these two functions feelings are primary in that they determine the ends of our actions while our ‘thinkings’ the means of getting there. In fact, feeling stands to thought as action stands to feeling; both following the form of the personal.

We can represent it this way:
Figure 1 **The Basic Paradigm**

Our actions contain and are constituted by our feelings which in turn contain and are constituted by our thoughts. We can understand this if we realize that with our thoughts we apprehend facts and with our feelings we apprehend value. In the normal experience of life we apprehend a fact to which we apply a sense of value. Value is constituted by fact; feeling by thought. But we can experience value directly, and when we do, it nonetheless includes fact. We always value something. Macmurray wrote:

> It is clear that any assertion of value presupposes what is matter of fact; and the experience of value includes and supervenes upon the apprehension of fact. It is always fact that is valued…. The experience of value is not a different but rather a fuller experience than the experience of the fact which is valued, though it is true that we may concentrate our attention on the valuational aspect of the total experience; and this may on occasion lead us into mistake about the character of the fact itself. (Macmurray 1986, p.32)

The experience of valuing something is a fuller experience than the mere apprehension of it. For it includes and presupposes this apprehension and goes beyond it. We can see now the inner side of this – that our feelings and emotions normally accompany and include our sense-perceptions. When we contrast thought and feeling or reason and emotion we tend to separate them as incompatible opposites, and we go on unconsciously to talk of them as we if we could not think and feel at the same time. (At the level of reflection of science and art there is some truth in this). But it does not follow that we cannot perceive something, or know something and have a feeling about it, at the same time. This is indeed normal, and when we seek to apprehend merely matter of fact, the difficulty is to exclude all emotional judgements.
We have to suppress our feelings and emotions then; and it is doubtful if we can ever do this quite completely. The more we are interested in the object of our inspection as an individual, the more difficult the suppression becomes. It is true that on occasion we have feelings which we cannot refer to an object. We feel depressed or dispirited and cannot tell why. But this is unusual and unsatisfactory, and our natural tendency is to ask ourselves what we are depressed about. We often invent an object if we cannot discover it. All this goes to support the view that an emotional reflection is about an object which is before the mind in its factual character, either in immediate perception or in memory, imagination or thought. The activity of contemplation includes and presupposes this factual apprehension, as the locus of reference for an activity of feeling. Without such a conjunction no valuation would be possible, since there would be nothing to value. (Macmurray 1986, p.36)

There is an interesting corollary to this as it touches the world of counseling, therapy, and pastoral care. If we change our thoughts about something, our feelings are likely to change as well, our valuation of ‘the facts’ contained in our thoughts. This is the basis of cognitive therapy. By the same token, if our feelings change for whatever reason, namely our warm relationship with the therapist or pastoral carer, we may change our valuation of something, which may lead us to think differently about ‘the facts’ of that something. In dealing with our memories, we can even change ‘the facts’ or at least re-frame them by thinking differently about them. This is the basis of psychodynamic therapy (note 3). Very often the mere fact of someone feeling heard by another person completely alters the feeling base within them around an issue or problem they are facing. They can think about that issue quite differently now they are feeling differently. On the other hand, if someone in a position to really know about ‘the facts’, corrects a person’s thinking, the person’s feelings will alter as well. Our feelings contain and are constituted by our thoughts, which in turn are both contained by our actions and constitute those actions. The decision of what we want to accomplish in our action is feeling based. How we will achieve it is thinking based. The three capacities relate according to the form of the personal.
Macmurray believed this form of the personal applied over every aspect of personal life; a positive pole containing but constituted by two negative poles. It is important to appreciate that we are talking formally in saying this. It finds its fullest expression in the human situation of two persons talking about the other, of which ultimately they are also part. This is the basis of human community. He wrote:

The propriety of this analysis is borne out by an examination of the structure of language, so far as it is relevant to the issue. The form of the personal is a relation of persons; and a person is an agent. To be an agent is to be in active relation with the Other, which includes himself. Thus the unit of the personal is two persons in community in relation to a common Other which includes them. The basic condition of their community is communication, and language is their normal means of communication. Language must therefore reflect this structure of relationships. It does so by distinguishing and symbolizing three persons, which the grammarians call the first, second and third persons. The first person is the speaker, symbolized as ‘I’, the second is the person addressed, the ‘You’, and the third is the person or thing spoken about… symbolized as ‘he, she or it’.

The full situation which is thus reflected is two persons in communication about a common Other. The ‘I’ and ‘You’ are talking to one another; and the mutuality of the relation is expressed by the interchange of the symbols. When I speak to you, I am the first person, you are the second; when you reply you become the first person and I the second. The symbols are interchangeable. The third person is the same for both of us, the common other around which we are talking. (Macmurray 1999, p.178)

This can be represented in any one instance of the conversation as:

```
First Person
  feeling
    I
      thinking
        action
  feeling
    You
      thinking
        He, She, It

Second Person
```

Figure 2 The Personal Perspectives.
or simply

**Figure 3** The Unit of the Personal

This is the *unit of the personal* – two persons in community in relation to a common Other which includes them. The ‘I’ is in personal relationship with a ‘You’, a personal Other, while conversing about an Other which they are not in that moment in personal relation; in fact they look at the Other impersonally.

Each of the three persons represents a perspective, logically interconnected by the form of the personal. The ‘You’ or second person perspective (SPP) contains and is constituted by the first person perspective (FPP) and the third person perspective (TPP). If we were to take away the ‘You’ or second person perspective (SPP) we would be left with an ‘I’ and a ‘He, She, It’; this is the case of the subject over and against an object, and the subjective is less than the personal. It is in fact the basis of the individual subject reflecting impersonally on an object, and in its fully developed form is what happens in the work of an artist. It is a perspective that is subjective but impersonal. If we were to further take away the first person perspective (FPP) or ‘I’ we are left with the third person perspective only, the ‘He, She, It’, an entirely objective stance in which both the personal and the subjective have been removed; this is the third person perspective (TPP). This is a perspective that is objective and impersonal, and represents in its fully developed form the stance of the scientist.

Macmurray’s contention was that the fully personal form that includes all three personal perspectives was the basis of the reflection we should call religious. So religion is directly associated with the second personal perspective, both in community and the Self. In my actions toward and with a ‘You’ or other person, in which there is a reciprocal movement for both of us between ‘I’ and ‘You’ as we communicate about each other and the other generally, we take the stance not of the
universally objective scientist or the subjectively objective artist but the inter-subjectively aware person, which in his or her fully developed form I have called ‘a religionist’; perhaps we could say, a pastoral care practitioner in some circumstances!

Macmurray’s unit of the personal also suggests a way of understanding the structure of the self, or the unity of the person. William James was the first to suggest that the self is duplex, the subjective ‘I’ in relation to the objective ‘me’.

Whatever I may be thinking of, I am always at the same time more or less aware of myself, of my personal existence. At the same time, it is I who am aware; so that the total self of me, being as it were duplex, partly known and partly knower, partly object and partly subject, must have two aspects discriminated in it, of which for shortness we may call one the Me and the other the I. I call these ‘discriminated aspects’, and not separate things, because the identity of I with me, even in the very act of their discrimination, is perhaps the most ineradicable dictum of common sense and must not be undermined by our terminology here at the outset, whatever we may come to think of its validity at our inquiry’s end. (James 1892, p.176) (note 4)

In commenting on this passage, Russell Meares in his book *Intimacy and Alienation* signaled out the word ‘myself’ as suggesting a subtle difference of meaning. Might it not be pointing to a third term, as for example in the statement ‘I was not myself when you saw me last’. In this case, says Meares, ‘myself’ is not equivalent to ‘I’ and ‘me’.

This third term is necessary to the whole argument of this book. It emerges during development, is lost in trauma, and is recovered during successful treatment – the ‘analytic third’ of Thomas Ogden.

I will argue that this third aspect of one’s person develops extra-personally, in the outer world, as a form of activity, performed in the context of a particular relationship which is an early, or embryonic, form of intimacy. Following these ideas, it is necessary to modify the Jamesian conception. Personal existence becomes tripartite rather than double. (Meares 2000, p.10)
In a note to the word ‘tripartite’ Meares refers to Ellenberger’s *The Discovery of the Unconscious*. The distinction between I, Me and Self had been made by social psychologist George Herbert Mead who had once lived in James’ house. It paralleled Janet’s ‘individu, personage, and moi’, and in Ellenberger’s opinion both had come to this formulation by reading Josiah Royce and James Mark Baldwin. Baldwin was a close friend of Janet, and of course Royce was James’ great friend and colleague at Harvard.

Meare’s tripartite self is I think the same insight as Macmurray’s unit of the personal as applied to the structure of the self, the unity of the person. I am in relation to myself as an object in the third person perspective sense. This is ‘Me’, my empirical self, made up of all the objective knowledge that I and anyone else might or could know about me. But I am also in relation to myself as a person, as an object in the world, but a personal object, a ‘You’. In other words the second person perspective plays as vital a role in my sense of self as does my own subjectivity and objectivity; who I am as a person to other persons, from which comes also my sense of who I am to myself as a person. In fact this second person perspective mediates my subjectivity and objectivity, as it also mediates between my self and the ‘selves’ of others with whom I relate. And given that this second person perspective is made up of communicative actions with other persons, and time is the form of action, this second person perspective is something that has developed over time from my birth and first interactions with my mother. It is the history of my life as a ‘You’. Hence it is the fullest expression of ‘Myself’.

It is worth noting at this point also, that in everyday life the three personal perspectives operate in the unity of the self. Our capacity as human beings to exercise judgements constellate around each pole; intellectual judgement around the TPP, aesthetic judgement around the FPP and moral judgement around the SPP.

‘I’, ‘Me’ and ‘Myself’ make up my tripartite being, my self as seen from three different personal perspectives, which are not isolated and separate but which are related in a unity through the form of the personal. ‘Myself’ contains and is constituted by my ‘I’ and my ‘Me’. The three perspectives, as James noted above in
relation to his duplex self, are not pointing to separate things, but to an ineradicable identity which can be apprehended from three different perspectives unified by the form of the personal around the primacy of the second person perspective. It is ‘Myself’, the You perspective that acts and engages other persons within community, my self that contains and is constituted by my capacity to withdraw and reflect as subject on firstly myself as both empirical object and personal object, secondly the other person as both a ‘You’ and a ‘He, She, It’, and thirdly the relationship that exists between us. In this I can think of myself as a You, an I, and a Me, aspects of my one Self that are formed in my relationship with the world of which I am part. The Self is not duplex but triplex, or tri-partite as Meares preferred.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4 – The Self as structured by the Three Perspectives**

The implication of all this is that as there are three personal perspectives that order my relationships in my interaction with the world, so there are three personal perspectives to be considered in thinking about myself and my inner structure and its relationships. In both, it is again the second person perspective that is primary when thinking of my self as a person. We will pick this up further when we consider the work of the psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut whose ideas can be applied directly to our work as pastoral care practitioners within this framework.

In fairness to Macmurray, he did not use the terms first person perspective (FPP), second person perspective (SPP) and third person perspective (TPP); although his whole philosophy leads up to and contains such a possibility. But the terms are being used by some neuroscientists in the attempt to understand the self and self consciousness, on the basis that the self looked at from each perspective will give a different but equally valid understanding. For instance, Georg Northoff and Alexander Heinzel in a paper entitled *The self in philosophy, neuroscience and*
psychiatry: an epistemic approach (note 5) look at each of the personal perspectives as illustrating a particular way of thinking about the self. Philosophy, and they are meaning in this case idealism, phenomenology and existentialism as philosophies founded on Descartes, gives a first person perspective; it presupposes a thinking subject. In contrast, ‘the neurosciences (like science in general) presupposes an objective world, which exists independently of human beings (ie. independent of subjects and of consciousness)’ (Kircher and David 2003, p.41). They typify looking at the self from the third person perspective. Finally, psychiatry and psychotherapy work from an intermediate perspective, namely the second person perspective, which enables the person to see themselves as an object, but unlike the third person perspective object, a personal object in relation to other persons. ‘In this perspective patients may be able to consider their own mental state from new points of view proposed by the therapist’. (Kircher and David 2003, p.41)

We will have reason to return to Northoff and Heinzel’s paper when we come to look at the interrelationship of the three perspectives within the self in greater detail, but for the moment I want to say that I believe this sort of discussion linking neuroscience, philosophy and psychotherapy is very interesting and helpful. One of the most prolific writers in this area is Antonio Damasio, whose reading of the European philosophical tradition is providing a completely new foundation for neuroscience as but one perspective by which the human self can be explored, needing to be necessarily linked with philosophical and spiritual insight and knowledge gained from other perspectives. But Macmurray would say that they still do not have the starting point right. They are locked in the Cartesian tradition of understanding the ‘I’ as the existent thinker in his isolation. As such it is then the point from which to start and to return; while the existence of the external world remains as philosophically problematic as it has ever been since Descartes. This can be overcome by giving priority not to the first person perspective but to the second person perspective, which finds itself primarily not in feeling or thought but in action, interpersonal action which includes the various forms of communication and speech.

The terms, namely the three personal perspectives, are also used by some moral philosophers. For instance, Stephen Darwall in his recent book The Second Person
Standpoint: Morality Respect and Accountability, proposes the priority of the second person perspective in our consideration of moral authority and obligation, and notes that,

the I-you-me structure of reciprocal address runs throughout thought and speech from the second-person point of view…. (which is ) the perspective you and I take up when we make and acknowledge claims on one another’s conduct and will. (Darwall 2006, p.3)

Darwall is primarily interested in conversation made up of such speech forms as orders, requests, claims, reproaches, complaints, demands, promises, contracts, givings of consent, prayers, commands, and so on, which relate to the specific agents involved and presuppose that they share a common second-personal authority, competence and responsibility as free and rational agents. In such forms of communicative acts,

the second-person stance excludes the third-person perspective, that is, regarding, for practical purposes, the others (and oneself), not in relation to oneself, but as they are (or one is) “objectively” or “agent-neutrally”. (Darwall 2006, p.9)

The second person perspective will always contain the first person perspective, the ‘I-You’, but it may include or exclude the third person perspective, depending on the type of communication. The exclusion of the TPP might be called the true moment of inter-subjectivity, in which ‘I-You’ – ‘I-You’ communication takes place when a true intimacy of “I-I” can emerge, and in which distinctive claims on the will between two equal and moral creatures can be made.

But the first-person perspective does not necessarily imply the second. We can ‘occupy a first-person perspective, whether singular or plural, without explicitly addressing anyone’ (Darwall 2006, p.10). I am suggesting that this fact can be used to distinguish spirituality from religion. Spirituality is essentially first personal. It does not necessarily imply communication. But religion is second personal; it implies communicative acts between persons, which can both include and exclude the third personal or objective standpoint; ‘God’ is both the signifier of an object or
substance ‘somewhere’, and a personal name of someone who is interacted with from the second person perspective.

Macmurray applied his form and unit of the personal or tri-polar pattern over many areas of personal life in his writings. The following are examples of this, given to illustrate the principles involved (note 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>SPP</th>
<th>FPP</th>
<th>TPP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You personal</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>organic</td>
<td>He,She,It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>action/reason</td>
<td>reaction/stimulus</td>
<td>feeling</td>
<td>cause/effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acting</td>
<td>feeling</td>
<td>thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Object</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>action</td>
<td>ends</td>
<td>means</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relational</td>
<td>aesthetic</td>
<td>intellectual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apperception</td>
<td>communal</td>
<td>contemplative</td>
<td>pragmatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>communal</td>
<td>contemplative</td>
<td>pragmatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religion</td>
<td>ritual</td>
<td>doctrine/dogma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective rationality: religion</td>
<td>the arts</td>
<td>the sciences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>love</td>
<td>fear</td>
<td>hatred/anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>care</td>
<td>anxiety</td>
<td>resentment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>interact</td>
<td>understand</td>
<td>explain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moral</td>
<td>aesthetic</td>
<td>technological</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of society</td>
<td>communal</td>
<td>contemplative</td>
<td>pragmatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutual</td>
<td>submissive</td>
<td>aggressive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>virtue</td>
<td>value</td>
<td>fact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right/Wrong</td>
<td>as moral</td>
<td>as form</td>
<td>as efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fraternity</td>
<td>liberty</td>
<td>equality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>action</td>
<td>intention</td>
<td>attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community</td>
<td>society</td>
<td>state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>society</td>
<td>justice</td>
<td>law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the actual presentation of the form of the personal in the ‘Caring Together’ training group I introduced the idea by using the analogy of hand, heart and head and related this to our understanding of different personalities. This was to illustrate how the form and unit of the personal can be used in bringing insight into different types of people and how they function and relate, something that is directly helpful in pastoral care. I include an edited version of this in (note 7) below.

A central and fundamental application of the form and unit of the personal is the origin and development of our motives in life in relation to other persons. We turn to this in the next chapter.

Notes

1. For instance, see Decartes’ Discourse on the Method or the second meditation in Meditations on First Philosophy in Anscombe, E. and Geach, P.T. (eds) 1977 [1970] Descartes: Philosophical Writings, Nelson’s University Paperbacks: The Open University]

2. Many theories now exist about the development of the self, or at least some aspect of the self, beginning with the psycho-sexual theories of Freud and Jung’s idea of individuation. Piaget (1962) legitimated the approach further in his research on cognitive development, Erikson (1963) on psychosocial development, Kohlberg (1976) on moral development and Fowler (1981, 1987) on faith development. Further work by Kegan (1982)), Siegel (1999), Conn (1998), Weber (2000) and Cupitt (1986) to name a few have built upon these ideas. As I read it, all are based more or less in an organic model of development, and do not take into clear account the role of an individual’s actual actions in his or her self growth and development. As far as I know this has yet to happen, for which Macmurray’s ideas of ‘withdrawal and return’ and self-transcendence along with the moral and religious focus of the second person standpoint or perspective in the interaction of individual wills and actions within community, could be a starting point.

4. It is worth noting that James in this famous quote, while claiming to be explicating a duplex self is in fact suggesting a triplex self when he acknowledges along with the ‘I’ and the ‘Me’, the ‘Myself’, the sense of personal presence. This sense of personal presence forms in my analysis in the second person pole of the self and is constituted by our personal relationships with others over our life story.


6. This table has been abstracted and drawn up from Macmurray’s Gifford Lectures *The Form of the Personal*, published under the titles *The Self As Agent* and *Persons in Relation*.

7. The following use of the three personal perspectives model of the self was first formulated in collaboration with colleagues in a personnel consultancy group. It took on more form and content when I discovered the work of Macmurray, and in the form below was presented as part of the Pilot Multifaith training group.

   The terms ‘hand, heart and head’ are sometimes used as a colloquial and metaphorical way of referring to our prime functions as human beings; our capacities to think, to feel, and to act. This simple triad points to capacities we all share as human beings; it can help us understand ourselves and others as we relate to the world around us, especially to other people. We do not all equally share in these three capacities of feeling, thinking and acting, and this goes a long way to describe difference in personality. Understanding the relationships between the three capacities also gives us clues as to how we develop as human beings, and what happens to us as we interact with others; the sorts of things that can go wrong in our relationships, and what might need to happen to put things right. I am going to describe the sorts of people and the ways they prefer to function under these three headings of head, heart and hand.

   Head people prefer to think; they engage the world mainly with their thoughts. It is not that they do not have emotions; it can be though that they do not always feel their emotions. Their actions are informed mainly by their thoughts. The sort of person that falls within this category can vary from people who work with their hands, like builders and mechanics, to business people and managers, to university academics and intellectuals. Science and technology are the preferred endeavours. What they share is that they like to view the world objectively and to think about it and act upon it to direct it and put it to use. They are interested in facts; they are pragmatic about life and engage the world around them as something that can be used for their purposes. They love to explain things; explanation allows them to be able to take hold and use. They like to get things done. Their world is fully determined, governed by laws through which prediction can be made. They are more at home with material things, rather than nature or people. If they have a God, he tends to be wholly
transcendent, a law giver, someone who can be useful to life by answering prayer. What God wants is fairly straightforward; it is there in the Law and the Book. They like to belong to groups with clear boundaries, definite structure, and strong leadership. They love freedom so that they can exercise their power to get things done; they are more interested in means than ends. Something is good if it is efficient and effective. They tend to be assertive and sometimes aggressive in their engagement of life. They are often extraverted, and tend to externalize life. They can be suspicious of inwardness. Common sense is the great adjudicator of action.

Heart people on the other hand tend to engage the world predominantly with their feelings. Not only do they have emotions, they are constantly feeling them and living in them; their actions are determined principally by their feelings. It is not that they do not think, but they tend to think through their feelings. The sort of person that falls within this category varies from dog handlers, to flower arrangers, to gardeners, to musicians and artists. The high endeavours of heart people are the arts. They like to view the world individually with their own feelings. I am intentionally avoiding the word ‘subjectively’ in this regard, because, as we shall see, this can be a confusing term. They like to view the world objectively, but with their senses and feelings. They are contemplative rather than pragmatic. They prefer to understand something on its terms rather than explain it in theirs; they prefer to let be, than control. Their world is unfolding according to certain principles. They prefer to trust the process to get to where it should go, than to get things done. They are often introverted, and tend to internalize things. Something is good if it has true form, is beautiful and has congruence and integrity. They are more interested in value than fact; meaning than explanation; ends than means. Life is to be reflected on. They are more at home with living things than material objects and persons. Nature often has mystical or spiritual qualities for such people. If they have a God, he is more immanent than transcendent, integral and part of the unfolding process; to be contemplated and absorbed. They tend to think of the spiritual as the real. They are more likely to be submitting and accommodating than assertive. Life has an underlying order; consequently anarchy and chaos are but necessary parts of the greater unfolding. Life is teleological.

Hand people live in their actions. It is not that they do not think and reflect; it is just that they feel most themselves when they are acting, and the more spontaneously and openly the better. Acting in this sense is more than behaving; it is intentional, and for hand people, positively motivated. They are doers, but not in the same way Head people like to get things done; they like interacting with other people rather than the organic or inorganic worlds. They are interested in people as persons, and want to know them personally. They are ready to shake ‘hands’ as it were; and this has symbolic power in the sense of meeting, greeting and celebrating. Hand people, in the sense I am meaning, enjoy to engage others positively. For them there are right ways to act. They are interested in community; people not only living together equitably but personally, and they will engage others to help when relationships break down or community is threatened. They are interested in both fact and value, but not for their own sake; rather for the sake of enabling them to act more effectively or appropriately in a given situation. Their prime mode of reflection is not pragmatic or contemplative, but communal.
They are often interested in social justice and equity. The other person is always in their reckoning in one way or another, and normally in a positive way. Hand people prefer to see the other person clearly and form their actions with the other person primarily in mind; but not in a negative or accommodating way. Typical hand people can be found amongst doctors and health care workers, community workers, aid workers, pastoral care workers. In some cases the attitude of a Hand person is forced upon someone professionally; but this will eventually take its toll, or alternatively he or she will fall into wearing a professional mask that hides their real disposition. If they have a God, he is likely to also be One who acts, and the relationship a Hand person wants with such a God is one of acting together and sharing a common intention. Hand people who feel no sense of relationship with a God are often interested in human rights, and will be prepared to fight for them, not only for themselves but for people generally.
Chapter 4

The Motives in Our Lives

Synopsis: The form of the personal can be applied to the formation and structure of our feelings and motives, differentiating between those feelings that are formally negative and those that are formally positive; the one is the basis of necessarily egocentric behaviour and actions, the other the basis of heterocentric behaviour and actions. The movement between the two, paralleling the movement between action and reflection, is identified as the rhythm or pattern of withdrawal and return, a fundamental aspect of our engagement with the world at all three levels, especially the personal. Knowledge and understanding at the level of the personal is the goal of pastoral care.

In Persons in Relation Macmurray proposed how the motives in our lives develop from childhood, and as part of this he introduced the fundamental process in life that he called withdrawal and return. It follows the logic of the form of the personal and hence the triplex nature of the model of the self that emerges from this. Some consider this aspect of his work idiosyncratic, and it is not clear at all how he arrived at it other than from his own observation and thinking. Despite its seeming simplicity it is a model and way of thinking about the self and the human condition that is remarkably inclusive and subtly complex, and can be immediately adapted to both counseling and pastoral work. This will become clearer as we proceed. The following is largely an adaptation by me of his work. (Macmurray 1999, p. 44f)

John Macmurray believed that what differentiates us from animals and organic life generally is that we are creatures who from birth have our being in and through our communication with other persons. This need to communicate is a natural characteristic; speech itself is just part of it and is in fact something we have to learn as we grow. But we are adapted by nature to being cared for, and this adaptation is itself the root of all communication. From the start, in our total helplessness we communicate our need to be cared for by crying, and our satisfaction in being cared for by smiles and gurgling. In other words, we are born into a reciprocity of affection, which is the condition of our existence. Mother and child, as all traditions remind us, form the primitive unity of human life. Our personal individuality is acquired by gradually gaining independence from the original communion of mother and child, and this independence at maturity is in fact an interdependence of equals; we are independent individuals but dependent persons. Our growth is a growth in
communication, and so in community. We are constituted as persons through communication with other persons, so the self, the ‘I’, is never the unit of personal life, but rather the ‘I-You’.

The reciprocity, the mutuality of the personal, is its defining character. Even when we withdraw completely into ourselves and are most an ‘I’, we take ‘others’ with us in our thoughts, feelings and images generally; and we invariably continue to communicate within ourselves with these people who are held within us in thoughts, feelings and images, as part of the flow of our consciousness. If they were not there within us we would be without internal structure and our very existence would feel threatened by fragmentation. This is a major theme in the work of Heinz Kohut, to which we will return.

The origin of our feeling or motive life lies in the distinction between pleasure and pain, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, which we experience when fully in the care of mother. Dissatisfaction comes first to us out of basic organic needs, and mother moves to meet these needs. We have a ‘wet nappy’ for instance. But she not only alleviates our feelings of dissatisfaction; she also generates feelings of satisfaction. She does this by communicating with us and engaging us emotionally and positively so that we pick up her feeling resonance as it activates our feeling capacities. Later she helps us put words to these inner experiences. The earliest communication between mother and child is a proto-conversation; it is real communication. We begin to feel and accept her love and care; it is a mutual and reciprocal interaction. She loves us and we love her. It is not insignificant to note that we love in life because we have been first loved. This communion between mother and child is not organically necessary, but it is fundamental to our nature as persons. It starts us on the road to becoming and being a person. It is the start of the second personal perspective or ‘You’ pole in the development of our sense of personhood. We seek to re-capture it throughout life in positively motivated relationships with other persons, and its mature form is a friendship in which each person lives predominantly for the other. It is characterized by a predominance of heterocentric actions, including of course communicative actions, between the two friends.
But Mother will not always meet our need exactly as we would wish. In fact she may on occasion not come to our aid when we most desperately demand it, for one reason or another. Then the first motive of dissatisfaction becomes dominant and turns to fear. The love and care we want and need and which comes to us entirely within our relationship with Mother, is replaced by fear and anxiety. This is the beginning of the motivational structure that undergirds the first personal perspective of our personhood. We are fearful for ourselves, which can continue into a feeling of abandonment; and we are fearful of Mother in that we think she no longer cares and loves us. This is the opposite pole of the care and love we had otherwise come to expect from Mother. In some cases Mother actually manifests fear in relation to us in our helplessness, and this will immediately generate fear in us; this is also a fear of mother and fear for ourselves. A basic rule of interpersonal relationships is that they are mutual and reciprocal.

So the development of human motivation begins with dissatisfaction for organic reasons, which brings forth the positive motives of love and care through the intentions and actions of mother. Then in the normal to-ing and fro-ing between mother and child the feelings or motives of fear and anxiety emerge, feelings that some have labeled ‘flight’ feelings. So our motivational or feeling life oscillates between positive feelings and negative feelings.

But then there is a third emergence, this time not from the care and love pole but from the fear and anxiety. If our relationship with mother or another primary other creates fear in us, and she or he does nothing to help us overcome it and we cannot dissipate the fear ourselves through positive relationship with other members of the family or group, or alternatively get away from the relationship altogether, the fear and anxiety can turn to anger and resentment, even hatred. This is the origin of the so called ‘fight’ feelings. This is the third phase of the development of human motivation. This third phase becomes the motivational continuum that undergirds the third personal perspective or pole of our personhood. These three phases can be represented thus:
You will be aware of the parallel in form to what we have already discussed in the
form of the personal. Fear is derived within personal relationships from love, hatred
is derived from fear. One set of motivations is positive in relation to the personal
other, and leads to heterocentric actions; the other two are negative and lead to
egocentric actions. The first negative feeling is characterised as motivating activity
away from the other, the second as motivating activity toward the other.

Although each motive pole is formed under powerful feelings in our early
development, in our maturing each pole takes on a wide spectrum of motives
representative of that pole. For instance the first negative pole, or first personal
perspective, that emerged under the feeling of fear, in the end also contains the
essential motive of the artist, which is the desire to contemplate the other through
feelings, to observe the other carefully with the senses and so see and understand in
terms of values and ends. It is contemplation. It is an observation that leads to
actions that enable an artistic representation of the other to be formed. The intention
of the artist is not to act on the other but to capture in image just who or what the
other is to their feeling sensibilities, to the ‘feelings’ as it were caught in the other
and apprehended by the artist. This is one end of the spectrum; the other is the full
flight feeling of fear or its organic counterpart of panic. The essential characteristic
of this first negative pole of motive feelings is that it does not motivate action or
behaviour toward the other, but rather contemplation or feeling absorption at one end
of the spectrum to movement or action to get away from the other at the other.

On the other hand, the second negative pole, the third personal perspective, is
characterized by a spectrum of motives that might begin with feelings of anger and
even hatred in childhood, but by maturity has evened out also into that of an observer, but an observer of truth. The motive of this observer is not to capture a feeling image but rather explain the other in thought so that the other might be seen in its relationships and understood through explanation, with such knowledge then being able to be used to control or use the other. The direction of motives in this pole is toward the other. This is the observer as scientist rather than artist. The other end of this spectrum of motive feelings is, as we have seen, anger, even hatred, and under this motive the other is in danger of being acted upon by the person in the grip of such a motive. In fact, such negative motive has to be managed by the person intentionally so that they do not act against the other. This is what we mean by someone having to ‘bottle’ their anger up. The essential characteristic of this second negative pole of motive feelings is that it does motivate action or behaviour toward the other, from action to verify an hypothesis to action to defend by attacking the other.

It is possible to categorize every human feeling within one of these three poles; motives that lead to actions that take the Other into account positively, negative motives which form intentions that range from artistic observation to outright flight behaviour and actions, and negative motives that range from scientific observation to fight behaviour and actions toward the Other. This is the structure of human motivation. If you ask a group of people to first tell you what feelings they think are positive, and then what feelings they think are negative, the negative list is invariably twice the length of the positive, and can be further analysed into ‘fight or flight’ feelings within the broad spectrum of each motive pole as outlined above.

However, not all second personal feelings or motives are obviously positive feelings. Guilt in its most important form is a second personal motive, not because it is a liked feeling but because it can motivate positive action toward an other, namely the offering of apology or confession of a wrong for which forgiveness is asked for and hopefully received. On the other hand the motive or feeling of shame is clearly first personal; it induces self consciousness and motivates withdrawal action and behaviour. Frustration, indignation, assertiveness can be second personal motives if handled effectively; or they can develop into third personal motives such as anger and aggressiveness. The essential distinction is whether the motive encourages
positive engagement with the other person or persons; in other words is heterocentric. Guilt contains in it a concern for and focus on the other person and a willingness to address relational difficulties. If not acted on constructively it can lead to accommodation and withdrawal.

Similarly, a feeling such as love can be quite egocentric. I may love someone for the feelings of pleasure they create in me, and I like to relate to them for that reason, with the motive of maximizing that pleasure for me. It may be that this is reciprocal, and we use each other for our own pleasure and enjoyment, calling it love. However, when I love the other person for their sake, then my love is heterocentric, and my actions are motivated by what is in the other person’s interest.

We spend our lives wanting to live in positive feelings within our personal relationships, and learning how to do this is only possible when we know how to work with our negative feelings, be they ego- or hetero-centric; for some people this is very difficult. The question of whether hetero-centric motives outweigh egocentric motives in our lives is both a question of life experience and commitment.

The negative poles are essential to life and completely inevitable. The most positively motivated person will be regularly set back on his or her heels by a failure in relating to another person. He or she will withdraw into one or other of the two negative poles, possibly both at different times or at the same time, as he or she battles with ‘flight’ or ‘fight’ feelings, to reflect on what went on in that interaction and what might be done to return to the person in an attempt to resume a positive interaction and relationship. If a successful return is effected, the person will experience a sense of personal growth and maturing, a form of self transcendence. This movement of withdrawal to reflect so as to think and feel our way back to a positive connection Macmurray called the pattern of withdrawal and return. It fills our lives at all levels of our interaction with the world, and is especially central in our relationships with other persons.

As already suggested, the negative poles of motivation at the benign end of their spectrums are the basis of the cultural reflective processes of the arts on the one hand and the sciences on the other, as already suggested. As we shall see in some detail
religion, art and science as reflective activities all have their origin in the interactions of ordinary and everyday life in which we operate as acting, feeling, thinking persons. And just as fear is derived from love and hatred from fear, so feeling is derivative of acting and thinking of feeling. The first negative motive pole is the reflective position in which our capacities to feel and apprehend the other contemplatively are developed. When we feel fear in relation to a personal other, we learn to observe the other carefully to sense how they might be feeling, and from this decide how we might act; to accommodate to their expectations or get out of their way. This is where we learn empathy, but not necessarily how to express it; and this development of sensitivity can be transmuted into a general feeling apprehension of the world and perhaps the desire to express this in some way, in one or other of the arts.

Likewise, the second negative motive pole is the reflective position in which our thinking develops. When we feel anger or hatred in relation to a personal other, we want to control if not manipulate, or at the very least exert our will effectively against the other; and to do this we have to think and plan. We build theories that help us understand how we can get what we want and what we have to do to get what we want. We learn to observe with this motive in mind, but not to capture an image; rather to explain and exert our will effectively. This attitude of taking charge has only to be translated into our general activities with the world of physical matter and we have the basis of science and technology. The motive of wanting to exert our will on the other comes originally from our personal relationships, and science and technology as such emerge from that part of our everyday experience in which we face practical problems and issues in our relationship with matter and things where taking control is appropriate if not necessary.

There is one other vital aspect of the origins of our motivations in our relationship with mother I want to introduce further now. In our relation with mother we build up a predominantly positive mutual interaction in which emotionally effective communication takes place. Our motivational structure emerges within that relationship in the ‘to and fro’s’ that characterize the relationship. We come to expect mother’s care and her doing of things for us. Initially we intend little or nothing ourselves. We are all motive! Intention in our life is mainly initiated by
mother; we take up our own intentional actions as we begin to take responsibility for ourselves. Mother wants this to happen, for us to grow up and start to do things for ourselves which she once did for us. So she stops doing something for us and asks us to do it ourselves. We are thrown back on ourselves. The predictable pattern of interaction that constitutes our relationship with mother is no longer operating. Perhaps she no longer loves us; so the motive of fear is activated. What we expect is not fulfilled, and the fear can pass over into a paroxysm of rage. This is the genesis of will, which always implies a self-assertion against the other, an opposition to overcome, and therefore an awareness of self as opposed to the; a clash of wills which is the origin of the moral struggle. Mother does not love me anymore, which can harden into mother is against me. This feeling constitutes the negative relation of persons, and is therefore mutual. If mother is against me then I am against her.

But in fact mother has not stopped loving me. My feeling and thought that she is against me is illusory. It pushes me into withdrawal from her, a withdrawal characterized by the two poles of fear and anger. There are three options in what might happen next; two in my court which are not satisfactory, as it were, and one in mother’s, which is. What I want is the re-instatement of the positive relationship I previously enjoyed with her. But she is demanding I do something for myself that she once did for me. In my fear of losing my relationship with her, I can accommodate to her demand and do it; but my feelings remain negative and the relationship is not restored to the positivity it once enjoyed. I in fact remain fearful and wary of her. Or I could get upset and angry and try to force her to take me back into the original relationship, but on my terms; and to do this I might need to become manipulative and aggressive. If she does, the relationship is not the same, and I have forced and manipulated mother to my will. There are numbers of single mothers now in Australian society who know this problem only too well and have children who have learnt to use violence to get their way but are deeply unhappy and long for the original positive sense of connection with their mother.

The last option is largely in mother’s hands. She needs to keep her boundaries and insist I do what she wants me to do for myself but at the same time show in other ways that she loves me and is not against me. I have to recognize that my original judgement that she was against me is illusory and wrong. My new judgement is
now, ‘Mother appeared to be against me, but she wasn’t really’. This is the recognition that I was wrong. My feeling and valuation of mother was not correct. Mother was not bad at all; perhaps I was. This is the formal basis of the moral experience. And it is also the formal basis of the intellectual experience also; I can recognize that my expectation of my relationship with mother was based on too limited an experience. This is the experience of being in error. The world is more varied and complex than I had known up to that point. So I do what mother asks of me and find that I actually enjoy doing this for myself; my negative feelings toward mother are transformed back to positive ones and mother and I celebrate the resumption of our positive relationship; although, now I am more responsible for myself and less dependent on mother.

What eventually happens in our lives is far more complicated of course than this simple, formal analysis; but the form remains true. In many of our disjunctions, withdrawals, reflection, decisions, and returns, we do not always return to the same level of trust and positive feelings in relation to the other person or persons. The return is rarely fully complete and some wariness and suspicion remains. Something is left behind; our spontaneous innocence is lost. Consequently, our actions are then based in mixed motives, some of which can be unconscious. One of the characteristics of unconscious motives is that we are not aware of them, but others observing us can be. Also such negative residue of feeling around a relationship in which no effective return occurred after a significant withdrawal can become the basis of transference in the person’s later life. Almost invariably people who seek counseling and therapy are people locked in withdrawal from disjunctions or breakdown of once and perhaps still important personal relationships. They are caught in the negative feelings of ‘flight’ and ‘fight’ and do not know how to act in a way which will both redeem themselves in their own eyes and maximize the possibility of returning to a positive relationship with the other. The other can also be caught in equally complex dynamics in their feelings toward the person seeking therapy or counselling.

Motives are fundamentally important in all aspects of live. We do not act without motive. We form our intentions toward the other within a motive feeling; or we control our motives intentionally when they are motivating actions that we do not
want to do, like punch someone’s nose; the basis of ethics, morality and law governing interpersonal relationships finds their origins in this tension between what we might want to do as an expression of our negative motive, however justifiable in our own minds, and what the community asks of us in upholding the peace and integrity of the community. As implied above, a major challenge in life is keeping positively motivated and finding ways to not only manage negative motivations but to have them transformed back into positive, something that when it happens is both a self transcendence and a moment of personal growth. As we shall see this is the stuff of religion as Macmurray understands it and as I am proposing in this philosophy of pastoral care.

Religion in its true form affirms positive motive and hence actions, such as love your neighbour as you love yourself. Pastoral care as a central activity within the religious aspects of life is necessarily positively motivated or simply will not work. We shall see that in religious activity what is important is not that the right act should always be done, but that what is done should spring from the right motive. Love can cover a multitude of sins. In fact religion in its most important role within human culture is about the transformation of motives, the individual and communal means by which breakdown in personal life and relationships within community can be overcome and the negative subsumed to the positive. Happy are those who believe that Love rules the universe; just so as, happy the child who knows his mother and/or father loves him unconditionally. Returning to positive motives and emotionally connecting relationship can under-gird life for such people and they can withstand major setbacks, growing through them.

Anyone serious about becoming an effective pastoral carer has to face the fact that in the rhythm of withdrawal and return that has shaped their life, that has formed their motivational structure, there is likely to be much unfinished business that dampens the person’s capacity to allow positive motives to form the intentions of their actions. Pastoral care, more than any other caring modality, is based on positive motives, because we are the initiators of the caring action. People do not come to us wanting something from us; we go to them. So although this course is an education in pastoral care, part of that is to put participants on notice that this involves the whole of their being, and that it may well be that a participant would benefit greatly by a
prolonged and honest self reflection and recapitulation of their life so far, and the important relationships that have formed them. This may mean seeking counsel and therapy to help them unravel those things that hold them back from developing in all three perspectives of their being, their capacities to think, feel and act; their head, heart and hand.

In looking at the formation of our motivational structure, I again placed the three emergent poles of love (care), fear (anxiety) and hatred (resentment) in a triadic form that we have called the unit or form of the personal as suggested by John Macmurray. I suggested that the first movement into the withdrawn negative feeling of fear was in antithesis to the positive feeling of love. Applying the form of the personal, we can say that love contains and is constituted by fear. Love will always contain an element of fear; if it doesn’t, the love will be purely sentimental. But for the love to predominate, the fear has to be subordinated. When we are perfected in love, fear has been completely overcome and subordinated; but it remains as an essential element within us and a major problematic in life. The subordination of fear to love Macmurray claims is the central role of religion in its true form. Historically of course defensive religion has been a major source of fear.

But then I suggested that there was a second movement in the withdrawnness when we cannot act on the fear and are forced to stay in relationship with someone who creates the fear in us. We become resentful and feel feelings of hatred. Here there is a dialectical movement between fear and hatred, both negative motives but opposite in their attitude to the other. Hatred is a negative to fear’s positive; or fear contains and is constituted by hatred. Without the anger and hatred to balance the fear and anxiety we would not stand our ground; we would always be passive rather than assertive. But what we really want is to find our way back to love and care as the dynamic in our interpersonal mutuality. Now we can represent this diagrammatically.
Hatred is a double negative to love. It motivates action toward the other but it is negative motivation; and it is one thing to stand your ground and be assertive, it is another to act toward the other negatively. Consequently people strongly moved by negative feelings in the second negative withdrawal pole have to manage their feelings intentionally so that they do not act out in anger.

Action can be motivated by feelings from each of the three poles as indicated by the arrows in the diagram above. Only action motivated by heterocentric motives or feelings enable us to engage the Other in positive actions and form intentions that are centred in the Other and not ourselves. This is not a negation of the Self however, as we shall see; ideally, hetero-centricity contains and is constituted by egocentricity, as we love our neighbour as we love ourselves. It is sustaining this second person perspective pole in a community that is the traditional role of religion in its truest form; and it is this pole that we wish to cultivate and sustain in our work as pastoral care practitioners.

Some important concepts have been introduced in this chapter from the philosophy of John Macmurray, which need now to be developed further in subsequent chapters as central to the basic paradigm that under-girds this philosophy of pastoral care. Friendship in the best sense of the word has its origins in our relationships with our parents in which our motivational structure first emerges; intentional friendship is the central concept in this philosophy of pastoral care. The pattern of withdrawal and return shapes every aspect of our lives. In our withdrawals we learn to reflect with our feelings and thoughts, and out of this process in everyday life the cultural
reflective activities of religion, the arts and the sciences eventually emerge. In our withdrawals from action into reflection we can be subject to illusory thinking that generates beliefs about the other as the basis of our actions for which we have no objective basis. The overcoming of this illusion enables our actions to be based in the reality of the other; we experience self transcendence both in our relationship with the other but within ourselves also as an experience of growth in capacity to relate effectively and spontaneously.
Chapter 5

Friendship

Resume: Aristotle’s analysis of friendship remains central to our understanding, at least in European tradition. In form, it exactly illustrates Macmurray’s form of the personal. Its crucible is in the relationship between mother and child, and in the complex movement between self interest and interest in the other, egocentricity and heterocentricity, Friendship takes us to the very heart of the human condition. Friendship of the good or primary friendship is the intention and goal of pastoral care, and the outcome of true religion, formally speaking.

Philosophical reflection on friendship has a history that goes back to Plato and Aristotle, but there has been ongoing discussion to this day. In fact Jacques Derrida in relation to friendship wrote,

All the categories and axioms which have constituted the concept of friendship in its history have let themselves be threatened with ruin. (Derrida 1997, p.295)

He suggests we should no longer be asking, What is friendship?, but rather, Who is the friend?, a question not dissimilar to the question asked of Christ, Who is my neighbour? The implication here is that it is in actual relationship with others that we come to understand what it is to be a friend and to have a friend. Sandra Lynch in a recent discussion, Philosophy and Friendship (2005), suggests that the philosophical framework in which such direct exploration of friendship might be conducted is that of Wittgenstein’s notion of ‘family resemblance’; friendship comes in many forms some of which nonetheless share some sort of family resemblance.

For instance, there are some characteristics of friendship that are perhaps more likely to be family resemblances than others. The word ‘friend’ comes from the old English word ‘freon’, which meant free, and ‘freo’ which meant love, a derivation linked to the Teutonic ‘frijojan’ and the Dutch ‘vriend’, both originally meaning love. Friendship then is a relationship characterized by the emotion or motive of love, and it is a voluntary relationship. It implies the freedom of each participant in the relationship and their choice to be in such a relationship. Freedom also implies
equality; and choice implies intention. Love, freedom, equality and intention are in some sense experiences we find in friendship.

Most reflection on friendship in our tradition returns to the analysis and taxonomy of Aristotle. Aristotle identified three kinds of friendship and his analysis became a ‘watershed’ for subsequent reflection and still sets the philosophical agenda to this day. The three kinds of friendship are; friendship of utility or advantage, friendship of pleasure, and friendship of the good, or as he sometimes called it, primary friendship. You will no doubt note the connection here with the form and unit of the personal proposed by Macmurray; he makes no direct reference to Aristotle in his discussion of friendship that I am aware of, which is remarkable I think given it is such an explicit historical reference to the form he is proposing. Aristotle writes in his Nichomachean Ethics:

There is in each case a kind of mutual affection known to both parties; and those who love each other wish for each other’s good in respect of the quality for which they love them. So those who love each other on the ground of utility do not love each other for their personal qualities, but only in so far as they derive some benefit from each other. Similarly with those who love one another on the ground of pleasure; because it is not for being a certain character that witty people are liked, but because we find them pleasant. So when people love each other on the ground of utility their affection is motivated by their own good, and when they love on the ground of pleasure it is motivated by their own pleasure. (note1)

These relationships described by Aristotle are centred in the individual or self, not in the friend, and if you take the utility or the pleasure away, then it is possible the friendship as such will fade or cease. Not so with primary friendship or friendship of the good between people who love each other because of who they are in themselves. Friendship of the good, Aristotle said, is permanent, reasonably enough; because in it are united all the attributes that friends ought to possess……a man’s best friend is the one who not only wishes him well but wishes it for his own sake (even though nobody will ever know it)…..(such) friendship in the primary and proper sense is between good
men in virtue of their goodness, whereas the rest are friendships only by analogy. (note 1)

To love someone for him or herself, not because of the feelings of pleasure they create in you, or because of the advantage they offer you in your life, is to describe a relationship in which the other person’s reality sets your intentions. This will happen when your own motive in relation to that person is positive. This is primary friendship, relationship centred in the Other. The mutuality in this case is not only utility and pleasure; as your reality forms my intentions toward you under a positive motivation such as love or care, so my reality forms your intentions. Note also that such friendship unites all the attributes that friends ought to possess, and that as friendship of the good it carries with it a sense of the ideal, of a value that is a virtue. Primary friendship is the realization of freedom and equality in relation to another person. To place Aristotle’s analysis in Macmurray’s unit of the personal, we would say that primary friendship contains and is constituted by friendship of pleasure and friendship of utility.

Figure 7 – Friendship and the Form of the Personal

Aristotle thought of primary friendship as a type of public bond that united virtuous and exclusively male citizens of the polis in a shared conception of the good and in shared practices. Friendship is a kind of ‘socio-political cement’, a civic relationship as Sandra Lynch notes, and the goal of politics is friendship’s development. Friendship in this sense is based in the liking of the good in each other; virtuous men admiring each other’s virtue. There is an important distinction here though between liking a person for his or her own sake, and liking him for his goodness, a distinction
of which I think we moderns are sensitive. To love someone for their goodness is not the same thing as loving them for who they are in themselves regardless.

Suzanne Stern-Gillet, quoted in Lynch (2005), notes this important distinction, which perhaps in the end is the final if not absolute criterion of primary friendship; to be loved and accepted regardless. To love a friend for that person’s own sake can be seen as the equivalent of loving the other for no good reason. On this understanding, friendship is not necessarily rational, she believes, in a world run on self interest, and so links our conception of friendship in the primary sense with the relationship of parent and child, in which the child is unconditionally accepted not only for any display of goodness, but equally when they are anything but good. It might be responded, however, that such unconditional love is what enables human life and the life of the personal in the first place, and is therefore entirely rational. Macmurray would argue this.

The unconditional love of a parent for a child provides an illustration of this kind of love. A parent’s unfailing love for a child – despite what might be seen as good reasons for withdrawing love – provides the child with a sense that she is loved for her own sake. (Lynch 2005, p.33)

Aristotle was fully aware of this connection between friendship and the relationship between parent and child. He in fact twice compares a person’s attitude to a friend to that of a mother towards her child. This raises two important issues. The first is that in linking friendship with the parent-child relationship we appear in principle to put aside the demand for equality between friends. But as Lynch notes,

Given that comparison, (Aristotle’s) claims about the characteristics of primary friendship might be more usefully interpreted as an admonition to give our friends the love, care and understanding that we might hope for from a loving mother. (Lynch 2005, p.32)

Further to that, as the child grows up and matures, the relationship with his or her parent does ideally take on a sense of equality, perhaps even to the point of reversal or inversion where a child begins to care for a parent in a way that is analogous to the care he once received from the parent. The important point here though is that at
least from Aristotle onwards, and certainly for Macmurray, as we will see, the
parent/child relationship is the crucible of friendship.

The second issue Aristotle sees implied in the parent/child relationship is that parents
‘love their children as themselves (for one’s offspring is a sort of other self in virtue
of a separate existence)’(note2). The parent loves the child as his other self, which
implies a greater complexity of relationship that goes beyond any simple
understanding; a necessary mixture of self-interest, self-love as much as any love and
interest in the Other. So if we draw on the parent/child relationship as in some sense
illustrative of what friendship might be, we have at the same time to account for this
sort of complexity. Self-love and self-interest cannot be divorced and separated off
as opposite to primary love in a dualistic way. In fact friendship that might have
initially been established on a pleasure or utilitarian basis, can develop primary
qualities. In his reflection on friendship, Plato makes this a significant point; that
love of virtue and the good life in relation to a friend, can arise and develop out of a
blatantly pleasurable or carnal relationship (note 3). Such a link between primary
friendship and self love is present in our European religious traditions largely
through the injunction of Jesus to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. The
capacity to love and care for another is in some sense connected with our capacity to
love and care for ourselves. Kohut saw this connection in his treatment of
narcissism, an interrelationship that continues throughout life (note 4), as opposed to
Freud who saw narcissism as an immature form of love that we should grow out of in
preference to loving another. Macmurray went further that Kohut. For him
eyocentricity or narcissism and heterocentricity are logically connected, according to
the form of the personal.

For Macmurray, the seeds of our capacity for primary friendship are definitely to be
found in the relationship between mother and child.

There is from the beginning an element of symbolic activity involved which
has no organic or utilitarian purpose, and which makes the relationship, as it
were, an end in itself. The relationship is enjoyed, both by mother and child,
for its own sake. The mother not only does what is needful for the child: she
fondles him, caresses him, rocks him in her arms, and croons to him; and the
baby responds with expressions of delight in his mother’s care which has no
biological significance. These gestures symbolize a mutual delight in the relation which unites them in a common life; they are expressions of affection through which each communicates to the other the delight in the relationship, and they represent, for its own sake, a consciousness of communication.

(Macmurray 1999, p.63)

So there is, necessarily, development, complexity and movement in the nature of friendship in the interplay between self and other. When seen within the parent/child relationship, the child comes to love the parent with primary qualities of love and friendship only out of a thoroughly egocentric base; and the child can make such shifts because they are first loved by the parent. Friendships with others carry the same complexities and shifts in a way analogous to this basic dynamic between parent and child. As we have seen and shall see further, these are the relationships that constitute our lives, and the matrix within which we find support and the capacity to transform and grow. So while friendship can be analysed into three broad categories following Aristotle, at the same time we recognize there is a necessary connection and relationship between these three, which implicates necessarily the other person or persons and which carries the possibilities of complexities analogous to the complexities found in a relationship between a child and its parent over the fullness of their life times. There is in friendship something that takes us into the heart of the human condition.

Thomas Aquinas, one of Aristotle’s greatest interpreters to our European tradition also wrote specifically on friendship, and drew the discussion directly into the nature of God (note 5). He particularly noted the reciprocal nature of friendship at all levels. Friendship can be for egocentric reasons, but this does not mean that it cannot be of benefit to the other party. So friendship based on utility or pleasure is primarily for oneself; but it contains benefits for the friend as well. In fact if it is not mutual it will not last as a friendship. And where the friendship is a primary one, each friend will also derive pleasure and utility from the relationship, not to speak of the likelihood of mutuality in that if I act in your interests, you are likely to act in mine. But friendship of the good has a further subtlety. If I act in your interest with your welfare in mind with no self interest or thought of you acting in mine, nonetheless
notes Aquinas, I can still gain simply out of the quality of the relationship itself. This is the true potential of primary friendship.

   It is a friendship that is disinterested in what can be gained from the relationship but which gains nonetheless. (Vernon 2005, p.85)

In other words, even when friendship is in its primary mode, motivated by a positive motive and intended by the reality of the other person, nonetheless a principle of reciprocality or reciprocity is at work in which the friend or carer also gains regardless of not having sought such gain. This is important in our appreciation of pastoral care. There maybe no fee for payment and rarely an explicit recognition in pastoral care; but there can be from time to time a knowing and a satisfaction in being in a relationship in which the self is forgotten, if only for a few intimate moments, in the reality of the Other for the Other’s sake. This is reward enough. It is mutual between the patient and the carer, and is hard to describe. In my own experience once a trainee has had such a moment of self transcendence in relation to another person, pastoral care is understood and needs no further justification. There is a mutual satisfaction through the presence of each to each other, which I think is analogous to the mutual satisfaction a parent and child can have where the relationship is enjoyed for its own sake. It is this enjoyment for its own sake that is the hallmark of good personal relationship; and this enjoyment is more than pleasure. A third element is present, perhaps the very quality Meares (note 6) refers to as the Self.

So for Aquinas, friendship of the three sorts always carries a reciprocality that benefits both parties. However, it is only when seen in the light of God’s love that the true nature of primary friendship is fully known, he believes. Only God has the selflessness that allows such giving to the Other completely, whatever He may get in return. God’s love is not possessive; so the more friendship is focused in the interest of the other person, the more like God’s love it is, altruistic or heterocentric, provided it is not possessive; a love that is for the other but benefits both. Friendship focused on the pleasure or use of the individual or self is love that is egoistic or egocentric, the more so of course if it is also possessive, as it can so often be because the underlying motive is negative; love that is for oneself but can benefit the other. Only God’s love is truly unconditional and heterocentric or altruistic.
Bringing a theological dimension into a discussion of friendship as a basis for pastoral care is important; but not necessarily so. Historically, pastoral care has had a theology guiding it, at least in our European and Middle Eastern traditions. But whether we posit God’s altruistic and unconditional love as an idealistic projection or premise, or claim its truth out of an empirical study of religious experience, or assert it as a tenet of Scripture, or whatever, such a move is not necessary to our investigation of friendship as a basis for pastoral care. Friendship stands in its own right, at least in its primary form, and its roots are in family life and a child’s relationship with its parents. Love and care in this sense do not need to be justified. They are necessary for the child’s physical, emotional and spiritual development into a person. The extent to which such primary friendship then finds an extension into wider personal communities than the family will be part of the individuals own life story and continuing growth to personhood. There are some who ultimately find a sense of friendship with an aspect of their experience they call God, as well as a place of personal fellowship for mutual support in a religious group. In other words I am arguing, following Macmurray, that the basis and foundation of pastoral care as I am presenting it is in the positive personal motivation of family life, ideally speaking, which by inference may extend for some into a predominantly personal view of the world and a loving, caring God.

It follows from this that it is important to place pastoral care as a caring modality based in friendship within a religious context, and this is where the ideas of John Macmurray are helpful. Religion, as we have seen, is about agency and interpersonal relationship; theology is about intellectual reflection on the objects of religious agency, one aspect only of religion as such. Religion is reality engaged personally from the second person perspective; theology is reality theorized from the third person perspective. Both are important; but religion is inescapable in this analysis, whereas theology is not, as we can see in the current ascendancy of secular atheism. Secular atheists are as much subject to the religious function in life as any other person, and this involves similar processes such as commitment to particular beliefs, and the cultivation of idealized figures (note 7). On the basis of scientific rationality they belief they can reject the idea of ‘God’. Religion is inescapable, and it finds its primary form in this model derived from Macmurray in primary friendship.
Macmurray brings the notion of friendship right into the centre of his philosophy when he wrote in the introduction to his main work *The Form of the Personal* that the simplest expression for his thesis is that: *All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and all meaningful action is for the sake of friendship.* (Macmurray 1957, p.14).

Perhaps another way of putting this might be: the point and purpose of life is friendship, and the way to friendship is through actions informed by knowledge of what is true, beautiful and real, about life and the Other; in other words meaningful knowledge.

Friendship for Macmurray is what makes life personal and community sustainable. It is living in largely positive motives, while not denying negative ones, in which the reality of the Other determines our intentions and actions; while at the same time our reality determines the Other’s intentions and actions towards us, in a similarly positive motive. It is the broader expression between people in personal community of what we might only otherwise find in a family. It is being loved for our own sake, and loving for the other’s sake. It is essentially religious in the most real sense of that word.

To create community is to make friendship the form of all personal relations. This is a religious task, which can only be performed through the transformation of the motives of our behaviour. (Macmurray 1999, p.198)

A community is for the sake of friendship and presupposes love. (Macmurray 1999, p.151)

Macmurray notes the differences between community and other forms of human society. In discussing human societies as such, he notes the distinction between societies based on force on the one hand and consent on the other, reflecting alternatively the proposals of Hobbes and Rousseau. Both are in fact aimed at the protection of individual associates in the pursuit of their private interests. They are *not* community.
Both forms are for the sake of protection and presuppose fear. A community is for the sake of friendship and presupposes love. But it is only in friendship that persons are free in relation; if the relation is based on fear we are constrained in it and not free. (Macmurray 1999, p.151)

So a community, as opposed to a society, is a gathering of people who feel freedom in relation to each other, who presuppose love, and who relate personally and actively toward each other in friendship, working to overcome negative motives such as fear. This is opposed to the Hobbesian or Roussean societies or associations, which presuppose fear, work to protect the individual, suppress the personal to the impersonal and sustain boundaries to negative behaviour through law and force, or a forced common vision.

Macmurray wrote,

Any community of persons, as distinct from a mere society, is a group of individuals united in a common life, the motive of which is positive. Like a society, a community is a group which acts together; but unlike a mere society its members are in communion with one another; they constitute a fellowship. A society whose members act together without forming a fellowship can only be constituted by a common purpose. They cooperate to achieve a purpose which each of them, in his own interest, desires to achieve, and which can only be achieved by cooperation. The relations of its members are functional; each plays his allotted part in the achievement of the common end. The society then has an organic form: it is an organization of functions; and each member is a function of the group. A community, however, is a unity of persons as persons. It cannot be defined in functional terms, by relation to a common purpose. It is not organic in structure, and cannot be constituted or maintained by organization, but only by the motives which sustain the personal relations of its members. It is constituted and maintained by mutual affection. This can only mean that each member of the group is in positive personal relation to each of the others taken severally. The structure of a community is the nexus or network of the active relations of friendship between all possible pairs of its members. (Macmurray 1999, p.157)
The last sentence in this quote is central in understanding Macmurray’s use of friendship as a fundamental concept. To see friendship as the central relationship that enables personal community is to lift the idea out of the vagaries of accidental, individual and particular relationships, and to elevate it into an active intention, under-girded by positive motives, that enables human beings to live and grow together within caring loving relationships. Friendship becomes the goal and purpose of our lives together, without negating other forms of relationship. It is not only an ideal; it is an intention to pursue that carries its own reward.

It is interesting to compare this understanding to Aristotle’s idea of civic friendship mentioned earlier. As we have seen, Aristotle proposed a public understanding of friendship as a type of social bond between good men within the life of the city. But at the political level, such a friendship is drawn into utility and advantage which makes it hard to sustain a primary sense of friendship; instead of utility and pleasure serving goodness, a reversal can happen, and primary friendship is made secondary to the other two. Politicians may well enjoy primary friendship together; but in the pursuit of political aims, such friendship is vulnerable to the demands and practices of politics. Aristotle was asking for personal relationships to prevail in an essentially impersonal aspect of society, in which the personal will in the end usually be subsumed under the impersonal. Politics is the organization of society at an impersonal level; it takes human beings as they are in their largely negative motives, and sets boundaries to negative behaviour to ensure enough cooperation for society to work. Religion, on the other hand, operates at the personal level; and it believes in the good and in the transformation of the negative into the positive so that personal relationships can be maintained and sustained. In religion, despite the empirical and historical examples that proliferate to the contrary, community is formed and sustained in which the impersonal is subsumed under the personal. To posit friendship as a goal to help society work at a political level is to put the cart before the horse, to mix categories; to posit friendship as the essence of personal community and hence true religion, is to centre life in the personal, from which the impersonal relationships such as politics can in their turn fulfil their role, all the more effectively because of the friendship formed and sustained at the personal or religious level. This idea of Macmurray’s runs counter to both Derrida’s (1997) linking of friendship to politics and the early feminist maxim that ‘the personal is the political’.
Friendship in its truest form is essentially a central element of our religious or personal being.

I think Macmurray succeeds in making friendship as a collective ideal persuasive at the religious level. But its validity is only in ideal and intention. Its actuality as true religion is the practical outworking of this intention and the development of the knowledge, wisdom and means to achieving such friendship in reality. This is the essential problematic of religion; making community as a nexus or network of relationships of friendship actually emerge and sustain itself. Primary friendship in Macmurray’s sense is then friendship that is entirely personal, friendship that is primary over all other forms of relationship; the basis of community in which we can truly have our being as relational creatures. It’s original form is the family.

Friendship in the primary sense intended by Macmurray and Aristotle is inherently inclusive. As such it puts particular friendships, which, as we have seen, can be egoistic and exclusive, to the test. How a person relates to the friends of their friend will depend on the degree to which the relationship is primary and inclusive. The egocentric individual will make little effort with the friend of a friend, and demand the exclusiveness of his friendship. Aquinas discusses the inclusive nature of primary friendship, and links it to the inclusiveness of the love of God. Having the capacity to enter primary friendships implies the potential if not the capacity to enter such relationships generally; to love other human beings as you find them, like the Good Samaritan. Macmurray puts it this way.

To obtain this analysis we isolated two persons from their relation to all others. If their relation to one another is exclusive of the others, then its motivation in relation to the others is negative; the two friends must defend themselves against the intrusion of the rest. Their friendship becomes a positive element in a motivation which is dominantly negative and this will destroy the realization of the exclusive relation itself. To be fully positive, therefore, the relation must be in principle inclusive, and without limits. Only so can it constitute a community of persons. The self-realization of any individual is only fully achieved if he is positively motivated towards every other person with whom he is in relation. We can therefore formulate the inherent ideal of the personal. It is a universal community of persons in
which each cares for all others and no one for himself. This ideal of the personal is also the condition of freedom – that is, of a full realization of his capacity to act – for every person. Short of this there is un-integrated, and therefore suppressed, negative motivation; there is unresolved fear; and fear inhibits action and destroys freedom. (Macmurray 1999, p.159)

Macmurray goes on to claim that he is actually saying nothing more than what all the universal religions have said ‘in simpler terms’.

We must, however, remind ourselves that any actual religion is the religion of an actual group of persons; and the community of any actual group is highly problematical. (Macmurray 1999, p.159)

Macmurray rescues Aristotle’s use of the term friendship in its primary sense as a public, collective term denoting a quality of relationship amongst equals. However, he takes it from the political arena within society to the personal interactions of people in community, and as such, it becomes then not only the ideal but the intention of religion in the truest sense of the word. Religion in its truest and formal sense is about primary friendship. In proposing friendship as the foundation of pastoral care, I mean it in the sense Macmurray proposes. In pastoral care, friendship is intended.

Notes
1. These quotes from Aristotle are taken from Sandra Lynch, Philosophy and Friendship (2005), p. 15,16. They come from his *Nichomachean Ethics*, 1156b29-1156a16, 1156b2-23, 1168a18-b7.
4. Kohut’s treatment of narcissism is one of his major differences to Freud. There is a further discussion of this in Chapter 10. For a primary reference on Kohut’s treatment of narcissism see a number of lectures, especially Lecture 6, in his The Chicago Institute Lectures (ed Tolpin and Tolpin 1996)
published by the Fellowship. The more secular atheism organizes itself as a movement the more it will be subject to religious functions and processes under my analysis based on Macmurray. A typical scientific hagiography of those worthy of being idealized is Pete Moore (2002).
Part C

Religion and Pastoral Care

In Part C the relationship between religion, as here presented, and modern pastoral care in the community is explored, using the paradigm and its applications introduced in Part B.
Chapter 6

Reflection and Self Transcendence

Synopsis: A unique capacity of human beings is to be able to objectify the world in reflection and to understand and engage it rationally. But whereas our culture tends to think such objectivity and rationality belongs only to our capacity to think, which finds an ultimate if not absolute form in science through the scientific method, Macmurray shows that we can and need to be equally objective or rational in our feeling and acting functions. This capacity for objectivity Macmurray called self transcendence, which finds its fullest form at the personal level in the capacity to act empathically in the interest of another person. Whereas a scientist self transcends in his relationship with the physical and material world, and an artist in relation to the world of form and organism, a religionist self-transcends in relation to personal life in community. He or she is an expert ‘non-expert’ in helping and supporting human community, and enabling its members to live together positively. This is pastoral care.

The three main reflective processes, according to Macmurray, Hegel (1977) and others, in a developed culture are religion, the arts and the sciences. Traditionally religion has been the dominant form of reflection, made up of feeling based ritual and thinking based doctrine and dogma that held the people in a common unity. Religion contained and was constituted by ritual and doctrine; doctrine was the story of why and how we are here, and ritual was its celebration. The three elements relate according to the form of the personal.

![Figure 8 – The Original Form of Religion](image)

In European culture at the beginning of the modern period, we began to think differently, as we have seen, although again the roots of this way of thinking went back to the ancient Greeks. We began to explore and experiment, and this saw the rise of science as a way of knowing or reflecting that was independent of religion. Whereas religious doctrine invariably depended on ecclesiastical or organizational
authority for its influence, science could stand alone as a body of knowledge that needed no such external authority to justify it. Its justification came in the scientific method when hypotheses or predictions were verified by experimental actions. Action was for the sake of this knowledge or reflection, which became the new standard for objectivity and rationality, and hence truth. As such, it has seemed to be in opposition to religion, and for that matter the arts. The conscious basis of our actions in our secularized culture is largely in theoretical and technological thinking that is instrumental, and this has had a significant effect on our values and traditions. This very significant shift has been overseen by a new ‘expert’, the scientist, as opposed to the traditional priest.

However we may feel as religious or spiritual people about our secular society, the aspect of science vis a vis the arts and religion that we need to take seriously, is the centrality of objectivity as the key principle of our relationship with the world. In science the focus is all on the world, the Other, not the Observer; so much so that the goal of good science is theoretical knowledge that is a true mirror of what is actually there in the world that is the same for us all, no matter who the observer may be, and even if there is no observer at all. There is no subjectivity or individuality in science, although of course science is carried out by individuals who are also subjects. This principle of objectivity Macmurray called self-transcendence.

Self-transcendence is the capacity to set the centre of interest outside oneself, and so to behave in terms of the nature of the object. (Macmurray 1986, p. 57).

This capacity is, in fact, the basis of our ability to be rational. Science as an activity has done this for thinking to an ultimate degree. It observes and moves immediately to analyze, to find constants and relationships, and it does so without any reference to the subjectivity of the observer. It is concerned with empirical facts and generalizations. It excludes values, particularities, intentions and all feeling based apprehension of the world. In thinking terms it self transcends to completely focus in the nature of the object it is observing. This fact is highly valued in a scientific, technologically focused culture such as ours. And so it should be.
But it is not the only form of objectivity and hence rationality, despite this assumption largely speaking in our modern European culture; we recognized this when discussing the work of Gadamer (1979) and Habermas (1978). Self transcendence and the ability to be real and rational applies as well to the arts and religion as forms of reflection, reflection conducted primarily from the First and Second personal perspectives and not only the TPP or Third personal perspective. In other words art and religion can be objective and hence rational as science seeks to be. For us in pastoral care it is quite vital to understand this full nature of self transcendence as it applies in all three forms of reflection, especially religious or interpersonal reflection.

The artist is as interested in the empirical world as the scientist; in fact sense-perception in the arts is more direct and fundamental than in science. The arts are sensuous. In science, at least in its early phases, we use our senses as means to an end that lies beyond them, as we do in ordinary life where our senses provide us with information which enables us to act successfully. But sometimes we stop and not only see but look, listen and not just hear. We can even begin to live in our senses instead of using them, and the activity becomes its own end, and has meaning in itself. We allow the Other to speak to our feelings and not only our intellect. This is the way of contemplation, the perception of the artist. Through our feelings we discern intrinsic value in what we perceive, and this value is registered in us through a sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction; you will remember that our feeling and motive life began in our Mother’s arms around the same polarity. Contemplation, however, is more than seeing or hearing coupled with a liking or disliking. It is an activity of mind, an attentive considering of what is being perceived. It can be systematic, purposeful, critical and often prolonged. Scientific observation passes at once to analysis and generalization by seeing its object as an instance of a class; contemplation, or artistic observation, on the other hand, sees its object as an individual existent. It particularizes. One is a knowing about, the other is a knowing. It is our way of getting to know individual things, places, people and so on, by the considered, systematic, purposeful use of our senses.

John Macmurray notes that the tendency in our culture to think of our thoughts referring to objects and hence reality, while our feelings just happen to us and are
purely subjective revealing nothing to us about the world, is older than modern science (note 1). Its roots are in the Stoic tradition where reason and the passions are completely separated, the one adulated the other despised. But in fact our thoughts happen to us just as our feelings do. Likewise, our feelings normally refer to objects and situations in the world outside us. We are pleased with what someone does; we are angry with someone else; we are afraid if we get into a dangerous situation. In fact if we are fearful without reference to something, we are deemed irrational. Contemplation is emotional reflection that is a critical appraisement of something through a continuous modification of feeling. The appraisement is a search for an appropriate emotional attitude to the object. The process expresses itself in the formation of an adequate image, whatever form that image may be; and this is the work of the artist. His focus is not in fact, but in value; ends not means; the particular not the general. The artist is not giving us something subjective, but a feeling discrimination particular to him of something in the world. He is self-transcending at the level of feelings as a scientist self-transcends at the level of thought. He wants to create an image that is a true mirror of the intrinsic feelings and values embodied in his object that he ‘objectively’ observes with his feelings. He is going beyond the feeling response of ‘liking’ or ‘disliking’ and is exploring the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ as it is a part of reality. In our response to the image he produces as an artist, we can either like it or dislike it as a subjective response, or we can in turn contemplate it to discern its inherent nature as it is in itself, and its success or otherwise in capturing the inherent and intrinsic value of the original object. *In self transcendence at the level of feeling we move beyond liking or disliking to an apprehension of what is good or bad.*

To self transcend at the level of feeling requires a growth in sensitivity. I need to learn to be interested throughout in the object, and not in myself being affected by it. My feeling must really be for the object itself, and the process must be an effort to know and enjoy the object and not to enjoy myself by means of the object. This is the essence of emotional self-transcendence or ‘objectivity’, and it is the foundation of good art. As Macmurray noted, it is the difference between reading an exciting ‘thriller’ and a great novel.
All of us will contemplate to some degree in our ordinary life, perhaps when life circumstances set us back on our heels and we begin to go off for long walks, and something catches our eye and takes us out of ourselves. Only the artist takes contemplation to its final stage and produces an image which we can all see or hear. The work of art is to the arts what a piece of technology is to science. It is concerned with the exhibition of values, and hence in relation to action, with the choice of ends. It is not about rules however because the choice of ends is a matter of intuition and feeling; it is not about discursive thought like science. If art is to function in the development and improvement of our primary activity in ordinary life, it must be by its effects on our capacity for sensuous and emotional discrimination. The practical function of art is the refinement of sensibility. It is an education of emotion and a training of judgement.

In a culture which is characterized by dualism as is ours, where we think in terms of subject/object, mind/matter, and nature/supernature, religion is drawn into opposition with both science and art and has to fight for its place. In the case of its relationship with science, religion is conceived as a third personal (TPP) body of knowledge in opposition to science as a TPP body of knowledge; in a technological culture this is now not even a contest. Religion is rejected as traditional knowledge now thought to be not true. In relation to the arts, the opposite happens. Religion is absorbed into the arts and spiritualized. It becomes the search for an idealized spiritual realm which is claimed to be ‘reality’ from the first personal pole or FPP. In this sense mysticism, as a universal experience that seems to affirm this way of thinking, is really an expression of contemplative reflection. It is an aesthetic rather than a religious experience in which contemplation takes the whole ‘real’ as its object and finds it ineffable. The current interest in our culture in spirituality along with a rejection of religion as such is an expression of this absorption.

However, as we have already seen, our whole picture can change if we step outside these cultural dualisms by thinking of ourselves primarily as agents. If we do that we can begin to think of science, art and religion not as ‘things’ but as activities the roots of which are in our everyday life. When we put action first, thinking and feeling fall into place not as aspects of our being that are in opposition to each other, but as reflective poles that guide our actions by expanding our knowledge and
heightening our sensibilities. The sciences and the arts are then fully developed forms of this reflective process that have disengaged themselves as activities from each other, but the origins of which are in our everyday practical life in which we confront resistances, problems, confrontations, rejections, successes, triumphs and so on, and seek to overcome them.

The sciences derive from the technical problems which arise in our use of the world as the instrument of our purposes; the arts from the problems of valuation which are involved in our choice of ends. Science therefore functions in relation to technical problems by providing a knowledge of fact upon which a technology can be based; while art is concerned with knowledge of value, which develops our capacity for discriminating intuitively between good and bad. Science is concerned then with matter of fact, and art with matter of intention; science with the actual and art with the possible. As reflective activities, they have opposite modes of procedure. Science generalizes, while art particularizes the given. These distinctions are clearly derived from the nature of action. For the problematic of action – the possibility of acting rightly or wrongly – has two aspects. We need wisdom in the selection of ends, so that we do not aim at the wrong things; and we need knowledge in the use of the means at our disposal to enable us to act efficiently in the pursuit of our ends. (Macmurray 1986, p.45)

What of religion as the third pillar of culture? What is the area of ordinary life that religion springs from? And what is self transcendence in religion?

Science and art are both activities of persons and in that sense they are personal; but in relation to our need for positive relationships with other persons to be a person, art and science are impersonal. They do not meet our fundamental need for positive personal engagement with other persons to be ourselves.

The inherent sociality of humankind is perhaps exhibited best in our need for friends (Macmurray 1986, p.53).

We need one another to be ourselves. In art and science we are an ‘I’; but in the living of life with other persons we need to be primarily an ‘I-You’, interdependent individuals with other persons.
We can contrast our personal life with our public or functional life.

It is that core of our human existence in which we are in direct contact with one another, and into which we enter with the whole of ourselves, and not in virtue of this or that particular interest or duty. (Macmurray 1986, p.54)

So while art and science, as impersonal aspects of our lives as persons, are high achievements, and directly inform our actions in the world, it is only in our personal relations with others that we find our positive personhood. We are formed as persons within personal community; and personal community is a fragile and vulnerable inter-connection of people which if it is to maintain itself and function well, needs the ends and means to do so.

It is the problematic of personal unity – that is to say, of community – which gives rise to religion; and it is this central aspect of life that religion refers. Its function is to maintain and extend, to deepen and develop human community (Macmurray 1986, p.54).

The typical language of religion is also the language of human relations: communion and fellowship, love and enmity, estrangement, forgiveness and reconciliation. This is not the language of either science or art.

It is then, from the problematic of personal relations that religion empirically derives; and it is the central field of experience that religion refers. (Macmurray 1986, p.53).

So religious reflection is the ultimate form of a reflective process we all engage in our ordinary lives, by which we cope with and manage our personal relationships with others. Shaking hands after an argument is a ritual symbol akin to other and more complex religious ritual. In this sense, religion is a central and essential aspect, formally speaking, of human life that touches everyone. And as thinking is to science, and feeling to art, so is action to religion. The meaning of religion can only be unambiguously expressed in action (Macmurray 1986, p.55). Diagrammatically, this can expressed as follows:
Both science and doctrine emerge from the third personal perspective. Both are abstracted forms of knowledge based in the thinking self, and whereas doctrine in a traditional society was established and maintained normally through the authority of a religious tradition and its structure, a rationality is claimed for science that needs no such authority. Its rationale stands completely outside that which it is knowledge about and is verified or falsified if correspondence is found in some way, or not found as the case may be, between the rational scientific theory and ‘what is’ through experimental action.

In our secular culture, unlike traditional culture where religion is primary, science stands on its own feet and does not need organizational authority to justify it. It makes a claim to be primary, and in so doing becomes the turning point in the unfolding of a new understanding of our relationship with the world, and ultimately of our Self understanding. Within European culture we are still working through this great shift. We are very comfortable at thinking of ourselves as thinkers; unsure of ourselves as feelers, wanting to drag feeling down into the third person perspective rather than understand it from the first person; and we perhaps are only beginning to think of ourselves from the standpoint of action, from the second person perspective. To find wholeness as moderns, we need to give equal weight to the first and second personal perspectives as we do to the third. In one we encounter matter, in the second form, and in the third spirit. So in religion we are dealing with the interactions of personal wills and intentions, and building a form of knowledge that is second personal and based in action. This is religion in its true or right sense, and this is what pastoral care is interested in.
When we deal with the natural world, whether at the organic or the inorganic level, there is no necessary reciprocity in the relationship. We do not have to come to an agreement with our object. We need only to know what it can be used for and how to use it. But when we deal with another person, we meet a response at our own level. It takes two to make a quarrel, we say. It takes two at least to resolve it. In general terms, any problem in personal relations is two-sided, and can be solved only by mutual agreement. Both the scientific and artistic modes of reflection are solitary, even though they may involve some co-operative activity. But if two friends are estranged, this hostility can only be overcome by their doing together something that is incompatible with hostility. The reconciliation may be symbolized by the mutual act of shaking hands. This is a ritual act, which symbolizes the common intention to take up again the common activity which the estrangement has interrupted (Macmurray 1986, p.55).

For us to survive together we have to be united enough not to fall into estrangement and hostility. We can do this at several levels. At the very least we agree to co-operate sufficiently even if our feelings and motives are essentially negative and self-interested. We are not free toward each other, but we can at least mutually engage each other for our own interests, and this constitutes a sort of friendship, as we have seen. It is a relationship held together by a common commitment to law and justice. It is overseen by the state and the processes of politics. This is the basis of society.

We can also enter relationships where we are not only useful to each other but ones in which we mutually give pleasure to each other, but in a way in which there is no real commitment. I find this sort of engagement in music and multicultural festivals, and such things as farmers’ markets or local shopping centres. There is a friendship here that is not needing law and justice to oversee it; we actually co-operate out of the sense of mutual pleasure. This sort of friendship is found also in clubs and associations. But it is still in some sense impersonal; there is pleasure in our relationship, but we have little to offer each other outside the goodwill of the common activity. The mutuality is still self-interested.
The personal relationships that mean most to us, however, and are the foundation of our souls or personhood have a further quality. We are not only useful to each other and give pleasure to each other mutually; we relate to each other in self transcending ways, putting the Other before the Self. This mutuality is under-girded by commitment to a positive or heterocentric motive, not a negative or egocentric one.

In such relationships I can feel accepted and free to be myself in my behaviour and actions because my commitment to the Other is not questioned. At the same time, I know I am accepted and loved as well, and even when I act in a way that puts stress on the relationship and causes the emergence of negative feelings and disjunctions, the relationship holds despite this and has ways and means to overcome these temporary estrangements and re-find the positive feelings of love and acceptance. In such relationships there is forgiveness and reconciliation, rather than an appeal to law and justice. The negative motive can be transformed to the positive. This is the basis of personal community. In it positive feelings and motives have priority over negative, and there is a mutual agreement, implicit or explicit, to subordinate the negative to the positive and attempt to live together for each others’ sake. This is an intentional commitment aided by communal activities that help this sense of being together positively. These communal activities are devised by the activity of religious reflection.

The primary act of religious reflection is, then, the corporate performance of a ritual (Macmurray 1986, p.56).

The invariant core meaning of this reflection, in so far as it can be expressed satisfactorily is ‘We belong together in a common life, and we are glad of it’ (Macmurray 1986, p.57). There is not only pleasure in this, but enjoyment if not rejoicing. This is a friendship in which each is for the other; the mutuality is positively motivated by love and care. The family meal is the most universal symbol and ritual of such relationships in personal community.

Now religion in its empirical and historical manifestations can be referred to each of the three types of human relationships, society, association and community, focused as they are in the three different perspectives of the Self. Like head, heart and hand illustrate differences in people, so also does society, association and community in
relation to human relationships and groups; and religion as such in relation to these
three foci is highlighted by different characteristics. Note that we are talking here of
religion not in its formal structure in relation to art and science, but in its historical
empirical manifestations, which are highly complex and problematic. Nonetheless
they can be analyzed according to the paradigm of the personal suggested by
Macmurray.

In the case of religion as it relates to society groupings, it binds together through a
commitment to law or the word of God externalized in scripture and doctrine, to
identity, and to formal ritual which has a political and hierarchical base. In the
ancient world this is exemplified by Roman religion. Within this there will be found
associations and communities; in other words groupings motivated by pleasure, and
love and care, but these are not the dominant type. So also with heart groups or
associations of people bound together by commitment to a common ideal or vision of
the good and the pleasurable. Such religion in the ancient world is exemplified by
the Greeks; the other two focal points will be found there also, but subordinated.
And then there is religion in which there is a primary commitment in relationships to
care and love; this is true religion as religion in the formal sense. It is best
exemplified by families and from time to time such a quality of community can be
found in any of the great historical religions, each with their own ways and means of
trying to sustain personal community and subordinate the negative to the positive.
This is religion that is not only a process of binding people together but of also
enabling them to self transcend in their personal relationships, to grow in the positive
capacities of their personhood.

This is the character of religious self-transcendence, according to Macmurray.
Since religion has its empirical reference in the relation of persons, the object
is always another person, and self-transcendence must mean the capacity to
have one’s interest in another person. Moreover, since religious reflection is
itself a mode of action, not merely of thought or of feeling, the self-
transcendence it involves must consist in a capacity to act not for oneself but
for another; in other words, to act in the interest of the other person. ….In
this field the whole person is involved, not merely the intellectual or the
emotional aspect; and these aspects are both involved in a total self-
transcendence. If such a complete ‘personal objectivity’ were achieved, it would mean that in the personal relation I am for you…. It would mean complete self-devotion to the other; a perfect love which is complete fullness of rationality. (Macmurray 1986, p.57, my emphasis)

Self-transcendence in religion is the capacity to truly empathize with another and to allow such knowledge of the other person to be the basis of any action.

It is important to begin to appreciate that the body of knowledge we become expert in as pastoral carers, knowledge and wisdom about interpersonal relationships and the inner structuring of the Self, is as equally valid as any scientific knowledge or artistic knowledge, and is essential to the good ordering of any community or group of people. In fact, I believe that we need a new word to grasp this reality that we set alongside scientist and artist, as already introduced. We think of a scientist as the epitome of the objective, rational thinker who brings the world under universal constants and laws from which technology can be developed. We think of an artist as the epitome of the objective, rational feeler who captures the universal forms of the world and expresses their beauty and congruency in images and objects of art within all of the senses. I believe it is time to think also of a religionist as the epitome of the objective, rational agent who helps human beings remain in positive personal relationships through the overcoming of negative motives and egocentric intentions, and the affirmation of actions that are universally right. A religionist, necessarily, must be at home in the secular world of science. He or she can be thought of then as a secular religionist, as I suggested in the Introduction (note2)

Whereas science discerns truth and falsity, the arts what is good and bad, beautiful and ugly, religion makes a judgement between action that is right or wrong within a particular intention, action the intended end for which has been determined by feeling, and the means of achieving that end determined by thought. The judgements of each of the three poles are problematic and can only be verified by their reference to the real, to what really is, and this reference is always through action. But whereas the scientist is assured of truth if the formula works by predicting an outcome, the artist knows he has touched what he contemplates when he feels satisfaction in what he has done, and creates satisfaction in others who view his work. He works until he
is satisfied. The judgement of the religionist, on the other hand, is verified through actions that enable and sustain positive personal relationships between people. A religionist is an expert in human relationships within personal communities, and part of his expertise is that he does not come across as an expert. The verification of his knowledge is in the success or otherwise of his actions. In fact, whereas action at the level of science and the arts is for the sake of science and the arts, and hence secondary, with religion action is primary and our thinking and feeling is for the sake of this action.

A religionist is not a protagonist for any one empirical manifestation of religion, but for religion as a process and communal reflection that is in principle applicable to everyone, and accepting in principle of all empirical religions. In finding myself as a religionist, I feel that I now understand myself in relation to both the artist and the scientist. I accept that the intellectual pole of religion in my world, according to the form of the personal, is principally science, rather than traditional theology (note 3); and the intellectual challenge I face, as a secular religionist, is to show the limits of science as a form of knowledge and its ultimate necessary subordination to the personal, to religion as expressed intellectually in philosophy but more importantly lived out in positive, personal community. The active life of pastoral care is the practical expression of my being a religionist.

**Notes**

1. See Macmurray 1986, p. 35ff

2. As a secular religionist I affirm self transcendence, and hence rationality and objectivity, in those aspects of life centred around the second person perspective. Hence religion, as primarily action, finds its true nature in self transcending and objective action. The objectivity of morality, which is also second personal, is affirmed by secular atheism. Like religion, morality is about human action, and only in recent times has its separation from religion been argued for, as it is in secular atheism. For example, in Sam Harris’ challenge in *Letter to a Christian Nation* he writes: “Everything about human experience suggests that love is more conducive to happiness than hate is. This is an objective claim about the human mind, about the dynamics of social relations, and about the moral order of our world”. (Harris 2006, p.24, his emphasis). Secular atheism can consequently be accepted as another religious tradition by the secular religionist. A major detailed discussion on the modern separation of morality from its traditional source in religion can be found in Taylor (2003)
3. Active popular discussion within our culture on many matters traditionally discussed by theology is now happening within science, as is witnessed in any scientific magazine or journal. For example, the following articles from *NewScientist*: Love, The Inside Story (29 April 2006); The Science of You (19 August 2006); What’s the Point of Religion? (1 September 2007); Faith, How Evolution found God (28 January 2006); The invisible hand that shapes emotions (27 May 2006); The Big Questions Life Death Reality Free Will and the Theory of Everything (18 November 2006); Through the Mind’s Eye, tapping into vision, thoughts and dreams (6 May 2006); So you thought you had free will (14 April 2007); and many more.
Chapter 7

Religion as Outward and Inward Processes

Synopsis: Religion can be thought of as having both an outward and an inward emphasis. The outward arises within the external relationships we have with others, including cultural and religious heroes some of which we may consider divine. But these figures can also be internalized as relationships we carry within ourselves; this constitutes the inward emphasis of religion. Pastoral care within religious organizations tends to focus more on the outward rather than the inward; modern multifaith pastoral care in the community on the inward. However as we change the locus of pastoral care to the community life of our institutions, multifaith pastoral care has the potential to also facilitate the outward processes as well within such institutions.

We have been discussing religion as a reflective process, vis a vis the sciences and the arts, as that aspect of life that arises out of the everyday need to sustain and maintain personal relationships within a sense of community, in which we positively engage others with the whole of ourselves. I have proposed that in its truest form religion is about primary friendship, or friendship of the good, following Aristotle; and its maintenance. Friendship builds community. It is from the problematic of personal relations that religion arises. Whereas science is an intellectual reflective activity, and art a contemplative one, religion is a communal reflection. Pastoral care is a prime function of religion in that sense, both traditionally and in the modern sense of multifaith pastoral care operating in the general community. Peaceful, personal community is to religion what efficient technology is to science and beautiful objects of art are to the arts. This is the formal meaning of religion in the scheme of things, as I am presenting it following Macmurray, however much we might point empirically to its historical failures.

There are two primary aspects of religion to be considered in our development as interdependent individuals. The first aspect is the outer relationships we have with our parents and siblings, and later the wider personal community represented by the church, mosque, temple, or synagogue, and then eventually to personal relationships within work and recreational settings.

The second is the inner reality and meanings that we build within ourselves around these relationships, a process that begins from the earliest days of our interaction
with our parents, and in a very real sense comes to constitute the structure of our souls. Pastoral care needs to be aware of both aspects, the outward and the inward, and their inter-relationship. They are inter-related; but in much of the pastoral care work in the community that happens in our institutions, it is the second, or inward aspect that we work with most, as we relate with individuals within those institutions. Consequently it is our primary focus in this philosophy of pastoral care. This aspect is in effect the history of the individual person’s Self, contained in his or her memories of significant persons, places, events and groups; the ‘Myself’ or second person pole of the tripartite Self, containing and constituted by the ‘I’ and the ‘Me’.

But we need to say something further about the first aspect first. These are the external relationships within family and personal community, and the externalized processes of religion that support those relationships, such as the family meal, community rituals, communal affirmations of shared values and so on. Although they are the stuff of traditional pastoral care, they have not been a primary focus in pastoral care in the general community, for obvious reasons such as the traditional tension between different denominations and traditions. However in some circumstances that I am aware of these processes are becoming important to modern pastoral care in the community as well. Once we see the institution in which we work as the community we are dealing with, in all its multifaith, multicultural and secular glory, rather than a traditional religious group, the external processes can become important in our pastoral care work as well, such as organizing gatherings to give expression to communal grief regardless of religious or spiritual tradition, or planning and organizing special days. (note1).

One psychoanalytic writer has noted that the day a child first consciously accompanies its parents to the church, synagogue, mosque or temple is a very important day in that child’s life (note 2). This is the extension of the family as a personal community out into a wider personal group. Here the child meets other children and adults who will form relationships with the child as significant others in his or her life, especially figures like the priest, minister, rabbi or elder. But the child also witnesses her parents, who are to her as ‘gods’ as it were, acknowledging publicly Others who are not present physically, even praying to them and worshipping them; from ultimate figures like God, Christ, Allah or the Buddha, to
various heroes of the tradition who embody the virtues and values most honoured in the group. The child is likely to already have ideas and images around religious figures formed in the family, and now these very private thoughts and feelings are meeting the public or communal religious figures that watch over the community. There are many new ideas and things to think about, and new activities and rituals to participate in.

The outer rituals and acts of religious reflection that engage the whole personal community are fundamentally important, particularly if there is a reality about them that can effect transformation in people’s motives and attitudes to life. To feel forgiven, to feel led out of a withdrawn place of hurt or anger into a sense of communion and celebration and a sense of belonging, is crucial life process that can sustain and contain our positive sense of well being. These types of pastoral activities are usually conducted by the principal figures facilitating the gathered community. Equally important is the encouragement given to live life according to heterocentric principles and to commit to the welfare and good of the community. In the face of ordinary life religion needs to be intentional; and the intention is to be in positive relationship with others.

Its celebration of communion is also a strengthening of the will to community. The function of religion is then to mobilize and strengthen the positive elements in the motivation of its members, to overcome the negative motives where they exist, to prevent the outbreak of enmity and strife, to dominate the fear of the Other and subordinate the centrifugal to the centripetal tendencies in the community. (Macmurray 1986)

In my analysis, one aspect of this external side of religion is important for pastoral care generally. All groupings of human beings, be it for personal, pleasurable or utilitarian reasons need to be structured. Most are structured around one person, even if that person operates within a group of people. So we have the head of a corporation, the president of an association, the prime minister of a country. What is unique about a personal community, and by this I mean a community in which religious reflection and action take place in the sense I have presented, is that each member of that community stands in equal personal relation with the head. It is not an organic body; it is a personal community.
In a family each sibling stands in equal relationship with Mother and Father; and they relate together within the formal structure of the family through the parent. The parent is the personal Other with whom all members of the family have an equal relationship. As such the parent symbolizes or embodies, ideally speaking of course, the positive and heterocentric actions and communication that should characterize the actions and communication of all the members of the family. No member of the family can feel out of relationship with the parent figure for long without also beginning to feel alienated from the family community also. The family members know that the parent will go out of his or her way to re-assure them of her or his care and love, no matter what, even if at the same time it means upholding definite boundaries. He or she will put the ninety-nine in the ‘sheep-fold’ and go looking for the one who is lost or disconnected. This commitment is an expression of intention that sets the standard for the whole family.

So also then with the community of the church, mosque, temple or synagogue; all good pastoral care has this quality about it, a complete even handedness in which the carer’s actions are for the good of the community and all its members, and this at times may require great wisdom in negotiating the various relationship complexities. Little will test or even disrupt such a community more quickly than a priest, elder, rabbi or minister who does not deal equally with all members of the community.

In *pastoral care in the community*, which is our prime interest, the pastoral care practitioner likewise embodies certain values and virtues, and deals equally with everyone with whom he or she has contact. Just as a parental figure and a priest or rabbi needs to be someone who is genuinely trusted, so does a pastoral care practitioner working in the community. It is not an option; it is of the essence of pastoral care. We cannot alter and effect the dynamic of a group for good by our presence if we cannot treat all our external relationships even handedly. Not only do we love and care, we are seen to love and care.

Traditionally one of the group roles of the pastoral figure or chaplain is of the positive scapegoat, modeled on the goat prayed over on the Day of Atonement in ancient Israel when the sins of the people were placed on the goat and he was then
sent out into the wilderness. In this way the sins of the people were symbolically yet ‘really’ removed from the community. An effective pastoral care practitioner does a similar thing when he or she is trusted enough by everyone for them to speak openly to her or him about the personal comings and goings of the people involved; then the pastoral carer walks away, taking the confidences and confessions with her, out of the network of people in disjunction, who ideally now have the sense of having been heard and understood in their grievances. This cannot happen if the pastoral carer does not embody the values and virtues of genuine trust and concern for everyone equally.

For many now in our modern secular culture, this wider engagement from the family into other personal community is not focused in traditional religious community, but rather in one of many compensations, from various clubs, associations, and support groups, to child-minding centres and schools. These are now very important aspects of modern Australian society. But these compensatory communities are less likely to draw the participants fully into the personal significance of the celebration of communion together in a wider family on any regular basis. They are not gatherings only for the sake of personal relationships. It is fair to say also that family structure is no longer necessarily based on traditional models, and experiencing personal community within a family can no longer be assumed. We do not know what the final implications of these changes will be; we might even suspect that without effective personal community, we are losing the means by which persons can be fully formed as persons in a positive sense, and so be able to take their place effectively in the wider society. This, coupled with the growing impersonal nature of society, may mean that the ways and means of overcoming our natural and developed egocentricities simply do not exist, and the State is left to cope with this until further compensatory structures are developed.

The second primary aspect of religion, which is currently the main focus for pastoral care in the community, is the building up of an inner structure or soul within the individual which enables us to assume our individuality. We are not use to thinking of this as a religious process; I am proposing that it is, in that our inner structure is formed in our relationships with personal Others, and religion has its origins in the problematic of personal relationships. These inner relationships are formed by the
internalizing of our outer ones. We are formed and sustained in and through ‘I – You’ relationships, both in our external relations and in the internalized versions that structure our inner life, whether we are conscious of them or not. The work of Heinz Kohut has been introduced, and in the next chapter I will connect his key ideas on self object relationships with the form and unit of the personal proposed by Macmurray.

There is a direct continuum between our relationships with significant others, such as parents and teachers, and friends and companions which carry for us warm, affirming and sustaining feelings which we have internalized as self-object experiences and relationships, and the sense of relationship and trust that some may develop and feel, perhaps very deeply and privately, toward religious figures within their culture, from whom such people also seek to have self needs met. It is important to be clear about this continuum. Religion in European society and western society generally, is increasingly relegated to unverifiable, and therefore dismissible beliefs about a supernatural realm. Even amongst those who professionally support religion, such as Keith Ward (2004), religion is understood to be primarily about such a realm, while others, as already mentioned in referencing Bruce Rumbold (2002) wish to see the idea of religion collapsed into spirituality. I am proposing that contrary to this the essence of the religious process or function is personal relationship with others, especially others we idealize, and to a lesser extent places and objects, that are internalized and become part of the structure of our inner life. In this understanding religion is inescapable.

It is the internalization of the positive experiences an individual has within personal community such as families and religious groups, along with equal relationships with friends, companioning relationships with fellow travelers, idealizing relationships with people we admire and love, and challenging figures whom we know are acting with our best interests at heart, that enable us to find our own individuality; and these inner relationships continue in our lives as major inner resources and influences that enable us to keep going and cope with life’s difficulties. We can form a sense of such relationship with cultural religious figures and, for that matter, celebrities, leaders, sportspeople and so on. We draw something from such figures, and this something becomes an important part of who we are. I had a teacher when I was in
4th class in junior school who is still active for good within me; I and my fellow students knew he loved us and cared for us deeply. I can still feel tears form at times when I think about him, and how he made us laugh with his gentle and loving teasing, and how he remembered us by name years later as if we had been his sons. I feel his pride in us all, and I am strengthened by the memory. He gave me a sense that there is something unspeakably valuable in simple love and acceptance. Clear visual images come to mind when I think of him. He has been an inner resource figure for me all my life. These inner resources within our inner life are a prime focus of pastoral care in the community; helping others be in touch with and able to call upon such inner resources.

The opposite can apply also of course, where key figures in our lives trigger negative memories and associated feelings; in this case we will reject what these figures stand for in our estimation of them, just as we will reject the anti-heroes of our religious tradition; we have needed devils as much as angels to help tell us who we are not, as much as who we are or might be. There may even be figures for whom we carry traumatic memory systems, whose ongoing influence is negative and inhibitory. These aspects of our soul are more likely to be touched and dealt with within counseling and therapy, as we have discussed; but alongside such intervention, the pastoral role can augment further support by helping a person connect with resourceful sides of the person’s life and memory.

A culture’s religious figures, human or entirely spiritual, have traditionally played a central role in the structuring of a person’s inner life. The unraveling of this for European tradition was not only the rise of modern science and the negation of feeling, but the emergence of Protestantism, which de-idealized the saints and Mary, separated God as Creator even further from the natural world, and instituted the Bible as the primary focus, an intellectual focus with which any relational I-You quality was secondary, and externalized. This was a de-spiritualization, in that the inner life became primarily a matter of ideas. Any inner relationships with actual figures were no longer explicit and accepted and cultivated in the community’s religious discourse; personal inner relationship became very private, real and important, but not often very conscious or communicable. You argued about ideas instead. The great communion of saints that once contained a person’s soul and
inner life gave way to a virtually empty spiritual universe, made up principally of God and Christ and a Book, and Christ was often more an idea than an internalized person.

I first learnt my Christianity as an adult in a very Protestant group. When I offered for the Anglican ministry I joined an Anglo-Catholic parish and early on went to a Bible study at which a woman began talking about Jesus as a real person, not just a theological idea. I was genuinely amazed. This experience was in fact transformative; because of it, I have worked at relating to Jesus as a person within me whom I feel and think about and inter-relate with, and who as such is a major inner resource for me. Before, he had been an idea of the Son of God who came down from heaven and died for me on the Cross; the only inner resource in this is that I was encouraged to feel some pride and strength when I believed this and was therefore able to say I was saved and going to heaven. This potentially can elicit some comfort. But such ideas as inner resource are small compared to the sense of inner image I now have of a man so free within himself that he can cross any boundary, love the unlovable, call up the wind, remain positively motivated against every odd, and so on. Being the Son of God, whatever that means as an idea, is secondary to the inner images, including feelings that I have formed in my idealization of someone who embodies the values I most want to see in myself, but struggle to display because of my own particular history of withdrawals and returns. This inner relationship is deeply resourceful. I have similar but less well formed feelings toward the Buddha, and people like Nelson Mandela, but in their case I do not carry on any sort of inner conversation as I do with Christ. In principle, I could!

Mainline Protestantism is now much less cut off from a conscious recognition of an inner life, and the modern rise of interest in spirituality vis a vis religion (in the popular pejorative sense), along with psychology and psychotherapy, are all major factors in this. But popular Protestantism, whether under the name of fundamentalism or pentecostalism, tends to turn a de-spiritualized and unfocussed inner life into something to be actively avoided. Looking inward can uncover real problems and open the soul to demonic influence; don’t do it. God is to be related to but not as an inner reality and part of the soul’s relational structure, but as an external transcendent being. Introspection and inwardness are wrong and practices like
contemplation and meditation can be dangerous. God is ‘out there’ and on my side and is to be used as such; a very third person perspective (TPP) expression of the religious sentiment. Consequently, for such people there is little awareness of just who structures their soul in terms of their developmental history of important relationships; when you ask the right question, and provided the person is not put into conflict with their outward religious ‘faith’, they can bring to light inner relationship that is alive and active and taken for granted, rarely brought into reflection, and certainly never seen as being in a continuum with their relationship with religious figures, who are normally limited to God and Jesus, ‘out there’.

Kill off the externalized Protestant God in his aloneness, as he largely has been killed off within our European traditions, and relegate Jesus to a problematic figure in history, and you have modern atheism, benign for most, whimsical for people like radio personality Philip Adams, and aggressively active in others like the internationally known biologist Richard Dawkins (2007), who deems all religion as a dangerous delusion, not just an illusion. Such people would consciously disavow any drawing on cultural religious figures in the meeting of their inner structural needs, and many would even deny the whole concept of an inner life.

Russell Meares in his book *Intimacy and Alienation* reports two experiments in which people claimed no sense of an inner flow and life of images. The first was by Francis Galton, the first great experimenter in memory who conducted research amongst different sorts of people. He ‘found that the great majority of the men of science to whom I first applied protested that mental imagery was unknown to them…. They had no more notion of its true nature than a colour-blind man, who has not discerned his defect, has of the nature of colour’ (Meares 2000, p.13). The second was an experiment by John Flavell and his associates amongst college students. Only 76% could agree that their inner life was a ‘stream of consciousness’, 12% had no opinion and 12% said that it was ‘probably not true’ (note 3)

Meares concluded that,

> These findings support the possibility that for some people, a minority of the population, the experience of the self as the stream of consciousness is limited or stunted. (Meares 2000, p.14)
Meares is circumspect, as was Flavell, in offering an explanation for this. I am less so. My hypothesis is that people can be so focused externally, and this can be enhanced by certain occupations, that there is simply no conscious awareness of the inner workings behind this, no self reflection much at all. Their conversation is a chronicle of externalities; and yet they function well enough, and can even excel in some areas. It would require carefully focused questions and patience to begin to bring any inner awareness to light. I have known people who claim to be religious who have little or no inwardness. God and religion are entirely externalized. The atheist who also discounts an inner life, either introspectively, or objectively in the concept of the unconscious, is closer to such a ‘believer’ than the person with a rich inner life, atheistic or not, in which he or she is conscious of a full range of images from feelings to perceptions from all five senses at various levels of memory (note 4).

Atheism in our European tradition is now culturally supported in a number of ways. It seems to be increasingly taking the moral high ground. Nonetheless, I would suggest that however intellectually an atheist argues his reasons for his atheism or disavowal of religion, the chances that underneath these arguments lie negative feelings of disappointment, even abandonment and anger toward a person, living or dead, are high. In the end we lose faith in its most meaningful sense with persons not with ideas. Phillip Adams, who has generously shared his story over the radio and in newspaper articles, is a classic example of this (note 5).

However, and this is the crucial point for us as pastoral care practitioners to grasp, an atheist or person who rejects religion as he understands it, may have little or no inner relationship with cultural religious figures of the tradition he or she was born into, but nonetheless that person will have internalized relationships, or in Kohut’s terms, self object relationships, with key people in his or her life, significant ‘I-You’ relationships that have played a central part in the structuring of that person’s inner life. They will still be caught up in processes that I am proposing are in essence religious. We will return to these considerations later. In modern pastoral care in the community, we are not operating within a common world of shared beliefs, which is the typical situation in traditional forms of pastoral care within overtly religious
community. We are operating with wisdom within the nexus of personal relationships that constitute a person’s outer reality, and more especially, the internalization of key relationships in a person’s life over time which constitutes inwardly who he or she is now in the present.

Those of us who enjoyed loving and caring relationships within a family community and the wider personal communities in which we participated, in which we felt loved and accepted and could give safe expression to all our emerging feelings and motives without fear or anxiety, are likely to have a well structured inner life. We are likely to be able to self reflect well, to self sooth ourselves, to act spontaneously in a positive motive, and to risk initiating personal relationships which in itself can lead to further growth and maturity. We are likely to be able to self transcend, to place our interest in the other and not only in ourselves; to empathize. We care and love because we were first cared for and loved. We have been able to build an inner structure that coheres; just as we enjoy good external relationships of personal friendship. In Macmurray’s terms, all three poles or personal perspectives function well in a sense of unity as a particular person.

The reverse tends to apply to people who grew up in dysfunctional families or personal communities. These people are more likely to suffer from what is called developmental arrest, to greater or lesser degrees; their internalizing of relationships to form inner structure can be damaged and not be fully adequate for the challenge of life. They can find it hard to live in positive motives and are more often than not withdrawn into negative ones of either the flight or fight kind; chronically anxious or habitually angry and resentful. They live pre-dominantly in the FPP or TPP of their sense of self, and not the SPP. They can find it hard to cope with much emotional pressure, struggle to self sooth, have poor self reflection skills, and rarely act spontaneously. They cannot self transcend easily at all; they do not naturally empathize with others. Experiences can happen that re-dress, at least in part, this developmental inadequacy; some may come to a crisis point and get help in the way of counseling and therapy, some may fall in love and find positive relationships that they can use to re-build or re-form their inner life; some may ‘find religion’, which means in this case coming into a sense of feeling relationship with ‘something’ greater than themselves that they learn to trust and re-build themselves around; and
along with this they can become part of a personal community such as a church. Alcoholics Anonymous is a personal community built up around such a process.

Some however do not find adequate compensation in later life and develop personality disorders, even psychoses (note 6). All of us fit somewhere along the continuum between the open, positively motivated, self-transcending person who cares about the other, and the totally self-absorbed person who continually totters on the sense of inner fragmentation. It is worth noting, however, that not all self-absorbed or narcissistic people are at risk of inner fragmentation; some wear fine suits and make lots of money, leaving a trail of damaged people behind them.

In saying that pastoral care in the community deals more with this second primary aspect of religion, I am meaning that modern pastoral care within society’s institutions works predominantly with individuals, and does not work with the whole community using externalized means of religion, or at least only secondarily. As we have noted, this may change in the future if multifaith pastoral care grows in influence. In other words, we do not often gather people within institutions for overtly religious purposes. When this does happen it is usually conducted by chaplains as people authorized by one or other religious group or denomination. Pastoral care practitioners, on the other hand, work with individuals or small groups where the focus is on the inner resources that individuals may or may not have within themselves that have been formed through relationships.

We do have a consciousness of the community in which we work however, because a great deal of the interpersonal issues that may arise in pastoral conversations will be issues that are arising between people within the hospital or school or nursing home. In that sense the community within which we work is the community that makes up that hospital, school or nursing home. Our work is supporting individuals but also helping and supporting the general and personal atmosphere of that particular organization. We are facilitating the personal side of life for people amidst the functional and impersonal demands that characterize that particular organization; we are introducing elements of community, in Macmurray’s sense, into associations and societies that are otherwise dominated by tasks and common interests.
So the community reference in pastoral care in the community is primarily to the institution in which it is being practiced and only secondarily to church and religious communities outside the institution. This is a major change from the time when different religious groups provided pastoral care to their own people and no one else within an organization such as a hospital. It is this development in our understanding of pastoral care, enabled by the secularity and multifaith nature of our general society, that this philosophy is seeking to respond to. Love and care as fundamental motives within our interpersonal relationships are not the prerogative of any particular religious group or organization; they are universal elements in the ongoing struggle of human community.

Notes

1. My first experience of pastoral care relating to the institutional community as its community, rather than a particular denomination or religious group, was on the campus of the University of Canberra. The pastoral care department began to facilitate external relationships within that community, including the running of Harmony days, communal activities and interactions between foreign students, activities for children of staff and students that brought their families into the life of the campus, and so on.

2. This phenomenon is pointed to by Ana-Maria Rizzuto in her book *The Birth of the Living God*, and discussed further by Robert Coles in his *The Spiritual Life of Children*.

3. An interesting example of an atheist with a rich inner life he was aware of is that of Dick Gross, Head of the Municipal Association in Victoria, interviewed on Radio National’s Law Report (30.01.07). Gross argued for the retention of ceremonies marking the beginning of the legal year being held in places of religion because of the added dimension of the transcendent such places enabled that would not be possible in an entirely secular setting. He assured us of his atheism several times while advocating this. The dichotomy for pastoral care is not so much between theist and atheist as between awareness of an inner life and lack of such awareness.


5. In the multifaith training program I used an article by Phillip Adams (The Weekend Australian Magazine, June 24-25, p.50) from a weekend magazine where he discussed his atheism. I asked the group to imagine how they might respond to him if they walked in and
found him in the hospital bed. For many pastoral care practitioners working in the
community rather than within a denomination or religious tradition, meeting an erudite,
intelligent atheist is an ultimate challenge. I wanted them to begin to relate to such a person
not as an ‘enemy’ but someone whose inner life is in principle structured as theirs is, but with
different focal points and content. The principles of empathy and self transcendence on the
part of the carer, apply as much to such a person as with anyone else. I believe it is hard to
find an educated atheist who is not interested in serious music, for instance, and uses music
or some other art form as part of the ongoing movement and stimulus of his or her inner life.

6. The personality disorders and therapy for such conditions is a major focus of the self
psychology movement begun by Heinz Kohut (see various references) and the
intersubjectivists such as Robert Stolorow (see references). An engaging introduction to
Kohut can be found in Lee and Martin (1991)
Chapter 8

The Structure of Our Inner Life

Synopsis: The structure of our souls or inner life at the personal level is formed through our relationships with other persons or objects that we imbue with personal meaning. These relationships, which are internalized as inner self-object relationships, can be analyzed according to the form of the personal, as has been unknowingly done independently by Heinz Kohut and J.L. Moreno. The pastoral care practitioner becomes skilled at relating to this inner structure within pastoral conversation, because it constitutes a person’s inner resourcefulness and resilience, and conversation imbued with this positive feeling in a relationship where the carer shows genuine regard and interest can completely alter their capacity to cope with their situation.

In Chapter 3, The Form of the Personal, we noted that just as there are three personal perspectives that order our relationships in our interaction with the world, so there are three personal perspectives to be considered in thinking about ourselves and our inner structure and its relationships. I carry within myself three polarities that form a unity; I am an ‘I’, a ‘Me’ which is my sense of self as an empirical object, and a ‘Myself’, which is who I think and feel myself to be as a person, a ‘You’, a personal being in relation to other persons. These three poles form a unity according to the form and unit of the personal. ‘Myself’ contains and is constituted by my ‘I’ and my ‘Me’ as these have changed and formed over my life of interaction with others. I am primarily my memories of significant others who have interacted with me since my birth, the relationships that have formed me, and the complex, multi-layered affects or feelings that are associated with those memories.

Heinz Kohut has made a particular contribution to understanding the ‘You’ perspective within the structure of the personal and the person. From the moment our mothers first take us into their arms, communication begins and a proto-conversation emerges; our sense of being a ‘You’ takes its first faltering steps. Where such relationship is characterized by mutual affection, friendship and intimacy, in which fear of acting wrongly is minimal and so consequently we can relax in the relationship and disclose the flow of our own consciousness without anxiety, we in part internalize that person, the relationship we enjoy with them, and who we feel ourselves to be in that relationship as a ‘You’; and we continue to experience these three things within ourselves when we are not actually relating to that person directly. In other words, such warm empathic personal connection builds
inner structure which gives us a sense of who we are to others and hence must be in ourselves. We form self object relations within ourselves. We build a strong second person perspective in our Self, our ‘You’, and this enables us to act in the world with confidence and positive motivation, willing to ‘see’ and be ‘seen’ and to relate to the Other rather than remain withdrawn and defensive, preoccupied with ourselves. (note 1)

Kohut identified three types of personal relationship that particularly and positively build our sense of being a ‘You’; these relationships are both immediately supportive as external relationships, but also as relationships we have internalized and which have become self-object relationships. The first is mirroring relationships, and as the name implies it is a personal relationship in which each person mirrors the other, so that the other feels him or herself to be understood, seen, listened to, and appreciated. It is symbolized by two friends facing each other directly and talking and listening empathically to each other. The relationship is equal, mutual and reciprocal, ideally speaking, but of course in the cut and thrust of life one person may need to be listened to more than the other, at least on some occasions. Mirroring experiences are vital from birth. Without them our second person perspective will not develop properly, and so also our capacity to engage others personally. We will not have a strong sense of who we are to others. Good mirroring experiences on the other hand mean that our internal structure as formed within ourselves will be strong and resilient, and even if we do suffer major set-backs or disjunctions in a personal relationship, we have well formed inner resources to help sustain us in our withdrawal and reflection about this particular event or relationship, and hence the capacity to grow further by making a good return to the relationship or situation in a positive motive, within the pattern of withdrawal and return. Our capacity to self transcend later in life is directly dependent on the internalizing of warm, empathic relationships we have earlier in life, of which mirroring is a major form. Such relationships at the time are beyond our initiative or control. We are born into a pre-existing social matrix; what we need to develop properly is outside our control. The right relationships are either offered to us or not; or perhaps insufficiently. In this fact lies the original insight that later came to be distorted theologically in some traditions and called original sin, where the matrix one is born into is dominated by the negative that we have no way of avoiding (note 1).
The second type of personal relationship Kohut called *twin-shipping*. Twin-shipping is a relationship in which I do something with someone else in a way that has a sense of mutual and intimate cooperation, perhaps around a common task. It is the experience of the ‘we’. It is symbolized by two persons going for a walk together, talking mutually about the world they experience, and their lives up to this point. It has a different dynamic to mirroring; it is more reflective, contemplative, perhaps expansive, and there is a quality of companionship. The two friends are not looking at each other as they walk but at a common world, reflecting on images from the past and sharing these reflections. One of Kohut’s examples of twin-shipping is of a little girl making a cake at the kitchen bench with Grandma. They are joined in a mutual task; they face the same way, they are enjoying both the task and each other; they are a ‘we’. The little girl drinks in this sense of connection with Grandma. She belongs to something greater than herself. Such relationship is the basis of a sense of belonging to a personal community, that is internalized and hence operative within the person’s inner structure even when they are away from the community. It is then also, along with mirroring relationships, an internalized resource.

The third personal relationship Kohut called *idealizing*. This is a relationship in which a person projects a sense of the good or ideal, perhaps also the sacred, onto another person who then carries that part of the person until they are ready to withdraw the projection and own the ideals and values they see in the other person as their own. The need for idealizing experiences in the early years of life are fundamentally important, but for most people the need continues throughout life whether they are aware of it or not. The little boy who idealizes his father and waits for him to return home at night to be lifted up into the air in mutual delight, one day comes out wearing his father’s outrageously large shoes; this is an illustration of the importance of idealization as an inner energy and resource, and its gradual internalization through modeling and empathic identification. If the need for idealization is denied, if the father for instance does not respond positively and allow himself to be idealized, the little boy experiences a profound disappointment. The potential projection does not occur and is instead held in the boy’s psyche as an unfulfilled need waiting for fulfillment; the basis possibly for either a desperate need to merge with someone in later life, or to habitually look for a guru to follow, or to
self idealize and become captive to feelings and thoughts of inappropriate
grandiosity. Idealizing is a vital form of personal relationship, but is doubly
problematic; it involves both the initial relationship in which the idealizing takes
place, and its resolution into some sense of equality; not dissimilar to the problematic
that exists in a child’s relationship with his or her parents.

One of Kohut’s closest colleagues, Ernest Wolf, identified a fourth personal
relationship of great importance in the structuring of the self, a relationship he called
adversarial (note 3). We need someone in our lives who calls us to account, and
without this we struggle to form appropriate boundaries in relationships with others
and with the issues of life generally. The adversarial relationship works best if the
person who provides this for us is also someone we feel warm relationship towards,
or even better, we idealize; and we believe has our best interests at heart. Otherwise
there is a risk that fear of the person becomes the dominant feeling or motive and
hence brings about a withdrawal from active relationship to cope with this fear. The
better situation is that such relationship is provided by someone we love and idealize,
while at the same time fearing, but the fear remaining subordinated to the love and
idealization. This might be what was meant by the ‘fear of God’; a fear subordinated
to love, and as such then the beginning of wisdom. The less satisfactory situation is
one that often happens and was investigated primarily in British Object Relations
theory, which has strong parallels to Kohut’s Self Psychology, where the Object, the
parent say, is both loved and feared but in a way that is then split within the child’s
psyche into a good parent and a bad parent. The same sort of splitting at the grander
communal level is possibly the origin of the Devil. If an adversary only ‘has it in for
us’ with no sense of relief through other feelings of care and love, he or she is
certainly experienced as completely against us, ‘the enemy’, and our whole life is
threatened with a sense of ‘extinction’.

It is worth noting that the founder of psychodrama, J.L. Moreno proposed a similar
analysis of the key relationships that form the self, and he did this many years before
Kohut. He proposed mirroring in exactly Kohut’s sense. Twin-shipping he called
doubling. Within a psychodrama, a doubler goes and stands beside the protagonist
and amplifies and augments the protagonist’s statements as a way of exploring the
deeper meanings present in what the protagonist is saying. The third relationship he
called role reversal, in which the protagonist in the drama takes up the role of the person from his real life that he or she is working on within the drama. It is the idealizing pole in our being that most seeks to role reverse with the person we idealize, and effective role reversal is the resolution of our idealizing transference. Similarly, being able to role reverse effectively with someone who challenges us can be the resolution of an adversarial transference; it can defuse the illusion about the other we have built up in our withdrawal from him. What psychodrama tries to do is artificially set up a theatre of action in which all four relationships are made conscious and used to help build more effective inner structure within the protagonist. (note 4)

I want now to relate these personal relationships Kohut has identified with Macmurray’s structure of the personal. Twin-shipping is a first person perspective phenomenon that builds up our sense of being a subject belonging to other subjects, a ‘We – You’ as well as an ‘I – You’. It is the relationship of belonging, a fundamentally important inner resource. Mirroring is a third person perspective phenomenon in which we come to know who we are as we are mirrored in close friendships. Within such relationships we are both an ‘I – You’ and a ‘You – I’. Idealization is the second person perspective, as is the adversarial relationship; the relationship within us that contains and is constituted by the other two. It is the way we see the Other as someone we would like to be like that most contains the possibility of our own personal growth and self transcendence. The idealized person is the call and invitation to become; to self transcend into being like the person we now only idealize. And if we hesitate at this challenge, they might in turn at least be the person to call us to account and provide us with the necessary boundaries to hold us in the hope we might one day take the step.

Now Kohut developed his ideas of these fundamental personal relationships within the context of psychoanalysis and therapy to alleviate serious morbidity caused by developmental arrest around the lack or inadequacy of such relationships in early life. His focus in other words was on therapeutic problems; and his role as therapist was to help redress this imbalance in the client by providing something of these relationships in a controlled therapeutic environment, so allowing some compensation now for what was not provided then. The therapist allows him or her
self to be engaged by transferences from the client within which the therapist then works to enable the client to come out of their morbid withdrawnness to re-engage life positively. Such therapy is aimed at building or re-building the ‘You’ in a person’s life, through mirroring, twin-shipping, idealizing and adversarial relationships with the therapist. Consequently these four forms of personal relationship in this context are referred to as self-object transferences. They are projections out of unfulfilled need of personal inner structure which if fulfilled would allow the person to cope better as a separate person. The goal of the therapy is to help that person belatedly develop such inner structure.

Such intense therapeutic relationship is not the work of pastoral care; but it is helpful for pastoral carers to be conversant with these relationships as transferences that occur out of developmental need so that they can be recognized if and when they emerge in a caring relationship. This is not out of the question in situations particularly where a carer has a longer term relationship with a patient who begins to experience the carer’s care in a way that excites other more deeply buried needs within his or her psyche. It becomes in these situations a case of managing such transferences wisely without causing further let down and disappointment, but on the other hand not being drawn into the possibly deeper implications. These transferences are not repetitive transferences that arise out of specific traumas and events in a person’s life; they are transferences arising out of arrested development in which what was required for the development of inner structure through relationship with key persons such as parents was not there at the age appropriate moment in his or her life. That such developmental arrests might increase the possibility of specific trauma and hence repetitive transferences out of these experiences, however, is highly likely.

But there are implications in these self object relationships which are the business of modern pastoral care in the community to work with. We all carry need in these areas throughout our lives even as relatively well formed and mature persons, and this need can manifest when other areas of our lives are under pressure. All of us can benefit by actual relationships within personal community that help meet our inner needs; in other words ongoing friendship in which our mirroring, twin-shipping, adversarial and idealizing needs are most likely to be met. So we belong to personal
communities of which religious organizations and churches are the primary form outside the family; the reason for such organizations is the support and maintenance of our lives as persons.

In a personal community such as a church that is stable and working well, you will find all four self object relationships available to the membership, summed up by the word friendship, as I have presented it in this philosophy. People mirror each other, they do things together, they are challenged, and they look up to someone. If the minister or priest, or for that matter the mullah or rabbi is not at least respected but better still admired and idealized, then the community will be vulnerable to negative motives creeping into relationships, and the community will fail in its capacity to offer the necessary self object relationships that assist and support its members in the rest of their lives. If all four relationships are available the community will grow and the needy as well as the more or less functioning will gather. They all stand in equal relationship, or should, both to the pastoral care and ministry of the community, and the symbols of its central focus, the figures most idealized, be they God, a founder, or a saint.

Within this broader picture of pastoral care and the self object relationships that build a sense of ‘You’ in persons, the pastoral carer can also work directly with the second person perspective of a person’s self, by seeing it rather as a major area of inner resource that a person has developed through their personal experiences of mirroring, twin-shipping, idealizing and adversarial relationships earlier in their lives. To activate this resource in memory by asking an appropriate question, or picking up a clue in the conversation and encouraging the patient to talk further about that relationship, be it a person, place or object, brings into the here and now images of that Other, and the relationship, especially the associated feelings; and further and most importantly the patient’s own sense of being a positive ‘You’ that he or she gained in that original relationship. This alters the feeling ambience within the patient, and consequently how they might then cope with their current situation. So if in a pastoral conversation a patient begins to talk about someone in a way that clearly indicates they admire or idealize this person, the carer draws this out; so also if it is clear the patient belongs to a particular group; or has a particular friend. Alternatively, the carer can ask a specific question, such as ‘Who would you say is
someone you have particularly admired in your life?’, or ‘Tell me about your friends’.

Self object relationships are normally formed with other persons. But it is inherent in the nature of the second person perspective, the ‘You’ aspect of the self, to personalize life, and in doing this we can form feeling relationships which can be internalized as positive supportive inner structure with places, objects, pets, gardens, music, books, works of art and so on, even abstract ideas in which we have invested some positive emotional energy. The self-object relationship is not primarily with the object or place itself, but with the internalized images of that object or place, and the relationship we feel with those images. This is a subject/object situation because it is all going on within, in the inner life of the person. Action and inter-relatedness with these objects and places formed the original relationship, and this is in part internalized; it is then my relationship with these internalized images that is part of the structure of my inner self. So just as appropriate questions can be asked about persons, so also they can be asked about places, objects, music, and so on; or a clue might be given in the conversation that the carer can pick up. In meditation and prayer, using such relationships to maximize the positive feelings a patient might feel here and now, can be very effective in marshalling inner resources that are part of the person’s second person perspective. 

While the primary source of selfobject experiences comes from other people, the beauty of nature, the inspiration of poetry and music, the lure of ideals like truth and justice, all contribute to self cohesion. The capacity to be moved by art, uplifted by music, awestruck by nature, inspired by a text, or motivated by an ideal are as much signs of healthy selfhood as comforting a friend, being empathic with a lover, or supporting a child in her choices. All of these healthy selfobject processes have found a place within lived religion. (Jones 2002, p.32)

Some objects in our environment become what D.W. Winnicott called transitional objects, the classic example being a small child’s teddy bear with which the child plays and thus creates an ‘intermediate area of experience’ which stands at the interface of the outer world, and the world of inner psychological process. In our development such objects, which are imbued with inner personal meaning, are the
key factors in the development of our imagination. The child talks to both the external bear as someone real and very important, and to the bear in imagination; along with the other objects used in the play space. They become inner companions as well as external friends.

Into this play area the child gathers objects or phenomena from external reality and uses these in the service of some sample derived from inner or personal reality..... In playing, the child manipulates external phenomena in the service of the dream and invests chosen external phenomena with dream meaning and feeling. (Winnicott 1971, p.51)

As adults, we do similar things with the objects of deep and real meaning to us. We are just not as open in how, when and where we do it! We are more likely to play in private! Winnicott also saw such inner workings of the child as the basis of the arts and sciences, in other words culture. In this he joins Macmurray.

(The transitional object) is not forgotten or mourned. It loses meaning, and this is because the transitional phenomena have become diffused, have become spread out over the whole intermediate territory between ‘inner psychic reality’ and ‘the external world as perceived by two persons in common’, that is to say, over the whole cultural field. At this point my subject widens out into that of play, and of artistic creativity and appreciation, and of religious feeling, and of dreaming. (Winnicott 1971, p.5)

The second person perspective also plays a central role in a person’s inner conversation, either with himself or with an internalized other. Following Northoff and Heinzel in this, as introduced earlier, the first person perspective (FPP) in abstraction experiences mental states immediately and so provides intrasubjective experience. But it cannot recognize these states as such and hence cannot communicate mental states to other persons. Mental states are recognized, and hence named, from the second person perspective (SPP); and this capacity can only develop in relationships with other persons. It is others who give us the language to name and hence communicate an inner mental state; Mother says ‘Johnnie is happy today’. So Johnnie now has a name for what he feels and a means to communicate it. So we are not able to experience mental states in general in the SPP, but we are able to
recognize them and judge them as they are experienced in the FPP. This recognition is direct and immediate.

The recognition of mental states in SPP can be regarded as a kind of nexus between private experience (via FPP) and public communication (via TPP) – the SPP thus provides *intrasubjective communication* so that the person can communicate with him/herself. (Kircher and David 2003, p.43)

The TPP cannot experience or recognize mental states, but it can recognize psychological and behavioural states in other persons. It recognizes public states, in other words, and hence then provides the basis for *inter-subjective communication*. So the mental states of other persons are indirectly recognized in the third person perspective through psychological and behavioural manifestations. The personal or inner implications of this is understood by someone else through a second person perspective inference which links the psychological or behavioural manifestation in person A to the intrasubjective experience in the experience and memory of person B that is recognized as such and so communicated by person B’s SPP. This is the basis and process of empathy. People without a well developed second person perspective or ‘You’ find it hard to recognize and so communicate their own inner state, and also lack the capacity to empathize with the inner state of someone else. They cannot coordinate and mediate between what they experience of themselves subjectively in the FPP and what they experience of others objectively in the TPP.

So in a person with a well developed SPP, the personal perspective schema Macmurray claimed as the basis of the personal life, a sense of being a ‘You’ is internalized within the individual as the basis of their own inner conversation; the ‘I’ and ‘You’ talk about the ‘He, She, It’, the second person perspective mediating between the other two. *We talk to ourselves as we would another person.*

However true this may be, and I think it is fundamentally true, some people find it intensely difficult to recognize that they talk to themselves within themselves; for some the suggestion is a sign of imbalance. Others own it easily, and talk to themselves aloud whenever the opportunity presents itself. At the same time, while we can be the personal other to ourselves with whom we interact in conversation within ourselves and sometimes out aloud, the inner other can also be the
internalized images of a real and separate person in our lives who has become a part of us in an ongoing and deeply personal sense. In Kohut’s terms, our relationship with this person inside ourselves is a self-object relationship, and it is an active relationship in which there is communication and interaction, all in images contained in memory and brought forward as required onto the theatre of consciousness in its flow of feelings, images, ideas and perceptions.

It is these phenomena and the bringing of them forth in conversation that is a central part of modern pastoral care in the community. They are the basis of both our spirituality and our religious self which can constitute inner resourcefulness and resilience. Before we develop this further we need to take up the issues of identity, especially religious identity, and belief. Both identity and belief can contribute to our sense of stability and well being, and in that sense be considered personal inner resource, but in both cases, it is inner resource that can be easily caught up in defensiveness and egocentric need. One of the paradoxes of life at the personal and religious levels is that the most balanced and stable people who are largely positively motivated and whose intentions are formed predominantly by the reality of the Other, are people who have little need to be defensive about themselves. In fact, they appear to be accepting of just about everything; believing all things and nothing, holding close only those beliefs that they can confirm and validate in their own personal experience and relationships. Effective pastoral carers are just such people on the whole. They are able to relate to others in all their foibles and yet know how to respond in ways that will help those others connect with what helps to sustain and support their inner lives, and give them a sense of belonging.

Notes

1. A good account of Kohut’s ideas are given in Lee and Martin (1991). Two of his major texts are also referenced (1977 and 1984). The latter was published posthumously.

2. Macmurray refers to original sin as hatred that is an original and yet necessary motive in the constitution of the personal. I am suggesting that original sin is the possible dysfunction of the family relationship network we are born into that influences our life negatively long before we are old enough to be self determining and able to do anything about it. It is sin for which we are not accountable and yet effects our lives, profoundly in the case of borderline personality disorder and
schizophrenia. But as D.W. Winnicott said our parenting need only be ‘good enough’ for original blessing to subordinate any original sin!


4. Some of J.L. Moreno’s key texts are referenced. The leading exponent of psychodrama in Australia and New Zealand is Max Clayton who has also written prolifically on the subject. A major recent text is referenced, *The Living Spirit of the Psychodramatic Method*. 
Chapter 9

Belief and Religious Identity

Synopsis: Religious identity has traditionally played an important role in our understanding of ‘who we are’, but often worked defensively in helping us rather to know ‘who we are not’. The emphases of different forms of religious belief can be analyzed according to the form of the personal, just as can the different types of belief. Primary belief is about what we know in interpersonal relationships, secondary belief and tertiary belief in what we apprehend through feeling and thought respectively. Primary belief is largely expressed through action; secondary and tertiary belief is reflective and hence problematic and is validated through action. Tertiary belief about the world is what James referred to as ‘over-belief’; both science and theology are forms of over-belief. It does not play a large role in interpersonal activity except where the belief lies close to our sense of self and identity. Pastoral care seeks to be expert in primary knowledge, and in relating to the personal meanings a person may place in their over-belief.

I have proposed in this training program that despite our different religious and spiritual backgrounds, we are united in pastoral care through a common commitment to act in the community with love and care that is in the interest of Others. This commitment is part of our identity as pastoral care practitioners. But there are other identities at work within us as well, some more important than others. I want to explore some aspects of religious identity as they touch us in our everyday life, and the beliefs that are at work within these identities. This is a challenging topic; the question of religious identity is one of the most important issues facing the world today. It is clearly also very important in the whole idea of multifaith pastoral care.

In introducing the ideas of Heinz Kohut, we saw that all four of the self object relationships he identified help us develop a coherent and stable inner world or sense of self and identity. All four self object relationships are present in a healthy family life, and a healthy personal community such as a church or religious organization. We can make mirroring relationships of friendship; we can idealize key figures including priests, imams and ministers, not to speak of God and the Buddha or whoever; we are challenged by people we admire; and we have the experience of twinship, of belonging, or ‘we-ness’, both in ritual activities but also in such things as community fairs and fetes. Religious community has therefore traditionally been an essential contributor to our formation. It also gives us identity markers that are
shorthand symbols of who we are at that level. I am a ‘Catholic’ say. For many
today who no longer participate in religious community for the meeting of personal
needs outside the family, the need for such community is met to varying degrees and
compensated for by support groups, interest groups, clubs and circles of genuine
friends. When someone declares he is a ‘Rabbitoh’ supporter he can be disclosing an
identity marker as important to his sense of self as the ‘Catholic’ who declares his.

Religious identity in a denominational sense within much of our European tradition
is now weak; in fact to be secular is now an identity itself over and against any
traditional religious identity. This appears to be having at least two interesting
effects. On the one hand, people from different denominational traditions are doing
things together in groups, including worship, on grounds quite other than traditional
religious identity. This is not ecumenism; it is something more than this because the
groups have their own identity and focus that in a sense is transcending but not
necessarily negating traditional denominational identity. And for reasons that I make
clear below, they are not necessarily rushing in to put a ‘Christian’ identity marker
on the group either. I belong to such a group and within it I experience all four self
object relationships. The question of my being an Anglican is not an issue. I have a
helpful sense of belonging to the Open Sanctuary as a community I identify with,
and this helps to sustain me; something quite unrelated to being Anglican or not
(note1). What is important to me, and I believe to most of the other community
members is the relationships we share together and the sense of unity that is ritually
enacted in one way or another. There is a special quality of friendship or connection
in this. So for me, one effect of weakened denominational identity has been to help
me see what is really important in religious community that I can directly feed on
wherever it may be.

However, identity markers can be amazingly powerful in helping a person feel who
they are and where they belong, while at the same time be surprisingly empty of any
substance and at times essentially negative. I first realized this when talking to a
neighbour who was adamantly Church of England. The identity marker he claimed
was clearly very important to him. But I knew for a fact he had not been to church
for years and knew little or nothing about the Church of England ‘faith’ as opposed
to any other. It became clear that what he really meant by being adamantly Church
of England was that he was in absolutely no way Catholic; this is a heritage my father was born into also. I did not doubt that so powerful was this negative identity marker in my neighbour’s life that there would be circumstances when it would motivate actions, and they would not be positive actions. This identity marker assured him in what he was not, but did little in telling him who he was and how such an identity contributed positively to his life. It was more or less defensive.

The ordinary language philosopher J.L.Austin (1962) has suggested that in the use of some words, such as those that imply ‘identity’ or ‘sameness’, even ‘reality’ or ‘existence’, ‘the negative use wears the trousers’. The words have little or no positive meaning but take their meanings from what they exclude (note2). My neighbour was Church of England as a way of not being Catholic. This negative aspect of how we can construct identity is important and cuts to the core. For me the identity ‘Christian’ as it is often used now is in some sense just such a negative ‘that wears the trousers’. People who take it strongly to themselves seem to be saying who they are not as much as who they are. To match this, the word ‘Christian’ is used increasingly by those who are not ‘Christian’ to describe ‘someone who holds narrow and unverifiable beliefs’; someone they are not, in their open secularity! Again the negative is ‘wearing the trousers’ all round. To be honest, I also don’t want to be labeled with an identity the meaning of which is ‘not me’. To be as open and inclusive as I can is a value that is important to me. I am certainly a member of a Christian church; that is matter of fact. I am more than happy to also ‘be a Christian’ if that can be framed in positive terms and not be something in which ‘the negative wears the trousers’ either in my mind or within the minds of others.

This strange power of identity markers was illustrated also through a friend who converted to being a Moslem. He had been at one stage a personal assistant to an Anglican bishop and had a detailed and broad understanding of the Church. His life became derailed at one point; people were questioning his work, he was going into serious debt, and his family separated themselves completely from him in a way that was cruelly pre-meditated. He was very lost. One day in a Laundromat, a group of Moslem women approached him, gave him a leaflet and invited him to a house meeting. They were there again the following week, and this time he responded and went to the meeting. The following week he became a Moslem. Shortly after that he
presented himself on my doorstep in his new identity, including a change of name, and proudly presented me with a copy of the Koran. He eventually married a Moslem woman and settled completely into his new personal community and identity. At the point he decided to become a Moslem, he probably knew little or nothing about Islam; but once he had crossed the line, and made the decision as it were, he took on a sense of who he was regardless of content, and immediately had this shift strongly affirmed by a whole new community of people relating to him at personal levels and meeting his self object needs. His newly adopted identity marker gradually took on content; but the content was secondary to the identity shift supported by self object relationships he found in the moment of conversion to the Moslem community. He was able to re-build his life from this new foundation.

The developmental psychologist Erik Erikson suggested that a sense of identity means “the accrued confidence that one’s ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity… is matched by the sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others” (note3). It is well known that people who are able to maintain themselves and cope positively in very difficult circumstances, such as concentration camps, entrapments, and acute isolation, are people who can think to themselves that if they were not in such circumstances they would be with people who love and accept them, and give their life meaning. In other words they would be surrounded by personal community. In the sense proposed by Kohut, these people are in fact in some sense with the person in their isolation, as inner personal objects with whom the person feels relationship and with whom some important forms of interaction, communication and even communion takes place within the inner dynamics of the person, as we discussed in the last chapter. Such a person has a solid identity and knows who he is. Some of those inner relationships will be with cultural figures with whom personal or emotional relationship is felt. The opposite is equally true; those who can think to themselves that if they were not in this situation, life would be still pretty empty and without meaning or affirming relationship, are people who are less likely to cope and survive. There is not an active sustaining sense of inner relationship with people to whom warm positive affects are felt, and from whom meaning for the self is taken. They lack a sense of personal community both inwardly and outwardly. Who they are, their identity, is in crisis.
This leads us to the second and contrary aspect of the weakening of denominational identity. While some like me are finding meaning simply in human relationships at religious and spiritual levels, others are helped by becoming very definitely Christian. Christians have appeared strongly in some quarters to fill the denominational identity void; but I think on the whole ‘the negative is wearing the trousers’ here also. This shift now puts the identity issue as something between world traditions rather than between denominational traditions. When I was growing up there were very few Christians around in Australia, as far as people using ‘Christian’ as a primary identity marker was concerned. Most people were either, Catholic, Church of England, Methodist, Presbyterian and so on. Only groups such denominations looked down on a bit claimed to be ‘Christian’. I remember being with a group of Anglican grammar school friends when we saw a bus with Baptist written on its side and one of us asked who they were. ‘They are Christians’ was the reply. This was the first time I had heard that particular identity marker as such. It sounded so strange in my world then that I have remembered the occasion ever since.

The weakening of denominational identity in Australian culture has seen the emergence and strengthening of ‘Christian’ as an identity marker; lots of Christians around now, alongside ‘secularists’ and members of other religious traditions. But if the negative meaning of this is still largely ‘wearing the trousers’, a Christian is someone who is not something else, and any positive meaning is subordinated to this. They are for instance an evangelical or fundamentalist which means not being a liberal. But it is in not being something else that the trouble lies and makes such religion, denominational or universal, essentially defensive, and in being defensive essentially egocentric, as Macmurray would call it.

The most powerful religious identity marker in the world now is of course Islam, despite some severe cracks. The genius of Islam as an identity marker I think is the word itself. While giving identity to a vast group of people that crosses over and covers many cultural and ethnic boundaries, it seems to point also to some ‘object’ somewhere, as if ‘Islam’ is a something in its own right. We do not talk about ‘Islamity’ or ‘Islamism’ as is the case with other world traditions. So the sense of identity is not only between people, it is with this ‘something’. In our European tradition, perhaps there was something similar at work when people would identity themselves with ‘the Church’. This is still found amongst Catholics, but I think even
there it is dying. I wonder if this added dimension to Islamic identity might be something that can help us all. Who or what is Islam? If this can be framed in positive terms and not in ‘what Islam is not’, it seems to me this could help us all turn the corner (note 4). The clash of traditions is a clash of identities in which the negative on all sides is ‘wearing the trousers’. But once I start to know who I am positively, rather than who I am not, I move from being defensive to being open and inclusive; and my sense of identity comes down to those relationships in my life within personal community that have enabled me to find inner structure and a sense of who I am, regardless of identity markers. To take this further, let me return to Macmurray’s contribution to what religion is, positively speaking.

Empirical religion as we actually find it can be analyzed in Macmurray’s schema under the FPP, the first person perspective, and the TPP, the third person perspective. As in our analysis of motive, the spectrum of characteristics under each perspective ranges from the benign to the extreme.

FPP religion in its extreme form is a withdrawal from the world, sometimes to the point even of denying reality to anything but the spiritual. The real is the ideal, a contemplative place as old as Plato. The identity need is to belong, to be part of, to experience some form of ultimate ‘we-ness’. This can become a desire to merge with the Other, to lose one’s self in the other; it is the basis of much mysticism. We lose our own individual identity as a separate self in fully identifying with the Other. In its benign form it is religion that is more interested in spirituality than religion, contemplation rather than relationship engagement, being rather than interacting. *Sameness* with others is expressed in common ritual, the mutual participation in community rites. The reality of the material world is not denied but is *felt* as a sacrament or symbol of a deeper reality. The person feels that his or her essential being is in this contemplative place. There is an identifying with life, with the wind, with the dancing movement of the trees. (note 5)

The extreme form of TPP religion, on the other hand is *not* losing oneself in the Other, but wanting the Other to conform to one’s self so that everyone is the *same*. The identity need is to have everyone like me. People in such religion like to see themselves mirrored in everyone else. We are the same, and this sameness usually
finds expression in what is believed in the propositional sense, or else in the power of the main identity marker that identifies the group – we are all evangelicals together for instance. To believe differently is an Otherness against which it is important to defend. Such otherness threatens identity. If I listen to strange beliefs others may have, I might well have my own beliefs undermined and I will become unsure of who I am. So threatening can such difference be that I am justified in very egocentric actions to defend the ‘truth’ and uphold my own identity. In its benign form TPP religion is interested in law and in what can enable stability in religious community, including good structure and levels of authority and responsibility, clear doctrines and dogma, and so on. Whereas in FPP religion identifying mystically with the All is something open to anyone, in TPP religion any sort of identity with God is reserved for the person at the top of the hierarchical pyramid.

In SPP religion, as rare as it may be, the sense of identity is in common action. People find their sameness in that they are together committed to the good, to primary friendship and concern for the Other. Identity with God or any sense of the absolute is around aligning both motive and intention in actions with the motive and intention of God, or the will of God. In the SPP, the will of God is not problematic as it might be in FPP and TPP religion; it is the fulfillment of an intention that is formed by the reality of the Other within a positive motive, such as care or love. Caring, loving actions within real and wise knowledge of the Other do not need to be justified. Their rightness is entirely contained within themselves; they are self justifying. Such a commitment to such actions within human affairs is a fragile and vulnerable one, easily taken advantage of by those who intend self interest out of egocentric motives. In pastoral care in the community we are making such a commitment, but at the same time recognizing the complexities that constitute our reality.

Belief plays a different role in each of the three religion types characterized by the three personal perspectives, and is central to the question of identity, religious and otherwise. What is important to realize for pastoral care in questions of belief is that there is always a pay off for the believer in holding a particular belief; if there is no pay off, if the belief has no ‘cash value’ to use the controversial term proposed by
William James in his contribution to the philosophy of Pragmatism, then the belief has little bearing on the self-identity of the individual and is easily traded for another or simply given up (note6). In other words we hold particular beliefs for particular reasons, and this applies equally to the three religion types in Macmurray’s analysis. In pastoral care we want to be able to discern the reasons behind people’s particular beliefs, and the meaning the belief has for the person, and to relate to those reasons and meaning empathically, rather than the actual content of those beliefs.

Primary beliefs are beliefs that are directly related to actions in everyday life in our engagement with the three levels of being; material, organic and personal. Interactions between people at the personal level contain the fullest expression of our primary belief and knowledge. Primary belief is largely expressed through action, and is often under-girded, as we shall see by habitual behaviour. There is no more certain ‘knowledge’ than when I say I know someone, whatever the content of that knowledge may actually be. Such knowledge grows as I continue to interact with that person in the rhythm of withdrawal and return, and the more open and spontaneous the relationship is the more my actions are my beliefs about that person and who he or she is. The fullest expression of this is complete intimacy and a sense of being one with the other person, of ‘knowing’ them, in some cases through all five senses at once, along with a sense of knowing them through time, their ‘myself’ or SPP pole of their personhood. This knowledge of the Other is personal and immediate, a structure of belief formed through experience in which love, care and trust characterize the relationship. This is primary knowledge and belief at the interpersonal level in our everyday lives. No other knowledge is more important than this, for reasons already discussed. Our capacity to know another in this way is directly related to our capacity to know ourselves, and to be at home with ourselves.

We can form primary beliefs through interaction with life at the organic and material levels as well, and some people personalize these to varying degrees. This is easy to see in people’s relationships with pets; others talk to flowers and trees; yet at least one famous person adopted the sun and moon as brother and sister, and addressed them personally as such. It would be very wrong to think such interaction did not have profound meaning for people who so personalize their interactions with the animate and inanimate world.
On the other hand, a master craftsman who knows the material he works with from years of intimate handling is also dealing with primary knowledge, whether he personalizes his relationship with the material or not. The belief structure that he works with has been formed through years of experience in the rhythm of withdrawal and return. He comes to know the material intimately through the senses, especially touch which is our primary sense in Macmurray’s analysis; he does not come to know it impersonally through technology and ‘needles on dials’, although he may do that as well.

While we regularly withdraw from action into reflection as an integral part of our gathering of primary beliefs and knowledge, and so our knowledge grows and expands, our capacity to reflect-in-action and so use our knowledge while acting is what most enables interpersonal relationship. It is operative at the other two levels also of course, but it is at the level of interaction between two or more persons that reflection-in-action is in its most developed form. We will be looking at reflection and knowledge in action in some detail later; it is at the heart of good pastoral care. It has elements of both skill and sensitivity, but it is more than both; it is best described I think as a capacity to be able to determine the end and means of an action on the run, and so be able to form a new intention or check a motive, while in the process of already acting. It relies on the carer feeling at ease and at home in the flow of their own consciousness, the stream of thoughts and feelings that are being brought to the centre of conscious awareness by complex associations with other thoughts and feelings. At the same time, what is happening to the other person is the prime focus of attention, which calls forth beliefs and knowledge of that person within the person acting, and so helps sub-intentions to form and be acted on. The more the person acting trusts the flow of feelings and ideas the more they can act on them, and so engage spontaneously with spirit and energy; unexpected and often good things happen in such interchanges. The action is the immediate expression of the primary belief.

The person, on the other hand, who is unsure or wary of the flow of ideas and feelings in their stream of consciousness will not be able to act spontaneously because they will not be sure if their belief is true and constitutes knowledge. If the
wariness is acute it is because the person feels conflicted by the thoughts and feelings emerging and needs to put energy into suppressing them or counteracting them. They are self-preoccupied rather than other-preoccupied. A spontaneous person who reflects well ‘in action’ is not self-conscious; they are other-conscious and immediately believing of the responses that are rising within them, to the extent that the belief leads immediately to action. It is primary knowledge and belief; the action contains and is constituted by the feelings and thoughts that allow intentions to be formed, both the end intended and the means of getting there.

The very opposite but equally valid form of knowledge to primary knowledge and reflection-in-action is knowledge gained in reflection through thought alone. Such knowledge is rare in everyday life, if in fact it ever occurs, because when we do withdraw into our thoughts predominantly to overcome a problem in our interaction with someone or something, we do not and perhaps cannot exclude our feelings entirely. In fact we need our feelings to help in making a return to action, as much as we need our thoughts. Withdrawal into thought and feeling are equally important in everyday actions.

Withdrawal into reflection that is thought alone is possible however if we reverse the relationship of action to reflection by making action secondary to reflection. Action is now for the sake of reflection. This is not a simple verification of a thought or feeling through action; it is the active intention of building theoretical knowledge. This allows an abstracted form of knowledge which can and does exclude feelings and subjectivity. As we have seen, I am talking of course of science; knowledge focused in the TPP and exclusive of the other two. Science is the most abstracted form of knowledge we have, and to the extent it directly engages everyday life is often counter-intuitive. Clearly the sun appears to go around the earth in the ‘reality’ of everyday life; not so says science. This is just the beginning! The beliefs science invites us to accept rarely directly effect our actions interpersonally; however science does lead to technology and technology is used by us in our actions, and this has had a huge influence on everyday life. Science also offers us beliefs that shape our world view and our thoughts about the universe that lie outside everyday life. If knowledge-in-action is primary knowledge, science is tertiary knowledge. Its power as knowledge is that it does not need, in principle, an external authority to justify it,
as traditional world views do; and it does lead to technology which is a direct and popular form of verification.

However, science is dependent in the wider scheme of things on authority; its own. The beliefs of science in principle remain open to being falsified and re-placed by more encompassing beliefs. However, because science is seen to work, it has acquired enormous cultural authority to be the adjudicator of what to believe, regardless of our senses. Science is the most potent authority in a modern secular culture like Australia’s. So most people would now have a universe in their minds that has ‘black holes’ in it because science has proposed their existence according to a particular theory of the universe and science is fully accepted as the determiner of such beliefs. It is trusted as such. However, this theory may yet come unstuck in favour of a more inclusive theory; in which case ‘black holes’ could cease to exist. This possibility has already been mooted (note 7).

The important point for our discussion of belief and pastoral care is that tertiary knowledge, whether traditional knowledge upheld by an external authority as in the doctrines and dogmas of traditional religion, or modern science authorized culturally by its rational and mathematical structure and success in prediction and technology, is made up of beliefs about the world that have little direct influence on our everyday actions in the world with other people. They are what William James called over-beliefs. Over-beliefs can be the most interesting thing about a person, and can be very important in their sense of who they are, their identity; in terms of their day by day interactions with other people however they normally have little positive part unless this identity is threatened or touched in some way. They do not effect decisions to act in relation to others. Most theology and science are over-beliefs in this sense, with the qualification as already indicated that the offspring of science, namely technology, does effect our day to day actions and hence our belief about ourselves in the world.

However, over-belief can effect day by day interactions when those beliefs are connected in some way to a person’s sense of self or identity. This is very important in pastoral care. It makes little difference to my interaction with Joe Blow if he believes the world was created in 7 days and I believe it has evolved over 16 billion
years; unless, my not holding Joe’s belief threatens him and he acts toward me out of that threat, or withdraws from me. Clearly, in such a case, to believe that the world was made in 7 days relates to something that connects directly into Joe’s sense of self and identity. He feels safer if the carer waves the same identity marker as he does because a difference of over-belief is threatening to his identity. His belief in other words has a ‘cash value’ for him; he needs to have it for a reason. Both beliefs are in principle not verifiable in any everyday sense of the word. Both need authority, external religious for one and scientific for the other. His need to be defensive is to protect something that he needs for his sense of self and identity. There is a ‘pay off’ in having that belief, and this ‘pay off’ will have a feeling base to it that connects him to a sense of self-integration as opposed to self-fragmentation. For instance, it could be that he deeply values, if unconsciously, the religious group he belongs to and it is required of each member of that group to believe the world was made in 7 days. A contrary belief raises the specter of shattering the ‘universe’ that holds Joe together, and putting him offside in the group. Or alternatively, my commitment to the view of science in this matter is a way of sustaining my sense of self against a childhood of unloving religious indoctrination. And so on.

In pastoral care in the community as it is being presented in this philosophy, pastoral care practitioners are people united in a commitment to positively motivated action in the interest of the Other; we are also committed to allowing everyone their own particular ‘over-belief’, while at the same time attempting to sense the meaning that over-belief has for that person, the reason that connects this particular belief to their sense of self and identity. For us to understand and respect this puts us in a place to relate to a level of meaning in the person that is profoundly important, and which can enable people when they feel seen and understood at that level to themselves self-transcend and at the same time to allow me my ‘over-belief’. When this happens, the way can be cleared for primary belief and knowledge to come to the fore in the relationship, and some form of useful connection or intimacy to emerge.

Secondary beliefs are beliefs that form predominantly around the feeling pole or FPP of our being. When reflection is secondary to action, feeling beliefs are fundamentally important in determining intentions and hence actions; such belief enables the ends of our actions to be imagined. Such feeling beliefs engage our
thoughts as well, in other words the TPP of our being. We think through our feelings. When action is secondary to reflection, feeling beliefs manifest in a particular artist’s work; and if these beliefs are self-transcendent and pick up objectively the feelings contained in the original object, I come to share in that artist’s belief and truth.

Secondary belief is at work all the time in our interactions with the world. For instance, I feel uneasy whenever I hear a certain president of a large country talking on TV or radio. Such feelings lead me to not believe what he is telling me. This belief is formed in feeling not in thought about facts; but it leads to thoughts. On the other hand, I believe Elgar’s cello concerto is a great piece of music. It is not only that it moves me and I like it. I actually believe it is great and beautiful music, and although such a belief may have formed in my own solitude, it comes to be affirmed as such, or undermined, by how others feel about it. My belief could be shaken if others disagree and particularly if those others carry cultural authority around matters pertaining to the arts. So just as scientific beliefs are affirmed within the scientific community through further experimentation and acceptance within the scientific community, beliefs about art and the discernment of true beauty also have a communal dimension that establishes a cultural embodiment of true belief at the secondary level within the community of the arts.

Primary, secondary and tertiary belief; we can analyze these further, again using Macmurray’s form and unit of the personal. We can say that primary belief at the interpersonal level is built around trust of another person, which contains and is constituted by our trust in the flow of our own feelings and thoughts. We believe in someone, and this is equivalent to having confidence or faith in that person. This belief stands to be extended in our action toward them and in their action toward us, and if we feel this action is positively motivated and has us in its interest, at least to some extent, we are likely to give mental assent to what that person feels and thinks. We believe him, and we entertain the possibility that his secondary and tertiary belief as worthy of our belief. It is interesting and I think important that ‘to believe’ means ‘to hold dear’ in its derivation, and comes from the same root as ‘lief’ or ‘love’. Primary belief is founded in love and contained in action. Primary belief is about truth as action between people. It clusters around the second person perspective.
Without trust, or as it is often called in pastoral care, conjunction, primary belief, particularly as knowledge and belief-in-action is barely operative.

Secondary belief is reflective; it clusters around the first person perspective, and calls in the third. It is mental assent on the ground of form and congruency and the feelings they engender. It is built around our trust or confidence that what we feel is the case of the matter. People speak of trusting their intuitions or their feelings. We believe something because of its congruency, and the feeling it calls forth in us. All secondary belief is problematic until validated in action. I believe a chair will support my weight because it looks solid. I don’t know that until I try it; but the feeling of safety and security the chair brings forth in me is sufficient for me to act and to sit on it. Someone might also believe in something that is not verifiable, such as the Platonic world of ideal forms, because of the feelings of congruency and completeness the forms give to his view of the world. It makes sense, and this is a feeling.

Tertiary belief is also reflective. It is belief where we think what we are thinking corresponds to what is actually the case. It is mental assent or acceptance of a proposition, statement or fact as being true on the ground of authority or evidence. This applies as much to science as to traditional religious belief. I believe in something because I am assured by the Pope or the official doctrine of a church, or by the scientific community that such a belief actually corresponds to how that something really is. If there is a conflict between the two authorities, I might once have gone with the Pope or risked my life; now I will go with science and risk being wrong if a more inclusive theory comes to hold sway.

In our work in pastoral care we are dealing primarily with primary belief but always recognizing the importance of secondary and tertiary belief. The more the belief is around something that has little influence on actions in everyday life, the more that belief is over-belief, and the pastoral significance of this is the extent such over-belief touches the person’s sense of self and identity. Over-belief that has real value to a person and helps to constitute their identity, however defensive and egocentric that may be, is belief we need to relate to carefully and empathically. To effectively
relate to it in a positive motive in a way that is in the interest of that person can open
the person to healing and self transcendence.

The paradox in all this is this: where there is love and care, belief based on facts, so
loved by thinkers especially scientists, is not so important as interpersonal belief
which is the substance of everyday life. What is important is the relational support
and emotional connection that positive interpersonal belief and trust makes possible.
In the end, those who love others for the others sake believe all things and nothing.
They ‘keep their powder dry’ in wisdom, waiting for the moment. They believe in
love.

Notes

1. *Open Sanctuary* is a spiritual and religious group on the far south coast of NSW in Australia.
   It gathers in an old church and sees itself as a community of contemplation and action. The
   question of denominational identity is not raised.

2. Austin discusses the idea of the negative wearing the trousers in *Sense and Sensibilia* (1962),
   p.70.

3. Quoted in an article on ‘Christianity’ in the Encyclopedia Britannica 2006, Ultimate
   Reference Suite.

4. Strong identity is a characteristic of Islam, and in countries like Australia where
denominational identity is weak and Christian identity is problematic, Islam is a force that is
courted now by both universities wanting student enrolments and politicians needing votes.
But Islam has yet to face the full force of secularity, and if it follows the same pattern as
Christianity, will split into those who seek a greater more inclusive human identity and those
who are hardened in their Islamism. The need for inclusive vision and such things as
effective multifaith pastoral care within the Australian community can only increase, to help
hold these tensions and help ease the situation through to a more generally accepting and
peaceful resolution.

5. Fairly extreme forms of first person perspective religion in which the reality of the physical
world is denied in favour of the spiritual are alive and well within New Age circles. Some of
these are centred in Christ but have no relationship with the Church at all and some are quite
docetic. They in fact do not use the word Church in their discourse. Eg. A Course in
Miracles (1988), the teachings of Gary Renard (2003), The Way of the Heart, etc..
6. James discusses the idea of ‘cash value’ and beliefs in his *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1904). This is a series of lectures in honour of John Stuart Mill. See Lecture II, *What is Pragmatism*?

7. For instance in the January 22, 2005 edition of *NewScientist* in an article by J.R.Minkel, he writes:

   THEY are the most fearsome objects in the universe. They swallow and destroy everything that crosses their path. Everyone knows that falling into a black hole spells doom. Or does it? In the past few years, cracks have started to appear in the conventional picture. Researchers on the quest for a more complete understanding of our universe are finding that black holes are not so black, and perhaps not holes either. Furious debates are raging over what black holes contain and even whether they deserve the name.
**Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care**

Chapter 10

**Illusion and Religion**

**Synopsis:** Illusion and delusion are important forms of belief. Overcoming illusion in life is the way to personal growth and self transcendence. This is Macmurray’s understanding of illusion. It is an inevitable part of the rhythm of withdrawal and return, entrapping only if we are unable or unwilling to test our beliefs formed in reflection through action in the engagement of the real. This understanding stands in contrast to Freud’s, and is closer to the views of Kohut and Winnicott. Pastoral care practitioners need to be skilled in managing illusion in their own practice, and in appreciating how it might be at work within those they visit and engage with in their work.

In the last chapter, I raised the importance of religious identity and belief, and how this may inform modern pastoral care in a multifaith community. Closely allied to these issues is the question of illusion, belief that is not or cannot be referred to the real. Illusion is particularly important in any modern consideration of religion ever since Freud’s analysis in which he relegated religion just about entirely to illusion based on infantile wish fulfillment, not necessarily false but derived from infantile need. This has hardened in the analyses of some others to delusion, which is when beliefs are false and fixed ideas about a supposed objective reality which are held no matter what; a characteristic of some psychotic personalities. Religious groups are defined by some then as gatherings of people who share the same illusions, and perhaps delusions. In some other commentators, illusion is not decried and relegated to infantile morbidity; it is seen as a creative and necessary part of the human experience, essential to both the development of the human individual and human community and culture. The developmentalist D.W.Winnicott was one such thinker; another was John Macmurray. In this paper I want to raise the question of illusion as it touches the practice of pastoral care, and our understanding of religion as the foundation of such care.

Philosophical interest in illusion has centred around problems of perception and the fact that we do not experience the world around us directly but only phenomenally through sensory images. How can we trust perception as a source of knowledge of the external world if it is only direct awareness of phenomenal appearances and not the world itself? We can be deceived by appearances and this is the basis of illusory
experience. We believe something is something when it is not. I remember climbing a stile once in England and as I went to put my foot on the ground I saw I was about to tread on a frog. I managed to avoid it just in time. Then when I bent down to look further at the frog, it had turned into an old leaf. The telling point as far as I am concerned is that in that split second I did see a frog; it was a real experience for me, but as subsequent action showed, it was illusory. I had in fact misinterpreted the information coming to me through my eyes. If I had not bent down to check I would to this day believe I had once avoided stepping on a frog; what was in fact an illusion would be my ongoing reality. Intentional attempts to create illusory sensory experiences abound, one of the most famous being those of Adalbert Ames in the 1950’s. People who completed his fifty or so experiments in a large, empty apartment in New York were known to sit in complete confusion on re-entering the real world. They had lost faith in their senses ability to give them knowledge of the external world they could trust and act on. Such faith had to be regained by trial and error. (note1)

I think it is worthwhile to bear this particular vulnerability of human experience at this basic level in mind; it is a pattern or form that holds also for more complex aspects of our experience which involve beliefs that bring in different levels of conception and memory. For instance, faith to act is directly dependent on the continuity of experience and the beliefs this enables, and this applies not only to basic sensory experience of the world around us, but also to our increasingly complex relationships with the organic and personal worlds. Faith is always relational in this understanding, and beliefs are the foundation of our actions within those relationships. We do not know a belief we hold is illusory until we act and the belief is shown to be so. It fails to be met by the real. We may suspect a belief is illusory, and it is knowing what to do when we do think that, that marks the overcoming of illusion and the ongoing grounding of our sense of being in the real. This is particularly important in interpersonal relationships, and hence pastoral care.

So the basis of our apprehension of the real is itself tenuous because our experience is founded in perception and sensory experience. All sensory experience is in images. This is easy to grasp in the case of sight, sound and smell; less so with taste and touch. But in fact touch also is only through our ability to make a sensory image
from such things as the information gleaned by the receptors on our skin. As Macmurray saw, it is not so much in touch per se that we are in contact with the object we perceive that is the crucial issue in the primacy of touch amongst our senses, it is that that object in some sense can resist us immediately when we touch it and attempt to act upon it. Immediate experience as opposed to mediate experience is experience in which we feel resisted in our actions. It is this experience that constitutes the base line of our sense of reality and of our own existence along with the existence of the object we are acting on. Mediate experience through sight, sound and smell carries the possibility or promise ultimately of immediate experience and hence resistance from the object through touch. I see something from a distance, and I move toward it on the belief that I can get close enough to touch it and feel its immediate resistance and hence be able to act upon it. In this mutual resistance the sense of my own existence and the existence of the object I am interacting with is given to me. As I look out my study window, I have no reason to doubt the visual images of a world ‘out there’ through past experience, despite the fact that I know I am experiencing images, but I feel my existence and reality here and now, and the reality of the chair and desk I am touching, through our mutual resistance which carries a far greater certainty.

Resistance takes other forms of course when we move from the material world. The most complex form of resistance is interpersonal and this is the resistance offered by another person. At this level, reality is through the engagement of wills and its resolution one way or the other, which may include resistance at emotional and physical levels as well, through a clash of feelings and bodily engagement. It is interesting that we often extend the idea of ‘touch’ to include the meeting of feelings in this regard without necessarily any bodily touching. When someone really ‘touches’ us we feel their reality; and we are more acutely aware of ours. The engagement of wills is the stuff of community; and the processes a community has to manage that engagement is, as we have seen, the generic basis of religion in Macmurray’s analysis, with its ways and means of forgiveness, reconciliation and transformation of motives. In the ‘toing-and-froing’ of interactions between persons there is a constant movement between illusion and reality in what people are thinking and believing of others. Some measure of illusion is inevitable in the rhythm of withdrawal and return. In the way Macmurray conceives the word, the overcoming
of illusion is the basis of personal growth and knowledge, of self transcendence. When we can abandon illusions for beliefs that have been shown in our experience to engage us with what is the case, with what is real, we alter the basis of our engagement with the world from a defensive, egocentric one to an open, engaging, heterocentric one.

This was the case in principle also for Freud in the way he dealt with illusion, but with opposite understandings of the relationship between religion and the real and a different conception of what constitutes illusion. In Freud’s analysis of religion, especially in *The Future of an Illusion* (1964), his intention was to highlight the sharp dichotomy between what he called primary narcissism characteristic of childhood, which is full of idealizations and dependencies, and the reality principle. Primary narcissism is the complete egocentricity of childhood. Freud wanted to unmask illusion in the name of reality; this was the path to maturity and the real. Reality was determined through rationality and objectivity, when one knew the Other free from illusion or wishful projection; you may note the parallel with Macmurray’s heterocentricity, but whereas Macmurray saw that rationality and objectivity applied to actions and feelings as well as thought, Freud understood objectivity as the supreme achievement of scientific rationality. He believed that religion was a prime source of illusion, defined as an appeal to infantile narcissism and to the wishes and fantasies it generates. Religion stopped people becoming real and growing up.

For Freud a belief is an illusion when wish-fulfillment is a prominent factor. Religious beliefs represent ‘fulfillments of the oldest, strongest, and most urgent wishes of mankind’ (Freud 1964, p.47). They cannot be as a result of experience or the outcome of rational thinking. So belief in the perfect community of heaven, in a warm and caring Father God, and in life after death are all infantile wishes projected onto life as a way of avoiding reality, namely the human misery of civilization with its imposition of instinctual controls, the impersonal, mechanical and uncaring world revealed to us by science, and the finality of death! Anything that could not come under the orbit of science was attributed to narcissism, and primary narcissism is entirely egocentric. Man finds his maturity and heroic place in the scheme of things in his compete rejection of all narcissistic comfort or consolation in favour of the impersonal realities that we know to be objectively real. Proper development goes
from primary process, outgrowing the pleasure principle, to secondary process and
embracing the reality principle.

Alongside wish-fulfillment, Freud singled out dependency as another element of
narcissism that religion encourages and fosters. Dependency and idealization go
hand in hand for Freud, whether this was with another person such as the father of
the family, or with ‘God’. This might be justified in children but not in adults.
Only such a being [‘an enormously exalted father’] can understand the needs
of the children of men and be softened by their prayers and be placated by the
signs of their remorse. The whole thing is so patently infantile, so foreign to
reality, that to anyone with a friendly attitude to humanity it is painful to
think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this
view of life. (Freud 1962, p.21)

Before continuing to bring Freud’s analysis up against Macmurray’s, Kohut’s
contribution has tempered Freud’s view in the psychoanalytic world not only on
religion as such but also on narcissism and the interplay between Self and Other.
Freud could see no positive contribution from religion and believed atheism was the
only rational position that could be adopted. This was not Kohut’s view. This was
in part because he viewed development not as a movement from complete absorption
and love of self to maturity and love of the Other, but rather as a continuing dialectic
between the two throughout the life cycle. Freud wanted to apply reality testing to
illusion based on idealization and wish-fulfillment, renouncing the latter and living
out the former. Kohut wanted to keep them in dynamic dialectical relationship in a
developmental pattern in which egocentricity ceased to be the primary basis of the
personality but remained as a necessary pole in the maturing process that made focus
on the Other or empathy primary but acknowledged the ongoing narcissistic needs of
the person as well, an insight at least as ancient as ‘love your neighbour as you love
yourself’. For him, idealizing connections are necessary for us to be emotionally
invested in a person or activity; reality testing is necessary to keep our narcissistic
drives grounded in reality and to keep the expectations that arise from them realistic.

Kohut also saw that there are other forms of knowledge that are as legitimate as the
scientific. As mentioned earlier he replaced Freud’s unconscious drives and instincts
with emotions and feelings, which can be conscious. But more importantly he asserted the primacy of interpersonal relationship, the emotional connection between an ‘I’ and a ‘You’ in the formation of the Self as opposed to the impersonal objectivity of the ‘I’ and ‘It’ that dominated Freud. It is the emotional interactions between persons that determine our development primarily, and this is not a matter of scientific objectivity but the capacity for empathy, or as Macmurray called it self transcendence. This meant, amongst many things, that the either/or view of Freud could give way to another possibility. For instance, Freud could only see two possibilities in the face of death; religious illusions or Stoic resignation. Kohut saw a third; enlarging one’s narcissism and identifying with a ‘supraordinate Self’ that enabled a person to view death from the point of view of eternity; a cosmic narcissism. This amounted to a transformation of narcissism through an enlargement of empathy.

I have little doubt that those who are able to achieve this ultimate attitude to life do so on the strength of a new, expanded, transformed narcissism: a cosmic narcissism that has transcended the bounds of the individual. (Kohut 1978, p.455)

Kohut did not mean some sort of peak experience or ‘oceanic feeling’ discussed by Freud in The Future of an Illusion, which Freud associated with the original feelings of infantile oneness breaking through into consciousness in a sense of merger with the universe or some sort of transcendent reality. He meant rather an abiding attitude toward life and a deeper insight into the nature of reality built around an autonomous ego through which individuality and intentionality could grow; whereas with ‘oceanic feeling’ individuality and intentionality vanish into primitive illusions of being One. A child is all motive and no intention of its own; the parent carries the child’s intentionality. Kohut believed that only very few ever attained such an empathic narcissism in which the Other was fully seen in its reality without denial of the Self’s reality at the same time. Nonetheless,

… such an expansion of empathy to include the cosmos is an alternative to both (the) oceanic mysticism….. in which the self disappears into the Absolute and the legalistic monotheism of Freud in which the self must continually struggle to conform itself to a set of prohibitions. (Jones 2002, p.28)
I hope the reader can see the form and unit of the personal emerging in this analysis. Such cosmic empathy could be seen to stand in relationship to oceanic mysticism and legalistic monotheism as the second person stands to the first and third. What is equally important though in connecting to Macmurray, is that Kohut saw this expansion of empathy to take in the universe as a transformation of narcissism; in other words a transformation of egocentricity or egoism or in Macmurray’s terms a transformation of motive. Where Macmurray differs importantly however from Kohut is that Macmurray believed that special experience, however important and transformative it might be, could not be the basis of religion; it might be the icing on the cake but not the cake itself. The processes of religion that enabled the transformation of motive and the subordination of the negative to the positive had to be grounded in ordinary and everyday experience that in principle is open to everyone. However, they do agree that intellectual activity and discursive reason alone cannot bring about such transformation and transcendence; and that growth in the capacity to empathize, the ability to put oneself in the Other’s place and see the world including oneself from such a place, is necessarily grounded in the experience of being loved. We do not begin the journey of interpersonal self transcendence without first trusting an Other, their motive toward us, and their willingness to know and be known. Otherwise we remain in ourselves and in our illusions.

Kohut did not develop his ideas of cosmic narcissism much further. As far as religion went he dealt mainly with its functional aspects in its role of providing self object experiences, something we looked at earlier. But he did write something I think interesting in a paper entitled ‘On Leadership’.

The survival of western man, and perhaps of mankind altogether, will in all likelihood be neither safeguarded by ‘the voice of the intellect’ alone, that great utopian of the Enlightenment and Rationalism of the 18th and 19th centuries; nor will it be secured through the influence of the teachings of orthodox religions. Will a new religion arise which is capable of fortifying man’s love for its old and new ideals….. the transformation of narcissism in the spirit of religiosity….could it be that a new, rational religion might arise, an as yet uncreated system of mystical rationality…..? (Kohut 1985, p.70)
Thomas Berry has wondered similar things (note 2). While John Macmurray would raise a number of questions about this passage, I think he would agree with the spirit of it in so far as he also could not see that our existing empirical or orthodox religions as they currently operate have a lot to offer the future, bound as they are in their defensiveness and illusions. But rather than a new religion, an understanding of true or real religion is required that granted religion its proper place in relation to the arts and the sciences and provided an effective and telling critique of religion when it is not real. His philosophy is I think a framework for just such an understanding of religion, and substantiates an understanding that is both rational and objective, while enabling self transcendence and healthy narcissism. It could also allow adherents of particular empirical religions to re-assess their own religion and attempt to draw from it what is true and real, based in the positive, and what is illusory and unreal, and based in the negative. It is the delusory elements amongst the illusory that would make this a very difficult task, given the collective element in both religious illusion and delusion. For instance, a fundamentalist in whatever tradition has a deep emotional commitment to the absolute nature of the text their tradition is based on, and cannot read that text apart from that commitment. It can lead him to claim black is white and that this is a ‘truth’ worth dying for; this is a complete withdrawal into defensive and delusory beliefs that are a very real disengagement from the real! As noted in the last chapter, such belief will nonetheless have a ‘cash value’ to the believer; it is belief intimately connected to his sense of self and identity.

Macmurray shared much of Freud’s critique of religion as it might apply to a particular empirical religion. In Freud’s terms this meant a religion that played upon such things as infantile forms of narcissism, encouraged childish dependency, demanded denials of reality and promoted unhealthy idealizations; in other words the stuff of illusion. For Macmurray it means a particular religion, not religion per se, that is seriously entrapped in defensive, egocentric and self-defeating activities motivated by either fear or anger or both, which breed beliefs about the Other that are in fact illusory and possibly delusory, in relation to what is really the case.

Macmurray believed also with Freud that religion included the projection of the child’s experience of family life, especially its relationship with its parents, as we
have seen. But he did not think that this meant that religion, in its form not its content, was illusory, the product of phantasy; quite to the contrary.

We have seen that the form of the child’s experience is dependence on a personal Other; and that this form of experience is never outgrown, but provides the ground plan of all personal experience, which is constituted from start to finish by relation to the Other and communication with the Other. It is this form which finds expression in religion, no doubt; but there is nothing illusory about this. The adult who endeavors to create or to discover, in the context of mature experience, the form of positive personal relationship which he experienced as a child, is not indulging in phantasy, but seeking to realize his own nature as a person. Phantasy, as Freud recognizes, is the result of a failure to grow up properly. It is, we have seen, the result of a failure to overcome the negative phase in the rhythm of withdrawal and return. The craving for the earlier expressions of the love-relation is suppressed, and not abandoned. The result is a negative to the Other, a fear and hostility which must be suppressed. For if it were not suppressed, it would actively seek the destruction of the Other. (Macmurray 1999, p.154)

So although a child from birth is by nature egocentric in its need to be cared for at all levels, the heterocentric pole is established in its soul through the emotional engagement of the mother in the motive of care and love within a mutual positively motivated relationship. Illusion or phantasy emerges in the child in a withdrawal from the mother for reasons we have discussed. Such withdrawal is entirely normal and necessary. The child’s parents are not going to meet the child’s every need and should not if the child is going to gradually pick up responsibility for itself and develop its own capacity to form intentions and act in the world. An effective return to the positive relationship is the overcoming of that illusion or phantasy, which can be effected only by seeing that the illusion does not correspond to reality. The child is in fact still loved and he realizes this and gives up his phantasy and illusion. If he does not he remains in the illusion, which can continue to grow and oscillate between motives of fear and rage.

This same process of withdrawal and return emerges in all personal relationship in a person’s attempt to find positive personal connections with others, including cultural
figures that the person may idealize or religious figures such as saints and God. In this sense true or real religion as the process that enables positive personal community extends the personal out into culture, nature and the heavens, and this can become the means to a more expanded, mature and developed empathy and narcissism, possibly even Kohut’s cosmic narcissism. Provided a person can go on sufficiently finding ways to self transcend and let go illusions in relationships more than hang onto them, he will continue to grow personally and be open to life. Once illusion begins to dominate over self transcendence then a compensatory life of phantasy can be projected onto the world and the heavens. As if to hoist Freudian psychoanalysis on its own petard, Macmurray notes that the wish to destroy the father and take his place is one of the common phantasies of childhood; nothing less than the oedipal complex so central to Freud’s whole analysis.

Would it not be as good an argument as Freud’s, then, if we were to conclude that adult atheism was the projection upon the universe of this childish phantasy. (Macmurray 1999, p.155, his emphasis)

So for Macmurray, illusion is not primarily about wish fulfillment where we project unreal wishes into an illusory world as a way of compensating for reality. It is the thoughts and beliefs that we generate principally in personal relationships, when there is a disjunction with and withdrawal from someone with whom we have otherwise been in a positive relationship. Our motive in withdrawing is necessarily egocentric, and if it is a feeling at the extreme end of either the flight or fight continuums, such as fear and anxiety or hatred and resentment, we are at risk of developing illusory thoughts about the other person which will be very ‘real’ for us. If we cannot overcome these ourselves, or no one comes to help us, or nothing happens to show us that our beliefs are unreal or not, we continue in those thoughts and are unable to re-engage in a positive motive. We may go to counseling or therapy, we may avoid the person completely, we may put on a ‘mask’ of ‘niceness’ while secretly ‘hating their guts’; or we may go into their office and punch their nose in!!

As we have already noted, even if we do succeed in managing our illusory beliefs sufficiently to check them against reality, and so find we were either right or wrong, some measure of illusion may be left in us in our relationship with that person or
group; it may never be quite the same. Full return to mutually positive relationship is most likely to happen in a well functioning family or personal community and less likely in the cut and thrust of impersonal society; even if we have been largely successful in self transcending the experience of disjunction. Our motives in relation to others can be very mixed.

If the return from the negative phase is to be completely successful it is necessary that the dominance of the negative motive be completely overcome, and the positive relation to the mother be fully re-established, in spite of her continuing refusal to satisfy his demand. It is the conditions and implications of such a successful overcoming of fear that concern our study. We may sum them up by saying that they consist in recognizing the illusions involved in the negative phase, and as a consequence the disappearance of the conflict of wills. This recognition of illusion does not necessarily involve its expression in judgment, and in its earliest stage of our development it cannot do so. To recognize as unreal what has been taken as real is to reverse a valuation, and value, we have seen, is primarily felt. The ‘facts’ of the situation remain unchanged. What is required for the recognition of unreality is a change of feeling from the negative to the positive (or vice versa), coupled with a memory of the earlier attitude. (Macmurray 1999, p.99)

In all this it is important to remember that personal relationships are mutual; the resistance and the support between persons in relation goes both ways. There is a correlation between Self and Other. Where there is freedom and equality, love and care is likely to be mutual; hostility and estrangement, even if only fleeting and momentary, likewise. If I am withdrawn from someone and wondering if my thoughts about that person are real or illusory, it is highly likely that person is in a similar place. So where there are mixed motives between people, as is normally the case, this also is likely to be mutual.

The illusory elements in a person’s soul can ‘join forces’ and split the world into friends and enemies; unite a family in their hostility to an outsider; bring a nation together against an ‘enemy’; cohere a religion against the rest of the world.

Because of the correlation of Self and Other, and the reference to the Other which is the original characteristic of personal motivation, a contradiction in
onself must imply a contradiction in the Other. The contradiction of motives in myself must divide the person’s world into friends and enemies. So long as there is an unsubordinated residue of negative disposition in any person, he needs something in the Other against which it may operate. Yet since the unresolved hostility is an element of unreality in himself, it introduces an illusory element into his friendships and his enmities alike. For a common hostility makes the bond of friendship appear closer than it is; and the enmity is not aroused by its object but projected upon it, and has its origin elsewhere. (Macmurray 1999, p.109)

We are prone as pastoral care practitioners, particularly before we have sufficient experience, to illusions. If we approach someone apprehensively, that is to say in a negative feeling regardless of our overall commitment to a motive of care, we can misinterpret a situation or what a person says to us. An example of initial illusion and ultimate self transcendence in my own practice as a trainer was a trainee who felt anxious in her work, intimidated by the hospital setting, and inferior and expectant of being rejected because she was a religious person. The patient was in a single room looking out the window with her back to the door. The trainee knocked. The patient turned her head, stared at the trainee for a moment, and then turned back to look out the window again without saying a word. The trainee’s negative feelings immediately generated beliefs about the patient and herself. She wanted to run from the scene, her worst fears realized. However, she was able to check both the thoughts and feelings that had almost taken over the flow of her consciousness, and instead stepped forward and approached the patient, saying ‘Are you all right?’ It turned out that the patient had just been told a few moments before that she had a terminal disease. Along with the egocentric responses to the situation, the trainee also saw something in the patient, and her sense of ‘I’ or that part of herself that stands outside herself and observes and makes decisions, what some psychotherapists call her de-centred self, was sufficiently strong for her not to give into the illusory thoughts and instead to respond to the little insight or knowledge of the patient she had gleaned, and from this re-find her motive to care and so act intentionally toward the patient in what she hoped was in the patient’s interest. She self transcended.
The disjunctions that cause a withdrawal and hence run the risk of engaging unreal or illusory thoughts in a patient can be very slight or seemingly insignificant. This is particularly so if the patient is anxious and unsure, or if the patient lives largely in a withdrawn, egocentric state as might be the case in psychiatric wards or hospitals. It is also the case that some people withdraw into negative feelings when approached by someone they think is ‘religious’. These feelings may have been established in the past for very real reasons; they are at least defensive if not ready to project an illusion onto the carer. If a carer makes a good emotional connection with the patient and the patient begins to disclose important issues about herself and her relationships, she moves emotionally into a vulnerable state and needs to know the carer is genuinely interested. If they sense any other motive in the carer, even as slight as the carer looking away, they can withdraw and old illusion take over; the ‘shutters’ can come down. In some cases transference can begin. As we will be looking at more closely later, we need to ‘attend’ to the patient, both for the patient’s sake and our own. Our withdrawals for whatever reason run the risk of the patient’s withdrawal and the creation of disjunction. This need not be a bad thing however, if we can see the withdrawal and respond in a way that re-connects us emotionally with the patient; apologizing can be very effective this way. To do this successfully can deepen the sense of connection and trust; we have responded in a way that is not the patient’s usual experience and they abandon the build up of illusory thoughts.

Although egocentric feelings are the prime basis of illusion in Macmurray’s analysis, rather than wish fulfillment only, idealization is an important aspect for Macmurray as it is for Freud, more by implication than any detailed analysis in his writing. Freud’s view of idealization is largely negative, and it certainly can be. In Kohut’s understanding idealization is a necessary self-object experience that if not allowed to emerge at appropriate times in the life cycle remains a need and hunger in the adult, and this can be projected inappropriately and with far greater force in adult life onto gurus, lovers and political figures. Idealization is where we invest something of ourselves in the Other because what we see in the other we want for ourselves, and the presence of the idealized other, along with our internalization of this, energizes us and makes life worth living; we act and engage life positively under this influence. It is where our egocentricity meets head on with the heterocentricity in us. It is the self-object experience centred in the second person perspective (SPP) in Macmurray’s
form and unit of the personal. It more than any other calls us out into a positive engagement with the Other in which our interest and admiration is elicited for our own sake. The underlying motive is positive and that is the crucial factor; but the thoughts and beliefs about the person idealized can be quite illusory nonetheless. The overcoming of this illusion while retaining the positive motives toward the Other is to become real in relation to the Other; the clay feet are seen and accepted and the person is loved and appreciated regardless. In the meantime the values and virtues involved in the original idealization are now likely to have been internalized and made the person’s own.

So idealization is both the most promising and the most dangerous of all our inner experiences. It is promising because it allows a narcissistic investment in an Other which can draw someone into powerful self transcendence if tempered by reality and the overcoming of illusion. On the other hand it can go wrong for reasons no one necessarily intended and the person goes through life with a deep hunger to find someone to merge with and be like but never being able to fully satisfy this need or internalize for themselves what they so want to experience in others.

Religious figures in any culture are objects to this need and in many cases fulfill it. And although this projection or transference may initially have illusory elements, it is because of the positive motives of love and care, not the negative compensatory ones that Freud was so aware of that came from deep wishful but unreal longing, or the egocentric feelings that Macmurray saw as the basis of negative illusion. They are rather, as Macmurray says, extensions of a person’s completely reasonable desire for positive personal relationship in which completely human, legitimate and rational needs can be met.

It is not unusual in a CPE training group for the trainer/supervisor to initially experience idealizing transferences and projections from members of the group. This is a good thing and should be skillfully engaged by the supervisor in building up their desire to learn and excel in what they do. The risk in this is if the supervisor gets caught up in his or her own illusion as well, as a result, and cannot apply some reality testing to his own thoughts and feelings. If this happens he in fact withdraws into egocentric feelings and loses his focus on the reality of the trainees. He counter-
transfers. He comes to need them for his own sense of well being and is now settling into a negative illusion. He only needs then to believe his own hype and he is in trouble. A good supervisor, like a good therapist needs to know how to use or diffuse such idealization, whichever is appropriate in the given situation; to show his clay feet, to join the group appropriately, to act in strongly heterocentric ways. By the end of a training group a successful trainer has drawn the trainees up into colleagueship and a sense of being equal. An ineffective supervisor leaves the trainees with some disillusionment and confusion as they watch him or her go off to entrap another group for his ongoing need!

But perhaps the most important thing for a pastoral care practitioner to understand in relation to illusion in the sense Macmurray means is that it is unavoidable in the withdrawals and returns that constitute our relationships with others; it is the means by which we grow personally as we overcome illusion and return to the real; and it operates under both positive and negative feelings. Negative motivated illusion is the bread and butter of our personal relationships; positively motivated illusion is the far less often experience of relationships and moments that can encourage us to whole new growth and horizons, provided at the same time we welcome and integrate the reality as it reveals itself to us.

Notes
2. For a discussion of Berry’s ideas see God’s Earth: Religion as if it really mattered, by Paul Collins. Berry is interviewed in the television documentary made of the book and speaks of his view that all empirical religions as they currently express themselves lack the necessary depth to hold the world together in the future. I take it that he means that it is not so much that such depth is not in principle present in the world’s religious experience and traditions, but rather that it is not currently operative. Current religions need major re-formation; in fact the world will eventually need to find unity at the religious or personal level, and this is possibly our greatest challenge.
Chapter 11

The Inner Conversation

Synopsis: Internalized self object relationships that carry positive feelings form structure in the soul or inner life, and are the basis of inner resource and resilience. We can talk inwardly to such figures as we might talk to ourselves, and we can talk outwardly as if they were there with us. This is the basis of prayer as a real and ordinary and not only formal aspect of our inner lives. Internalized second person perspective relationships in which there is a degree of idealization are more likely to become conversational or prayer partners, ranging from people we know to cultural figures who traditionally embody accepted values and virtues, such as Christ, the Buddha and God. Even atheists will have internal figures they have inner connection with, if only an idealized sense of themselves. Such inward resourcefulness is the focus of pastoral care.

Using Macmurray’s form and unit of the personal, we have seen that spirituality is essentially a first person perspective phenomenon, while religion is centred primarily around the second person perspective. The essential difference is that religion as a second person perspective phenomenon necessarily implies a personal Other, a ‘You’ with whom we feel ourselves to be in relationship; and this applies to both our outer relationships within personal community, and the internalized others or self-object relationships that are part of our inner life, and help to structure our souls. I have argued also that modern pastoral care in the community is focused more on this inner religious life than the outer. We are interested in who a person engages and talks with within themselves, or as William James put it, the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine (James 1902, p.31), which is his definition of religion. I would like to slightly change this wording to: the feelings, acts and experiences of individual persons in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in personal relation to who or whatever they significantly idealize.

As pastoral carers we are interested, as we have seen, in self object relationships around the first and third person perspectives or poles of a person’s inner life; these also are significant resources within a person. But it is the idealizing pole, or the second person perspective, that is the central one in a person’s inner religious processes. This pole also
carries an adversarial function as well which can work together with the idealizing. Someone we admire or idealize can be the most effective person to also help us establish and understand boundaries. This idealizing pole or second person perspective holds complex images of persons, and perhaps places and objects, in a person’s life that carry or have carried feelings around values and ideals that a person has felt drawn to, and they have either eventually been internalized as idealized self object relationships or the person has largely withdrawn the idealizing projection and stepped into those values and ideals as their own; or it could be a mixture of both. The continuum of figures that might typically be part of someone’s second person perspective pole can cover a wide range depending on the person’s upbringing and culture; a parent, a teacher, a lover, a sportsman, a crocodile hunter, a leader, the fuhrer, a princess, a pop star, a movie celebrity, a priest, a rabbi, a mullah, a guru, the kindly old man down the road, a saint, a prophet, an angel, a Master of the Universe, the Spirit, a god, God. Such figures inhabit the wider consciousness and can come into awareness in the stream of consciousness at will or at times spontaneously. They turn loneliness into solitude, as well as offering comfort, direction, support and the desire to engage life. They can be alive or dead.

The point I particularly invite you to consider is that the continuum of internalized figures can range from the very human whom we admire or idealize, and who may or may not embody positive values and virtues, to figures that a culture has ordained as divine and as true embodiments of what constitutes truth, beauty and rightness of action. In so far as morality is the capacity to act rightly, it is a primary embodiment of the second person perspective, and traditionally very few figures, such as God, Christ, the Buddha exemplify such ideal being completely. Some may hold the people’s devotion for a while within a given cultural period, but cannot stand the test of time, and be elevated to an eternal place; for example Mao Zedong in China. There is too much ambivalence and equivocation around such figures.

The more we develop the capacity to observe ourselves and what goes on within us, the more we become aware of the figures within us and the parts they play in our ongoing lives. Some people have a very strong and conscious conversational relationship with
such figures that can include talking out aloud to them as well as inwardly within themselves. Still others are barely aware that such a process is going on within themselves; their capacities for self observation and reflection are not high. They just do it without being aware they are doing it. Most people, even if they are aware of what they do and who they talk to in their solitude, do not disclose this to another person without a high level of trust in the conversation. Some, like the Irish poet Medbh McGuckian, are not only aware of these relationships; they intentionally develop conversation with them, mainly internally but sometimes out aloud, and enjoy talking about such a central aspect of their life. In an interview on the ABC she said:

….. my grandmother whom I adored and cherished and who was my real first mother. She’s dead now 40 years and I just always feel that she is still with me and I need her and I am very like her and I’m becoming her. So there is that kind of thing which is historical in me, but there are very strange things that happen with the dead. I mean that they come to us and people won’t admit that very often because they might in a way be considered slightly crazy to being open to being haunted in a way.

….. I mean my father is dead 12 years now and he is in some ways further away than he was at the beginning. But at the same time, two babies were born into the family, twins, were born yesterday, and I felt that he knew about it, that wherever he was that he was aware of it, because it was close to the date that he died and also it was close to the birthday of another sister and I know this sounds very superstitious, the dates and the times and all of that, but it is all we have, I think, you know, and these temporal things are not just the hours and minutes and days passing from the past to the present to the future. I think they are meaningful. So all those things are very comforting and delightful and poetry is at the heart of them. (Encounter, 12.12.04, p.6)

Poetry may well be at the heart of these ‘comforting and delightful’ things; they are also the stuff of inner religion. I have heard ecclesiastical figures refer, disparagingly in the main, to such processes as ‘folk religion’, as opposed to proper religion which supposedly is formed around agreed doctrines and authorized ritual. It would be
reasonable to say then that in this philosophy of pastoral care we are asserting the primacy of folk religion over ecclesiastical, to use those terms. Folk religion, if we are to call it that, is a genuine process of the human soul, formed around the second person pole of the person’s inner life; ecclesiastical religion is built outwardly largely around the first and third perspectives. This can have a role as we shall see, but will always be secondary. Even the most caricatured outwardly focused ecclesiastical figure, self conscious of authority, orthodoxy and ritual protocol, will have a ‘real’ religious life within, a ‘folk religion’ that can be a much truer expression of what really matters to him or her. For all his outward ecclesiastical prayer, his mutterings within himself to the ‘You’s’ that structure his soul are what carry the relationship feelings that really matter and have meaning to him. The needs of the soul will not be denied.

The need to idealize ‘someone’ is a very powerful psychodynamic need. As we have seen, if this is denied at age appropriate periods in a person’s life, this can lead to developmental arrest that can plague the person for the rest of their life. The second person perspective can be fragile and vulnerable; our sense of self esteem comes from the internalizing of positive personal experiences with Others. The need to idealize will certainly not be denied, and although the process itself is value neutral, what is idealized is about value and virtue as apprehended through feeling and action. Hence the role of the general culture traditionally in offering agreed ideals, values and virtues that are thought to be worthy of our idealizing; and in this, traditional external ecclesiastical religion has played a significant part, at least in the past. But far less so now; organized religion is not held as a strong influence, and traditional religious figures that embody such values and ideals as humility, giving, preferring the Other, and faith in God have a diminishing following.

But the need to idealize has not gone away; so we witness extraordinary outpourings of collective grief at the death of Princess Diana, and the crocodile hunter Steve Irwin, along with a burgeoning celebrity culture which includes sporting heroes, movie stars, TV personalities, and popular musicians. Macmurray claimed that it is when the religious impulse starts to be projected onto political figures that a society is in greatest
danger of the implications of a reversal of values. Idealization carries the greatest promise, as we have examined, of self transcendence and personal growth; it also carries the greatest possibility of reversals and the exploitation of the egocentricities of others. No personal perspective raises moral and ethical questions more acutely.

Are there absolute values that we should idealize and aspire to? All the major traditional religions at their best affirm compassion, love and care, along with such things as loving kindness and forgiveness. Macmurray in his analysis of real or true religion as a generic process in human affairs maintains that the positive motives in life are essentially heterocentric and the acts that flow from them are self justifying. There is no need to justify acts of loving kindness; love and care speak for themselves. In this sense they are absolute, agreed to even by leading secular atheists, as already noted.

Everything about human experience suggests that love is more conducive to happiness than hate is. This is an objective claim about the human mind, about the dynamics of social relations, and about the moral order of the world. (Harris, S. 2006, p.26)

As a consequence of all this, idealization is a central issue for pastoral care practitioners at a number of levels. The second person perspective or pole in a person carries the religious impulse, but we live in a culture where this aspect of people’s souls are not necessarily inhabited with traditional religious figures or objects which embody traditional religious values, values which most people involved in pastoral care would still hold themselves. Consequently, we are most likely to enter conflict around this vital aspect and resource of people’s lives. This perhaps more than anything else tests a pastoral carer’s capacity to de-centre from his or her own values and inner life so that he or she can help someone more readily access theirs.

I am not thinking here of a direct conflict of values say around an issue such as abortion, as important as this may be to some people. I am meaning more the possible conflict when a carer who in her own life idealizes and feels a strong inner connection with Jesus or Mary or the Buddha or the Prophet or the Bible, or the Qu’ran or God, is connecting
pastorally with a figure who still talks to his mother everyday although she has been
dead for 30 years, or a favourite uncle, or a dead child; or ‘my best friend Evie’ or ‘the
tree at the bottom of the garden’ or the atmosphere at a special place; or Elvis or
Madonna or John Lennon or Tiger Woods; or Jim Jones or Adolf Hitler. I have
supervised a carer who developed a strong pastoral relationship with a German man who
still admired and felt devoted to Hitler; Hitler was still an active self object in this man’s
soul, and in terms of his actual life now this was not negative; it was supportive. The
challenge the pastoral carer meets in these circumstances is how to enter the reality of
the patient’s inner ‘You’ pole when the person invites them, without judgement and
without compromising his or her own values, so that he can help the person connect to
the inner resources that are carried there in those self object relationships. In this we
should come to know and respect our own boundaries. Whereas some may be able to
decentre from themselves significantly, others may not. In general terms, the more we
experience the other person as a separate person from us, the more we can stand alone in
our own selfhood, and the less we will project onto them; so the more easily we will be
able to cleanly empathize with them and enter their world regardless. This is all part of
the training and ongoing experience and growth of a pastoral carer.

As we have seen already, there are wheels within wheels in Macmurrays form and unit
of the personal with its three interconnecting and unified perspectives. Just as our
relationships in the world can be looked at from the three personal perspectives, so also
we can think of the structuring of our self or inner life from these perspectives. But we
can then also think of the internalized relationships that make up our ‘You’ or second
person perspective as also structured according to the three personal perspectives. So
when I imagine someone important to me, in other words have images of them active in
my awareness, I can contemplate him or her, or I can think about them objectively, or I
can interact with them personally. In other words, I can experience them in my
imagination from all three personal perspectives, including actual engagement within
myself in communicative acts. Such internal acts follow the form of the personal; they
contain and are constituted by my contemplation and thought. But whereas my
contemplating and thinking about them is entirely within the images of my reflection, if
I should go to act toward them by communicating, it is then that my body may also become involved. I might speak out aloud or at least mouth the words. At times I may in full self awareness intentionally address the person as external to myself, wherever in actuality they might really be. I still talk to my dead wife from time to time out aloud. This is the basis of prayer as action. Prayer as an outward act begins as an inward impulse to converse and communicate. On the other hand, I can talk to myself and be seen as doing so as if talking to an Other. Talking to ourselves can be thought of as a form of prayer in that when we talk to ourselves it is usually to ourselves as we idealize ourselves to be. Some theorists refer to this as our ‘higher Self’.

Whether or not an inner conversation or an outward prayer is real is bound up in the degree of satisfaction or communion we receive in such communicative acts. Folk religion does not ask the question, do the ‘You’s’ in my life actually exist?, as long as there is a sense of feeling relationship and interaction. This is the mark of their reality to us personally. Unless we get something back at least sometimes, even if that ‘something’ is only something we can recognize very privately within ourselves, we would give up the conversation. And what we get back has to engage our feelings; it has to have meaning. Sometimes it is an immediate sense of knowing. Sometimes it is a particular feeling that I identify with the person, and this feeling brings with it particular thoughts. Sometimes visual images of the person are present; we may even ‘hear’ their voice. There can be a sense of knowing what they would think and say about what we have just said to them, and this comes to us like a response. It is as if our knowledge of them as important people in our lives continues on after they are gone, be it that they are just absent or they are perhaps even dead. This is all the more important to us if there are idealizing feelings present. ‘God’ in such an understanding of inner religion may be only a particular feeling associated with an experience, say of a beautiful view, that draws the person out into addressing God as ‘You’ personally.

Sometimes there is a sense of spontaneity and seeming intention from the other person who is so important to us, as in the case of Medbh McGuckian quoted above. Her grandmother and others come to her, and although she does not mention it in this quote,
I can well imagine there is often a lively conversation between the two from which Medbh derives comfort and benefit. I am amazed in my own experience how someone can suddenly appear in the flow of my consciousness. Perhaps it is because of an external stimulus that I am not conscious of, or the flow of association with what I had been experiencing a moment before. Whatever the reason, there is a complex response within me that may include inner conversation. It certainly engages my imagination, my capacity to make and manipulate images, and may involve fantasy. What is vital to appreciate is that the images can include not only perceptual ones of the other person, be they visual or auditory, but a sense also of myself, and the relationship between us, all carried in associated feeling images. We somehow dwell in these images, this flow of consciousness.

Relationships in the other perspectives, which give us friendship in the mirroring and twin-shipping sense, are essential for the stable background flow of our thoughts and feelings, but we are less likely to have inner conversation with people in these categories in our lives except if for any reason the relationship has become a bit shaky. We may well re-hearse conversations with our friend as we go to meet her for coffee, or what we will say at the group we are to attend that evening.

The second person perspective contains the added dimension of ‘looking up’, of transcending, of desiring, of merging, of being attracted, of becoming; and then equally of being hurt, frustrated, angry, withdrawn when for any reason the offering of our self is not received in the way we want it to be received. The time in our lives for most of us when this dynamic is most at work, apart from early childhood, is when we first fall in love and attempt to act on these feelings and intuitions to have our desire met; but its roots are in the relationship with our parents, especially our mothers, and its ultimate end, as we have seen, for some is in the permanent idealized relationships that are more explicitly religious in the traditional sense, with God, Christ or the Buddha. For others it might only be Mum. Hitler is believed to have died with a photograph of his mother on his chest; the last remnant of the hope of having once been loved and perhaps still being
so, at least by her. The internal conversation is driven by narcissistic feelings and need of one sort or another at varying levels of intensity at different times in our lives.

Idealization finds its most general application in religious and spiritual terms in the idea of sacredness. What we hold sacred or has special qualities that we may think of as divine, and relate to personally as a ‘You’ is the basis of our ‘inner’ religion, individually and collectively.

What does it mean psychologically to call a teacher, an institution, an object, an experience, a text, or a ritual action “sacred” and to relate to it in that special way? One of the elements that goes into that attribution is the dynamic of idealization. To denote something as sacred is, among other things, to form what Kohut, in his earlier writings, would call an idealizing transference with it. We call something sacred when it meets our needs for idealization, when we can invest our narcissistic energy in it. That is why, as we have seen, idealizing language runs through much religious discourse. (Jones 2002, p.40)

The great intellectual champion of ‘folk religion’ as opposed to dogmatic or ecclesiastical religion was William James, whose definition of religion began this chapter. James studied religious experience empirically in his famous book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and towards the end drew generalized conclusions from this research about religion and its objects and practices. Living religion as he called it was based on just what we have been discussing, the inner communion of the Self with important, idealized, sacred or divine Others.

The religious phenomenon, studied as in inner fact, has shown itself to consist everywhere, and at all its stages, in the consciousness which individuals have of an intercourse between themselves and higher powers with which they feel themselves to be related. This intercourse is realized at the time as being both active and mutual. If it be not effective; if it be not a give and take relation; if nothing be really transacted while it lasts; if the world is in no whit different for its having taken place; then prayer, taken in this wide meaning of a sense that something is transacting, is of course a feeling of what is illusory, and religion
must on the whole be classed, not simply as containing elements of delusion – these undoubtedly everywhere exist – but as being rooted in delusion altogether, just as materialists and atheists have always said it was……………. The conviction that something is genuinely transacted in (prayerful) consciousness is the very core of living religion. (James 1902, p.455)

Recently in my pastoral work I talked with a woman in the throes of a pastoral issue. It became clear to me in talking with her that she had a very active inner conversational life, and as the level of trust increased she began to disclose this and I risked asking quite direct questions. She told me that she spoke constantly with Jesus and Mary within herself and experienced them as comforting companions. She spoke with the Father only on special occasions when there were significant requests to be made. She also spoke personally with a number of saints, especially St.Christopher when she was traveling, and the sense of security and comfort in this was very important to her. More than that, she had a beloved uncle who had died some years earlier, who, like Madbh McGuckian’s grandmother, was an active inter-actor with her in her daily life both when alive and now more so in death. She loved and idealized them all. She in fact had a great deal of inner resource with which I, the pastoral carer, could work.

Are such inner relationships illusory? From the second person perspective, I think the answer is no. They are all personal and supportive relationships that encourage positive beliefs which this particular person affirms in her actual experience. Furthermore, they encourage an ongoing self transcendence; she is not entrapped by these relationships because they are characterized by love and care. From a third person perspective, these relationships cannot be validated apart from accepting her testimony. If it could be shown that there was a change in her brain function when she was conversing with Mary, say, that indicated a positive feeling experienced within the first person pole of her Self, this might be as close as one could get to establishing Mary’s actual existence, at least to this woman. However, the reality of Mary for this person is not in question; religion in the end is about what is personally real.
Macmurray noted that existence is a practical experience, and to exist means to be in dynamic interrelation with other existents. So a person with a strong inner communicative or prayerful relationship with something they call ‘God’ has no reason to doubt ‘God’s’ reality. To do so would be like questioning whether or not they really had a mother. What can be reasonably assumed though, given the desire for conversation and prayer, is that the person’s conception of ‘God’ has associated with it positive, warm and idealizing feelings, along with a sense of mutuality in the relationship. ‘God’ in this sense is primarily a ‘You’ not a ‘He, She or It’, a personal object which we sense as real. Once there is such a sense of reality around ‘God’ or ‘angels’ or ‘Masters of the Universe’ or what have you, the question of existence is a non-question.

Religion as an extension of relationships we in principle find in personal community into a greater and possibly cosmic arena is the quest for personal relationship that meets basic narcissistic needs; something Freud decried, but something Kohut and Macmurray saw as entirely reasonable and to be expected; and such a quest can be rational and self transcending in the realm of the personal. James put it this way,

The pivot round which the religious life, as we have traced it, revolves, is the interest of the individual in his private personal destiny. Religion, in short, is a monumental chapter in the history of human egotism. The gods believed in – whether by crude savages or by men disciplined intellectually – agree with each other in recognizing personal calls. Religious thought is carried on in terms of personality, this being, in the world of religion, the one fundamental fact. Today, quite as much as at any previous age, the religious individual tells you that the divine meets him on the basis of his personal concerns. Science, has on the other hand, ended by utterly repudiating the personal point of view. (James 1902, p.480)

Not only science of course; doctrinal and dogmatic theology has tried to drag ‘God’ and associated idealized beings, who inhabit the second person perspective or ‘You’ pole of a person’s inner structure, into the impersonal, objective pole of the third person perspective. The ‘God’ of official theology and philosophy is not necessarily the ‘God’
of religion. A person may satisfy himself intellectually that ‘God’ exists, but it is not until he feels a real and personal relationship with such a One that this ‘God’ becomes religious; and then the question of existence is unnecessary. Reality transcends and includes existence. ‘God’ in this sense has to be developed within an inner conversation, and it is within this conversation any conceptual understanding of God is then developed also.

However, the point in all this for pastoral care as I have been presenting it, is that the personal relationships that enable us to become persons and which we internalize to varying degrees as inner structure in the dialectical and narcissistic movement between love of Self and love of Other, are extended out into wider arenas. The extension of idealizing relationships in particular helps to move our narcissism into more cosmic levels and where this relationship is constituted by feelings of love and care it helps found our personality in heterocentricity and predominantly positive motives. This constitutes significant inner resource. Whether we help a person draw on this resource by their telling us about the close relationship he or she still feels with her long dead mother, or whether we help a person by their telling us about the most sacred place they have ever been to, or the strength they feel when they read the Qu’ran or the Bible, or the importance they feel in their talking to God, or prayer, or for that matter the feelings of joy and wholeness remembered when first seeing Hitler, we are in principle connecting them to what has possibly most constituted their sense of well being and positive energy in life.

What then of the person, the now classic postmodern who disavows anything to do with religion, by which they mean that ‘this is all there is’, and who feels socially justified in being dismissive of religion and notions of ‘God’ or another realm of being; in other words, a secular atheist whose feeling for the personal is increasingly unconscious. How is he resourced inwardly around the second person perspective?

For a start, if the person copes well with life, it is reasonable for us to assume as pastoral carers that such a person will have successfully idealized others in his life, and these
others may have been significantly internalized. It is highly likely they have developed strong feeling relationships with art. A recent book examines Freud and his gods; Freud had a unique collection of objects of antiquity, many, if not most, objects of divinity, sacredness and religion. Music is likely to be a major inner resource, and will have idealizing energies involved; and so on with persons, places, and objects (note1)

William James has a further suggestion in this regard, that can apply not only to a secularist but to all of us to varying degrees. His basic definition of religion as revampped by me, you will remember, is the feelings, acts and experiences of individual people in their solitude, as far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to who or whatever they may significantly idealize.

What keeps religion going is something else than abstract definitions and systems of concatenated adjectives and something different from the faculties of theology and their professors. All these are after-effects, secondary accretions upon those phenomena of vital conversation with the unseen divine …… renewing themselves in saecula saeculorum in the lives of humble private men. (James 1902, p.437)

The divine might even be only ‘a larger more godlike self’ suggests James, as we noted above, ‘a higher self’. This I think is the bottom line that might draw us all into the inner religious process, religionist and secularist alike.

The practical needs and experiences of religion seem to me sufficiently met by the belief that beyond each man and in a fashion continuous with him there exists a larger power which is friendly to him and to his ideals. All that the facts require is that the power should be both other and larger than our conscious selves. Anything larger will do, if only it be larger enough to trust for the next step. It need not be infinite, it need not be solitary. It might conceivably even be only a larger more godlike self, of which the present self would be but a mutilated expression, and the universe might be a collection of such selves, of different degrees of inclusiveness, with no absolute unity realized in it at all. (James 102, p.514, my emphasis)
Self idealization is part of the outworking of our narcissistic needs; and we each know the experience of ‘talking to ourselves’. We would not do it if it did not have meaning and efficacy. Self idealization only becomes pathological when it is a compensatory defence against severe hurt and disappointment in crucial relationships which should be positive self object relationships but are not. We are enjoined to ‘love others as we love ourselves’. So a more idealized projection of ourselves is also part of the ‘You’ that constitutes the second person perspective of our souls, and which can become the Other with which we have personal conversation about the vicissitudes and destinies of life. In this sort of analysis no one escapes religion in its positive sense.

Our inner conversations constitute our soul. The effective pastoral carer is someone who understands this and works carefully with it for the benefit of the people they intentionally befriend.

In 1904 in answer to the question, ‘Is God an attitude of the Universe toward you?’, James replied:

Yes, but more conscious. ‘God’, to me, is not the only spiritual reality to believe in. Religion means primarily a universe of spiritual relations surrounding the earthly practical ones, not merely relations of ‘value’, but agencies and their activities. I suppose that the chief premise for my hospitality towards the religious testimony of others is my conviction that ‘normal’ or ‘sane’ consciousness is so small a part of actual experience. What ever be true, it is not true exclusively, as philistine scientific opinion assumes. The other kinds of consciousness bear witness to a much wider universe of experiences, from which our belief selects and emphasizes such parts as best satisfy our needs. (note2)

James’ ideas are remarkably similar to the theory and practice of Alcoholics Anonymous and its many off-shoots. Religious experience is a sense of personal connection with something greater and other in the broadest sense, with which conversation is cultivated
and developed, inwardly and outwardly. This is the bottom-line, as it were, of religious experience; spoken connection with ‘God’ as ‘you conceive him to be’. The increasingly popular use of terms such as ‘The Universe’ or ‘The Source’ or ‘The Higher Self’, as well as ‘God’ is an extension of this, and is also in line with James’ basic understanding of religious experience.

Perhaps James’ testimony to his own experience really states the bottom line in this process, and yet also retains the essential sense of connection to something ideal and other that is his main distinction of religious experience from other inner experience. He commented, again in 1904, in a letter to his colleague James Leuba, whose work James had used in *Varieties*:

The Divine, for my active life, is limited to abstract concepts which, as ideals, interest and determine me, but do so but faintly, compared with what a feeling of God might effect, if I had one. It is largely a question of intensity, but differences of intensity may make one’s whole centre of energy shift. Now, although I am devoid of *Gottesbewustsein* in the direct-er and stronger sense, yet there is something in me which makes response when I hear utterances made from that lead by others. Something tells me, “thither lies truth” – and I am sure it is not old theistic habits and prejudices of infancy. Those are Christian; and I have grown so out of Christianity that entanglement therewith on the part of a mystical experience has to be abstracted from and overcome, before I can listen. Call this if you like my mystical germ. It creates the rank and file of believers. As it withstands in my case, so it will withstand in most cases, all purely atheistic criticism, but interpretative criticism….it can energetically combine with. (his emphases, note3)

The mystical germ, the deeply personal and private inner commerce with ‘something’ if not ‘everything’, whatever form it may take be it only in some sense greater and other, is the core of religious experience. All else for James is ‘over-belief’, ‘buildings-out performed by the intellect into directions of which feeling originally supplied the hint’ (James 1902, p.422), energetic combinations with ‘interpretative criticism’. A person’s
‘over-belief’ might be the most interesting part of his or her faith and world-view, but it is not the core of his religious being. It is an out-growth from it.

Religious experience spontaneously and inevitably engenders myths, superstitions, dogmas, creeds and metaphysical theologies, and criticisms of one set of these by adherents of another……… But all these intellectual operations, whether they be constructive or comparative and critical, presuppose immediate experiences as their subject-matter. They are interpretive and inductive operations, operations after the fact, consequent upon religious feelings, not coordinate with it, not independent of what it ascertains. (James 1902, p.423)

This type of building of over-belief is a spontaneous process of thought, not to be confused with an intellectualism that builds religious objects from a logical process, ‘drawing rigorous inference from non-subjective facts’ (James 1902, p.424). James is critical of this form of intellectualism, dominant at the time of his lectures in the absolute idealism that held sway particularly in Scotland, the seat of the Gifford Lectures; although it is in the end a form of over-belief that people can commit themselves to emotionally, just as science is a form of over-belief that substantiates itself collectively through the scientific method and becomes established as agreed objective knowledge which arouses emotional commitment in some as truth. It is not the core of an individual’s religious being or inner life however.

This completes the description of the Self using the form of the personal as the basis for a philosophy of pastoral care: Intentional Friendship. Pastoral care is centred in the second person perspective of the Self which is necessarily founded in the motive of love and care out of which positive intentions toward the Other are needed for the constitution of personal community. Pastoral care need no longer be founded in a theology in which God’s love and care is posited as an unearthed and abstracted idea from which other ideas are deduced; instead it is founded in the love and care that is real and necessary for personal community to form, especially the family, without which human beings could not grow as persons. These processes in their most general sense are religious. It is from this basis that life and the Universe is experienced personally,
within which people are able to experience and appropriate a sense of relationship with a wider circle of ‘personal beings’ in the attempt to have their ongoing narcissistic needs met, including for some a cosmic love that can be named personally ‘God’. Viewing the theoretical basis of pastoral care in this way enables it to be inclusive of human experience generally within whatever tradition. The content may vary, but the form is the same, within which we are all seeking meaning and the capacity to cope with our lives and the lives of those around us. This in no way negates the intellectual attempt to think ‘God’ or ‘the Whole’, and struggle with what is true objectively from the third person perspective. This remains as an end point in the quest, rather than a posited beginning point in understanding the human condition.

In the remaining chapters, I take key concepts from this philosophy as it has developed out of John Macmurray’s philosophy, and apply them to the process of Clinical Pastoral Education.

Notes


PART D

Implications for Pastoral Care Training

In Part D some of the important implications of this philosophy for pastoral care training are examined, including a re-focusing of the reflective process, and a re-examination of the relationship between the trainee and the supervisor and supervisory peer group in Clinical Pastoral Education.
Chapter 12

**Motive and Intention**

**Synopsis:** Reflection in CPE has its origins in Freudian interpretation of behaviour. This pre-supposes a dualistic world of mind to matter, theory to practice in which motive and intention are virtually the same thought.

Overcoming this by making Agency primary, as proposed in this philosophy, allows motive and intention, along with attention, to be grasped as related but distinct aspects of our experience. This in turn allows a completely different analysis and interpretation of pastoral actions, and a shift in focus in supervision away from making the unconscious conscious to the intentional growth through reflection of the trainee’s pastoral capacities.

Clinical Pastoral Education, the most widely accepted training method for pastoral care in the English speaking world, is based on an action/reflection method. As we have noted, it began in the 1920’s under the direct influence of the training methods and ideas then being explored in the United States in the training of psychoanalysts.

People in training were assigned to a peer group under the supervision of a trained person. They would visit in hospitals or some other pastoral context, write up their visit as a case study or verbatim, and present this to the training group or the supervisor individually for reflection. The benefits of this reflective process would then be taken by the trainee into their further visiting. The training program would be further enhanced by didactic material in the form of lectures, discussions and reading, and further group process training.

The background theoretical understanding at work in the reflective process was largely Freudian, which was not without tension amongst people trained theologically. It did mean that chaplaincy and pastoral care began to take psychology and psychoanalysis seriously, to the point from time to time of invoking a reaction by those who felt theology was a more appropriate basis for pastoral care than psychoanalysis. In fact, they shared the same problem in relation to pastoral care training; it is not without reason that psychoanalysis has been referred to by some as a meta-theology. They are both systems of thought developed from the third person perspective. In making action and religion the basis of our understanding of pastoral care, we centre the process around the second person perspective.
My earliest work in Clinical Pastoral Education, both as a trainee and as a new supervisor, was very much in this old style of a sort of Freudian interpretation of what might be ‘really’ going on in a pastoral visit, something unconscious that a good supervisor could help make conscious. Such interpretive reflection did encourage trainees to self-reflect, but it also set up a tension between the expert supervisor and the trainee that excited transferences that were not always helpful. The supervisor would largely take the role of the adversary, which as we have seen can be a very important and helpful self object position in enabling people to find boundaries in their life and work as carers; but if not modulated by more positive dynamics and modeling such as idealizing, twinshipping and mirroring, can become demanding and oppressive. Further to that, Freudian interpretation breeds a culture in which all participants come to accept that the real meaning in just about everything is likely to be unconscious, to be made conscious by a clever interpretive disclosure, usually by the supervisor. It meant also, that the form of reflection being modeled and taught was not necessarily empowering to the trainee; there is little value for the actual practice of pastoral care to take from a supervisory session that the main issue going on in the pastoral visit under discussion was probably the patient’s poor relationship with his mother. Part of the problem with Freud’s understanding of the unconscious is that it can be made to explain just about everything; and most of that ‘knowledge’ is quite unrelated to human action, just like most theology. It is a form of over-belief, however interesting. Further to this, theory for its own sake that is unrelated to action, either to verify itself or to inform action, is vulnerable to becoming illusory, even delusory.

My first substantial break from this supervisory tradition came when I studied self psychology and was supervised in psychotherapy training using the Conversational Model developed by Russell Meares within the self psychology movement. This put the emphasis on the immediate relationship of the carer with the patient, and what the carer needs to be saying and doing to enhance an empathic connection with the patient. The same type of relationship is encouraged then between carer and supervisor. Interpretation in this model is not about the imposition of a theory to explain what was really going on unconsciously; it is attempting to understand why there had been a breakdown or disjunction in the relationship between the carer and patient, and what needed to be done to restore a sense of empathy and trust between
the two. In a supportive climate of empathy and trust the client or patient can come up with their own interpretations as to the deeper ‘why’s’ and meanings of a situation, in their own language, and in a way that is self-energizing. The carer or therapist’s role is to manage and enhance that climate of empathy and trust; not to deliver ‘expert’ explanations in a new interpretive language. However, he may point out and interpret what is going on in the relationship between himself as therapist and the client.

The next stage in my own development was then to find the work of John Macmurray and to begin to view the Self from the primacy of action, the Self as Agent. Macmurray drew a clear distinction between action and behaviour. While both are motived, behaviour is activity that is habitual and not intentional and so not necessarily conscious; action is fully conscious and intentional, the intention being formed through the persons’s knowledge of the Other. Freudian interpretation of human behaviour, and it is behaviour strictly speaking that we are considering when we think in Freudian categories, and not action, is based on the false premise, as far as Macmurray is concerned, that intention and motive are necessarily unconscious, in the form of instincts and drives. Freudian instincts and drives are in principle not experiencable as such directly in consciousness in the first person pole of the Self; they are explanatory concepts in Freud’s thought. Freud was trapped in the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter, and in making thought and theory primary it is in fact hard to differentiate between motive and intention. It meant then that in Freudian interpretation the central determiners of human behaviour are in principle unconscious, available only to trained ‘expertise’ from a third person perspective way.

Kohut, on the other hand, made feelings and relational empathy the foundation of his form of psychoanalysis rather than the unconscious Freudian drives and instincts. Feelings as motives can be either conscious or unconscious. A good deal of what motivates us in life is unconscious, and it can be a self transcending revelation to realize our real motive in a situation, whether it be an innocent aspect of the way we live or an actual self deception. As we have discussed, mixed motives are natural to the human condition, and many of these are not available to consciousness in its ongoing flow. We need to have them revealed to us, through our interactions with
others and the self revelations that may arise from these interactions. In this, the person in therapy or being ‘cared for’ is consciously part of the process; what might be really going on emerges for them in the relationship with the carer and in their own thought and emergent feelings. However in all this, there is still not a clear distinction between motive and intention.

Macmurray, by understanding the Self as primarily an Agent, could make a clear distinction between the two, and this distinction enables what I believe is a paradigmatic shift in the use of the action/reflection model in Clinical Pastoral Education. He wrote:

The distinction between motive and intention is difficult, and indeed impossible, for any philosophy which accepts the primacy of the theoretical, and takes its stand upon the ‘Cogito’. For the motives of our actions are not thought but felt, and if we represent them as thought, they become indistinguishable from intentions. From the standpoint of the Agent, however, the distinction is both important and clear-cut. (Macmurray 1957, p.194)

What follows is by no means an exhaustive analysis of what is a highly complex process. I have focused on those aspects that I think a trainer and supervisor in pastoral care should be aware of, and which he or she might progressively make his trainees aware in the growth of their Self understanding.

An essential distinction Macmurray notes is that while motive can be either conscious or unconscious, intention is always conscious. To act is be conscious of acting and what we intend by the action.

One aspect of the difference…. is that the motive of an action need not be conscious, while the intention must be. To talk of an unconscious motive makes sense; but ‘an unconscious intention’ is a contradiction in terms. The phrase could only signify ‘an intention which is unintentional’. An action, in the sense in which we are using the term, is necessarily intentional. It is indeed the presence of intention which distinguishes it from activities which are non-rational, uniformed by knowledge. (Macmurray 1957, p.195)
Motive originates and resides within the Self. Following the distinction between emotion and feeling proposed by the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (note 1), namely that emotion is what occurs in the body and is in principle open to third person scrutiny, and feeling is first personal, known only to the individual person, we can say that all activity, both behaviour and action, is motivated by emotion, some of which is registered inwardly as feeling. Feeling is the inner face of emotion; but we are not necessarily aware of it. Whereas in our behaviour we are not aware of this motive unless we intentionally reflect on our behaviour, in our actions it is a goal of training for a trainee to be aware of what he is feeling when he acts. We in fact want to be able to manage our feelings intentionally, calling upon our own resilience and inner resources and capacity to self soothe and alter the dominant feeling within us at any point in our interaction with a patient. There is in this alone a significant level of individuation and maturity, that may take some time to achieve.

For instance every present moment includes our memory of what has happened and our anticipation of what might happen. To sustain our presence to the patient as a pastoral carer we have to be able to de-centre from negative motives such as anxiety or fear, in the light of both anticipation and memory, and not let them motivate behaviour or actions that will jeopardize the relationship with the carer. Even when approaching a ward, or its equivalent, anticipating what we might find can create a motive of fear or apprehension, especially if our memory is reminding us of difficult times with that particular patient previously. There are various things we can learn to do to manage this.

The motives within us have deeper roots than this though. For instance, at the behavioural level this will be a system of habits peculiar to a particular individual. This system of habits is the individual’s character, which has formed over his or her life, without the person being necessarily aware of this formation, and can include acquired skills and sensibilities that were once conscious and initiated intentionally but have now been internalized and operate in the individual without him having to be aware of them at the time, but able to be aware of them in reflection. It may well be that some aspects of this system of habits in an individual cut across the overall motive to pastorally care, and consequently have to be undone as it were. The person needs to become aware of this ‘habit’ with the intention of changing it. The habits
that motivate our behaviour become part of our being as an organism, and hence are difficult to change. To do so is a matter of intention, which means a conscious and very personal and often painful process.

By the same token, training in pastoral care introduces the person to many new skills and sensibilities. It is a goal of the training for these skills and sensibilities to become internalized and habitual, and in so doing they have an influence on the person’s character and the motive base of their behaviour, and consequently also their actions.

More consciously, the carer is motivated also by the role he needs to fulfill. Unlike the doctor who is motivated principally by the third person perspective and is predominantly motivated to examine the patient medically to fix him or her up, and the beautician who is predominantly motivated to make the patient feel attractive and well presented and so is operating mainly in the first person perspective, the pastoral carer is focused in the second person. They are motivated, or need to be, to meet the patient as an equal and free person in the whole of their life, giving the patient at least respect and his or her full autonomy and authority as a person, and hopefully also a sense of the carer’s genuine interest and care and love, with no ulterior motive.

Motive also undergirds the desire to want to fulfill such a role in the first place. Computer buffs do not offer to become pastoral carers by virtue of their being computer buffs. If they do it is for some other reason. Usually motives that undergird a person’s life arise within fundamentally important influences or events in their life. It is important in training to help the trainee become more aware of this underpinning motive in their life and where it came from. At the end of the seventies I conducted research in altruism at the University of Birmingham and interviewed all their social work students. Although social work does not have the same degree of focus in the personal life as pastoral care does, it is nonetheless an important and not well paid community activity; like pastoral care it is not a fee for service profession. Interestingly, and I am not saying conclusively, all the students fell within three categories: those who were influenced by Marxist thought and saw social work as a way to change society; those who had gone through a major crisis in their life which had completely altered their attitudes and led them to want to give
something to others; and those who were influenced by religious teaching and membership of one sort or another. The third group was by far the largest, something like seventy percent (note 2).

I think it is entirely likely now to find a secular atheist who is motivated to live life predominantly in the second person perspective, and my hunch is that in such a person there will be a deep commitment to such things as human rights or alleviating human suffering. The point here to note is that within the great complexity of motives in a carer’s life there is likely to be a basic commitment to an under-girding motive that is focused in the second person perspective and hence is positive toward the Other. Without this it would be hard for the work to be rewarding, which takes us back to our discussion in chapter five on Friendship.

Motive, as either emotion or feeling, governs the expenditure of energy by selecting its direction, of which one direction is toward the Other and can be either positive or negative (as in love and anger in the relations between persons) and the other negative and moving away from the Other (as in fear). Positive motives under-gird the life processes, the negative are defensive of life processes, at times necessarily so and at times unnecessarily so. When we are genuinely threatened and in danger, we need to be negatively motivated; when we are trapped in negative motives in relation to another person we are to that extent withdrawn from life. The selection of the direction of a response is a function of feeling, whether we are conscious of it or not.

All living organisms are motivated in their behaviour. Sensory consciousness and the formation of images is also controlled by feeling, directing energy to the formation of images, which in turn can modify feeling. These images of sensation help to widen the possibilities in reactions, but do not effect the direction; this is a function of feeling only. It is the stimulus that controls the feeling and hence the reaction.

When these essentially organic processes are lifted into the level of the personal as they are with human beings, they become the foundation not only of our behaviour but also of our capacity to act. The images of sensation become the perceptions of knowledge, knowledge of world around us, of the Other. It is this knowledge that
determines action as opposed to behaviour through the formation of an intention toward the Other, an intention that necessarily arises within a motive.

With the distinction between Self and Other, both images and feelings are referred to the Other, and action is determined by knowledge. This knowledge has two aspects, a determination of the Other as matter of fact in relation to action, and so an apprehension of the possibilities open to the Agent; and a valuation of these possibilities in action, and so the determination of an intention. These two aspects of knowledge are of course not separable in fact, but only distinguishable by thought. The discrimination of the Other – as support for and resistance to action – is perception; the valuation of alternatives is a matter of feeling. (Macmurray 1999, p.197)

The capacity to perceive and know the Other allows the Self to become not only a ‘behaer’, but also an agent, someone who acts intentionally. The initiative to act lies with the agent, who determines his action in terms of the nature of the Other. However simple and immediate an action may be, so long as it is an action, and not merely a reaction to stimulus, then it is informed and directed by an awareness of the Other-than-self as other; and the ground of choice, that is, the determination of the action, lies therefore in the agent’s knowledge of the Other. (Macmurray 1957, p.168)

This knowledge may be very limited, far from adequate, capable of being extended and deepened by reflection, and never complete; however at the point of action and hence choice it is knowledge and it is certain.

So long as we do not generalize, or anticipate, or in any way go beyond its immediacy, our knowledge of the Other in action has a certainty that no reflective knowledge can ever attain. (Macmurray 1957, p.168)

The knowledge that enables intentions to form, and hence particular actions to occur, has three focal points of awareness, the Other, the Self and the relation between the two.

Knowledge is that in my action which makes it an action and not a blind activity. It is ‘objective’ awareness; or rather awareness of the Other and the Self in relation. (Macmurray 1957, p.129)
This takes us to a third crucial concept in Macmurray’s analysis that has bearing on pastoral care training, namely *attention*. Intention contains and is constituted by attention, as attention contains and is constituted by motive. When we visit someone, or in fact in any action in life, what we know in our awareness is determined by what we attend to, and what we attend is determined by the motive that is driving the act. As we shall see, we in fact take in much more than we are aware of during the visit, and this knowledge can be brought into awareness by reflection. But it is what is in our awareness at the time because we are attending to it that will determine our intention. What a doctor attends to when he visits a patient is very different from what a beautician attends to, and equally different from what a pastoral carer attends to. So it is an essential part of pastoral care training to help the trainee attend to the things that are going to help him form intentions that will serve his motive to care pastorally.

For instance, a room with no flowers or cards is a fact that a pastoral carer attends to and takes into his awareness. It is a ‘communication’ that has meaning and is revealing of the person in the room. In general terms we are attending to those things that give us knowledge of the person as a person, how they are feeling, what is going on in their inner life and how it is that they cope with difficult situations; what are their inner resources and level of resilience.

So action at the interpersonal level is governed by intention. The intention will form in what we are attending to and contain a motive that may be either conscious or unconscious. But the intention itself will be formed by knowledge, namely beliefs that are trusted as real in the moment. This knowledge is gained by attending to the three major focal points, and has two aspects, a determination of the Other, and a valuation of possibilities in action, and so the determination of an intention. This process is anchored by our most certain knowledge of all; *that when we act we know we are acting*. Further to this, actions are built upon a repertoire of behaviours which are habitual and motived and which form a system within the individual that is an expression of his or her character.
How does this inform my work as a pastoral care practitioner and supervisor or trainer? Firstly it encourages the supervisor to help the trainees become more aware of what their motivations are in doing this work, what in their system of behavioural habits fit in with this and what counteract it, and what might be done to undo this. It encourages us to present a series of communication skills that the trainee can become habitual with and so increase the behavioural foundation upon which his actions can be based.

It highlights also what is to be focused on in the supervisory process. We want the trainees to grow in their capacity to know what they are feeling when they are acting, their motive in the moment, and to develop ways to manage these feelings and motives under the general motive and intention of offering intentional friendship. We also want them to learn to attend to those things in a visit that will maximize their knowledge of the Other and their own Self in the relationship, and so form appropriate intentions in their conversation that are based on the reality of the patient. We want them to develop the capacity and the facility to attend primarily to the patient, secondarily to themselves, and thirdly to the relationship between them, while they are acting; and to develop the capacity of what is referred to as reflection-in-action, which in turn is based on the skill to reflect effectively on an action once the action is over and we have withdrawn from it. We want them to understand that such reflection both expands their knowledge of the Other, of themselves, and what to do effectively in the relationship, so that their knowledge is more adequate; and it also can enable them to see when they are in error or acting under an illusion. We want them to begin to think from the point of view of their agency, which means thinking in terms of motive, attention, intention, memory, anticipation, withdrawal and return, reflection, reflection-in-action, knowledge and knowledge-in-action. We want them to become encouraged and interested in their growth and understanding as an acting person who is approaching others in a positive motive to offer intentional friendship. We want them to develop a stable de-centred self or Observer, with increasing options of how they might respond to a person with an ease in intending and acting, to the point of spontaneity.

For instance, as a pastoral carer I want to be able to sense both motive and intention in a person’s communicative actions in relation to me, and respond to one or other or
both. Much modern counseling, and for that matter pastoral care, has been dominated by the idea of the reflection of feelings. This can be important in the service of empathy, but it is only addressing the motive side of the person’s communication, and if overused can feel unreal and lacking in real connection and spontaneity. Added to this is the tendency to attempt to reflect feelings not in the actual relationship between the carer and the patient, but feelings the carer thinks the patient might have had in the situation the patient is relating. A strong sense of conjunction and connection cannot develop from reflection of such feelings. At the very least the feelings that matter, at least initially, is the motive that can be discerned in the person’s immediate communicative act in relation to the carer. Some theorists refer to this as the ‘feeling in ascendency’ (note3).

A greater sense of connection is likely to develop if the mirroring or twinshipping or sometimes idealizing, in other words the empathic responses from the carer, are picking up the intention of the person, or the intention and motive together. The intention in any communicative act is what the person is meaning or intending, and this intention in a patient I have just started talking to is formed by his knowledge of me the carer as the Other he is addressing. This might be very momentary and totally incomplete knowledge of me, but in terms of his action in communicating to me will be certain knowledge and hence the basis of his action. His intention will be based on that knowledge, through something that has caught his attention, and will be driven by a motive. So what he communicates to me after I introduce myself as a pastoral carer will be different from what he might have said if I had introduced myself as someone else, a maintenance man or a doctor for instance. Whatever knowledge he had of pastoral care, plus any feelings associated with and part of that knowledge would help determine his motive and intention in communicating with me. It is likely that he will have formed an instant impression of me as perhaps an open non-judgmental person (more fool him!), or an anxious do-gooder, or someone to have a joke with, and this will help determine his action as well. The person will be potentially aware of his intention as part of his general consciousness, but not necessarily have it in the cone of his attention and hence conscious awareness. When we relate to his intention in some way, it brings it directly into his cone of attention, and he feels heard, seen, understood. Unlike a lot of therapy we are not trying to make conscious what is unconscious; we are making the person directly aware and
attentive of what is already in principle conscious. We wish to respond effectively to what the patient’s communication means to him; not what we instantly think it means to us.

In any communication, there can be a number of levels of meaning which in principle can be discerned or discriminated, from fairly superficial levels to levels which are very close to the person’s sense of self and meaning in life. The more we know this person the more we will be aware of the possibilities in our response and hence the range of choices from which our intention in responding to the patient can be determined through our feelings in the moment of interchange. In general, in establishing connection we seek to respond to an intention closest to the person’s cone of attention, if not already within it, to the ‘intention-in-ascendancy’ if you like. A growing trust in us, and a liking of or warming toward us, will quite naturally deepen their intention and take it closer to what really matters to them, and at the same time stabilize the motive behind it; hence the importance of our motives being quite transparent and positive, and experienced by the patient as in his or her interest.

We may wish to respond only to the motive we discern rather than the intention; and in fact we may discern a number of motives that might be quite mixed, if not conflicted. Our response will be more immediately empathic and help create conjunction if it is the feeling behind their communication in the here and now, as we have seen, so long as the feeling is a positive or at least a benign one. People do not like having negative motives mirrored back to them unless the levels of connection and trust are strong or the motive is so obvious that it would be ridiculous not to respond to it. People are often helped by having a conflict in motive mirrored back to them. If a negative motive is present in the carer’s assessment, it may be possible to reframe it in the carer’s response. So instead of saying ‘I can see you are very angry’, you may say ‘I can see good service is really important to you’. In all likelihood that could be a genuine motive behind the more obvious motive of anger.

As will be discussed further, our primary attention is on the patient, and specifically what we can discern of their motive and intention. This attention should not waver, and any withdrawal in us into reflection, the thinking and feeling that is going on within us that we need to learn to attend to also, should happen within the primary
attention we are paying the patient. If we take our attention off the patient, and withdraw fully into reflection, it is more than likely that we will lower our eyes, or turn slightly, and the patient will immediately withdraw also and the connection can be lost, particularly if the patient is disclosing something important, possibly with the thought and associated negative feeling of ‘this person is not really interested in what I am telling him, like everyone else’. We are developing the capacity to stand outside ourselves as it were and be aware of both the person we are talking to and what is happening in us so that we are in the best position to make choices and hence form intentions that lead to actions that are in the best interest of the Other.

This brings us to a vital point that will be explored further. We have to learn to let our thinking and feeling do their work in us and for us as we keep attending to the patient, and secondarily ourselves. The more we can trust this process as it manifests in the flow of our consciousness the more easily and quickly we can access and use it in our conversation, to the point of lightness and spontaneity. The flow of consciousness, both the patient’s and ours, works by association. If we can have a hunch of what the thought or feeling might have been immediately before the person’s communicative action that is their intention and/or motive, and we respond to that, we will create strong conjunction and effective energy within the conversation.

As we shall see, being able to ask questions of ourselves is vital in this reflective process generally, both in reflection-in-action but also when we go to write up a pastoral visit and we withdraw entirely into reflection around our actions in the visit.

So the supervisor’s role is not to come up with an interpretive idea of what was ‘really’ going on according to some theory, but to push the trainee in his or her own reflection on the three main focal points of a pastoral interaction; the patient, the carer, and the relationship between them. Reflection on each focal point carries the possibility of both gaining and increasing knowledge of the other person, knowledge of himself as an Agent in the process, and knowledge of the intersubjective communication needed between the two; and of seeing how the carer may have been in error, acting on illusions, as it were, and not just inadequate knowledge.
Being an effective pastoral carer is knowing what to say and do in the here and now that supports, enlivens, encourages, comforts and heals the people we are engaging at personal, inter-subjective levels. Reflection in pastoral care is the for the sake of these actions, and for no other reason. Our capacity to reflect-in-action is enhanced by developing our capacity to reflect effectively in complete withdrawal. We turn to consider this as a central process in Clinical Pastoral Education.

Notes:
2. The research paper on this study in altruism was not published. It was part of a Diploma in Pastoral Studies from the University of Birmingham. It is entitled ‘With Care’ and is available from the author.
3. The concept ‘feeling-in-ascendency’ is used for instance by Rowe and Mc Isaacs in *Empathic Attunement: The Technique of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*. It is typical in a pastoral conversation that a patient will relate an event that occurred some time ago, which will have all sorts of feelings at the time for the patient. The carer is tempted to relate to these feelings or motives in response. But what is more important is to sense the feeling or motive in the patient in the here and now as he is talking to the carer, and relate to this. This is the ‘feeling-in-ascendency’, and for this to be effectively mirrored, either directly or by relating to the intention toward the carer that is coming out of that motive, will create immediacy and conjunction between the patient and the carer.
Chapter 13

The Pastoral Carer in Reflection

Synopsis: Learning to reflect on a pastoral visit after the visit is over, and drawing others into that reflective process, namely a supervisor and a supervisory peer group, is the basic method of CPE. Learning to think from the standpoint of action and agency alters the focus of this reflection to what is known of the patient by the carer, what is known of him or herself, and what is known of the relationship between the two; and how that knowledge can be checked for error and increased by reflection, so that the carer can return to visiting having learnt more about all three points of attention, increasingly able to use that knowledge while they are actually acting.

As pastoral carers we seek to be expert in acting positively toward another person in ways that he or she finds supportive, caring, helpful, meaningful, engaging, energizing and possibly healing. To do that we are seeking to make conjunctive and immediate emotional connection with the patient, and to respond in ways that enable a good level of trust to form; our aim is to listen and respond effectively in a way that connects the patient to inner emotional and spiritual resources.

To do all this, as we have seen and discussed, we are constantly involved in the rhythm of withdrawal and return, not unconsciously as is the case for most people in their everyday life, but intentionally. People move into reflection to cope with something but are not necessarily conscious of doing this; pastoral carers become habitual reflective agents and do so consciously. We reflect as we act, and we withdraw completely from our actions to intentionally reflect on that action in our solitude, and with other carers and supervisors. It is in withdrawal to reflect that we learn and grow and develop our capacity to self transcend or empathize in our pastoral care relationships that we intentionally enter and re-enter, and to be able to use the fruits of our reflection while we are acting through the capacity of reflection-in-action.

The reflective activities of the personal are concerned with the development of knowledge, and this development has two interrelated aspects, eliminating error and enlarging its scope. The development of knowledge is primarily concerned with our knowledge of the Other; but this will include, as its negative, knowledge of ourselves. The reflective activities, as negative aspects of action, are for the sake of action; they are symbolic actions, as it
were, with a meaning; and this meaning is a reference beyond the symbols to what they signify. In general, this reference is reflection to action; from a symbolic or imaginary action to real action. Now since action is the determination of the future, all reflective activities have a reference to the future and its determination. They determine the future symbolically, but not in reality. (Macmurray 1999, p.167)

Before we look further into knowledge- and reflection-in-action as the key capacities in pastoral care practice, we need to look at the broader process of action and reflection when we completely withdraw from the action with the intention of reflecting on it. This is the primary method of Clinical Pastoral Education.

In our practical training, the action/reflection/action process is in some sense a spiral one. It is applicable across all pastoral care contexts, but for our purposes here of describing the process, let us imagine I am referred to a patient to visit within a hospital context. I make my visit. I then withdraw to reflect on the visit and write it up in some form such as a verbatim or case study. I then take this representation of my visit to a supervisor or supervisory peer group, and they continue to reflect with me on the visit, bringing their knowledge and reflective capacities to bear on the issues as represented in my representation. After this I continue to reflect on the issues raised until I return to make another visit to the patient, having now benefited by the several occasions and levels of reflection. Alternatively I take what I have gained into visiting someone else, with the expectation of doing this more effectively from what I have learnt in the withdrawn reflection. This process can be represented diagrammatically.
I want now to look at the sorts of things that might go on within pastoral carers as they go through this process, thinking from the point of view of action, the Self as Agent.

At each moment we are in the present, with a future and a past. The past is fully determined; there is nothing I can do that can change the past; it is in or potentially in the present only as memory. I can perhaps change memory, but in any case at best it is always incomplete and can never fully represent what is now past in the present. The future is to be determined, and it will be determined by my action. It is in the
present symbolically as anticipation of what might happen, such as what I might find when I conduct a visit; for all that, the images in my mind and associated feelings from both memory and anticipation can seem very real, even if in fact they are illusory. Their actual reality can only be known in and through action.

As Macmurray implies in the quote above, I am already determining the future symbolically as I set out to make my visit. A great deal of what I will do in the visit I will do without being conscious of what I am doing. I will behave out of habit. A lot of what will happen I fully expect to happen, given my experience of pastoral visits generally; I commit all that to my habitual skills that I have internalized through experience and reflection. This caring behaviour is driven by a motive but has no intention. What I will be ready to attend to is what might be different or unexpected, and intention will form from my knowledge of this.

In both of us, the carer and the patient, anticipation and memory are at work. The more I can anticipate the patient in his actions, the more spontaneously I can act toward him. This capacity is directly related to my knowledge of him; and this knowledge has both a general sense and a particular sense. In so far as the patient elicits memories of others like him, and the situation, I can use that knowledge in relating to him; this is the sort of person he is and this is the most effective way to engage him, and in situations like this these are likely to be important issues for him, and so on. This knowledge can be gradually built up through experience and reflection on people and situations generally. But there are particulars about this person which I have not met before; my attention needs to be on these aspects which are likely to be focal points of my thinking and feeling when I withdraw to reflect. These particulars are unique to this person and represent an edge against which I can learn and grow.

We will look in greater detail at the process during the actual visit when we look at knowledge and reflection-in-action specifically in the next chapter. For the moment, let us assume the visit will eventually end and we will leave. We will carry at that moment as we leave either a general feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the visit; it is important to note this and to recall it when writing up the visit. We may also be aware of particular moments in the visit when we felt satisfied or dissatisfied
with what we had said or done in that moment; it is worth noting these as soon as possible. An act begins with a feeling which is the motive for the act, and finishes with a feeling. If the finishing feeling is one of satisfaction there is a sense that our intention has been realized; if not, the dissatisfaction is a motive to attend to and from which to form a new intention. The action of visiting this person is now part of the past; it is fully determined. Definite feelings of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction are the possible doorways to attend to in reflection. They represent the focal points of possible growth in knowledge and personal growth in capacity that we might gain through reflection and return to action.

We need to be aware of several important aspects of the process when we withdraw to reflect. Firstly, The withdrawal from action is a withdrawal from intending; and so the whole activity of reflection is an attending to what is already there, to what has already been done. Thinking is then something that I do, since without my attention nothing will follow; but it is a negative doing, because what follows when I attend is something that I do not determine. The idealist is right in saying that the idea develops itself in my mind: but this is conditional upon the attention which makes the thinking mine. (Macmurray 1952, p.172)

We now intend to attend to reflecting on the action that has been, but being a negative intention, as it were, it cannot determine an end to achieve as intention does in action. What it can determine, however, is a method to be followed in attending. I can formulate a series of questions to be answered through a process of reflection, and decide the order in which they shall be asked. What I cannot do is to determine in advance the answers that I shall get. These have to be discovered. For this reason the success of reflective activity depends largely upon a methodology – upon a systematic ordering of attention. (Macmurray 1952, 172)

The key to reflecting well is to have an effective methodology. Our reflection is a result of asking ourselves a question, or rather a series of questions, as we attend to the finished act in our memories; from these questions we get answers. The two variables in this are the amount of tension in the Self there is from the action, and our
sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a measure of this, and the concentration we apply, which is the degree to which we limit the amount of complexity we attend to, starting perhaps with the whole and then limiting it to various parts or aspects of our memory of our action, namely our pastoral visit. This process applies to the reflective process at all levels. In preparing the representation for instance, in most cases in CPE a verbatim, which is the first thing to do, I can ask myself a series of questions to enable the most efficient recall, and aspects of the visit that in fact had been in my broader awareness but never been attended to can perhaps be recalled to some degree; we can possibly get answers to the questions. This is because more enters some level of consciousness other than our immediate cone of awareness, and the question enables this to be accessed. We have never ‘thought’ about that thing because we have not needed to up to that point. Even quite matter of fact questions can be asked of ourselves, like, what was the patient wearing? We may get an answer despite the fact we had not taken conscious note of what he or she was wearing.

The same application of questions as a systematic ordering of attention applies to the whole reflective process, including quite abstract and complex issues. For example, we may ask ourselves ‘what was the dominant theme in that person’s story?’ Our reflection will suggest an answer. As already noted in the last chapter, learning to reflect with our whole being by letting answers come from our questions is applicable to all forms of reflection.

So the first task in reflection is to produce a representation of what went on in the original action or presentation. We want as adequate a representation as possible to take to a supervisor or supervisory group. What they will encounter is our expression of the original encounter with the actual person; a representation of our presentation, which is still a living but indeterminate part of our memory despite the fact that the actual visit itself is fully determined.

These processes and the events which constitute them are, in actuality, completely determinate; but for reflection they are only partially determined. The reason for this is that in action attention is governed by a practical intention, and only so much is noticed as is required for the purpose in hand…. When a theoretical intention replaces the practical, the given for
thought is relatively indeterminate, and the activity of reflection is concerned to achieve a theoretically more adequate determination of this primary representation. The use of the term ‘representation’ in this connexion is literal. The elements of knowledge in action are ‘presentations’. In reflection they are remembered and so become representative of the original presentation in action. (Macmurray 1952, p.175)

So we withdraw to our desks. We follow a methodology which consists of the systematic asking of questions to elicit what we know that we are not aware that we know, about the visit and the person visited, and ourselves and our relationship with the person. Once we feel we have an adequate representation we continue to reflect further to take our thoughts and feelings to deeper levels. In practice we need to build up our own series of questions, and apply them until this becomes habitual. Learning to reflect on our actions, like any skill, can become internalized and habitual, and this is a goal of this learning process. But initially we apply the procedure quite self consciously. The following is a short example list of possible questions; more can be explored in workshop situations.

Firstly questions to help recall the visit so as to write up the verbatim proper:

- What did I know about the patient and what was I anticipating when I was approaching the ward?
- What was my dominant feeling at the time?
- What was my first reaction when I entered the room and saw the patient? What did I know instantly about this person?
- How did the conversation start?
- At what point did I feel we were beginning to connect?
- When did I feel I made effective responses and what were they?
- What did I know about the patient as a person by the end of the visit, not chronicles about his life, but who he is inwardly.
- How did I feel on a satisfied/dissatisfied continuum when I left the ward? Were there other points in the conversation when definite feelings on this continuum emerged.
- Etc., etc.
Once the verbatim proper as the basic representation of a visit is complete, it forms the basis of further reflection along with the continuing memories within us, many of which will now emerge as we ask questions that will take our reflection deeper.

- What was this patient like as a person? What sort of person was she? What would be some of the attitudes to life he would have? Which personal perspective do they predominantly live in, first, second or third? How deep is their inner life, and do they self reflect?
- Returning to each moment of definite satisfaction/dissatisfaction in turn, why was I feeling that way? What was I missing? Was it something I was doing or not doing that was effecting the situation leaving me feeling some dissatisfaction?
- Do I know as I ask myself the question, ‘what was going on in me and what was going on in the patient’ on those occasions?
- What did I know about the patient that I was not using in my responses? (this is a very important question to ask at this stage in the reflective process. Our knowledge of the other should be forming our caring intentions in us. Otherwise we will end up simply chatting. Many people pick up far more about the person than they dare use pastorally in the conversation. Learning to use what the patient gives you or reveals of him or herself is the key to letting your knowledge of him form your intentions and your empathy.)
- What did he say and do, that gave me a clue to any inner resources he has? Friends, hobbies, attitude to nature, companions, people he idealizes, attitude to art, spirituality, religious relationships etc..
- How did I use that knowledge if I did?
- Did I have a sense at any point in being led in my responses, of ‘being given’, in my reflection-in-action, what to say next?
- How spontaneous was I?
- Etc. etc.

Our reflection has two poles, as we have discussed in detail. The thinking pole generalizes and thinks about the visit and the person in general terms and ideas. We in effect stand back in the third person perspective and think about the visit objectively as an example of pastoral visitation and the experiences and theories behind such visitation. In other words, we might think about the visit in terms of the
concepts and ideas that we have been discussing in this philosophy. This reflection would constitute a knowing about the action and the personalities involved through explanation and inference from facts. We might also call on other theories and objective material. We may reflect on the fact that in our opinion the person has a personality disorder with important implications for their ongoing care. At the same time, we are thinking that it is not our role to diagnose, but to relate personally, and personality disorder or not this is a person to engage with intentional friendship. How can I better do that?

The feeling pole particularizes and intuits, from the first person perspective, what was unique about this visit and the person visited, and the expression of this will not be discursive. It will be intuitive and will reveal the carer’s emotional engagement with the patient. It will be from this pole that we intuit the person’s feelings, possible inner life and resources, and so on. We can enhance our reflection on the patient from this pole when we have withdrawn to our desks, by imagining the patient from our memories, and then seeing if we can ‘represent’ this in some way intuitively, perhaps by drawing, colour, poetry or music.

We can go one stage further and actually ‘be’ the patient by ‘role reversing’ with him or her. This actually takes our reflection into the second person perspective, and for those who have developed a facility in doing this, it offers immediate ‘knowledge’ of the other through the most powerful empathy we can engage. Our feeling based intuitions become the basis of our self transcendence, tempered and engaged by our thoughts, in an empathic immersion in the reality of the patient, as we ‘know’ them from the visit. There is no more immediate and ‘certain’ knowledge of another person than this, even if it is shown to be wrong or inadequate through further reflection or action!! This is the primary method in psychodrama.

In the actual practice of reflection however, the two reflective poles work together, particularly when we reflect-in-action. We use our capacities to think and feel in the same sequence of time, moving from one to the other as we reflect. The most effective form of reflection in pastoral work is learning to think through our feelings. This follows the logic and form of the personal as we discussed it earlier; our actions contain and are constituted by our feelings, and our feelings contain and are
constituted by our thoughts. When I am acting I hold the person in my attention and intentionally open myself to whatever feelings emerge within me, waiting for a thought to arise within that feeling. A similar process occurs when reflecting on the action after the event. I let myself be aware of what I am feeling about some aspect of the person or the visit, and let a thought arise within that feeling.

Returning to action reverses the process. One of the things I will think about in my reflection for instance is how I might have acted differently in a particular moment in a pastoral situation so that I might be more effective pastorally. Once I start to do this I am beginning to anticipate my return visit and I begin to use the symbols taken from the first visit and ‘imagine’ myself doing something different. I will have a feeling response to this, and if this has a sense of satisfaction to it I will be readying myself to try out the new action in actuality. In other words I will be ready to return from withdrawal into action and reality to test my new insight and knowledge and skill.

This anticipatory phase of reflection is important, and is usually recognized inadequately under the heading ‘pastoral opportunities’. In fact it is the relationship of our reflection to the future which is being highlighted here, and the more we can be clear about what we intend to try out from what we have learnt in reflection the better. Our anticipatory reflection can afford ‘to fly kites’ as it were, and this is something that can be confirmed and experimented with in the supervisory group or with the supervisor.

So once an adequate representation of the visit is produced and fully processed through this methodology, the pastoral care trainee can take this to supervision, either individual or within a supervised peer group. The carer is still in withdrawal in reflection from the original visit, but what is now to be reflected on in supervision is the representation of that visit, including the reflective processing carried on in isolation. Only symbols are being dealt with, because only symbols remain of the original visit. Again the communal reflection is guided by a methodology or procedure which is in the hand principally of the supervisor, but follows a similar process of questions and responses as outlined above for reflection in solitude. Remember the goal of reflection is to eliminate error from our knowledge and to
enlarge our knowledge. The supervision group can particularly take up the anticipatory reflection phase, when the trainee is reflecting on how he or she might do something differently in the future, in either a re-visit or in a new visit to someone else. The new action can in fact be role played in the group as a first testing of the new knowledge, again with the discriminating feelings of satisfaction/dissatisfaction being used to monitor progress. Supervisors trained in psychodramatic methods are more likely to enhance the anticipatory reflection within a group by turning the group into a ‘here and now’ experience incorporating aspects of the original pastoral visit.

The final phase is the final integrating of the reflective process into the anticipations that form as the trainee plans a re-visit or new visit. This is in the person’s own solitude, where the data for reflection now includes not only the original visit, but the production of the representation or verbatim, the solitary and deeper reflection on that, and the experience of the group reflection in processing the trainee’s presentation to the group. This last aspect may in fact be central in the trainee’s continuing solitary reflection for one reason or another, because although the group is part of the trainee’s reflective withdrawal, it is also a powerful and very real place of interaction in itself from which people will in different ways withdraw to reflect. Ideally, the group processes will remain primarily centred in the presentations of actual pastoral visits, and leave the final integrating and anticipatory reflection done by the individual largely free from group issues. This is a key aspect of good supervision.

The more the reflection process is entered into intentionally by establishing effective reflective methodology as outlined above the sooner we will begin to internalize the process and begin to make it part of our habitual behaviour. We want this to happen, because the ultimate goal in training in pastoral care is learning to reflect-in-action, where our withdrawal and momentary change of attention from the person to whom we are speaking, to what the response to our question-in-action is, all has to happen within ourselves as we maintain our engagement of and connection with the patient. We are learning to be able to access our knowledge, which is expanding and becoming increasingly free of error through the various reflective practices we engage in, while we are acting.
The goals of the supervisor in the supervisory relationship arising out of what we have been discussing in this chapter are to help the trainee obtain a clear understanding of the different phases of the reflective process, and to support him or her in developing an adequate methodology of reflection that the trainee can begin to internalize and use habitually.

In the next chapter we will discuss the process of reflection-in-action, and its development as a skill. It builds on our capacity to completely withdraw from action into reflection effectively to develop our knowledge of ourselves, the people we engage pastorally, and the relationships that form between us from our intention to befriend.
Chapter 14

Reflection- and Knowledge-in-Action

Synopsis: The central skill in good pastoral care is being able to reflect-in-action that enables knowledge-in-action while in the act of visiting. This capacity grows out of the practice of withdrawing to reflect as described in chapter 13, and in learning to let the reflection process go on within so that we are paying attention primarily to the patient, secondarily to what is happening in ourselves, and thirdly what is happening in the relationship between us; all on the run as it were.

In the last chapter we looked in detail at the process of withdrawing to reflect on our actions to eliminate error and grow in our knowledge of the Other person, ourselves and the relationship between us. However, as already indicated, this knowledge is only of primary use in pastoral care if we can access it while we are actually acting. It is potentially knowledge-in-action, and our accessing of this knowledge is dependent upon our capacity to reflect-in-action. We now turn our attention more fully to this skill that is important in all interpersonal action, and central to effective pastoral care. Some aspects of this have been introduced already.

Knowledge-in-action always carries a sense of certainty. It needs that certainty to be the basis of our action, even if we realize later that this knowledge was wrong or inadequate. However, part of this knowledge-in-action is always our most certain knowledge, formally speaking; when we act we know we are acting. This is a given, our sense of our own existence in action. Unlike reflective knowledge, it is not problematic. At the same time it includes an awareness of the Other whose existence is also given in our action, and an awareness of the relationship between us, both of which carry reflective aspects. At the moment of action it is knowledge that is ‘certain’ for the sake of the action.

Knowledge is that in my action which makes it an action and not a blind activity. It is ‘objective’ awareness; or rather awareness of the Other and the Self in relation. (Macmurray 1957:129)

So knowledge-in-action is built upon a certainty of Self, and a sufficient certainty of the Other to act by perceiving possibilities and valuating them, and hence
determining an intention. The action fully contains the knowledge and is constituted by it. When we act in this way, the unity of the Self is most felt; I act therefore I am. The thinking and feeling poles of our being are fully contained in the acting, but at the same time they are determining the action, namely its motive and intention. The problematic nature of knowledge of the Other in knowledge-in-action is the basis of our reflection-in-action, and the degree of certainty and spontaneity by which we use such knowledge is a measure of our maturity and ability to trust the reflection-in-action process that we develop within us.

Knowledge-in-action, as we have seen, is possible only by attending to certain things and ignoring the rest. But we can only ignore what we are in fact aware of. We acknowledge this phenomenon when we say we were ‘unconsciously’ aware of something when our attention was focused on something else.

These unnoticed elements in the situation play an essential role in the determination of our action. We see them and respond to them, without noticing them……. This indeed is the basis of habit; and habit is a necessary constituent of any action. Habit is conscious behaviour, or response to stimulus which involves awareness. But in human behaviour, save in abnormal conditions such as somnambulism, it can only be present as a negative element in action. (Macmurray 1957:130)

So two key elements in knowledge-in-action as we have already discussed are habit, behaviour we do not have to think about, seen but unnoticed, so we can give our attention to what might be new or different in a situation; which in turn will inform our intention and guide our action.

We cannot know someone moment by moment unless our attention remains on them. With reflection-in-action, we are learning to keep our primary attention on the other person, while developing a secondary attention on what we are thinking and feeling, which will be informed by what is now past in our interaction with the person and what we might anticipate in the future. Action is over time; so within an action there is a past element, the action so far completed or engaged in. Hence knowledge-in-action always has a problematic element, as does all reflective knowledge, in that its truth, or its appropriateness, or its rightness is only established in reference to the
actual, and hence needs to be validated in action. This involves choice and risk, particularly at the personal level, where our knowledge of the Other may be for instance a subtle intuition of the other’s inner state, which in that split second we may respond to with certainty in action, or we may withhold ourselves and take the thought away with us to reflect on it in full withdrawal later. We may or may not act on that reflection at a later date. The intuition comes from reflection on what we have experienced of the person so far, which in turn is built upon our knowledge of him or her from other occasions, which we may well have developed more fully in complete withdrawal in reflection.

Knowledge-in-action is incomplete, and necessarily so.

I must always know up to a point what I am doing, and never completely. For I am an agent in my movement and not merely the cause of it…… An agent is in his movement, and consequently can always alter or modify it at will within the limits of his resources. If I could know completely what I was doing I should have ceased to be an agent and become a continuant. I should have surrendered my power to modify my intention as I proceed. (Macmurray 1957:165, my emphasis)

The capacity to change our intention in action is in large part because we can reflect in action. This is the essence of the capacity we are developing in pastoral care; the ability to withdraw in one part of our being to reflect on our action by attending to the flow of our thoughts and feelings, while at the same time we continue to act and keep our attention on the patient. As we act we are always assessing that act and its effectiveness, while remaining ready to change our intention as required to one that will be more effective and in the greater interest of the patient.

The primary reflection is the reflective element in action, which proceeds in terms of the distinction between right and wrong. (Macmurray 1957, p.136)

An action is judged right in pastoral care if it achieves the end of engaging the patient in a way that helps and supports; it will in all likelihood be positively motivated and determined by the reality of the patient. It will be judged wrong if it does not engage the patient effectively; in all likelihood it is either negatively motivated, or, and this is more likely, determined to some degree by illusion, or false
knowledge, or knowledge that is inadequate to lead to an effective action. This distinction between the rightness and wrongness of actions is ultimately the basis of morality; but in this context the actions in question are contained in the overall intention to pastorally care, and so relate to the ultimate achievement of that intention. Each particular carer needs to become the chief discriminator of his or her own actions, of what is a right or wrong action; and the capacity to do this is an essential element in the skill of being able to reflect-in-action.

So the rightness or wrongness of an action is not determined by putting it alongside some sort of absolute standard, but by the assessment of the actor as to whether or not the action furthered the overall intention of effectively connecting and caring. This capacity can only grow with experience. If I can assess, principally from what I observe in the patient, that what I have just said was effective and my intention in that moment was fulfilled, I will feel this rightness of action as a form of satisfaction, and I will give all my attention to the nature of the patient’s reply so that I may continue and further deepen that connection. On the other hand, if I feel the wrongness of my action, again principally from what I observe, I know to change my intention immediately; for whatever reason, which may not be my responsibility at all, my knowledge was insufficient at that moment or I was in error. My action may have created a disjunction in the relationship, but seeing this I am quick to apologize and change my intention. Changing my intention effectively at that point is dependent on my capacity to reflect-in-action and hence act in a new way that is differently intended because I now know something about the patient I did not know before, or I realize that what I thought I knew was in fact wrong.

Good supervision enables the development of this capacity to discriminate right and wrong action in pastoral care within each individual carer. It is essential that this is seen as an inner development within the carer. If the carer begins to believe such discrimination is the prerogative of the supervisor or the supervisory group, the capacity to make such judgments is made external to the carer and no development within the carer can take place; and the trainee begins to assess the rightness or wrongness of their pastoral actions by what the supervisor thinks. However, it can help if the trainee uses the supervisor as a model or ideal of how a pastoral carer acts and responds, and empathically identifies with the supervisor. This can be a very
important aspect of the learning process, and goes beyond close intellectual analysis. However, it does mean that the supervisor must allow him or herself to model good pastoral actions and do so in a way that invites the trainees’ engagement. This runs counter to the earlier style of supervision that came out of a Freudian world of interpretation, where, we have noted, the supervisor often modeled an adversarial role, with little relief from other forms of more supportive relationship. This adversarial role of the supervisor nonetheless was modeled by the trainees, which could lead to a very confronting group process!

Certainty in action is the basis of spontaneity in our relations with other persons, a major focus in the psychodramatic methods of Joseph Moreno, as already mentioned. Spontaneous action, as opposed to spontaneous behaviour when we react immediately to a stimulus, is the coming together in time of all the facets involved in action. In Macmurray it is when our positive motive and intention based on knowledge of the Other come together in an action toward the Other that seemingly has no premeditation. It has a certainty and immediacy that seems to come from ‘somewhere else’, and yet as an action contains and is constituted by our thoughts and feelings, the basis of our reflection. In some instances, the moment before the action, be it bodily movement or verbal communication, we seemingly have no idea what we are about to do or say; and then we do or say it. In my own experience, the essential element in this spontaneity is not that there seems little conscious reflection, but that what we do and say is unexpected; it is different from what we might have expected from a more deliberate act of reflection. It has an energy and life about it. I am normally aware of the reflective moment just before I act, and once I feel this reflective moment, I let it happen and have no hesitation in acting. It often comes when I surrender to a deeper aspect of myself. The reflection and the act then are almost one. It is as if a process of reflection is going on within us that we are able to attend to within minute fractions of time, and the vital point in this is that we have learnt to attend to this reflective possibility within us, along with our ongoing attention on the person. It is well known that such moments can be the turning point in therapy. This capacity for interpersonal immediacy is at the very heart of good pastoral caring.
In psychodrama, a careful distinction is made between spontaneity that is effective and appropriate, and seeming spontaneity that is in fact the acting out of an individual’s own thoughts and feelings without adequate reference to the other person, or adequate reflection on his or her reality. The motive is also likely to be egocentric. Macmurray’s analysis covers this distinction carefully. True spontaneity, as noted above, contains all the elements of positively motivated action; it is heterocentric and its intention is formed by the reality of the other person through knowledge of that person accessed through reflection-in-action.

As we saw in the last chapter, there can be no intention in the primary sense in reflection because reflection determines nothing in reality. It is the manipulation of images, symbols and ideas. Its focus is an ideal. This ideal may be predominantly thought based, for instance a conception of truth; or it may be predominantly feeling based, such as for instance an image of someone acting in a particularly appropriate way that the Agent has observed and internalized; as mentioned earlier in the modeling effect a good supervisor can have. But the more important point at this stage, to re-iterate and affirm our earlier discussion, is this:

We cannot intend the conclusion of a train of thought. We can only attend to what is given, to the data or the premises. Without this attention nothing happens. With it something follows from the data which is determined by the data, not by any intention of ours. The withdrawal from action is a withdrawal of intending; and so the whole activity of reflection is an activity of attending to what is already there, to what has already been done. Thinking then is something that I do, since without my attention nothing would follow; but it is a negative doing, because what follows when I attend is something that I do not determine. The idealist is right in saying that the idea develops itself in my mind; but this is conditional upon the attention which makes the thinking mine. (Macmurray 1957, p.172)

I think most of us know this experience of reflection best where a length of time to reflect is involved, by the experience of ‘sleeping on things’. We reflect deeply on a situation in terms of our memory of it and the issues it involves, and on our anticipation of the implications of the situation in the future; but it is only in the morning perhaps as we wake that a resolving or connecting idea comes to our mind.
The work has been done out of immediate awareness, as it were. The same process is taking place in all reflection, including reflection-in-action of the most spontaneous variety. On the one hand we are attending to the immediate past of the history of our interacting with the Other in reflection, while at the same time attending to the Other within the active intention we have toward that Other in action. The great skill we are learning as the way of accessing our knowledge in action is to let the idea develop in us as we attend to both poles of attention.

Reflection-in-action has something of the quality William James means in the process of surrender within religious experience (note 1), and I think it can be likened to the Pauline notion of ‘walking in the Spirit’ in which we come to implicitly trust whatever idea or feeling arises in our stream of consciousness because we are secure in our motive toward the Other and clear about our intention. It can be developed and enhanced by learning to ask ourselves the right questions, as we have seen.

I find within myself that my settling into reflection-in-action is often preceded by moments of insecurity, doubt and even fear that I will be inadequate as I think to myself ‘What on earth am I going to say in response to all this?’ And then I relax and begin to just attend to what is going on within me; I stop working too hard. Thoughts and ideas begin to spontaneously arise which I ‘watch’ or attend to, ready to use in a moment of evaluative choice, while all the time I keep my attention within my intention toward the other person alive and active. I don’t take my attention off the other for a moment as I attend to what is ‘coming up’ in my flow of consciousness. Invariably as people struggle to learn in this work, they will withdraw into reflection and take their attention off the person. They disappear into themselves and look away, eventually popping back ready with something to say, while in the meantime the interaction has moved on and their response applies to ‘back then’ not ‘here now’, even if they haven’t created a disjunction in the patient by withdrawing in the first place. Such responses carry little or no connecting energy or spontaneity, and are likely to create disjunction rather than conjunction.

Macmurray has something further to say about attention that applies directly to what we are discussing, remembering that attention constitutes intention and is contained by it. It is important to understand that the intention is not the end. It is in the action,
and is not fully determinate. The analysis of actions into means and ends is reflective, and presupposes that the action is both complete and successful. Our actions are not necessarily planned in advance. In pastoral care we may visit with an overall goal, within which then a series of intentions form until the visit is concluded. Whether or not, in reflection, the end implied in the original goal is achieved is part of our judgement through reflection. If the end was not achieved, we will feel dissatisfied and deem the visit unsuccessful; part of our reflection might then include the inadequacy of the means we employed.

The more experience we have, and the more background habit and capacity to attend to both what is presented to us and our knowledge-in-action as it emerges in the stream of our consciousness through our inner intention to reflect, the more we will look forward with positive motive to the unexpected or what might lie outside our anticipation. I think for some even there comes a time when a motive of excitement replaces a sense of dread as we anticipate perhaps finding what we have not anticipated, and so can learn from it.

In developing this capacity to reflect and know-in-action we are in effect becoming more conscious of what we do anyway, so that we can intentionally grow in our capacity to relate effectively. There is a formal relationship between the two poles of attention, a relationship that is not dialectical in the Hegelian sense; it is dialectical in the sense of the form of the personal: our capacity to attend to the patient, and hence form intentions for our own caring actions, contains and is constituted by our capacity to attend to our own reflective processes as they process what we are observing, sifting through the accumulated knowledge about persons in relation, our self as a pastoral carer, and the intersubjective communication skills that are progressively becoming habitual. The ongoing goal in all this is to effectively empathize and self transcend ourselves into the reality of the other person, so that our actions are in his interest and for his emotional and spiritual support.

The following diagram attempts to set out the relationship between the different forms of reflection.
Within more traditional CPE supervision, looking at a carer’s actual response to a patient as the carer has recorded this within a verbatim is the principal way the carer’s responses are focused on. The least effective form of this supervision is where the intentionality of the response is assumed to be unconscious, and therefore outside in principle the carer’s own capacity to be consciously and intentionally in charge of his own actions. Deeper meanings are at work in everything that only supervision will reveal. In the end such a focus in supervision is not empowering.

In the model I am presenting that arises out of thinking from the point of view of action, the supervisory aim is the opposite. It is the supervisor’s role to help the trainee feel in charge of his own intentions and actions when pastorally visiting, and know with increasing certainty what he is wanting to achieve with each communicative response; and to be aware of this while he is acting, through his reflection-in-action. Some of his most effective responses will have high levels of spontaneity, but this does not discount being conscious of his intention. So it is not enough in looking at responses in verbatims for the supervision process to find deeper meanings, although on occasions there could be, or even decide the effectiveness of a response in a third person way that does not actively include the carer’s own reflection and judgement. And it is not enough to leave any reflection
on an action in a verbatim without helping the trainee to identify what he has learnt and how this might be integrated into his accumulating knowledge. And finally, and most essentially, the supervisory process ideally provides ways for the trainee to practice accessing any new insight or knowledge while acting, which means in effect lifting the reflection out of the verbatim and the supervisory discussion of it, into the ‘here and now’ of the trainee’s capacity to act. This involves then active coaching on the part of the supervisor in a number of different ways, modelling, and a regular use of role play methods where the situation represented in the written verbatim is represented again in actual interactions between real people, principally the members of the training group.

Notes
Chapter 15

Self Revelation in Pastoral Care

Synopsis: Pastoral care as intentional friendship, unlike other caring modalities, subordinates the impersonal to the personal. Self revelation is then an essential aspect of the skill base of the pastoral carer, but always within the intention to care and act in the interest of the other or patient. The relationship intends freedom and equality, and this finds expression in the carer not being caught up in needing to ‘fix up’ the patient, but to befriend them, letting them go as much and as easily as joining them for the moment in their life’s journey.

I have argued that pastoral care is unique amongst the caring and healing modalities; its uniqueness lies in the personal nature of the pastoral care relationship. It could be said that one of the roles of pastoral care in institutions and organizations like hospitals, nursing homes, jails and schools is to affirm the ultimate primacy of the personal and the importance of personal community in life, working alongside and with, hospitals as medical science organizations, jails as corrective services establishments, and schools as educational facilities. Such pastoral care is of course not necessarily only done by specially designated people; traditionally for instance in hospitals nurses have played an enormous role in personalizing the patients’ experiences, even when not necessarily engaging in in-depth conversations. However, it is now generally held that this aspect of a nurse’s role is under pressure, not only because of time-pressure which is a very real factor, but also because of the increased medicalization of nursing practice. It is increasingly a profession guided by third person perspective knowledge and technology.

Other caring modalities, as we saw in Chapter 1, even those forms of psychotherapy that focus on the inter-subjective relationship between the client and the therapist, ultimately subsume the personal to the impersonal, and this is appropriate. Clients approach such practitioners intentionally to seek help for some aspect of their lives. They want the counselor or therapist to use their knowledge and skills to help in a context that is removed from the client’s normal life. It is a contractual relationship for which there is a due consideration in the form of payment for services. Now it is possible that a friendship might form between a practitioner and the client, but this is more the exception than the rule, and nonetheless the relationship would still be
 overseen ethically and perhaps legally by considerations that would not enter a more normal friendship. In most circumstances there is no ongoing relationship between practitioner and client outside the contractual arrangement.

In pastoral care, however, the impersonal is subsumed to the personal, and takes place within the normal processes of living and relating. Pastoral care practitioners, even when they reflect on the person impersonally within a particular theory for instance, do so for the sake of enhancing the ongoing personal interaction, which is seen to have an importance and validity in its own right, and is not only for the sake of helping the person or fixing them up. They are, ideally speaking, expert non-experts skilled in the art and science of connecting with others in the spirit of friendship; and this is friendship that carries a sense of Aristotle’s primary friendship or friendship of the good. As we have seen all friendship is mutual, however friendship of utility and friendship of pleasure depend on that mutuality functioning well; the underlying motive in the end is self-interested in both parties. Primary friendship however can bear more strain as it reaches mutuality provided at least one of the parties to the relationship retains the intention to friendship for its own sake, which amounts to friendship for the sake of the other person. This is where we are positively motivated, for whatever reason, and we act toward another with our interests subsumed to the interests of the other person. As we saw, such actions in which we do not expect any return, nonetheless can give something in return, and this is at a deeper level than the open mutuality of friendships of pleasure and utility. As someone once said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ (note1), and I think this was meant as a statement of fact not as an ethical injunction. Further to that, to offer friendship as care and love can eventually become mutual, and this is when in a relationship we live for each other as separate people.

Friendship as we are proposing here for pastoral care, intentional friendship, is then necessarily a process that contains and is constituted by the key elements of equality and freedom, if it is to be a primary friendship; and this is part of the essential difference between pastoral care and other caring modalities. The mutuality of primary friendships requires that all parties feel equal and free toward each other, and if that is not the case in a relationship between a patient and a practitioner, the expert non-expert can intentionally act to help that quality of relationship appear. So
this is very different from the relationship between a client and a counselor or therapist, or a social worker and even a community worker, as we have seen. It is also very different from most traditional pastoral care relationships between a priest or minister and a parishioner, because there is not an assumption of equality often unless the priest or minister works to establish it. Priests and ministers who need to hide personally behind an authority and its symbols are rarely effective in pastoral work. They are unable to give and receive, and the relationships they form lack reciprocality and mutuality, let alone spontaneity. Their pastoral work can come to consist principally of the virtually impersonal enactment of set rituals.

This leads us to the key issue of self revelation and its place in pastoral care; we reveal ourselves to our friends. Self revelation is an ongoing issue in counseling and therapy, and responses to this question are now many and varied; should the counselor reveal himself, and if so when, and to what extent; should he talk about himself at all? The tension goes back to the early days of psychoanalysis when the client lay on a couch and the analyst sat behind with no eye contact between them. The analyst was to practice a strict abstinence which meant he or she did not self reveal at all and focused entirely on the material brought forward by the client, offering supposedly objective interpretations of what was really going on in the patient’s inner life from the theory of psychoanalysis. Even today in a modern derivative of psychoanalysis such as might be practiced by a Kohutian self psychologist, or someone trained in the Conversational Model proposed by Hobbes and Meares (note2), the therapist will face the client and seek to engage inter-subjectively at personal levels all for the sake of gathering knowledge about the client, and all the more so they can help them in their problems and struggles by the way they respond. But the inter-subjectivity is not reciprocal and mutual; the actual reciprocality is in the fee given for the service. The abstinence practiced might not be as strict as is the case with a classic psychoanalyst, but the ongoing intention is always to enable the client to reveal himself so that what might be really going on can be responded to by the therapist from his position of expertise.

Some counselors use self revelation intentionally to help alleviate or defuse any developing transference. In psychoanalysis and any form of therapy that uses transferences as part of the therapy, abstinence can increase the likelihood of
transferences forming in the client’s relationship with the therapist, these becoming important parts of the therapy; and this then is part of the rationale of abstinence. But in more general counseling this may not be desirable, and the counselor can balance the relationship more by self revealing and presenting his own reality as a counter to the illusory projections forming in the client. But his intention should not be to fundamentally alter the relationship to one of equality and friendship, although this of course can happen. I have also known people who have gone to counselors only to have the counselor spend the whole time talking about themselves. In such cases this is more likely to be because of poor practice rather than wise interaction for the sake of the client.

In pastoral care, the situation is different and this difference is formally part of the very theory I am presenting. Pastoral care is about intentional friendship, and friendship is about knowing and being known personally.

How then do we know another, and what form does this knowledge take? Clearly, it has a very different form from our knowledge of the material world. It is not, and cannot be objective or scientific…. We can know a great deal about other people, both in particular and in general, without knowing them. The reason for this is simply the mutuality of the personal….. To know another person we must be in communication with him, and communication is a two-way process. To be in communication is to have something in common. Knowledge of other people is simply the negative or reflective aspect of our personal relations with them. From this there follows an interesting corollary. All knowledge of persons is by revelation. (Macmurray 1999, p.169, my emphasis)

Interpersonal knowledge is by revelation between the persons involved; it is not a generalization from observed facts. It is entirely possible that in a relationship between two persons, one or other will chose not to reveal themselves but rather pretend to be what he is not, to claim to think what he does not really think, and to feel what he does not feel. It happens in small and large ways all the time in general exchanges between people, from the legitimate wearing of personas in social relationships, to dissimulation amongst friends (note3), to out and out withdrawal personally from another because of breakdown in the relationship. In fact learning
'to fake it' is now considered an important survival skill if not a necessary one for success in social and business life (note4). We cannot know such people by generalizing from our observations of their behaviour. We only really come to know someone ‘as he genuinely reveals himself’. (Macmurray 1999, p.169) Such self-revelation however need not always be intentional. The more both parties to a relationship feel trust, love and acceptance toward each other, the more they self reveal quite naturally; they let their guards down and disclose their ‘real self’, as it were. The ultimate expression of this are those moments of immediacy and intimacy that Russell Meares identified as the emergence of the Self, mentioned earlier. Such mutual interaction and self revelation at this personal level cuts both ways. It is the means by which we also come to know ourselves.

Self-revelation is at the same time self-discovery….. In no field of knowledge is anything really known until it is expressed; and to express knowledge is to put it in the form of a communication. In the personal field this is simply complicated by the mutuality of the personal relation. One can only really know one’s friends, and oneself through one’s friends, in a mutuality of self-revelation. This self revelation is, of course, primarily practical, and secondarily a matter of talk. We sometimes call it ‘giving oneself away’, and contrast it with ‘keeping oneself to oneself’. (Macmurray 1999, p.170)

We don’t self reveal to people we do not like or toward whom we feel suspicion. Negative relations between people make knowledge of the other person, and hence then also knowledge of oneself, difficult if not impossible.

Mutual dislike or hostility inhibits self-revelation…. I still form an ‘idea’ of my enemy; and I shall take my representation of him to be the truth. But this will necessarily be an illusion. I shall know him as he appears to be, but not as he really is; and the knowledge will be ‘unreal’. My knowledge of another person is a function of my love for him; and in proportion as my knowledge is a function of my fear of him, it is illusory or unreal. The problematic of
our knowledge of persons is in terms of the distinction between reality and illusion, between ‘real’ and ‘unreal’. (Macmurray 1999, p.170)

‘My knowledge of another person is a function of my love for him; and in proportion as my knowledge is a function of my fear of him, it is illusory or unreal’. This knowledge is the reflective aspect of my personal relations with that person; so that my reflection on this person, be it in reflection-in-action or when I withdraw from action into reflection, can remain personal; it is in the terms then of our positive interaction as we experience each other inter-subjectively, an interaction that contains and is constituted by moments of withdrawal under a negative motive that may or may not lead to illusory thought. The objectivity of this relationship lies in our mutual capacity to empathize with each other, and hence mutually self transcend. On the other hand, if I were to withdraw and generalize on my experience of the other person, my reflection could become impersonal and the objectivity would then be the possible correspondence between what I think is going on with what might be actually the case. This is not saying that such impersonal reflection is necessarily inappropriate; on the contrary, it is an essential element in the rhythm of withdrawal and return. The type of objectivity can vary however. Even with our closest friends we nonetheless can withdraw from them and think about them impersonally in an attempt perhaps to understand them, even by imposing some sort of personality theory. But such understanding remains impersonal until it is re-interpreted back into the reality of the actual personal relationship I seek to continue to enjoy. The important thing is to recognize the difference in the ‘knowing’ between the two modes of reflection; personal knowledge of another that is generated through self revelation in a positively motivated relationship, is of a different order of knowledge to that obtained by generalization from observed facts. Both require interpolation and interpretation from our experience of the person in what they are revealing of themselves; but one is for the sake of empathy and self transcendence which leaves open my own self revelation and discovery in response, while the other is for understanding in general terms so that theoretical knowledge can be applied.

So pastoral care as intentional friendship uses self revelation in a way not formally found in other caring modalities. The pastoral care practitioner is skilled in self revealing in response to the patient to enhance the personal nature of the interaction.
But having said that, such self revelation must remain within the motive and intention of offering pastoral care; in other words, we self reveal for the sake of the relationship and in the interests of the patient. Nothing will destroy a pastoral relationship quicker than if the carer begins to self reveal egocentrically, motivated by their own fear or anxiety or inner need. The patient can develop the sense of being used, and in most cases will not welcome a return visit from the carer. So although self-revelation is an essential and integral part of pastoral care practice, it is still exercised in a sense of abstinence; the carer is there for the sake of the patient and not the other way around. Any need to self reveal on the part of the carer needs to happen elsewhere with someone else.

So self-revelation in pastoral care is a skill to develop, not a practice to avoid. It includes the capacity to do so only within the motive and intention of pastoral care, along with the sensing of the appropriate moments in a conversation when self revelation will be helpful and effective.

So if pastoral care is intentional friendship in which mutual self revelation and discovery can take place, what are the boundaries of such a relationship? How can the willingness to befriend be appropriately contained to avoid so called ‘compassion fatigue’, not to speak of needing to limit people’s demands as friends for interaction and support in the most practical everyday sense of getting other things done. This issue is a traditional one for priests, ministers, mullahs and others involved in traditional pastoral care, and can require careful planning and self management. It applies also to modern pastoral care in the community. The social or community worker can justify not becoming personally involved with their clients in part on the basis that to become so involved would possibly raise expectations that they cannot then meet, and at the same time draw them into situations that would be very demanding of time and personal energy. So what of pastoral carers, who intentionally engage the personal.

There are many practical points around this issue that are normally discussed in a workshop situation, and it is not my intention to raise them in this context. However, there is also an aspect that is inherent in the notion of intentional friendship as it is proposed in this philosophy of pastoral care. We saw that the origins of primary
friendship or friendship of the good lie in the relationship of parent to child, especially mother to child, within the personal community of a family. It is because of the un-conditionality of a mother’s love that we can first experience living in a close emotional relationship which is pre-dominantly grounded in positive motives. We remain in large measure egocentric within such a relationship, but not so the parent, who intends the best for us, even when our demands force them to go the second mile. We noted that there can be an irrationality for some commentators in such love, where we love regardless, but this love can be very real. I remember once when very sick with flu realizing the depth of love I feel for my three adult daughters; having consciously experienced that love I can easily appreciate that it would take a lot of strain and stress to test it to the point of breaking. I genuinely want the very best for them but know I need to let them have their own lives and make their own decisions, and this needs to be as much part of my love in an adult friendship with them as any intention to actively care and love. Primary love is not driven by egocentric needs. It can let the other go in their own separateness as it can welcome them in moments of connection and immediacy.

Developing some capacity for heterocentricity, which at the same time implies a positive motive, can develop early in life when we begin to act toward a parent out of love for them, and when we are constantly engaging our siblings as equals who demand their own freedom; but for many it is not until we fall in love or come to realize a close circle of friends, or are influenced by religious teaching, or a mixture of all these, that we begin to live for someone other than ourselves. And out of this comes an appreciation of the place of community and the realization that community does not just happen. It has to be intended, a realization that finally comes home fully when we begin to raise our own children.

The unity of any community of persons is constituted and maintained by the will to community of its members. (Macmurray 1999, p.160)

But this unity is a unity of persons, which means a unity of individuals united in their intention to community and friendship. This is only possible if the positive motive contains and subordinates its negative. The form of this is as follows:

The structure of a community is the nexus or network of the active relations of friendship between all possible pairs of its members. If, then, we isolate
one pair, as the unit of personal community, we can discover the basic structure of community as such. The relation between them is positively motivated in each. Each, then is heterocentric; the centre of interest and attention is in the other, not in himself. For each, therefore, it is the other who is important, not himself. The other is the centre of value……. But this is mutual; the other cares for him disinterestedly in return. Each, that is to say, acts, and therefore thinks and feels for the other, and not for himself. But because the positive motive contains and subordinates its negative, their unity is no fusion of selves, neither is it a functional unity of differences – neither an organic nor a mechanical unity – it is a unity of persons. Each remains a distinct individual; the other remains really other. Each realizes himself in and through the other. (Macmurray 1999, p.158)

Traditionally this finds expression through the idea that in pastoral care we are not trying to ‘fix someone up’. When we try to ‘fix someone up’ we can be in fact avoiding a personal encounter with that person. In a personal encounter someone may indeed ‘get fixed up’, but that is not our intention. Our intention is to respond to the reality of a person through bodily and communicative acts, to befriend not to fix up. We seek to allow the patient or other person to realize himself in and through us, and in so doing we are prepared to realize ourselves in and through them. We meet them as we find them; we leave them as they find us. Our befriending must necessarily contain and be constituted by their equality and freedom. So the question of boundaries in pastoral care is not about how far does one take a relationship of friendship but how does one understand the nature of intentional friendship in the first place, and the expression of love and care within that.

So intentional friendship moves toward mutuality but is ultimately motived by the carer’s commitment to care. This raises the question of how a pastoral carer sustains this commitment in the face of caring for someone who offers little or no mutuality, whether the patient resists self revelation on the one hand or latches onto the carer in a needy way that excludes a natural mutuality. Both types of relationship need to be handled with wisdom, and the place of reflection in withdrawal is consequently central. Sustaining the commitment is likely then to be an aspect of the carer’s spiritual practice and sense of relationship with idealized self objects within his or
her own life, including God, Christ, Mohammed, but also possibly a supervisor, other carers they admire, and so on; or it may be simply their vision of love and care as the ultimate force of the universe.

We have come now to the end of this presentation of *Intentional Friendship*: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care. What follows is a Report of the pilot multifaith training group that was used to test the philosophy, compiled by the official Observer, with inclusions edited from this text. The presentation is concluded with a final Postscript.

Notes

1. This is the only saying of Jesus that is accepted as authentic that does not appear in the Gospels. It is in fact in the Book of Acts.
2. The Conversation Model is presented in Meares books *The Metaphor of Play* and *Intimacy and Alienation: Memory, Trauma and Personal Being*.
3. Mark Vernon has a detailed discussion on dissimulation in his *The Philosophy of Friendship*, p.50 ff.
Chapter 16

**Putting It All in Context**

It remains for me in conclusion to place this philosophy of intentional friendship in the ongoing development of modern pastoral care and its training and formation methods.

Stephen Pattison wrote in his article on theories of pastoral care in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*,

> Pastoral Care theories have multiplied in the present century. Escaping from a simple counseling paradigm, they have become more critical, pluriform and diverse. As an activity, pastoral care is still substantially focused upon the acquisition of usable techniques and unsupported by good critical theory. (McGrath 1995, p.426)

What is also required is not only good critical theory, but a theoretical understanding that brings some unity to the key tensions and conflicts that have characterized pastoral care in the modern period. These have been significant. Such a unity of understanding seems to me to be vital if pastoral care is to respond to the future, and be enabled, with theoretical integrity and practical adequacy, to extend its roots and premises beyond the Christian church into the personal communities of our multicultural and multifaith societies.

In fact I have come to realize that I have been carrying within myself some of these tensions that are present in modern pastoral care and its chief training modality in the US and Australia, Clinical Pastoral Education, ever since my first unit of CPE in my final year of training for the priesthood, followed a few years later by a diploma in pastoral studies at the University of Birmingham in England. The writing of this thesis has to some degree resolved this tension for me. The historical difference in understanding between the US and England on the nature and direction of modern pastoral care has been a major tension in the movement, and I have drunk deeply from both wells.
In the States, the development of modern pastoral care has been paralleled by the rise of the profession of pastoral counseling. They have mutually influenced each other. In fact some of the first supervisors named by Anton Boisen, the founder of CPE, also distinguished themselves as theoreticians in pastoral counseling, in particular Seward Hiltner (1949) and Carroll Wise (1951). The desire for professionalism in pastoral counseling helped to create a separate professionalism for CPE and the pastoral care that arose from it. On the one hand to be trained to be a supervisor in CPE was itself an entry into a unique profession in its own right, while to train in CPE with the intention of becoming a chaplain or pastor assumed ordination and entry into the clerical professions. As we shall see this close association of pastoral care and CPE with professionalism was something resisted in the British tradition, and is an issue still being worked out for us here in Australia.

However, there were immediate tensions within this professionalism in the States. Given the strong engagement of psychoanalytic and psychological ideas in the emergence of modern pastoral care and its training, a tension soon emerged between theology and psychology in both pastoral care and pastoral counseling. Again Seward Hiltner was a key figure. The other was Robert Brinkman.

The ‘Hiltner tradition’ stressed theological reflection about human experience. To think theologically included theological content as well as the terms of the ‘theological’ setting in seminaries as the locus of teaching… The ‘Brinkman school’ emphasized science and psychology and subsumed the importance of pastoral theology. The desire of Brinkman was ‘to enable students to gain a profound understanding of people, their deeper motivation, their problems, their emotional and spiritual conflicts, their infirmities and their strengths’. It is conceded that in the long run Hiltner’s position gained dominance, although an element of Brinkman’s stance remains to this day. (Leas, p. 3)

The dominance of Hiltner’s position found expression in the inclusion of ‘theological reflection’ as part of the reflection and supervisory process in CPE. However, the focus on communication skills and psychoanalytic and other theoretical insight, far outweighed ‘theological reflection’. In my experience it sat uncomfortably alongside
‘the real game’, as it were, as something we should all be interested in but beyond that few were sure just what it was and how we went about it within the CPE context. Many attempted to give the process theoretical clarity, culminating with Killen and de Beer’s *The Art of Theological Reflection*, considered by some as the most successful attempt to explain theological reflection to date. It built on a very successful ministry training program entitled Education for Ministry at the University of the South. However, as a process it is in my opinion of limited value to pastoral care training, but of some value in the more general sense of pastoral formation. But the tension went deeper than that.

Hiltner’s position with regard to theological reflection also failed to satisfy some who wished to do CPE. Its connection with theology and the Christian tradition was not explicit enough. So since 1957, when the Southern Baptist Association of CPE was formed, Baptist leaders, such as Wayne Oates, Richard Young, Edward Thornton, and others, has insisted that pastoral care functions emerge from a theological foundation and serve to strengthen and correct theological knowledge. For Oates, learning focused on ‘training workers for a ministry that affirms the Christian Gospel; and builds pastoral skills to relate to people suffering from problems with which the pastor will have to deal throughout her/his ministry. (Leas, p.5)

Oates became a primary figure in this more conservative context and form of CPE (Oates 1951) which intentionally anchored itself in the church and its received theology. This was a quite different culture from the earlier forms under Boisen, Hiltner and others where some separation from the church and immersion in the new forms of knowledge about the human person were liberating, even if it meant the relationship with the church and its theology became tenuous and even problematic. There is some evidence that this earlier culture has remained ascendant however in the current interest in taking CPE into multifaith circles as mentioned later.

Further specialization in pastoral counseling took place when in 1963 the American Association of Pastoral Counsellors was founded. Its first chairman was the other great pastoral counseling theoretician of the modern period Howard Clinebell, whose
book *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling* published in 1966 and revised in 1984 took over from Hiltner’s (1949) as the defining text of the movement. Interestingly Hiltner opposed the formation of the new specialist organization.

Hiltner’s main concern was that there would develop a rift between the specialism of pastoral counseling and the churches, and he saw the establishment of a hierarchy of counselor grades and the endorsement of fees for private practice as evidence that the ordinary Christian fellowship was being bypassed. (Campbell 1985, p.37)

This was a check to the professional emphasis that characterized the American approach to pastoral care and counseling, a check that was central to the British understanding, as we shall see. Clinebell believed such dangers could be overcome; the need to introduce standards and controls was for him far more urgent, and hence a hierarchy around supposed expertise was confirmed. The reader may remember that Freud’s attempt to introduce lay analysts on the model of pastoral practitioners also floundered in the States over the question of expertise. There may be a question of cultural values here that may become more obvious when we look at the British experience. The same concern molded the structures of CPE. In my experience when I started my journey, a CPE supervisor for the average participant in a CPE unit was an expert beyond measure, to be admired and feared. This was enhanced by the stand off and sometimes adversarial approach most supervisors took, something that was encouraged by the very hierarchical structure of the organization itself. Thankfully the hard edges of this culture have largely gone or are disappearing, at least within Australia. It did seem to be founded in a strong sense of expertise and professionalism which dragged the ordinary work of everyday pastoral care into the same atmosphere.

So pastoral care as I first experienced it in CPE was focussed in counseling and communication skill formation, and psychoanalytic and associated insight and reflection. It was centred in the supposed expertise of the supervisor. It tended toward professionalism, individualism, and acknowledged expertise, with an ambivalent relationship to the church, and a pretty constant but unsuccessful struggle to understand itself theologically, and an equally constant struggle to define itself not as a therapy but as an education process. It could be a major turning point in a
participant’s life and mark the beginning of real self-reflection. It was valued by
church leadership and supported as such because it provided an intense group
experience with therapeutic possibilities for participants to sort themselves out before
ordination, at least in Australia.

Modern pastoral care in the United Kingdom had quite different emphases but arose
also from the attempt to take psychology and the human sciences seriously, while
remaining primarily rooted in the tradition. One of the earliest figures of note was
Frank Lake, who in 1962 founded the Clinical Theology Association. He was a
psychiatrist and a missionary. His major text *Clinical Theology* was published in
1966. He was controversial and eclectic. He saw his work as ‘theology rooted in the
love and power of God but meticulously observant of the sound practice of
psychiatry and psychotherapy’. (Bridge Pastoral Foundation, p. 2). Despite the fact
that at one stage he ran seminars based on his book in eleven dioceses, he did not win
complete acceptance in either religious or psychiatric circles. I experienced his work
as interesting and maverick. No new idea could remain immune from his
enthusiasm, including his experimentation with LSD in assisting patients to retrieve
past memories. His work continues in a renamed association, The Bridge Pastoral
Foundation. In the end Lake was never mainstream.

On the other hand, the pastoral ideas and work of another psychiatrist, Robert
Lambourne did set up a more mainstream expression of modern pastoral care in
Britain. Lambourne founded a diploma in pastoral studies at Birmingham
University, which I attended under his successor Michael Wilson (1975) in 1978/79.
Both Lambourne and Wilson are looked back at as the elders of modern pastoral care
in the UK. There was little or no emphasis on skill development, or training as such.
The focus was on an in depth reflection about the human condition as understood
from different viewpoints and how and what needs to be done to help address these
issues. Pastoral care was as much about a vision for community as anything else.
Consequently pastoral care in Birmingham initiated the ‘therapeutic community’
movement for instance, working in close cooperation with the medical profession
and community health. Pattison in the article already mentioned writes,

> Using counseling as a paradigm for pastoral care has torn that activity away
> from its context within the ecclesiastical and wider community and colluded
with a sense of apolitical individuation... R.A. Lambourne was an early critic of the counseling dominated professionalized pastoral care movement. He theorized about pastoral care from the perspective of one who believed that pastoral care should be lay, voluntary and diffuse in the community, motivated as much by a struggle for corporate excellence as a struggle against individual defects. (McGrath 1995, p. 425)

My experience of working with Michael Wilson within this context of a broad reflection on life in its individual and collective dimensions was transformative. I came alive to theology and philosophy, ethics and psychology, literature and science, within the general framework of pastoral care as individual and collective action. Wilson encouraged me to have no fear of our secular society but to engage it lovingly and wisely within my integrity as a Christian; nothing can be broader or more inclusive than God as far as he was concerned. The limitations are in our capacities to think and feel aright. He never played the expert. We loved him and gathered around him without fear. Other tutors in Birmingham worked with us in a similar way, notably John Hick, now a major figure in comparative and inter-religious scholarship. Rather than training as such, there was in this British experience a sense of formation as a pastoral practitioner. There was no tension in this understanding of pastoral care with counseling or therapy.

So pastoral care as I first came to experience it in the British tradition was intellectual, deeply reflective, collective, vocational rather than professional, ethical and eclectic, and very concerned in empowering the community to interact more adequately and effectively. It molded theology to its discourse as loving interaction with the world. I remember Michael Wilson in an informal eucharist thanking the tree for its sacrifice in giving us the wood that became the chalice and the paten which he was using. It was spontaneous, deeply personal and very moving; and very religious in the best sense of the word. I asked his widow many years later if Michael had known the work of John Macmurray who had died just before I went to Birmingham. Of course he did, was her reply. Perhaps if I had stayed around him longer I would have learnt that for myself.
This fundamental tension between the American and British understandings of modern pastoral care broke surface significantly in an interchange between Clinebell and Lambourne in the early seventies. In setting this out further I am indebted to Alistair Campbell’s discussion (Campbell 1985, p.38f). The distinctions are important; there are strengths and weaknesses in both points of view.

For Clinebell the notion of expertise remains normative; for Lambourne it is precisely the use of this norm which creates danger. Clinebell wants the expert to teach the laity; Lambourne wants to mobilize the laity so that they can challenge the narrowness of vision of the experts. Despite his interest in growth models, Clinebell sees pastoral care primarily as a problem-solving activity; Lambourne wishes to change it into a mutual search for excellence, with no acknowledged experts on the route. In the last analysis, the difference may be seen as between a writer who views care from the perspective of counseling and one who views counseling from the perspective of care. Inevitably the centre of attention is very different in each case. (Campbell 1985, p.40)

For Lambourne training should concentrate on models of the ordinary and the communal, not the specialized and institutional; ‘creating a healthy interpersonal life, which would be concerned less with the eradication of individual problems and defects and more with the enhancement of values through worship, social action and ‘mutual confrontation and confirmation’ (Campbell 1985, p.38). I note here the emphasis on creativity, which I will pick up further later.

In Campbell’s analysis of this debate, he notes that there can be a kind of captivity when there is a strong emphasis on professionalism in pastoral care. Features of this captivity are lack of mutuality, maldistribution of influence and power, intellectualism, neglect of the communal dimension, and resistance to change. These features are the realization of Lambourne’s worst fears. An important discussion of such captivity to expertise and professionalism and its consequences and implications within psychoanalysis can be found in the paper by Meares and Hobson, *The Persecutory Therapist* (Meares 1977).
Campbell I believe was the most significant thinker about pastoral care in Britain following Lambourne and Wilson. He is now considered a distinguished medical ethicist, but his first work was in pastoral care, culminating in *Rediscovering Pastoral Care* (1981, revised 1986), *Moderated Love: A Theology of Professional Care* (1984), and finally *Paid to Care?: the Limits of Professionalism in Pastoral Care* (1985). Campbell placed himself squarely in the English tradition following Lambourne, but at the same time acknowledging that there needs to be a form of professionalism, which included skills but much more than that. For Campbell, what should mark professionalism in pastoral care is that which leads to freedom rather than captivity. So rather than a professionalism of expertise a professionalism structured to maximize the use of the imagination, creativity, and his most interesting suggestion, folly, the work of the clown, something also suggested in the US by Capps (1984). Such a professionalism cannot act alone; it needs to be rooted in interactions and community, of which the church is Campbell’s prime example.

Campbell goes so far as to advocate that we need to be ‘taken back to the root of professionalism – *professio* (his emphasis), a public declaration of *intent* (my emphasis)’ (Campbell 1986, p.48). It is out of this intention that our structures for pastoral care can form freely, within which we act professionally. This intention in Campbell’s mind is for the other to be loved, truly loved on his or her terms? In such an intention there should always be and necessarily so a transcendence of professionalism to remain true to the spirit of pastoral care. In the end love, care, intentional friendship is a motive and commitment, and although it can be supported by insight and skill, it can carry the day when it is present even when skills and insight are lacking. It requires pastoral carers to be formed rather than only trained; formed in their commitment and capacity to walk in the other’s shoes.

Thus from love may emerge some structures which liberate pastoral care for its true profession. We have seen that love entails a discipline of the physical, bringing care in contact and closeness; that it seeks story rather than theory in order to create a companionship with others; and that it requires a passion for honesty and truth in both personal and societal dimensions. (Campbell 1985, p51)
In short, what I have been describing is much more a way of being than a way of doing. That is why, despite the fact that it entails a public declaration and can be enhanced by training, pastoral care also goes beyond professionalism. It cannot remain the preserve of a professional group. (Campbell 1985, p.73)

If anything the situation now, in 2007, in the US and the UK, and more importantly for my interests, here in Australia is more complex. I cannot pretend to be fully aware of the American and English situations, but I read it this way. Pastoral Counseling in the US has continued to develop with high levels of expertise and professionalism. It is carried out in centres normally established by large churches, and its connection with ‘pastoral’ is predominantly through the open acceptance of the Church and all it stands for in the broadest sense. A representative text to illustrate this is David Steere’s *Spiritual Presence in Psychotherapy: A Guide for Caregivers* (1997). Steere is a professor in pastoral care and counseling, and has a long list of qualifications. Those attending CPE courses are still predominantly people who will serve as chaplains and pastors. So in general terms the professional model continues. However, CPE itself has now unified organizationally, as of 1967 when the four CPE organizations that had evolved from the early days merged to form the ACPE. As a training process it is attempting to move beyond its Christian roots, and now describes itself as an ‘organization devoted to providing education and improving the quality of spiritual caregivers of all faiths through the clinical education method’ (note 1) As is happening elsewhere, both the terms ‘religion’ and ‘pastoral’ seem to be increasingly avoided. It is as if the hijacking of ‘religion’ by fundamentalism is accepted and ‘spiritual’ is thought of as a broader more inclusive term than ‘pastoral’, presumably because of the latter’s ancient association with religion. Hardly strong evidence, but ‘spiritual care’ in Google achieved 8,970,000 sites, while ‘pastoral care’ only 1,740,000. On a quick examination the bulk of these ‘hits’ for both are in North America.

My sense of what is happening in the UK is more formed by direct contact following a recent trip to England and conversation with some key figures there. One such conversation was with Professor Simon Robinson (2003). He is charged with developing a multifaith chaplaincy degree at the University of Leeds. Multifaith interaction is far more advanced in Britain than in Australia, and much of this is
being initiated by the churches. He believes that what pastoral care has lacked in Britain is a sufficiently articulated training and formation process, which may hark back to the strong resistance to professionalism in Lambourne and Wilson. The vocational aspect of pastoral care has never been doubted, and neither the belief that in principle all members of the church are so called; but how people then take on pastoral identity and so act pastorally remains vague and equivocal. There is no equivalent in Britain to professional pastoral counseling as found in the US. ‘Spirituality’ as a term in preference to ‘religion’ is appearing but not to the same degree.

Like Britain, there has never been a pastoral counseling movement in Australia. CPE was imported from the States in the sixties and until the last 10-15 years or so has been largely included by the churches as part of clergy training; it also attracted many religious from the Catholic church. But over the last 10 years there has been an ever increasing lay and volunteer involvement in pastoral care in institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes, and increasingly also in parishes lay people have been singled out as pastoral visitors or carers. In part this is because the churches are no longer able to finance chaplains to hospitals and other institutions, and the average priest or minister has had little time for pastoral work; but also the point has been reached I think when pastoral care is having a life of its own, still connected with the churches but organizing itself alongside and outside of them as well. And in most States this has a multi or inter faith component, initiated more by pastoral carers themselves than the churches. The Australian church officially is a long way behind England in initiating multifaith interaction. CPE remains the preferred training method, both as a component of clergy training and for volunteer pastoral carers, but there is also a strong criticism of it, both within the churches and the pastoral care movement, but also with CPE circles itself. This is now being recognized even by some of the original and most senior CPE supervisors. In the terms used by Campbell, there has been a professional captivity and the time is upon us to escape such a captivity and re-work our understanding of pastoral care and the basis of CPE while at the same time face all the issues implied in weakening churches, a secular multifaith culture, and a growing pastoral care movement that is, at least in some areas, largely peopled by the non-ordained of whatever tradition. A recent and early response to this is found in Little (2007).
In a seminar recently (August 2007) in Canberra led by the psychoanalyst Frances Moran on her recent book, *Beyond the Culture of Care* (2006), it was recognized that pastoral care had two ways of going in the future to avoid crisis – either toward a new professionalism in which pastoral care clearly understands its aim and role within a market, consumer driven society, and take its place equally alongside other caring professions, or as a movement that is its own community reaching out with something that is more than professional, a something that carries a transcendence and commitment to love regardless, perhaps something like a religious order. Some participants wondered why both directions could not happen. Moran herself was advocating the road to clearer professionalism; that pastoral care drop the word ‘care’ and be known as pastoral practice; that it clarify its aim clearly as recognizing, sustaining, encouraging and nurturing human subjectivity in a world of market objectivity; that it establish clear principles of justification; and that it work toward a clear and recognized methodology of formation.

So, as I see it, *Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care* is being written in a context that is dynamic and challenging. What I am offering is only a start in my own deliberations. The conversation amongst key people is still in early stages. I think I have taken from both the American and British traditions and added twists of my own, some of which some will see as reactionary on the one hand and unprofessional on the other. In the case of pastoral care I have enunciated its uniqueness vis a vis other caring modalities such as social and community work on the one hand, and chaplaincy on the other. Its uniqueness is not dissimilar from the aim Moran is proposing; that pastoral care focuses on and specializes in the personal interactions of life. It is not a profession in the American sense, but it is a vocation. It *is* a profession in the sense Alistair Campbell proposes; it a public declaration of an ‘intention’ which is never and cannot be a fee for service and which carries with it a sense of its own transcendence; whatever structures it develops are necessarily to remain open. It carries an expertise; pastoral carers are expert non-experts in interpersonal and informal relationships, with all the subtlety of knowledge this implies about human persons including self knowledge, and all the capacity to reflect on experience to grow in the capacity to act effectively, especially the capacity to reflect and know-in-action. Whether such a ‘profession’ could take its place fully
amongst other caring modalities in a consumer society remains to be seen; I can see the other option raised in Moran’s seminar as possibly a better way if pastoral care is to retain its unique integrity.

With this understanding of pastoral care, there are questions to be raised about CPE and its appropriateness in its received and traditional form to adequately prepare and form pastoral practitioners. Thankfully the whole organization in Australia is increasingly willing to work with such need to change. I think CPE supervision can claim professional status in the American sense, but recognition of the captivity it has been in is urgent and important. In this work, I am advocating that CPE needs to learn to work from the primacy of action; this raises a critique of the existing methodology that is centred in reflection. Action needs to be brought into the training groups themselves and made central there as much as it is claimed to be central in the clinical setting. Only in this way can the central capacity to know and reflect-in-action be fully worked on. For this reason I believe the methodologies of psychodrama should be fully explored for their possible contribution to pastoral care formation. What other background work and study for an adequate formation process is required needs long discussion. The suggestions made by Frances Moran are important.

Some will view what I have written as reactionary in so far as I anchor pastoral care back into religion, and I put spirituality in its place in relation to religion. But this is an understanding of religion that I claim is generic and fundamental and can take its place with head held high against and with the arts and the sciences. This is religion re-visioned and reclaimed. We need it because religion per se will not go away. Ignoring it like a bad smell, as is happening in non-fundamentalist circles, is not going to work. We have to understand it better as something inherent to human community. We need to be able to critique religion openly as either good or bad with the same even-handedness that we critique science as either good or bad science.

Some will view what I have written as unprofessional, at least the use of friendship as a central concept, be it intentional friendship or not. My argument is that friendship is anchored deep within our philosophical and religious tradition, that it
has been treated with intellectual rigor from the time of Aristotle on, and this very same form has now been seen by Macmurray and others as a way to adequately think of the Self.

Then others will think I have been too radical in replacing God as the central concept of pastoral care with the Self. I think this is a more complete acceptance of the reality of our secular culture and its implications, along with the implications this in turn has for the way we see our selves in relation to reality. In fact it allows us now to proceed in re-framing religion and spirituality in a way that recognizes all human experience including that of the staunch atheist as something that is not outside the ministrations of pastoral care. This in turn allows us to grasp the nature of religion in human life and its foundation in personal community. In one sense seeing Self as central gives ‘God’ back to the people, resting ‘him, her, it’ from the doctrine and dogma of religious organizations in the traditional sense, to be found or not found as the case may be within each individual’s own experience and life. Wresting ‘God’ from organized religion in turn raises the huge issue of identity and the Self, which I addressed as a central one for pastoral care. It is central also in the wider cultural sense in our secular culture, and I think this is where fear of my move may be too radical for a process like pastoral care for some, given our moral understanding is so traditionally linked to a theistic world view. We are morally adrift perhaps and heading for the rocks.

We may well be so headed. This is the theme of Charles Taylor’s important reflection *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, some of the arguments of which he extends and completes is his most recent book *A Secular Age*. His interest is to explore ‘our modern notion of what it is to be a human agent, a person, or a self’, and this is reflected in ‘how our pictures of the good have evolved. Selfhood and the good, or in another way selfhood and morality, turn out to be inextricably intertwined themes’ (Taylor 1989, p.3). In the form of the person deduced from Macmurray’s philosophy (of which there is never a mention in Taylor) we can say that he is interested in the self from the second person perspective, as is Stephen Darwall (2006) referred to earlier (p.55f). Religion, and especially theistic religion is the traditional source of the good, and hence the basis of our morality, how we should act in relation to each other. It has provided a framework, which
might be only an empty identity, but which is nonetheless a basis outside the person that allows evaluation or discrimination of ‘right or wrong, better or worse, higher or lower, which are not rendered valid by our own desires, inclinations or choices, but rather stand independent of these and offer standards by which they can be judged’ (Taylor 1989, p.4). Taylor believes there is now a general consensus on morals such as universal human rights, the demand to reduce suffering, the ideals of freedom, equality and self-determination. But there is a lack of moral sources or agreed upon constitutive goods to undergird that consensus. He outlines three options for developing moral sources for modern ethics: a no longer assumable theistic basis, the power and dignity of the human person, and expressivistic resonances within the self, such as the development of our inner life and its connection with nature, and our valuing of the ordinary. But in the end he still wonders if modern moral sources can be sustained without a vision of hope or a religious dimension, ‘a love of that which is incomparably higher than ourselves’. (note 2)

I think unlike Darwall who is attempting to address the moral dimension actually from the second person perspective through Austin’s speech act theory, Taylor’s reflection on agency is from the third person perspective. This is confirmed I believe in Frances Adeney’s review referenced above when she writes

Taylor limits his apprehension of moral sources in another way by tracing the history of the monological self. Although Taylor is aware that, to put it in his own terms, ‘the community is also constitutive of the individual’ and that ‘common meanings are embedded in our institutions and practices’, he somehow in this work loses touch with the communal dimensions of moral self-interpretation. Although he refers to communities and moral practices, the modern moral sources he points to focus on a disengaged individual self. (p.3)

I believe Taylor’s interest in agency is disengaged from the actual structure of the self, unlike Macmurray. If it were to be seen as integral to the very structure of the self, perhaps he might be prepared to concede that a fundamental framework for a modern ethic is primary friendship as analysed by Aristotle and Macmurray, and the source of this is personal community especially the family and our relationship to a mother whose whole being can intend love and care.
More encouraging to my whole philosophy is George Furniss’ *Sociology for Pastoral Care: An Introduction for Students and Pastors*.

The perspective of pastoral care, like all cultures and subcultures, has three types of orientation, one of which may be emphasized more than the others; cognitive orientations (What is reality? What is knowledge?), cathectic orientations (What feels good or bad?), and evaluative orientations (What is right? What is moral?).

(Furniss 1995, p.1)

But without going into details here, Furniss falls equally foul of the dilemma of our whole culture, the unexamined primacy of the third person perspective of the isolated thinker. Morals thought of from such a perspective inevitably tend to the moralistic and the legal, just as religion does. Both morality and religion cannot be divorced from the interpersonal ‘I-You’ of the second person perspective without losing their inherent essence. Not only do we need to learn to think from the point of view of action, we need to do so from the point of view of the other person with whom we are interacting.

I want to conclude these concluding remarks with reference to a history of the self in pastoral care. An important part of the rise of modern pastoral care has been some classic historical reflections, the first of which was John McNeill’s *A History of the Cure of Souls* (1952) and the second Clebsch and Jaekle’s *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective* (1964). McNeill’s is a general survey and summary across all traditions; Clebsch and Jaekle’s is a collection of primary documents within Christianity preceded by a critical essay raising some of the very questions we have been discussing about the nature and direction of pastoral care in the modern period. But it is E. Brooks Holifield’s *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* that I want to draw particular reference. Holifield traces the story of the self in pastoral care from self-denial in the seventeenth century, to self-love in the eighteenth, which became associated with self-culture, self-mastery sometime after the civil war, and self-realization in the first half of the twentieth century. This has been taken up by Walter Conn in his *The Desiring Self: Rooting Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Direction in Self Transcendence* (1998) when he,
at least in his own mind, continues the history of the self in pastoral care by proposing the idea of self-transcendence.

Of all the writers I have here reviewed in this chapter, Conn alone mentions John Macmurray, but only in a footnote. My sense is that his attention was drawn late in the piece when preparing his book, and while sensing its relevance it was too late to incorporate it into his thinking and presentation. He claims with Macmurray to be considering a practical self as agent in dynamic relation with others, but this is not the case in the actual text.

To put it briefly, I will be arguing that the self (the person precisely as conscious) is a unity-in-tension, a dynamic, dipolar, dialectical, first-person reality constituted by consciousness and experienced as “I” (a creating-self at the subject pole striving for meaning and value in self-transcending relationships) and “me” (a created-self at the object-pole consisting of material, social and spiritual selves). (Conn 1998, p.6)

This is of course the duplex self of William James. But it is Conn’s use of self transcendence that particularly interests me, given that the concept became central and important to Macmurray, especially in his last major book Religion, Art and Science: A study of the reflective activities in man originally published in 1961 (1986). Conn seeks to anchor direction for pastoral care and counseling in what he sees as the fundamental desire of the human self, the desire to self-transcend.

My theoretical premise is that the fundamental desire of the self is to transcend itself in relationship: to the world, to others, to God. But only a developed, powerful self has the strength to realize significant self transcendence. My approach, therefore, recognizes two focal points in the fundamental human desire: the drive to be a self, a center of strength; and the dynamism to move beyond the self in relationship. My interpretation of the desiring self will not only include both elements, it will insist on their inextricable connection; the desires to be a self and to reach out beyond the self must always be understood together: separation and attachment, independence and belonging, autonomy and relationship. The self exists only in relationship to the other. This dual desire of the human heart is expressed in the two words of my basic theoretical term, ‘self-transcendence’, and it is
the core of what I mean by ‘the desiring self’. Charles Taylor has argued persuasively that the self must always be connected to the good. My interpretation of the desiring self insists that this connection is intrinsic: by its nature the self desires to transcend itself, to move beyond itself to the good. (Conn 1998, p.5, his emphasis)

Otto Rank was one of the first to point out that one of the paradoxes in human life is that it is only those who are free to be united with another who are also free to be alone in their own solitude and selfhood. If we are not first loved we cannot find our own selfhood to then desire self-transcendence. To put this in the language I have been using following Macmurray, it is only those who live life predominantly from the second person perspective, containing and constituted by the other two, who desire and seek to self-transcend, at least at the interpersonal level. For such people, to put themselves in the other’s place and so know them in all the strange subtlety and complexity of interpersonal knowledge, becomes a natural way of life. It is the path to wisdom. Reality is fundamentally personal and the positive engagement of life becomes intentional. But not many find this as a way of life; the bulk of us live in a compromise, with occasional moments of self-transcendence amongst a jungle of escapes and defenses which lead us from time to time to think perhaps we should go and see a counselor or therapist. Then we do not desire self transcendence in an interpersonal sense; at worse we seek to escape to another world we believe more real than this one, or control this one and bend it to our will; at best we self transcend as does the artist on the one hand, or the scientist on the other. This is Macmurray’s understanding of self-transcendence.

Ideally pastoral care finds itself as a second person perspective activity expressed in actions that are self transcending of the interpersonal Other. In reality we are so often broken vessels with little more than the desire to so live this way.

Notes
The following is an edited version of a report on the Pilot Multifaith Training Program published by the Canberra and Region Centre for Spiritual Care and Clinical Pastoral Education Inc under the auspices of the Pastoral Care Board of the ACT. It was publicly presented at a function to inaugurate the Board at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in February 2007. Sections of the Report that are repetitious of material already covered in this document have been omitted.
The Program was conducted by the Canberra and Region Centre for Spiritual Care and Clinical Pastoral Education Inc under the direction of the Pastoral Care Board of the ACT. It took place at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in Canberra from August to November 2006.

Compiled by Geoffrey Hunter and David Oliphant.
CARING TOGETHER

A Report on a Pilot Training Program in Multifaith Pastoral Care
Canberra 2006

The program was developed and conducted by David Oliphant.

Report compiled by Geoffrey Hunter and David Oliphant. It is based on observations during the Program and Trainee Evaluations. It was presented at the Inauguration of the Pastoral Care Board of the ACT on the 28th February 2007 at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.

Introduction:

In February 2005, a Search Conference on Pastoral Care was held at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in Canberra. More than 50 people met for two days to consider the needs of pastoral care in Canberra and the Southern Region of NSW. They represented a cross section of organisations that were considered to have an interest and responsibility in this matter, including the various churches and religious traditions (Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Moslem, Jewish). They considered the current nature and future needs of pastoral care in the region within such institutions as hospitals, nursing homes, schools, universities, jails, and the courts. From within the diversity of religious faiths, the conference recognised the need for a common and shared approach in providing pastoral care.

Pastoral care is defined as the offering of emotional and spiritual care to people in the community who are going through a difficult or demanding time, and helping those people connect with their own inner and community resources. It is not counselling or therapy, but the offering of care and support.

The Search Conference resolved two significant objectives: Firstly to develop a community body to set standards for pastoral care, pastoral care training, and the ongoing support and supervision of pastoral carer practitioners. Secondly, to develop a training program that would enable people from different faith traditions to train and work together within a shared philosophy of pastoral care. This second objective became known as the Pilot Multifaith Training Project, ‘Caring Together’.

Copies of this Report can obtained from:
The Canberra and Region Centre for Spiritual Care and Clinical Pastoral Education Inc
PMB 49, The Canberra Hospital, PO Box 11, Woden, ACT, 2606.

Telephone: 02 6244 2261. Email: lyn.kelly@act.gov.au
The Multifaith Training Project:

This report is about the initial outcome of the second objective. The first objective is already a reality, with the inception of the Pastoral Care Board of the ACT, and the NSW Greater Southern Area Health Service Pastoral Care Advisory Committee.

The Project was developed around an introductory unit of Clinical Pastoral Education that was appropriately adapted to explore the multifaith aspect of the group and a common commitment to pastoral care. As a pilot project it was to test a philosophy of pastoral care entitled *Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care* developed by David Oliphant, a Clinical Pastoral Educator working out of The Canberra Hospital.

During August to November 2006, the 10 day training program was led by David Oliphant, with the assistance of Mary Waterford, both supervisors in CPE. Geoffrey Hunter was an independent observer with a responsibility to assess and report on the project. There were 10 participants, with at least one person from each major faith tradition.

- A senior Presbyterian minister
- An educational institution multifaith chaplain (Baptist)
- The president of the Canberra Jewish community
- The president of the Canberra Islamic Centre
- A vice president of the Mandir Society of the ACT (Hindu)
- The Spiritual Care coordinator of the Canberra Rigpa Centre (Buddhist)
- A proponent of modern Christian and General spirituality
- An educational institution multifaith chaplain (Jewish)
- A member of the Islamic community

Objectives:
The Project set out to test the following:

- The feasibility of training people from different religious traditions together for pastoral care in the community.
- The appropriateness and effectiveness as a theoretical basis for multifaith pastoral care of the document *Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care.*

General Affirmation by the Participants

Comments by the participants reflect a general discovery within the course. They affirmed that the provision of mutual multifaith pastoral care is possible.

As one person reflected: "*I am better able to see others from their perspective and to journey together with them, while remaining true to my beliefs.*"

Another affirmed that now religion was no longer considered simply as a dogma that could focus on differences or separation from others, but rather is now seeing religion as a context for people to share in "*an action with love and caring relationships.*"

Perhaps the outcome can be best summed up with this comment: "*Despite the baggage of my previous understandings of other faiths, I am now more accepting of other perspectives.*"
Features of the program:

The program provided a philosophy of pastoral care that provides opportunities for care of an individual without conflict with a particular faith tradition. Participants were provided didactic teaching and discussion about pastoral care, together with take home papers each week for further reading. There were sessions that provided workshop and action/reflection activities to enable practice of the skills of pastoral care. In the final week, each trainee had the opportunity to present a verbatim, about a pastoral care encounter they had experienced, for group supervision.

The Course:

There were four aspects that were addressed. These were interwoven throughout the course.

A. A sharing by each participant of the unique focus of their own faith tradition that might test and challenge the assumptions which underlie this philosophy and approach to the provision of pastoral care.  (pages 3-4)

B. The introduction of a philosophy that sought to provide a framework that enabled people from differing faith traditions to mutually develop pastoral care without causing conflict with their traditional and personal beliefs.  (pages 5-9)

C. An understanding of pastoral care as a caring modality.  (page 10)

D. An awareness of and introduction to the skills involved in pastoral care.  (page 10)

Experiences from the course:

Over the period of the ten days of the course, participants affirmed the relevance of the underlying philosophy in assisting to focus on providing care for a person, in such a way as to affirm that person's faith tradition and without imposing one's own expectations.

The evaluation comments of the participants are found at the end of the report. This is a sample of the verbal and written comments made at the end of the course:

- "In contrast to the past, I can now relate easier to people of other faiths or no faith."
- "It has been an experience of understanding human faith (rather than only from my own religious perspective) - no barriers."
- "I discovered how to seek the meaning from others rather than approach with my own projections."
- "I found how to be open to others and listen to them without imposing a religious perspective."
- "I found how to be clear about my perspective and identity so as to be confident in myself when seeking to stand beside others."
- "The approach of this philosophy enabled me to reframe my use of "religion", thus removing previously conceived barriers."
- "Hope that others will be involved."

A: DISCOVERING THE FAITH PERSPECTIVE OF OTHERS

SHARING ABOUT PASTORAL CARE

During the first session people were invited to share their perceptions about the nature of pastoral care. Each described how care was provided from the perspective of their faith tradition. It became apparent that the term "pastoral care" was seen as having a Christian origin, and at first it seemed that other traditions did not have the same emphasis on ‘being pastoral’. ‘Pastoral’ is a concept that emerged from the idea of the shepherd caring for the flock. After further discussion there was the recognition that within each tradition caring activities occur than can be described as ‘pastoral’.

However, each tradition identified particular religious rituals that were important at times of crisis, such as at the time of death. In Muslim communities the term "pastoral care" is not used. Visiting the sick is highly recommended but it is provided by families rather than by
the Muslim religious organisation. Similarly the Hindu relies on families to visit rather than a specifically religious figure. As one Jewish participant commented, "Family look after family".

'THE FAMILY’ AS THE ORIGIN OF PASTORAL CARE
It became clear that there was a distinction emerging between rituals of religion and the provision of pastoral care. While particular religious activities were important in times of crisis, and the spiritual understandings were often given perspective through a religion, it was family and cultural groups who tended to provide what may be described as "pastoral care". This affirmed ‘the family’ as the origin of pastoral care as presented in the Philosophy.

In Australia, with the increased isolation experienced in our society, particularly when crisis occurs in an institution such as a hospital, there has been a growing emphasis on the need for pastoral care. An older member of the training group, born in Australia, reminisced that in contrast to the isolating nature of our current society, urban community in the 1940's was communal with neighbours personally knowing and caring for each other. This family and community care was still occurring within particular ethnic groups, but increasingly more of the population can experience isolation. The concept of pastoral care within an institutional context is comparatively recent, and has become recognised and used in the secular context. The term "pastoral care" comes from a predominantly Christian perspective, but it was obvious from the responses with this group that the concept and need is consistent with the other faith traditions.

SHARING ABOUT FAITH TRADITIONS
It was during the third and fourth weeks that members shared about their own faith tradition. They had been asked not only to briefly outline their religious tradition, but also to nominate some saints and heroes within it and to share about what their tradition has provided for them. This was an opportunity to share about their own faith tradition and to understand better other traditions. More importantly it brought a sharing together about what is basically important for each member as a person. As one group member said, "There is such similarity in different words." Another, "There was excitement today in how much we have learnt at depth from each other." And at the end of the course it was said, "In contrast to the past, I can now relate easier to people of other faiths".

While there were many common aspects that could be recognised between the traditions, the diversity of understandings also stood out. For brevity in this report a couple of aspects are noted. For example, while the Jewish, Christian and Moslem traditions have emerged from a common source with Abraham, each view their own distinct dogma and rituals as essentially the revealed truth. In contrast, the Buddhist and Hindu traditions focus on the journey of the individual towards a divine reality. For them there are various deities and processes which can assist them discover truth in that journey.

What emerged from this sharing was a greater awareness and understanding of the background of people of other traditions. At the same time, it was said that "In the course there has been an experience of inclusiveness and community with understanding so as to not preclude the opportunity to share with people of other faith traditions."

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
Cultural differences were also identified as an area that required sensitivity in developing relationships. Even within faith traditions there can be a variety of cultural differences between different countries. In the exercises for developing listening skills for pastoral care, there was a realisation of the need for sensitivity to different cultural and religious expectations, such as relationship between the opposite sexes, and appropriate eye contact or touch. For example, Western culture values eye contact, while Eastern or Asian cultures minimise eye contact.


B: **INTENTIONAL FRIENDSHIP: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care**

[this section has been omitted in this version of the report. It contains material already covered in this document, taken from the Introduction]

Some Evaluation Comments from course participants directly related to the philosophy presented:

- "I feel that the philosophy worked well for me, in that I did not need to put aside my own beliefs and traditions."
- "This allowed a reframing a definition of 'religion' that helps towards bringing down barriers."
- "Religion is now not just dogma but an action involving love and care relationships."
- "The understanding of self identity with head heart and hand analogies helped."
- "It seems to provide a new way of approaching something (called pastoral care) that is inherent in all faith traditions."
- "In this course it was apparent that regardless of faith or culture we are people with the same fears, needs or joys, and who can care for each other."
- "This course was a wonderful academic and analytical approach in a multi-faith setting. Wow!"

All the participants overwhelmingly affirmed the helpfulness of the philosophy.

The full text of *Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care* will be made available to interested persons in the near future. Please contact:
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C: **THE UNIQUENESS OF PASTORAL CARE**

Pastoral Care initiates contact and conversation, operating in the normal contexts of people’s lives.

The Pilot Training Program focused on the unique character of pastoral care as distinct to other caring modalities, such as counselling, psychotherapy, social work, welfare and community work. In other caring modalities, personal connection is for the sake of impersonal and professional assessment and treatment. Pastoral care is the only caring modality in which personal connection is the prime goal of interaction. Hence the naming of pastoral care as intentional friendship.

Nowhere is this illustrated better than in the question of self disclosure by the carer. Because the nature of friendship is the mutual self disclosure of each person, pastoral care includes the skill by the carer of appropriately revealing him or herself as a person in the pastoral conversation. Other modalities have an intersubjective relationship that is not mutual and reciprocal carers does not ‘give themselves away’ as equals in the relationship, and the interaction is not ‘free’, in that the conversation is for a particular purpose and not an interaction for its own sake out of which important issues for the patient might arise. The fundamental premise of primary friendship is that the self revelation is not egocentric but is
offered with an in the interest of the other person. It that offer of friendship which then becomes valuable when the other person is interested to receive it.

An effective pastoral carer is an expert ‘non expert’. The conversations he or she initiates are between two or more free and equal persons where there is no necessary assumption of ‘expertise’ as there is with a counsellor or therapist. It requires high levels of interpersonal skill focussed in the free and equal relationship of friendship in which the carers intentions are formed in the interest of the patient or person, undergirded by a general motive of love and care.

**D: PASTORAL SKILL BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

Participants were involved in skill awareness activities as the course progressed.

- Exercises that focused on the skills of listening and responding to another person.

**Issues that emerged with multi-faith and multi-cultural activities:**

1. There are cultural variations as to what is the appropriate eye contact. Western cultures value strong eye contact, while Asian defer away in eye contact.
2. There are difficulties encountered about an appropriate manner for male / female contacts with people of some cultural backgrounds.

- Exercises that addressed the skills of being empathic. This drew a distinction between the motive and intention of communicative action, and highlighted an understanding of the inner life as something constructed over time by mirroring, twin-shipping, idealizing and adversarial relationships that become self-object relationships within the person.
- An exercise that used the psychodrama techniques to assist participants practice various skills.
- A case study that offered an opportunity to reflect as a pastoral carer on the "intention" of another person. Participants were asked to imagine having an interview as a pastoral carer with a self declared atheist, and to seek ways to respond to the person empathically that respected his views but also connected him to any inner and spiritual resources he might have.
- Use of role plays enabled the participants to test their skills under the observation of the group, and in so doing learn skills and strategies from each other.

*Again in evaluation it was recognised that there can be limitations in a situation of female and male with interaction in role plays between Christian and Muslim and Hindu cultures.*

- A workshop on attention and reflection in action to develop spontaneity. Here participants sought to focus with concurrent attention on both the other person and the self. When acting to seek to maintain simultaneous focus in care there is a readiness engendered in the carer for spontaneity with regard to the other person.
- Finally the process of verbatim reports was introduced as a basic tool for ongoing Clinical Pastoral Education training. Each participant was assigned the task of returning in the final week with a verbatim report of a pastoral care encounter. These were presented and discussed in the final session.
EVALUATIONS

A Compilation of Trainees Evaluative Comments on the Pilot Multifaith Training Program ‘Caring Together’.

The purpose of this evaluation is to enable participants to reflect on the course generally and to specifically comment on the effectiveness and applicability of the philosophy of pastoral care that was introduced in the pilot program in providing a unifying theory of multifaith pastoral care without compromising the content of any particular faith system.

General:
1. What was the most important thing you learnt in the course?
2. How has this course affected your idea of pastoral care?
3. What did you enjoy most about the course?
4. How have you grown in this course?
5. What insights and skills do you feel more aware of since completing the course?
6. How would the course have been more effective in your opinion?
7. Would you recommend it to others?

Specific:
1. How well so you think you grasped the philosophy of pastoral care presented?
2. Did the philosophy conflict in any way with your personal beliefs or your tradition?
3. Do you think the philosophy conflicted with any other group member’s beliefs or tradition?
4. Do you think the philosophy might provide an adequate theoretical base for multifaith pastoral care?
5. Do you have any suggestions on how the philosophy might be more adequately presented?

General:
1. What was the most important thing you learnt in the course?
   • How to approach strangers.
   • Positive intention to friendship is powerful, and allows even beginners to make mistakes.
   • A way of being with someone irrespective of differences in culture and belief.
   • I would like to think that I am becoming more a "hand" person.
   • Skills in listening and developing intentional friendships.
   • The commonality in the differences and sensitivities of multifaith and multi-cultural.
   • Regardless of faith or culture we are people. How similar are our faiths and beliefs; with the same fears, needs and joys.
   • This course has provided valuable theory that has enhanced previous CPE training.
   • The value of seeking to "mirror" the other person.
2. How has this course affected your idea of pastoral care?
   • It was a completely new experience.
   • Encouraging an open acceptance of other faith traditions.
   • Redefined my understanding into a positive sense of what "religion" provides.
   • Increased my awareness of being with another person in a more connected manner.
   • Realisation that intentional friendship is the friendship that we all need in times of crisis. Needing to be with rather than being for the other person.
   • Provided insights and understanding about what I am doing in pastoral care.
   • To be totally present with the other person, regardless of faith traditions.
   • Strengthened my trust that pastoral care is appropriate for common humanity needs, rather than only from a religious perspective.
   • Ability to analyse the process of my intentions in relationships as a fellow human being.
3. What did you enjoy most about the course?
   • The Interfaith similarities.
   • Group interaction and especially personal insights from other faiths.
   • Involvement with participants of other faith backgrounds, and my changing perceptions as we progressively revealed ourselves.
• Sharing our stories.
• Sharing with others in mutual desire to care, and better understanding their approach from other faith traditions.

4. **How have you grown in this course?**
• Expanded my horizons
• From feedback on how to provide pastoral care.
• Value of considering a wider selection of ideas and approaches.
• Grown to be more tolerant and more questioning; less likely to assume that I know what is going on for the other person.
• Grown more sensitive and effective.
• Learnt to find my voice and to have a go.
• Through the activity of action, withdrawal and reflection, I have gained in a deeper knowledge of the processes of intentional friendship.

5. **What insights and skills do you feel more aware of since completing the course?**
• Meeting people where they are.
• Seek avoiding theological debates.
• Confident to try to alter my habits and use new techniques.
• Increased self awareness in approaching others; and staying with what they present.
• Reflecting during the conversation and asking myself "What are they meaning?"
• How to have language that "mirrors" the other person's perspective.
• A greater awareness of cultural sensitivities.
• Ability to "mirror", which enhances conversations.
• More aware of my motives and intention as well of my clients.
• Ability to reflect while in conversation.
• Listening and effectively following the conversation of others without directing with my answers; helping them to strive for their own answers.
• More aware of the moment of connection, the transcendence of "walking in the spirit", the importance of idealisation in a person's eye (with heroes and anti-heroes), and how people talk within themselves to "someone".

6. **How would the course have been more effective in your opinion?**
• Provision of a course overview or structure.
• Provide more practical training.
• More interactive work earlier in the course Didactic is valuable but the real learning is in doing.
• More role plays with feedback by the group.
• More time for sharing and discussions.
• Simpler synopsis or breakdown of each paper.

7. **Would you recommend it to others?**
• Yes (unanimous)
• Highly recommended.
• Absolutely; I already have!
• I feel that it is essential.
• Provided a wonderful journey of understanding intentional friendship.

**Specific:**
1. **How well do you think you grasped the philosophy of pastoral care presented?**
• Reasonably.
• Fairly well.
• It took a while through the course before it "clicked".
• I have absorbed the essence of the "head", "heart" and "hand" trilogy in harmony equals wisdom.
• I need more time to reflect and digest.
• Especially the "religion" aspect being the Action of Love, Care and Concern; rather then being "dogma".

2. **Did the philosophy conflict in any way with your personal beliefs or your tradition?**
• No. (unanimous)
• No conflict. Instead, by addressing the term "religion" this way, it brought down barriers.
• By the feedback from others provided more insights.
• It enhances a Buddhist perspective.
It worked well for me with a Christian view.
On the contrary, it encouraged, enhanced and acknowledged what I believe.

3. Do your think the philosophy conflicted with any other group member's beliefs or tradition?
   - No.
   - Unsure
   - Seems a new way of approaching something that is inherent in all traditions.

4. Do you think the philosophy might provide an adequate theoretical base for multifaith pastoral care?
   - Yes. (unanimous)
   - It provides a cutting edge to encourage further exploration.
   - Needs to be published.

5. Do you have any suggestions on how the philosophy might be more adequately presented?
   - Raise public awareness.
   - Simpler language in presentation.
   - (Also a variety of particular suggestions to address strategies)

Comments relating to General Q 6:
   - Structure of a syllabus in the course
   - Needs reduction in didactic intellectual component, so allow more time for practice.
   - Less volume in reading, and more open discussion and active participation.

Editorial comments: Duplicate comments are not included in responses to these questions. Occasionally there was editing to clarify or simplify a comment.

The evaluation comments about the course presentation and structure has challenged us to re-write aspects in the presentation of the philosophy.

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Postscript

The ice-caps are melting, sea-levels are rising, rainfall is decreasing, the air is polluting, Iraq is likely to implode and if it does the Middle East may well explode; I am conscious that there is something almost naïve in proposing a concept of the Self and of religion in this philosophy of pastoral care that upholds the primacy of heterocentric action; waving a flag in a hurricane.

The great entrenched network of secularized capitalist culture is now spread throughout the world. It has formed and nurtured personal and institutionalized self interest, sometimes of the enlightened sort, as never before in our history on this little planet. Grounding modern pastoral care in the community in a formal and positive understanding of religion that is analogous to the tripartite nature of the wholistic self points to quite different motives, and to an understanding of religion that is a radical counterpoint to what we actually see in the world today; religion which is often political rather than personal, un-reflected, illusory, and formed largely speaking in the egocentrically defensive poles of the Self.

It is one thing, of course, to assert that true religion is the overcoming of the negative in human nature and relations and the subordinating of fear to love; it is another to actually live it. This is a central tension in the human condition. However, even if the whole of life on Earth is premised on selfishness, as neo Darwinists like Richard Dawkins maintain, the altruism, or at least the seeming altruism that we experience within personal communities like families, is actually necessary in a quite formal sense to our self development. Without love and care that accepts us regardless we cannot self transcend to become separate interdependent creatures who feel that we determine our own lives for ourselves through choice and action. We can chose to love because we have been first loved. That reality has to remain amidst all our comings and goings, or we have no basis for ongoing personal community that can positively construct and support our lives.
I own my naivety in what I am doing in proposing this philosophy of pastoral care. I think it is better to ‘light a candle than curse the darkness’; and there is a very real sense that what the world needs now, more than ever, is naivety and innocence that trusts love, care, forgiveness, and reconciliation; and works for it. I am encouraged to think that there is universally, if not a naivety, an innocence about religious figures who put love and compassion first and dare to live by them. Or is it wisdom? Jesus likened it to the nature of children and the kingdom of God. They are remembered and continue to inspire, even if their own lives were marked by seeming failure. It is as if true religion is a necessary ‘candle’ in human affairs, however much the winds blow, and providing there are at least some who are prepared to live by putting others first, some very essential focus of hope can be maintained. And some of these people may now style themselves secular atheists.

By the same token, nothing guarantees that the ‘light’ will prevail. There seems little true religion as Jesus taught it in the defensive sacralized capitalism of so much popular religion in the United States, for instance, which makes no attempt to hold the world as One, and actively cultivates the most dangerous end of the spectrum of motives of the third person perspective of the self, all in the name of Christ. Sam Harris’ recent Letter to a Christian Nation highlights some of the complexities that confront religion in that nation, not that his analysis has any understanding of true or right religion as I have presented the idea in this philosophy of pastoral care. What he thinks religion is is what I think should be named false or wrong religion. As already discussed, wanting to throw religion out altogether as he does is a simplistic response that is a serious lack of understanding of the role religion can play in human culture; it is also indicative of a lack of understanding of the nature and boundaries of science. In the end we are grappling with the complexity and ambiguity of human nature; to blame religion for the sorry state of world affairs is like blaming science for the sorry state of the environment.

For Macmurray, the complete opposite of friendship and heterocentricity, of positive second person engagement, of religion in its truest sense, is the mutuality of hatred. It is the height of irrationality.

Hatred cannot, as a motive of action, be universalized. It presupposes both love and fear, and if it could be total it would destroy the possibility of
personal existence. It is no doubt this that underlies, even if it down not completely justify, our tendency to assume that suicide is evidence of mental derangement.

This mutuality of hatred as the motive of a negative relation of persons is clearly an evil. Hatred itself, as an original and necessary motive in the constitution of the personal, is perhaps what is referred to by theology as original sin. At any rate, the distinction we have just drawn between a positive and negative relation of persons is the origin of the distinction between good and evil. (Macmurray 1999, p.75)

We live in a world where mutual hatred appears to be triumphing at the level of cultures if not nations, while the planet itself staggers under our self interested exploitation. If key commentators such as James Lovelock (2006), the originator of the Gaia hypothesis, now a theory, are right, it is perhaps too late and judgement has begun. Our alienation from the planet is perhaps now complete and we are in enmity with the biosphere that gave us birth: vengeance is mine saith the Planet Earth. If anything can motivate us to face our own human nature as one human race, and find ways to overcome our fear, subordinating it to friendship, surely it is the state of the environment. Tim Flannery suggests we should be planning and acting as if we are going to war.

So, on all accounts, it is a dark time to be trying to light a little candle around multifaith pastoral care in a very localized setting in far off Australia! And yet the first flickers in the pilot training group that grappled with this philosophy of Intentional Friendship have been encouraging. From my point of view, the group intended friendship and found it, and although there was open disclosure of our different religious and spiritual backgrounds and insights, this became subordinated to the engagement of the group and the ideas I was presenting. I think this is born out generally in the evaluation comments of the participants. There were times when the sense of unity in the group was palpable. On one occasion it led to the spontaneous suggestion that we pray there and then, which we did. It was only after that some drew back in trying to grasp the meaning of such an event for them, and whether or not they had somehow compromised ‘their god’ and their faith. But the group was able to talk about this openly, and we reached a sense of being human
together, engaged in that most basic and universal of human actions, to voice inner thought and feelings to ‘God’, the ‘Universe’, the ‘Source’, the great ‘Out-there’ or the equally great ‘In-here’.

The group validated my belief and hypothesis that a common religious philosophy based on a formal understanding of the Self can form the theoretical basis for pastoral care in a secular multifaith society. Each member of the training group was able to take the philosophy and then find it for themselves in their own tradition sufficiently to allow them to feel included in what we were discussing, processing and work-shopping. We found a sense of unity and identity around the idea of pastoral care as an expression of what is best and true in all empirical religions that have proved their capacity to guide and unite human community.

It was and is important that Intentional Friendship argues that the origin of pastoral care is in the personal community of the family, moving into the wider religious community as an extension of the idea of family only secondarily. Pastoral care is inherent and necessary to the function of personal community whether named or not. In fact, as we have seen, it is only in the European theological traditions that pastoral care has been singled out consciously and named as a specific function of the Church. Nonetheless, as was recognized in the pilot training program by the participants, the process occurred and occurs in all cultures and traditions, and in the light of the increasingly impersonal nature of society in countries like Australia, traditions other than European are beginning to institute and plan pastoral support and practice more consciously, while secular society is also valuing and planning for pastoral care because of its unique emphasis on the personal side of life and the coherence of community.

So this philosophy marks a break from the European tradition of founding pastoral care in theology, in preference to a philosophical anthropology which in principle accepts that there are many expressions of religious function and sentiment in the different attempts by different cultures to enable communities to cohere and function with a sense of unity and common focus. Modern secular culture, and a world that is increasingly influenced by this secularity, does not deny the importance of religion at one level; it cannot, because outside the European traditions it is still a potent force
that has to be fully reckoned with in enabling the world to gain a sense of unity at
levels other than the economic, and so not destroy itself. But the acceptance is
negative, because the prevailing idea of religion is that it is largely belief that is not
ture. I have tried to show that this is a misunderstanding of religion. It is also an
inadequate comprehension of the nature of truth. A scientific culture dominated by
the third person perspective understands truth as correspondence between our
thought and theory and what is actually there. A culture formed more around the
first person perspective, while not discounting truth as correspondence, also sees
truth as coherence, as that which contributes to the coherent form of the whole.
What now needs to be seen is that truth also finds expression around the second
person perspective as action that creates and sustains personal human life. In
traditional language this is truth as spirit, the spirit of truth, the under-girding,
underlying presence of positive motive that wills intentions based on the reality of
the Other. This is the understanding of truth that religion should be championing, as
science does correspondence and the arts coherence.

To live the second person perspective life needs a sense of positive personal
relationship beyond ourselves that continues to engage us and call us forth. To love
and care we need to feel loved and cared for, and the more there is a sense of genuine
connection with each other, with the natural environment, and with a personal sense
of the cosmos, call it what you will, the more our lives are stabilized in the second
person perspective. We were beginning to find such connection in the training
group, and it meant that we were actually relating to each other in the spirit of good
pastoral care. We accepted difference and we sought to understand the meanings we
were each attempting to communicate. We were self transcending. It may well be
that if multifaith pastoral care is to become an accepted part of the community’s
attempts to sustain and maintain itself, ongoing groups of pastoral care practitioners
may be necessary to keep the candle alight.

I began by saying that pastoral care is a profession in transition from an explicit role
within the Christian churches to a general caring modality in the community in its
own right, and that this community is now both secular and multifaith. I asserted that
if this transition were to happen, it would be necessary for pastoral care to find a
theoretical base that a secular society could validate and yet could contain the various
empirical religions that constitute our society including the tradition of secular atheism. I believe that *Intentional Friendship: A Philosophy of Pastoral Care* has started that process successfully, and that this was the consensus also of the multifaith training group that work-shopped the philosophy.
References in the Text


Bibliography  (Sources used in carrying out the research that are not specifically referenced in the text).


