Minding: Transformative authority in African-American pastoral counseling, a transition from silence to active engagement to therapeutic silence

Leroy Wright Jr
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MINDING: TRANSFORMATIVE AUTHORITY IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN
PASTORAL COUNSELING, A TRANSITION FROM SILENCE TO ACTIVE
ENGAGEMENT TO THERAPEUTIC SILENCE

By

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at
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ABSTRACT

MINDING: TRANSFORMATIVE AUTHORITY IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN PASTORAL COUNSELING, A TRANSITION FROM SILENCE TO ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT TO THERAPEUTIC SILENCE

by
Leroy Wright, Jr.
May 3, 2008
190 pages

The dissertation will seek to advance the hypothesis that pastoral counseling can make greater inroads into the African American community by revisiting the use of silence in establishing therapeutic relationships with clients. This discussion will explore how practice informs theories about the use of silence versus a more interactive, relational model of dialogue in the initial stages of the therapeutic process—how it enables the transference of power, and when it interferes. My desire is to promote a sense of being at home for African American clients within the therapeutic milieu.

This study is intended to lay a foundation for a revision of the therapeutic stance to a shepherding model, which is more interactive and conversational. Once a dialogue is established, silence can be used to create and maintain a sense of connected-distance, while still promoting a will to share.

As a philosophical departure from the abstinence stance theorized by Freud, this research will serve to demonstrate and substantiate ways in which more effective therapeutic alliances can be established with African American clients that are built upon the idiom of community and a desire for creative fidelity.
Prior to examining the usefulness of theological and psychological concepts there will be a discussion of the "psychology of oppression," brought about by the horrific mantle of slavery, which still permeates the hearts and souls of most African Americans, presenting a challenging dynamic for pastoral counselors in which to address the psycho-emotional nuances and relational patterns that exist within the culture.

The study will focus on three distinct phases of the therapeutic process, all are related with theoretical and theological justification and supported by cross-cultural literature. The anticipated outcomes will be the identification of the theoretical and theological bases that support linkages between clinical psychology, pastoral counseling practices, oral tradition and biblical hospitality.

The research for this study will use a qualitative method of phenomenology in which two case studies will be described, wherein issues of silence and feelings of victimization are present. The dissertation will address how successful transitions were achieved to enable these clients to move forward with new meanings of life's contradictions.

I submit that African Americans and, perhaps, other oppressed minorities, actively resist positions of leverage over their central beings such as those created by the traditional silent therapist-client relationships.

The basic conclusion drawn as a result of this research is that the use of silence, in the neutral stance, can be informed by the idiom of the oral tradition in the establishment of optimum therapeutic relationships in the counseling of African Americans.
Dedication

To Daddy,

Mr. Leroy Wright Sr.

(1923-1983)

whose seat is empty, will be missed, and yet is always present;

Mama,

Mrs. Janie Mae Wright

(1928-2002)

whose voice I can always hear telling me to let my tongue speak words of kindness; and

my grandmother, Gigi,

Mrs. Lena Fields

whose 100 year old voice, always reminds me to trust in the Lord.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly express my gratitude to all those persons who have helped and encouraged me in this endeavor; for without the help of my community, this work could not have been given birth.

I am also grateful to Dr. Edward P. Wimberly, my mentor, Dr. Emmanuel Lartey, and Dr. Skip Johnson who served on my doctoral committee and provided valuable input while patiently steering me in directions that allowed me to give name and definition to the methods and ideas that I vaguely described as my way of thinking, being and doing pastoral counseling. They continually gave encouragement and shared resources of knowledge, time and materials toward the development of this model, which seeks to remove the silent stranger’s mask from the practice of pastoral counseling to gain greater acceptance in the African American community.

A special word of appreciation and thanks goes to Dr. John Patton who accepted me into the Th.D. program, kept me softly focused and provided me grace when I needed it; Dr. Calvin Kropp, who supervised my training; Charles Carpenter and Robert Morris, for granting me admittance into their CPE programs; Thoresa Snorton and Miriam Needham, for aiding me in getting in touch with my feminine side; the late Dr. John Diamond, who thought it not robbery to write a letter of recommendation; the late Ms. Reta Bigham, who carried me when I could not find a keyboard; and Mrs. Cece Dixon, for her technical assistance and valuable support.
My sincere gratitude and affection is extended to my editors Dallas Terrell, and Denise McFall my miracle worker for turning my thoughts into printed pages; and to my family, Bettie, Erica, Andrea and David, whose love and support are ever present. Finally, I wish to thank my Savannah family and the ancestors: “I am, because we are.”
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Silence is an appropriate dimension of pastoral counseling with African-American counselees, but for many African Americans, there are certain socio-cultural and historical factors that must be taken into consideration before therapeutic silence can be employed. For example, the oral tradition of African Americans, the African cultural survivals related to discourse, slavery, and suspiciousness about strangers, are factors that may prevent the use of silence in the early stages of pastoral counseling with African Americans.

This dissertation provides a design for a model of pastoral counseling centered on "minding" or transformative authority, a psychological approach used to move persons from silence to a more active involvement. The efforts associated with this thesis process will illustrate how it is possible to form a therapeutic alliance and form transference by moving from silence to an active engagement oriented model of pastoral counseling discourse. Once a therapeutic alliance and transference is established, I advocate the employment of therapeutic silence, which is more characteristic of depth pastoral counseling approaches. The title of this dissertation, Minding: Transformative Authority in African-American Pastoral Counseling, A Transition from Silence to Active Engagement to Therapeutic Silence provides an umbrella approach to a large volume of work used to show counseling methods used in the African-American community to
assist counselees in various life situations.

Pastoral counseling, in an attempt to become a legitimate science, has tended to draw upon the psychology of the silent neutral stance far more than the theology of hospitality as a fundamental frame of reference. The result is that conflict is seen as a kind of pathology that requires “disconnectedness” because of an insistence on objectivity in observation. Instead, I propose that conflict be seen as an occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation.

It is my belief that pastoral counseling may have taken a wrong turn in advancing the silent neutral stance of psychology as a way of connecting with and observing individuals in conflict. It has been my experience in my clinical experience to observe that many of my clients took the same silent neutral stance that I did and, as a result, we ended up playing a game of chicken. While the silent neutral stance is part of the early definitional methodology of psychology and analytic psychoanalysis, it is not the way of everyday human experience or Christian proclamation. I seek to recover the root of and fundamental frame of reference of pastoral counseling as being theological. Therefore, I am suggesting that the silent neutral stance include publicity of fidelity, by showing kindness and favor through the use of the spoken word to establish a faithful trust.

With clients who are talkative, I have learned to use the traditional silent neutral stance. However, for those who refuse to talk because their wounds are so painful that mistrust of strangers is a major issue, I publicize fidelity by extending hospitality via the spoken word as a way of connecting with individuals in conflict. It is within this dynamic that I have found many African Americans, who view the silent treatment as
indicative, if not reminiscent of oppression and rejection, are receptive to my invitation of parity in participation. I use the spoken word to provide succor, nurture and express a "will to share" that which has been meaningful to me.

I am advocating joining with clients starting with the greeting encounter, using the art of oral communication to actively engage clients in conversation in order to build trust by disarming their defenses and connecting with them. It is my belief that pastoral counseling can benefit by recapturing its theological roots of extending Christian hospitality or kindness and utilizing the concept of kenosis, or the emptying of oneself of position of authority as a referent or fundamental frame of reference. I am advocating that counselors make a deliberate attempt to transform the authority of our position by positioning ourselves as servants thereby publicizing our fidelity so that African-American clients feel like being at home. 

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CHAPTER II
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

In Chapter I, this author proposed that pastoral counseling, in an attempt to become a legitimate science, has tended to draw upon the psychology of the silent neutral stance far more than the theology of hospitality as a fundamental frame of reference. I proposed that conflict be seen as an occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation. I advocated minding by joining with clients to actively engage them in conversation in order to build trust by disarming their defenses and connection with them.

The problem this dissertation wishes to address is the use of the silent neutral stance. The seminal questions to be discussed are: Should the practice of the silent neutral stance be revisited? Does the silent neutral stance ignore the “idiom of community” in the African-American cultural experience? Can the extended family model of the oral tradition provide a model of transforming authority which publicizes fidelity and promote a feeling of being at home to those who need a nurturing, succoring relationship to enable them to deal with conflict with hope instead of despair? Can providing succor through a more interactive model of conversation, of speaking and being silent with the intent of joining and receiving facilitate the forming of more therapeutic relationships with African-American clients? How can conflict be seen an
occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation? What would a practical theological model of the engagement process look like? What would a practical theological model of “A Transition from Silence to Active Engagement to Therapeutic Silence” look like?

I believe many African Americans do not avail themselves of pastoral counseling because of the silent neutral stance. I have observed during my clinical process that some clients, who came for counseling, terminated and never entered into a counseling relationship, because they did not feel at home. It is my belief that the silent neutral stance sometimes fosters a suspicion of intent and a lack of faithful trust. There was a time when the African-American community did not have freedom of speech. Because of oppression, in the African American community uttering one’s personal problems to strangers is considered to be culturally unhealthy. Within this space, silence about oneself is deemed as natural and healthy. This reticence to engage in personal dialogue is particularly true as it relates to clients’ communication with culturally different strangers. Thus, the initial use of silence in the neutral stance may fail to produce the trust necessary to promote a therapeutic alliance and transference while working with some African-American clients. Therapists, as silent “strangers,” may need to be transformed into non-strangers through the use of a model of interactive dialogue in the initial phase of therapy, a model that considers the idiom of community and the cultural nuances of the interpersonal communication that exists within the African-American community.²

²Howard Thurman, With Head and Heart: The Autobiography of Howard Thurman (Orlando, FL:
The idiom of community is an integral part of the African-American ethos for promoting interpersonal communication. The idiom of community is utterance with a communication style or manner of verbal expression that provides a feeling of inclusion and belonging to African-American listeners. The oral tradition, as an idiom of community in the African-American cultural experience, is a style of universal communication that offers the availability of support and hopefulness in the conflicting and paradoxical social situation in which the individual finds himself or herself engaged. It is my belief that the extended family model of the oral tradition provides a model of transforming authority and can provide a frame of reference for publicity of fidelity.

In the pastoral counseling encounter, participation in silence is designed to produce transference by inviting clients to freely associate and declare their worst anxieties and fondest dreams with an apparently disinterested stranger. However, historically among African Americans, racial memory taught that survival depended on being wary of strangers, as the silent stranger carried with him or her racial memories of death, oppression, exclusion and an impediment to freedom. Consequently, among many African Americans, the silence inherent in the initial phase of the counseling encounters is sometimes met with defensive resistance and suspicion, due to the clients’ residual feelings of the victimization of oppression. It is my belief that pastoral counseling has adopted a model of the disinterested silent stranger with authority that may not promote or facilitate trust when working with African-American clients.

Paradoxically, as a result of the oppression of racial discrimination, many African

Americans have transformed the powerlessness of imposed silence into a generative silence that empowers. Being silent about one’s problems can be considered an inverted way of achieving a sense of power—a subversive resistance against dominance. For many African Americans, silence in the public sphere is a positive affirmation of their power and a negation of the authority and power of others over them. I will show that a subaltern public sphere exists which negates the acceptance of imposed authority and the subjugation of power, recognition and voice. Within this context, silence in the counseling encounter may present a culturally healthy resistance to feelings of powerlessness and victimization among these clients.

The Significance of the Problem and My Concern with the Problem

Establishing therapeutic relationships with clients is the charge of every pastoral counselor. However, the crucial question is how best to forge productive and effective counselor-client relationships.

The significance of the problem of the silent neutral stance is that the therapist is positioned as a disinterested authority with an established position of leverage, as that reflected in the doctor-patient model. I submit that because oppressed minorities resist accepting positions of leverage, communication between therapeutic counselors and African-American clients can be significantly improved when attention is given to the communication patterns that transform authority in African-American culture and community.

I have struggled with use of the psychoanalytic model of silent authority and abstinence in the initial phase of therapy that has been traditionally used in pastoral counseling for three primary reasons: 1) Silence often presents a barrier to establishing pastoral relationships with African-American clients; 2) It does not publicize an invitation of parity of participation; and 3) The practice of silence is in conflict with the establishment of a belief of fidelity, in my cultural experience.

The oral tradition, in contrast to silence, utilizes the utterance of the spoken word to transform authority by publicizing creative fidelity. The oral tradition expresses language that connects the African-American cultural experience. The oral tradition embodies a participating knowledge. I suggest that to be effective in counseling African-American clients, the key is to understand the world as the client experiences it, and to identify the language the client uses to describe his or her world.

With most of my clients, sharing of descriptions of their world was not achieved until I received kinship adoption as a member of their extended families. The removal of the stranger’s mask occurred when I extended an invitation of recognition and parity in participation to my clients through the spoken word. By developing a bond of trust and transference of power, they felt received and I was no longer positioned as a stranger and/or disinterested authority. I suspect real dialogue is not possible without an invitation of parity of participation.

Statement of the Model

I intend to describe a model of a helping relationship in which real dialogue can occur. “Model” is defined as a conceptual design for describing the early stages of
joining, receiving and engaging counselees in the pastoral counseling process, with the goal of illustrating how the engagement process moves from silence, to active engagement, to therapeutic silence.

The model I propose for establishing a successful therapeutic relationship with African-American clients is called “minding.” Minding transforms authority by publicizing fidelity. Publicizing means to proclaim, to recognize and/or give attention to the importance of another. Fidelity means faithful trust. Minding transforms authority by receiving and being received by the other. Receiving involves recognizing, attending to and privileging or empowering the other.

This model transforms the use of silence in the initial phase of therapy by publicizing fidelity through receiving and joining with clients in interactive dialogue in order to establish a faithful trust between clients and therapists. This manner of speaking would facilitate a mutual sharing of power, authority, recognition and availability between client and therapist. Once clients feel received, joining has occurred, and trust and/or kinship feelings have been established, therapeutic silence as embodied in an “observer-participant” stance can then be utilized as a therapeutic approach.

This model has three movements. The first movement is to initially maintain the silent neutral stance with African American clients. If this stance is unsuccessful in establishing a therapeutic alliance and forming transference, I propose a second movement to a more interactive model of active engagement which “minds” clients in crisis in order to join and connect with them. Once a therapeutic alliance and transference is established, I advocate a third movement to therapeutic silence, which is more
characteristic of in-depth pastoral counseling approaches. However, the therapeutic silence I propose involves objective observation and when necessary subjective participation as an observer-participant.

My efforts at minding clients are directed at receiving them in such a way that they feel like they are being at home, ensconced in a certain domain of their own. Here, the rather conscious self seems to endure with a certain quality of its own within the surroundings, which it makes its own. There is a kind of harmony between the two that renders the surroundings habitable.

In minding clients, the achievement of intimacy is dependent on the recognized alterity or difference and common ground that exist between client and therapist. The minding model is a mutually inclusive interaction and can lessen the strangeness and alienation between client and therapist. Conceptualization of a design of a model of minding that empowers the other by transforming authority can be seen in the concepts of the extended family, the parenting of the “good-enough mother,” the hosting of hospitality and transformation of “kenosis.”

One fundamental framework of a conceptual design of the engagement process is psychological and is based on client-centered therapy. This model is based on the therapist receiving the client and the client experiencing herself/himself as being fully

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received by the therapist. Receiving others is a “practice of self” which borders on welcoming. This receptivity has a certain readiness or pre-ordination. One meaning for the term “receptivity” is a gift, even a gift of self. Involvement in the act of hospitality means the offering of a gift of self. It entails having the other person participate in a certain reality, in certain plenitude. To provide hospitality is truly to communicate something of oneself to the other. The identification of receiving and giving can be accomplished only in the clients’ own sphere, which corresponds to being at home. The process of receiving and joining with African-American clients is, therefore, crucial to this therapeutic process.

A second fundamental psychological framework of a model for establishing relationships with African-American clients is parenting. Most people who enter counseling for the first time are not in touch with the depth of their need to be parented and cared for. I wish to use the “good-enough mother” as a parenting model that publicizes fidelity by transforming authority. She provides support and eventually engages in optimal failure, while hovering. Optimal failure by the therapist is a necessary step in the transition from active engagement to therapeutic silence. In this model, joining is achieved through a “secure attachment,” which is the ultimate aim of receiving and joining with African-American clients. The mother minds her child, and the child minds its mother.

When receiving and joining are successful in the “good-enough mother” model, a “transitional space”⁷ is provided for a “transformation of authority.” The transformation

⁷Winnicott, Holding and Interpretation, 6-14.
of authority occurs when there is an “optimal failure” of the mother to respond to every want of the child. The mother, who has the power to accommodate, with unusual generosity, responsiveness and attentiveness, begins to wean her child. The child accepts the mother’s gaze and hovering stance, realizing she is still being minded, and begins to explore her environment.

A third fundamental framework for a conceptual design of the engagement process is sociological. The “extended family model” provides a concept for design of a model of establishing relationships with African-American clients. The extended family is a cultural idiom of African-American community. This model achieves joining by extending an “invitation to kinship adoption.” Kinship is defined as “being related to a collective group that is similar through adoption, experience, or biology.” While it is difficult for African Americans to reveal themselves in counseling with other African Americans, feelings of kinship lessen the suspicion of intent. Many African-American clients consider themselves and others as belonging to the community through kinship. The extended family model embodies the concept of transformative authority by fostering agency and consolidation of identity. Transformative authority is power or influence that empowers by sharing in a collaborative relation of power.

A fourth fundamental framework for a conceptual design of the engagement process is the theological concepts of kenosis and hospitality. I contend that a practical theological model of publicizing fidelity is “(Jesus), being in the form of God, thought it

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not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6-7). This incarnational model of a caring act advances the concept of kenosis and hospitality. Jesus as servant is the ideal model of transformative authority. This movement involves the therapist using himself/herself and the spoken word to extend hospitality in the engagement process to promote a sense of being at home with the client having a freedom of participation.

Client centered therapy, parenting, the “good enough mother,” the extended family model, Christian hospitality, and kenosis provide insight into the transformative authority that conceptualizes a design of a “minding” model. This model seeks to deliberately form collaborative relations of shared authority in order to secure the relationship.

Once a secure relationship is established, the kin stops soliciting the family member, the host no longer pampers the guest, and the mother no longer dotes on her child; then, optimal failure can occur and therapeutic silence can be received. The kinsman, the host, and parenting examples provide a shepherding model that transforms authority by negating the powerlessness of not belonging and reinforces the feelings of recognition, participation and availability. Within the therapist-client context, once authority is transformed, the stranger ceases to be a stranger, community can be established and communion can begin.

I believe that pastoral counseling will make inroads into the African-American community when we incorporate the idiom of the community before adopting the silent neutral stance. As such, I propose that counselors mind clients by utilizing the spoken
word to interactively engage, receive, and join with clients. Once a connection has been established, then detach, by maintaining therapeutic silence, in order for clients to grow, if not thrive, in the experience as objects of caring, attentive concern.

Thesis

The oral tradition can inform the use of silence in counseling African Americans. Utilizing the spoken word of the oral tradition demonstrates transformative authority which allows the sharing of experience, a sense of agency, and a sense of being at home. The spoken word of the oral tradition facilitates the joining and receiving of African-American clients necessary to establish a therapeutic alliance and transference with a cultural group that has experienced the victimization of oppression. The extension of hospitality via the spoken word can promote the recognition of parity of participation and the establishment of faithful trust to facilitate transference.

Definitions

The following definitions offer insight into some of the terms used during this thesis. While some of these concepts may have been mentioned earlier, this section seeks to provide additional insight into some of the concepts, in an effort to provide a common understanding for the concepts.

Fidelity is a certain relation which is felt to be inalterable and, therefore, on an assurance which cannot be fleeting. Fidelity is faithful trust.

"Good-enough mother" is a parenting concept that illustrates succoring,
receiving and optimal failure as a way of building a secure attachment.\textsuperscript{10} The concept of parenting is useful for the purposes of building a model of minding.

\textbf{Hospitality}, as a moral imperative of Christianity, can be defined as providing some space into which people are welcomed, a place where the stranger will feel free to enter because an invitation to join has been extended. Hospitality is a gift of the self that has a will to share a feeling of being at home.

\textbf{Idiom} refers to the belief, practice, style or manner of expression elemental to a given people. It is a manner of verbal communication that is natural to native speakers of a language, and an identity peculiar to a people or culture. An idiom can be a signification, a sensing of the simplest abstractions that can describe the elements of significance.

\textbf{Joining} is the process of disarming the defenses and easing the anxiety of clients by conveying understanding, acceptance and respect. Joining can be described as building a relationship of “earned credibility.”\textsuperscript{11} To “join” the family, the therapist must convey the acceptance of family members and respect for their idiom, their way of doing things. To disarm defenses and ease anxiety, the therapist makes accommodation overtures in the initial greeting, listens carefully, and acknowledges each client’s position by reflecting what is heard. The therapist, therefore, minds the client. It is in this manner that the therapist shows respect for clients by taking their authority for granted.\textsuperscript{12}

Kenosis, a Greek term, means to empty oneself, to divest oneself of position—to completely remove or eliminate elements of high status or rank by eliminating all privileges or prerogatives associated with such status or rank. For Brueggeman, kenosis is a summons to fill by emptying, propelled by the love of God. By analogy this act involves humility and exaltation, which can be considered as to fill by emptying.13

Minding is transformative authority which shares power or influence in collaborative relations of power to create conditions in which lived experience of empowerment is valued as the defining feature for claiming a sense agency and consolidation of identity. Minding means to participate in a centered relationship of creative fidelity. To mind means being faithful to, looking after, caring for or privileging another. Mind is a covenantal idiom of the African-American community that means recognition, attention, acceptance, and parity of participation. Mind means to charge an individual, whose interpersonal competence has been validated, with the authority and responsibility to attend to, regulate, care for, and protect another. One example is an adult in the community who minds a child in the place of the parent (in loco parentis). Inversely, mind means to adhere to authority, to accept, rely on and trust a position of leverage of another, such as members of the family or extended family, host or God. Mind means allegiance to one who is faithful.

Model is defined as a conceptual design for describing the early stages of joining and engaging counselees in the pastoral counseling process, with the goal of illustrating

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how the engagement process moves from silence to active engagement to therapeutic silence.

**Oral tradition** can be defined as a dynamic structure with power transmitted through verbal interchange as an idiom of the community. The power of the word is *Nommo*. It is speaking meaning into action. For African Americans, the oral tradition expresses collective sharing and survival. It is the power of the spoken word that transmits shared knowledge, participation and experience. The spoken word is the pervasive force that connects human experience, a method of simultaneously expressing and concealing that developed out of the experience of handling contradictions.

**Practical theology** is a mutually critical reflective reasoning and interpretation of the revelation of the truth of God's actions in relationship to the contradiction and unity of lived experience for people of faith.

**Power** may be defined as the capacity to produce desired effects on others. A power differential can exist between therapist and client. In clinical encounters with African Americans, power and the lack of power are inherent in the roles of clinician and client and their cultural group status. The therapist can facilitate transference of power, or empowerment, through the use of strategies that enable clients to experience themselves as valuable and worthwhile, both as individuals and as members of their respective cultural groups. The process of empowerment requires helpers to use their power

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appropriately to facilitate this shift by employing strategies that require the ability to be vulnerable and let go of the power embodied in the helper role as an expert or a person who is aggrandized as an individual or a member of a cultural group.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{Receiving} involves a warm caring for and acceptance of the client. This caring that is not possessive and demands no personal gratification. In the optimum of therapy, a process of personality change is set in motion when the individual experiences himself as being fully received.\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{Transference} is the concept of experiencing new persons or events in terms of old expectations and structures.\textsuperscript{19} It is the unconscious tendency to shift emotional interest and investment toward new persons or inanimate objects in the hopes of re-experiencing old persons or objects, or in succeeding where formerly we failed.\textsuperscript{20} New individuals are experienced as a partial representation of prior experiences of nurture, or the frustration of needs and supplies. Freud indicated that transference is a patterned repetition of historically determined motives, defenses, anxieties and an interpretation of a patient’s relationship with the counselor. It is an attachment that develops in the patient of itself, and the physician becomes linked up with one of the images of those persons from whom he was used to receiving kindness.

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Transformative Authority is empowerment that allows the client to draw upon their own lived experiences and cultural resources to enable them to play a self-consciously active role as producers of discourse, identity and agency.21

The “unthought known” is an inarticulate element that the client knows, but has yet been unable to think it. Self as an object tends to disappear. The self, in the existential moment, is the feeling. It is being in the moment, with little self-conscious awareness. Sartre defines it as reflexive awareness. It is not something one perceives. The moment of full experiencing becomes a clear and definite referent. These moments of immediate, full, accepted experiencing are in some sense almost irreversible. Once a thought is experienced fully in awareness, fully accepted, and then it can be coped with effectively, like any other clear reality.22

Method of the Dissertation

I will use a pastoral theological method. This method is a process of theological reflection or “theologizing” in the pastoral context or from a pastoral perspective such as pastoral care and counseling. This theological method is a third-order reflection on the manner in which judgments are made concerning: (first order) religious language designated as the collection of phrases employed to give expression to the way in which a person’s or community’s life is related to God; (second order) the explication and critical evaluation of the basic meaning of religious language for yielding theological judgments;


(third order) reflection on the caring act. This theological method is concerned with the evaluation of the sources, norms and procedures of theological judgments.

Pastoral care and counseling assists the person seeking help to explicate and critically evaluate assumptions concerning the meaning and significance of faith and the life of faith. Pastoral counseling involves assisting persons to formulate explicitly what may have been only tacitly or subconsciously assumed. In addition to the explication of religious language in terms of meaning and significance, counseling entails the evaluation of such explicit meaning in terms of its truth. While the task of attentive and sympathetic listening is of paramount importance, pastoral counseling entails the facilitation and application of normative judgments. The goal of theological reflection is for persons to be able to speak more accurately, truthfully and responsibly of their own pilgrimage as persons of faith.

Pastoral theology is theology rooted in and tested by pastoral practice. The development of a two-way movement between (theological) theory and (pastoral) practice is crucial. Pastoral care turns to the human sciences in addition to theology for theoretical generalization and illumination. The discussion is fruitful when both theology and the human sciences are secondary to focusing discussion upon the common subject matter of human nature and transformation. The subject matter common to both is the shared interest in the nature and possible transformation of human existence.\(^{23}\)

The inter-disciplinary methodology I wish to use for relating theology, psychology and other human sciences is the phenomenological method. The goal is to

\(^{23}\text{Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling, ed. Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1990), 862-864.}\)
enter into the experiential internal frame of reference of the counselee(s). The key is to understand the idiom of the counselee(s). It is a method that "brackets the worlds" constructed by disciplinary structures. The method proposes to gain, via an intuition of Being, what the sciences of both theology and psychology obscure, \textit{a priori} by their disciplinary systems.\textsuperscript{24}

Phenomenology argues that the proper realm of the study of human being is consciousness itself, employing an "as if" dimension. From a phenomenological approach, understanding takes place from within, by bracketing the natural world and attending, instead to the inner experience that is the author of that world. The phenomenological point of view of the experience of therapy centers more on an external frame of reference, in an attempt to capture those qualities of expression, which may be observed by another—the point of view from within God and the client’s frame of reference. As a model of conversation that often lies at the center of human and pastoral encounters, it is an expression of faith and personal and group experience—a product of the direct reflection of particular situations and events which some may regard as non-systematic. It is not only well-ordered theoretical systematic theology (second- or third-order theological activity) that is real theology. It is dialectical, in that it proceeds by way of critical conversation between different voices so that all can be heard.\textsuperscript{25}

Upon reflection, I observed that most of my clients were on a pilgrimage of faith which had the appearance of a crisis. They could not embrace positions of authority over

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., 1268.

\textsuperscript{25}Stephen Pattison, \textit{A Vision of Pastoral Theology: In Search of Words that Resurrect the Dead} (Edinburgh: Contact Pastoral Limited Trust, 1994), 8-22.
them which did not allow their voices to be heard and had the appearance of a "given". My clients struggled to reconnect with the source of their authority in the midst of external demands of sovereignty over them and obedience from them. I endeavored to make my clients feel like they were at home. Using the spoken word, I related to my clients by publicizing parity of participation as a given. The covenant rights of authority and freedom of choice found in the voice of scriptures and the preached Word were practiced in the relationship. It was in our relationship where the transformation of authority away from external claims over docile bodies was fostered and the reestablishment of the sovereignty of personhood and individual agency, as a given, was reclaimed. Through our relationship, my clients rediscovered 'whose they were and who they were.' The constant given that my clients could embrace was being a child of God.

The struggle of human beings is with the "givens," the ultimate concerns of existence: death, isolation, freedom and meaninglessness. The awareness of being a child of God tends to stabilize the ego and results in a new courage, fearlessness and power.26

The position that I occupy is felt as mediatory, in that I view myself as a link between powers whose communication with one another is my responsibility. I act as a mediator in a such a way that this blinded consciousness turns toward the will that I serve, that it unfolds to the light which is supposed to illumine me. With this in mind, I must be absolutely sure that the other consciousness does not feel that I am acting out of personal motives as may be evidenced by the fact that I am only showing love to this person, that I am truly a mediator between him/her and an unknown will that refrains

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from revealing itself as a material power; and that this love must go out to the soul as it is. With the belief that nourishes it, and which must also be included in my embrace, my love must be strong enough to allow this soul to be transformed and to renew itself, to expand and to be reborn as an image of the God whose interpreter I say I am. My task is to help reflection to reach the vital and ever religious element concealed in a phase, being at home.

Marcel, Creative Fidelity, 219.
CHAPTER III
AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL LEGACY

Introduction

In Chapter I, this author proposed that pastoral counseling, in an attempt to become a legitimate science, has tended to draw upon the psychology of the silent neutral stance far more than the theology of hospitality as a fundamental frame of reference. I proposed that conflict be seen as an occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation. I advocated minding by joining with clients to actively engage them in conversation in order to build trust by disarming their defenses and connecting with them.

In Chapter II, I explored whether or not the practice of silence should be revisited in establishing therapeutic relationships with African Americans. I proposed that the silent neutral stance in pastoral counseling is problematic as a model for connecting with African Americans in conflict, and that revisiting the benefits and outcomes of the silent neutral stance may yield valuable insights in helping pastoral counselors make inroads into the African-American community. I discussed designing a model of therapy, my thesis, definitions of key terms and my methodology. I advocated minding as transformative authority.

In this chapter, I will discuss the existence of the African/African-American cultural legacy of nommo, the generative quality of the spoken word. In doing so I will
demonstrate that the silent neutral stance ignores the "idiom of community" of the African-American cultural experience which includes a definitional system of collective survival under oppressive conditions. In addition, I will suggest that the oral tradition, religious experience and extended family models are indigenous African-American approaches for coping with contradictions and providing support in the midst of conflict. These models provide a conceptualization of transformative authority.

I propose that the use of discourse is more congruent in establishing and maintaining relationships with African Americans. I will begin by showing how the oral tradition utilizes the power of the spoken word to create and maintain a dynamic structure capable of transforming power. I will show how the euphoria of the spoken word seals relational agreements. Further, I will explore the extended family model as a way of conceptualizing and understanding the strengths and coping strategies that African-American families use as a means of survival. In addition, I will explore the Black Church and its use of orality or the spoken word to form a cohesive identity in a context of oppression.

I will also explore the works of Howard Thurman, who proposes that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazarús provide support and approaches for coping with contradictions and providing support in the midst of conflict for the oppressed. Conflict is unavoidable and by analogy a Divine initiative. Thurman demonstrates that the idiom of community, the oral tradition and the hospitality of the inclusive community have the power to transform and consolidate one's identity in the midst of conflict and paradox.

This chapter will also explore the significance of Thurman's work for therapeutic
practice. A case study will be used to illustrate the practical significance of Thurman's thinking. In addition, I will conclude the chapter with how the work of Edward P. Wimberly builds on the concept of conversation as a way to show how African oral tradition and religious faith come together in a practical therapeutic model. The significance of Wimberly's work is that it is part of the African-American faith tradition, and it is foundational for this dissertation.

An African Legacy

There is an African legacy of interactive dialogue that demonstrates the existence of a collective cultural memory. The African approach to the maintenance of survival exemplifies a "humanity-nature unity" or "oneness with nature." Africans seek to achieve a comprehensive understanding of nature to facilitate a more complementary coexistence with it.1 Africans define the world from their distinctly different racial-cultural realities and definitional orientations to the maintenance of their survival.

The significance of definitions resides in the fact that they determine or dictate the meanings that we attach to events we experience in our day-to-day existence. Our definitions determine whether we consider these events as important or unimportant, as good or bad, as true and factual or as untrue and fictitious; or whether we, in fact, attend to them at all. Thus, we make assumptions about the events we experience based on our "predisposed" beliefs about and attitudes toward the nature of things.

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Definitions, therefore, dictate how we, as individuals, will perceive and respond to our “experiential reality.”\(^2\) One’s definitions actually constitute a collective or shared phenomenon. These shared definitions, thus, represent a *definitional system*. A definitional system is essentially a “world view” of a social system—it’s a peculiar philosophical orientation to the world.

Inherent in the definitional system are those beliefs and behaviors that reflect the survival *thrust* of the collection of people it represents, because it evolved from the *cumulative collective experience* or *social reality* of that particular cultural group.\(^3\) Definitional systems are, in effect, racially peculiar phenomena and provide the dynamic context within which psychological oppression evolves as primarily a racial issue.\(^4\) One definitional system I will discuss is *nommo*, the power of the spoken word.

My attempt to uncover African-American sources of influence led to Africa—the heart of all patterns of African American behavior. Melvin Herskovits in *Myth of the Negro Past*, and others, demonstrate the abundance of cultural memory in African-American societies.\(^5\) African-American communication styles are reflective of the internal mythic clock, the epic memory and the psychic stain of Africa in our spirits.\(^6\)

Most African Americans within the USA can trace their ancestry to West Africa. In traditional West African philosophy, there was a concept called Nommo—a belief that

\(^2\) Ibid., 96.

\(^3\) Ibid., 97.

\(^4\) Ibid., 107.


there were magical powers in words. West Africans believed all living things rested upon the word. *Nommo* means the power of the word to create or bring into existence all entities, to set forth the “generative power of the community” that transcends the physical world.⁷ There was a belief that words actualized life and gave man mastery over things. Africans believed that no medicine or potion would be effective unless accompanied by words. The belief in *nommo* was so powerful that all work had to be accompanied by speech. Even warfare was preceded by a verbal battle. *Nommo*, with its productive powers, is identified as the transforming power of vocal expression.

*Nommo* makes us one with nature. It is a collective experience; and cannot be completed without the participation of the ancestors, since the dead are the agents who continue to energize the living. In African society there is coherence among persons and things, wherein the African finds energy and life in the midst of persons.⁸ There is no “great tradition” of withdrawal in the African or African-American tradition; ours is preeminently a tradition of remarkable encountering with others. But encountering, for us is always accompanied by words and, as such, it is profoundly verbal.⁹

It is only in the “give and take” of the *nommo* that we find the energy that cannot be found in the lives of solitude. There is some belief that hermeticism results from suspicion and distrust of persons other than one’s self. I know myself only in relations to others. In the productive engagement with the other, we truly experience our own

⁷ *African American Communication*, 180.

⁸ *Asante, Afrocentric Idea*, 66.

⁹ Ibid., 187.
harmony. We can see how nommo engages and energizes, as vocal expression of a way of connecting with individuals. Engagement with others is basic to a sense of community.

Nommo demonstrates the linkages in the use of the spoken word between and among Africans and African Americans. It can be seen that persons of African descent can be defined by the use of speech as a way of establishing and maintaining connectedness. The use of nommo relieves suspiciousness about strangers since vocal expression is a way of connecting with individuals. The practice of silence should be revisited in establishing therapeutic relationships with African Americans since traditionally encountering others is always accompanied by words and is profoundly verbal.

The African Oral Tradition

The oral tradition is a definitional system of African language groups. The African oral tradition transmits knowledge from one generation to the next. Knowledge is passed down orally. Messages are transmitted across time and space by word of mouth. African civilization having evolved earlier than other continents set standards of social interaction that promoted community stability. Speech is an integral and functioning part of society and cannot be separated from the entire worldview because word-power is, indeed, the generative power of the community.

Greetings contribute to the rich oral tradition of African people. Greetings in African society are a unique form of nommo. In all African culture, a greeting encounter

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10Ibid., 188-189.
is an art in oral communication. The vocal expression of greetings is a way of connecting with individuals in the community. Greetings are an important feature of human interaction and using the spoken word relieves suspiciousness of one’s intent. The way individuals relate to each other is determined by very complex rules of behavior. One of the cultural expressions Africans appreciated most was the greeting one offered to another of his community and, on rare occasions to strangers.

The elders of the communities taught that greetings acknowledged the presence of another. Greetings were also meant to be prayers for the health and general well being of the person or persons to whom the greeting was extended. Greetings are a rule of behavior that is taught at an early age and is intuitive for the native of the culture. African speakers take much more time to greet and ask about one’s health and that of the family. Greetings of positive politeness recognize the other’s desire to be respected and maintain self-esteem in public or private situations. Greetings confirm the relationship is friendly and express reciprocity and parity of participation. There is a deliberate attempt to avoid embarrassed the other person or make them feel uncomfortable. The concept of alienation is non-existent in African philosophy since the people are closely interconnected with each other in a way of life that involves concern and responsibility toward others. The interactive dialogue of the oral tradition is a definitional system of an African legacy.

**African-American Oppression**

Orality or vocal communication became the fundamental medium of communication during slavery in the lives of African Americans. Unable to read or write English and
forbidden by law (in most states) to learn to do so, the displaced Africans in America soon cultivated a natural fascination with nommo, the word, and demonstrated a singular appreciation for the subtleties, pleasures, and potentials of the spoken word. Experiential spontaneity relied upon vocal creativity to transform the audience. Thus, African Americans have developed a consummate skill in using language to produce communication patterns alternative to those employed in the Anglo-American situation.11

People of African descent produced discourse on every subject and in every genre of expression. Central to the understanding of the role of vocal expressiveness within the African American community are nommo, the generative and dynamic quality of vocal expression, and slavery, and the primary fact of Black existence in America. In the African-American cultural experience of slavery, freedom of speech did not exist and any “idiom of community” had to be subversive. African-Americans wore masks of accommodation. Lurking behind these social masks of accommodation remain feelings of frustration and a need to speak aggressively to oppressive power. It is my belief that the silent neutral stance also ignores the “idiom of community” of the African-American cultural experience and may be reminisce of slavery and segregation.

**Rhetoric as a Discursive Device Against Subjugation**

The core from which Black history in America emerges is slavery and antislavery. Black discourse, therefore, to be healthy discourse, is expressed through resistance. In a historical context, we can see that those of African descent were targets all the way back to the days of slavery when we were stripped of our language and forbidden to speak.

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The early African speeches in America dealt with the institution of slavery, with the orators voicing their opposition to the oppressing agent. Out of necessity and in resistance to our plight, Black folk developed their own style of speech, which consisted of codes and metaphors that allowed them to communicate without the slave masters knowing. Vocal communication was used as a discursive device to convey information and feelings, while avoiding the repercussion of being discovered. Rhetoric, therefore, is a coping strategy that African Americans have used to survive.

Traditional African philosophy does not make the distinction of “speaker” and “audience.” Black speakers know what the ancestors knew with their use of nommo: that all magic is word magic, and the generation and transformation of sounds contribute to a speaker’s power. Thus, one must know how to use the voice. Intonation and tonal styling are substantive parts of most African-American oratory. And the intelligent speaker knows that speaking is an emotional as well as an intellectual process.¹²

Theoretical Concepts of the Black Experience

In this section, I will present an overview of some theoretical concepts of social justice and the relation of recognition and voice in the Black experience. I will explore the commonalities of the collective experience of dealing with oppression while seeking freedom and liberation, particularly freedom of discourse. My focus here is the theme of the oral tradition as a counter-memory that provided publicity, recognition and participatory parity. I would also like to introduce the idea of the sovereign subject to show an example of transforming authority in the Black experience.

¹²Asante, Afrocentric Idea, 48-49.
Michel Foucault’s work has implications for the concept of minding and the oral tradition as transformative authority. The oral tradition is a history of subjugated knowledge of a people awaiting meticulous erudition of truth and scholarly recovery. Foucault’s task was to subdue those histories that are not history. Foucault believed that the human sciences rise from the subjection of language for the purposes of determining the nature of identity or the fabrication of human memory. He proposed that there is a counter-memory and the subjects that evolve from this language manifest the history of our otherness. This experience of language penetrates into the domain of discursive thought. While counter-memory may appear to be a form of negation, it becomes the affirmation of the particularities that attend any practice, and perhaps the activity that permits new practice to emerge. Counter-memory is the name of an action that defines itself, that recognizes itself in words - in the multiplication of meaning through the practice of observant repetitions.

I wish to propose that the oral tradition is a counter-memory awaiting erudition. It is another form of history, a transgressive history; not the order of things, but the surface disorder of things to the degree that they are spoken. The oral tradition is something other which was said, but not written as official history. It is made up of other voices which have remained silent, “naturalized” through the language of reason.¹³

Foucault suggests that, through the recovery of the details of these autonomous and disqualified knowledges (in the “union of erudite knowledge and local memories”), we can rediscover the history of struggle and conflict. And, in the provision of an adequate

space in which these knowledges can be performed, we can develop an effective criticism of the dominate knowledges, a criticism "whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought." 

Foucault argues for the "insurrection" of the subjugated knowledges against the "institutions and against the effects of the knowledge and power that invests scientific discourse," for the insurrection of knowledge.

One procedure for intervention to correct the historical omission may appear in techniques of rewriting. The subject of rewriting will be dealt with further in our discussion of Edward Wimberly’s work on re-authoring.

Holding on to the counter-memory allowed the slaves and their descendants to create a collective psychological space, independent of the oppressor, where they could generate a sense of worth. This collectively shared psychologically space served as a protective screen that prevented the slaves from internalizing the oppressor’s view of white superiority and Black inferiority. Speech is invested with power.

Nancy Fraser observes that the Black experience did not allow freedom of discourse. Fraser cites the idea of "the public sphere" in Jurgen Habermas’s works, in the sense that it designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberated about their


15Ibid., 27.
common affairs; hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction.\textsuperscript{16}

According to Habermas, the idea of a public sphere is that of a body of "private persons" assembled to discuss matters of "public concern" or "common interest." On one level, it designates a special kind of discursive interaction. Inequalities of status were to be bracketed; power was to be excluded; and discussants were to deliberate as peers. The result of such discussion would be "public opinion" in the strong sense of a rational consensus about the common good.

Fraser provides historical records in which members of subordinated social groups have repeatedly found it advantageous to constitute alternative publics. To voice concerns, many African Americans have had to establish what Fraser refers to as subaltern counter publics. Subaltern counter publics are parallel discursive arenas in which members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses, which, in turn, permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.\textsuperscript{17}

Having been denied access to the public sphere, African-Americans utilized the oral tradition as a subaltern counter public to transform authority and insure collective survival. If discourse constitutes a form of struggle, it is because they confiscate the power to speak on social conditions.

In the public sphere, free men were considered as sovereign subjects. Slaves were different because they were appropriated bodies. Foucault recognized important preconditions for the morality of antiquity was that the subjects of that morality were free


\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 81.
and active masters of themselves: slaves and women had no morality.

Slavery was integrated into an institutional field that constituted slaves as non-participants of truth or power. However, I propose that slaves considered themselves, as sovereign subjects because of their belief in God. They did not internalize the oppressor's view of their inferiority. The thoughts of slaves were free even when their bodies were not.

For Foucault, the sovereign subject is a nonmaterial center where the intangible forms of truth are created and combined.\(^{18}\) This work involves steady screening of representations. Mental representation is subjected to examination. The sovereign subject is the control point for the approval that one should or should not give to representation. This inspection is a test of power and a guarantee of freedom. To keep a constant watch over one's representations is to access the relationship between oneself and that which is represented, so as to accept in the relation to the self only that which can depend on the subject's free and rational choice. The subject of the sovereign subject will be dealt with further in the idea of *kenosis* in the works of Walter Brueggemann and Karl Barth.

**An African-American Oral Tradition**

Boyd-Franklin states that there are four areas of experience for African Americans, based on collective survival and the sharing expressed in the Black vernacular that is unique from other ethnic groups. They are the African legacy, the history of slavery, racism, discrimination and the victim system.\(^{19}\) The oral tradition, the

\[^{18}\text{Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 45.}^\]

religious experience, and the extended family provided a dynamic structure for collective sharing and survival.

Prior to the Civil War, orality or the use of the verbal language was the medium used to transmit thought and store knowledge. Orality also has a sensory/audio aspect. Orality involves a set of concepts embedded deeply in the language and culture of the people. Orality matches the values of the audience. The oral tradition used the language of the spoken word to included thought, verbal expression and *nommo* (the power of the word). The spoken word is revered. Words take on a quality of life when they are uttered by the speaker. In the act of nommo, the speaker literally breathes life into a word. When words are spoken, the listener is expected to acknowledge receiving the message by responding to the speaker. The speaker and the listener operate within a shared psycholinguistic space affirming each other’s presence.

The oral tradition is a dialogue in which the otherness of the speaker is respected in his or her own identity. The speaker defines his/herself in terms of their own religious and cultural identity. A true dialogue assumes certain equality between the partners. Engaging in dialogue in the oral tradition can involve the retrieval of stored memories of life experiences. Sounds can trigger memories of relatedness and succor. The oral tradition and its use of the spoken word preserve the original thought and verbal expression in memory. In the oral tradition, knowledge is performed and stored. It is a world of sound and involvement, participation, and expression.

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Joseph White believes that the oral tradition has a vital impact within the African-American experience. It is deep in hidden meanings, intuition and nuances. It is important in information exchange and social relations. And, it is communicated orally between people and over time. The idiom of the oral tradition transmits what White refers to as “a set of assumptions, beliefs, values, ideas, and behaviors shared by a particular group of people that is handed down from one generation to the next. The oral tradition functions like a psychological lens, enabling a people to focus reality and interpret events.”

African Americans view silence about difficulties as a healthy survival technique. The airing of one’s problem in public to a stranger is contradictory to a cultural experience where survival has depended on a healthy sense of suspiciousness.

In the African-American experience, tragedy is unavoidable and structural oppression is real. However, in sharing experiences there is a negation of the internalization of victimization. The spoken word is the pervasive force that connects human experiences. The language of African Americans is characterized by the interrelatedness of speaker and listener, joined together in a common psycholinguistic space. The African-American ethos enables the creation of a “collective psychological space” to generate a sense of worth, dignity and belonging.

Experience with handling contradictions created a healthy sense of suspiciousness within the African-American cultural experience. This suspicion of intent is a healthy

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cultural paranoia that many African-American clients developed over generations in response to racism, oppression and discrimination. Often this paranoia is the result of feelings of victimization that are expressed in the subaltern counter public, like the Black Church.

**African-American Religious Experience**

The religion of the African-American community is complex. African religious presence is everywhere. African Americans are spiritually oriented and have learned how to weave religion into everything so that there is no separation between religion and life. When African Americans talk, their speech will always carry more information than the bare referential meanings of the spoken words.

Brooks-Higginbotham documented the existence of an alternative, parallel Black sphere in the United States in the 1880-1920 periods. During this “nadir” in African-American history, Blacks were excluded not only from suffrage, but also from the full gamut of “white-only” discursive arenas and institutions of civil society. In this context, they built a public sphere in the one space they had: the Black Church. The Church became a subaltern counter public that transformed authority, publishing national newspapers and holding national conventions. In these forums, they denounced racism and debated antiracist strategy. Creatively adapting their religious institutions, African Americans made a public sphere where the liberal model would have denied there could be one. Fraser cites theorist Jane Mansbridge, who argues that “subordinate group sometimes cannot find the right voice or words to express their thoughts, and when they do, they discover they are not heard. [They] are silenced, encouraged to keep their wants
inchoate, and heard to say “yes” when what they have said is “no.”

The History of the Negro Church

The Negro Church was a social force in the life of the Negro race. Prior to emancipation, the church was the only institution in which the Negro was permitted to maintain his own peculiar needs. The church offered the only avenue for the expressional activities of the race. It was a center in which friend looked forward to meeting friend, contact with whom was elsewhere denied by the rigorous demands of slavery. It served as an outlet for the expression of Negro social thought.

After the Emancipation, the Negro Church developed a social atmosphere. Education found its basis in the church. Most movements among Negroes have owed their success to the leadership prominent in the church. It was a factor in the general uplift of the oppressed Negro.

After the Civil War, Negroes regularly attended church, whether Christians or sinners. The oppressed Negro must go to church to see their friends, as they were barred from social centers opened to whites. The young Negro must go to church to meet his sweetheart, to impress her with his worth and woo her in marriage.

Many social scientists erroneously concluded that the Negro Church mainly served social needs denied its members in the larger white society. This ignores the fact that members of Negro Church were living heirs of a rich African religious tradition of communal hospitality. The extended family, which we will deal with in more detail later,

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22 Fraser, Justice Interruptus, 75-78.

is an example of communal hospitality. The constructive task of Negro theology and ethics is its illumination of the notion of hospitality. The doctrinal richness of the Negro Church must be seen in the way Negro worshipers embraced the ideal belief of Christian hospitality. This was the community's way of affirming the biblical doctrine of being reconciled in God through Jesus Christ.  

Jesus was a living example of ultimate humiliation and ultimate exaltation. Imitation of the mind of Jesus Christ, who came in the form of a slave, was key to citizenship in the body of Christ. Jesus Christ accepted bondage to the “powers” of this world. He was a person without advantages with no rights or privileges. Bearing the likeness and mindset of Jesus Christ was the evidence of His gospel at work in the community.

Slaves saw Jesus as both God’s witness and participator in humanity’s behalf. Jesus was perceived as both the victim and the victor of the cross. He was praised as both God’s passive and active agent in the salvific drama that was initiated and actualized by God.

Jesus as the victorious self over the suffering of this world was offered to the daily victimized as the antidote to self-pity. Jesus echoes a note of triumph, signifying that God has demonstrated once and for all that no human act of cruelty in this world can separate believers from God’s love (Rom. 8:35-39). Believers become victorious participants in God’s salvific drama of suffering and redemption.

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25Ibid., 165-166.
Hospitality was the genuine trait of the believers of God. It was the primary theme of the slave community's prayers, songs, testimonies, and sermons. The slave's radical understanding of agency grew out of his or her dialogical encounter with God. Slaves practiced moral responsibility in the everyday world, following the conversion experience, sensitive to the fact that God saw all that they did and heard all of what they said.26

Negroes attending Sunday school clandestinely learned to read and write before the Civil War. After the war, without fear of punishment, they eagerly studied in the churches on Sunday, finally learning to read the Bible that they might know for themselves the truths hitherto kept from their fathers, but now revealed to their children in freedom.27

The church not only promoted education from the pulpit and through Sunday school, but also by its emphasis on the Bible, unconsciously stimulating the efforts toward self education. Whether or not a Negro attended Sunday school, he heard or someone read to him from the Bible dramatic history, philosophical essays, charming poetry, and beautiful oratory. Hearing these repeated again and again and under circumstances securing individual attention, he had many of these precious passages sink into his heart like seed planted in fertile ground to bring forth fruit fourfold. The Negro preacher expounding the Bible drew very striking figures and portrayed life, death, and the beyond in dramatic fashion.

26Ibid., 65.
27Woodson, The History of the Negro Church, 244.
The majority of Negroes became Bible readers. It was not mere reading, for many of them committed to memory choice passages of the Scripture. Hundreds of them could recite accurately chapter after chapter of the treasures of the Bible. From the study of the Bible the Negro developed, moreover, a desire for Biblical literature. He heard the moral appeal and gladly accepted the message to those in quest of the higher life in Christ.

In the Black Church, speech and music are manifestations of *nommo*, with singing setting the stage or mood by preparing the audience for receiving the spoken word.\(^{28}\) The implications of *nommo* are clearly sensed within the religious experience, when worshippers and faith leaders, including preachers, deacons, and church mothers, interact. It is an interactive event.

An example of a collective psychological space can be found in African-American preaching. One of the unique features of African-American preaching is the dynamic pattern of “call and response” in worship. This is an example of “real dialogue” in the African-American oral tradition.\(^{29}\) Through *nommo*, the call is served by a response. Such responses require a participating audience that talks back to the preacher as a normal part of the worship dynamic.

For Henry Mitchell, Black dialogue is more than a cultural habit when real dialogue takes place. “Real dialogue occurs characteristically in response to the preacher’s reference to something that is vital in the life experience of the respondent—something with which he identifies, something which elicits his asseveration. He is able to respond because he is at home—interested in what the preacher is saying because he is

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\(^{28}\) *African American Communication*, 20.

involved in the issues.” In this context, the familiar is used as a model for crossing over to the unfamiliar.30

The African-American religious experience is a cohesive process of identification, with particular emphasis on being a child of God, the liberator who sets the captive free. Truth can be found in religion even when the practices of religion are not truthful. Rhetoric, which resonates with a felt sense of identity, transforms, empowers and provides a catalyst for the formation of a cohesive community. Thus, it can be seen that “real” dialogue is a way of connecting with African Americans that conveys a sense of being at home.

The Extended Family

The extended family model is important to building a model of connecting with African Americans in conflict because it is an established, indigenous pattern of a transformative authority. This model of family life seems to capture a sense of being at home and the strength, vitality, resilience, and continuity of the Black family.

One of the core principles of The Black extended family is hospitality. The Black extended family can be seen as an outgrowth of the African patterns of family and community life that survived in America. This model emphasizes collective survival, mutual aid, cooperation, mutual solidarity, interdependence and responsibility for others. These values allowed members to have some power over their own destiny by enabling them to develop their own styles for family interaction.31 I would like to describe some of

30Ibid.

my extended family, community, and church relations in an effort to show where the pattern of minding came from.

I grew up in the segregated south in a community called Tatumville, in Savannah, Georgia. During those times, being a Negro meant that you didn’t have freedom, authority or power. We were not allowed to go wherever we wanted or express ourselves freely outside of our community and church. Tatumville was my inclusive community where everybody knew each other and hospitality was offered to all. There were no strangers in Tatumville. We were all neighbors. Neighbors would borrow a cup of flour from each other and repay it when their supplies were replenished. Extra door keys could be found under the door mats.

Everybody knew Mrs. Janie, my mother, because she was known to feed any child who stayed for supper. My father would complain that she was trying to feed the whole neighborhood. My father was the ruler of the house, but he could not stop my mama from feeding anyone. When we were little and my mother had to leave us, she would ask a trusted neighbor to mind us. The adults would mind the children and care for them. The children would mind the adults because they were the authorities. As I got older I was told to mind my younger brothers and sister and they were told to mind me. I was personally responsible for their well being and safekeeping.

We grew up across the street from my aunt Sarah, uncle T and my cousin Jimmy. Aunt Sarah was not my aunt by blood and Jimmy was not her child by birth. He was aunt Sara’s brother’s child. She raised him as her own son. Next to them lived deacon and sister Maynor. Next to us lived Miss Lizzy Brown and her children. Every one except
uncle T attended the Second Arnold Baptist Church.

We attended church for Sunday School, morning worship and BTU (Baptist Training Union) in the evening. Rev. George Dingle preached that God would make a way somehow, just like He delivered the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. In my senior year at Beach High School God delivered and integration began. This was one of the defining moments of my life. My extended family was very optimistic about my new future possibilities.

The extended family group is made up of a number of legally related and non-legally related adults and children who come together within a mutually supportive social, psychological, and economic network to deal conjointly with the responsibilities of living. It is a model of African family identity that is passed down to the children through the oral tradition as a fundamental link between generations.

For many African Americans, the kinship of the extended family is a counter defense to the vulnerability of not belonging. Thurman’s description of the extended family in the segregated South is similar to my own.

The individual began to feel himself part of a larger primary structure in which kinship by blood was not a criterion for the claim of belonging. For a long time the Negro adult in the community stood in loco parentis to any Negro child. It was not necessary to know whom the child was or where he lived. This gave the child an immediate sense of being cared for with positive results in his own personality. The individual life could not be easily separated from the whole. Any stranger who came into the community had to be given hospitality, for all doors outside the Negro community were closed to him. Thus, there was the constant experience of overall identification.”32

In loco parentis provides a conceptualization for the design of a model of minding as transformative authority. The community partnerships with strangers transforming them into non-strangers by extending hospitality thus sharing influence in collaborative relations of power. In loco parentis, or in place of the parent, creates conditions in which lived experience of empowerment is valued as the defining feature for claiming a sense agency and consolidation of identity. Adults and children obtain an immediate sense of being cared for with positive results in their own personality.

The African-American extended family is an example of transformative authority. It exists and persists primarily because African-Americans face the common perils of oppressive economic and social conditions. It exists out of necessity as a way of surviving in an oppressive (racist) class system. This model, which provides a supportive family network, offers a way of conceptualizing and understanding the strengths and coping strategies that African-American families use to survive and contributes to the growth and development of family members throughout the life cycle. The extended family is a collaboration of the inclusive community that transforms oppressive authority into empowerment.

The case study Joan provides a good example of the extended Black family.

Joan was referred to me by another African-American female client. Joan is a thirty-three year old single African-American female whose presenting problem is depression, family issues, and loneliness. Joan worked part-time in a law office. She gave up full-time work to enter seminary. She is in her second year. She is attractive and has a Mona Lisa smile. She is articulate yet shy. She was no longer able to pray,
unhappy and depressed. Feelings of non-acceptance and alienation are central themes in her life. She yearned for a gratifying relationship. While she feels that she has been called, she is not receiving the desired validation of her church and pastor.

Upon meeting her, I greeted her warmly and invited her in. I took her history and presenting problem. Her mother and father divorced when she was two. He had a problem with drugs and other females. She remembers seeing him for the first time when she was eleven or twelve. She remembers seeing her father again when she was fifteen and how he flirted with her without recognizing her.

She felt that her mother was emotionally distant and did not receive her. Her mother remarried and would never stand up for her to her stepfather. Joan never liked her stepfather. Her stepfather affirmed only her half-sister, his daughter. Repeated attempts for succor from her mother went unfulfilled. Her mother didn’t “mind” her, only her grandmother who raised her. She lived with her grandmother, aunts and cousins. Her needs for parental succor were not met growing up. Her extended family provided parenting in place of her parents.

**Summary**

The African-American cultural legacy is evident in the use of the spoken word and the belief in communal hospitality. Orality and *nommo* (power in the word), use language to transmit thought and verbal expression of involvement and participation. This can be clearly seen in the oral tradition, passed down from generation to generation, which transmits a sense of identity in the midst of conflict and paradox. This sense of identity and power can readily been seen in the prototypical African American religious
experience and the extended family. The African-American Church and extended family are examples of transformative authority. Being a child of God and having the community as surrogate parents negates the pervasive images of deficiency. Undoubtedly, the spoken word of the oral tradition is the idiom of the African-American community.

Orality and *nommo (power of the word)* were understood earlier in the chapter as a dominant means of transmitting ideas, facilitating verbal expression, assuring participation, and fostering community. Oral tradition via the power of the word, more so than writing, fostered a sense of identity for African Americans from generation to generation. It is not enough, however, to draw on a philosophical notion of the power of the word without putting the concepts of orality and *nommo* into a theological frame. The significance of the theological frame is that the power of the word within the African-American Christian context drew on biblical witness and what it had to say particularly about Jesus to give divine significance to the word. Thus, one cannot talk about the power of the word in African-American Christian tradition without talking about the Word that became flesh in Jesus Christ.

As indicated early in this chapter, the significance of Thurman's work is that concepts such as the idiom of community, the oral tradition and hospitality of the inclusive community have the power to transform and consolidate identity. One might, therefore, conclude that the most effective model for connecting with African-American individuals in conflict is one that utilizes the spoken word as Jesus did instead of the silent neutral stance.
Jesus of Nazarust used the generative quality of the spoken word to join with the multitudes. The cultural experience of his hearers included a definitional system of collective survival under oppressive conditions. The religious experience of many African Americans provides an approach for coping with contradictions and providing support in the midst of conflict.

Howard Thurman proposed that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazarust provided succor by modeling a “will to share,” a supportive approach for coping with contradictions in the midst of conflict for the oppressed. It is not just the power of the word, but the willingness to share the word within community that brought life, meaning, and sustenance to people in the midst of conflict. Conflict is unavoidable, but it can be transforming when the power of the word as shared as a Divine initiative within community. Thurman demonstrates that the power of the will to share the word of Jesus, the oral tradition and the hospitality of the inclusive community, have the power to transform and consolidate one’s identity in the midst of conflict. Like Thurman, I believe that the will to share is at the root of Christian hospitality and pivotal to the establishment of communal fidelity.

**The Will To Share: The Theology of Howard Thurman**

This focus on the work of Howard Thurman is to provide a theological perspective of a prolific and preeminent African-American theologian and thought leader who embodied hospitality and the “will to share.” Thurman struggled with the central issue,
the apparent inability, and the demonstrable failure of Christianity to deal effectively with the system of social and economic injustice.

According to Thurman, the Christian religion was born of a people acquainted with persecution and suffering. The impulse at the heart of Christianity is the human will to share with others what one has found meaningful to oneself, elevated to the height of a moral imperative, “for those who need profound succor and strength to enable them to live in the present with dignity and creativity.” Christianity is a religion which calls attention to one’s obligation to administer to human need.

Howard Thurman states that few interpretations of Christianity deal with what the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazarus have to say to those who stand, at a moment in history, with their backs against the wall. He describes the striking similarity between the social position of Jesus and the vast majority of African Americans. It is a social climate that manifests the denial of full citizenship, which creates the challenge of creative survival. African-Americans assume “there are no basic citizenship rights, no fundamental protection guaranteed to them by the state, because their status as citizens has never been clearly defined.”

The works of Thurman purport that conflict can be seen as a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation of the inclusive community. From this theoretical framework, the religious experience can, therefore, be defined as a dynamic encounter between man and God through the experience of prayer and human suffering.

\[34\text{Ibid., 11-12.}\]

\[35\text{Ibid., 34.}\]
The will to share, as practiced by the inclusive community, illuminates the message of Christianity and provides a model for connecting with African Americans in conflict.

Howard Thurman speaks of the cultural conflict between the idiom of the African-American communal experience in identifying with the European-American community:

The residue that accumulated in the collective and individual psyche of the Black man from the awful sense, that always, under any and all circumstances, his life was utterly at the mercy of the white world, is the most important, single clue to the phenomena of the present. The most vicious, cruel and amoral manifestation of this fact was lynching.\(^36\)

Lynching and the denial of the freedom of speech reinforced a system of victimization against Black people. There is a deep need in the collective psyche of people for a point of referral where identification is possible under oppressive conditions. People yearn for a refuge where they can feel like being at home. A way had to be found by which the believer’s religious faith could keep them related to his security as a person. Personhood requires a transformative authority which shares power or influence in collaborative relations of power to create conditions in which lived experience of empowerment can be valued.

This affirmation came from the preaching of the scriptural narratives where ultimate identity was related to being a child of God. Being a child of God transforms authority. Thurman recalls:

The awareness of being a child of God tends to stabilize the ego and results in a new sense of courage, fearlessness and power. This idea was instilled in slaves at secret religious meetings with fellow slaves. ‘You-you are not niggers. You-you are not slaves. You are God’s children.’\(^37\)

\(^36\)Thurman, *The Search for Common Ground*, 92.

This awareness transmitted an idiom, providing him with his identity. Everything Thurman ever felt and worked on and believed in was founded in a kind of private, almost unconscious autonomy that did not seek vindication in his environment because it was in him. We must have some way to keep from internalizing our environment’s negative judgments about us. As long as we keep the environment external to us it cannot control us; but when we internalize it we become captured by it. Thurman’s witness stands as a “minority report” of the tradition of the Black religious experience of reinterpreting the relationship of Jesus to the oppressed.

**The Practical Theological Significance of Thurman Views**

Thurman affirms that recognition of being a child of God and the idiom of community, and the oral tradition consolidated the identity for many African Americans. One of the questions raised in the discussion of the problem was “What would a practical theological model of the engagement process look like?” I propose that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazarus provide a practical theological model of the engagement process, particularly Jesus who had power, coming in the form of a servant. Furthermore, I contend that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazarus provide a model for minding in the African-American community. I will discuss these issues in more depth in my discussion on pastoral theology.

For me the model for helping is Jesus Christ and wanting to be Christ-like. A case illustration of the engagement process as an act of hospitality and humility provide additional support of this point. This engagement process involves joining with silent clients and starting a dialogue so that I can see the world as the client experiences it.
My client was born in Haiti. It must be remembered that Haiti is a country where African slaves overthrew their slave masters and established their own government. I proposed that the background of Haitian-Americans are similar to African Americans. However, one major difference is that Haitian oppression is clearly a class struggle. For African Americans and Haitian Americans, racial oppression disguises what is truly a class struggle.

**Case Study I**

Marcus was a single Haitian-American male who was referred for counseling by a former supervisor. His presenting problem was anger towards his denomination for failing to ordain him. His sponsor recommended individual counseling. He rebelled against any authority over him other than God or himself. He was highly intellectual and fluent in several languages.

As I began taking the family history, I was struck by the fact that he could not remember the names of all his brothers and sisters. He resented his mother for having so many babies. When asked about his father, he replied, “I hate my father.”

I entreated Marcus to try and remember the names and order of his younger brothers and sisters for the genogram, which is a diagram of family structure. He began to explain that his mother was always having babies, and that it had been a long time since he had seen his family. He came to America to attend high school and returned home only once in seventeen years.

Once the intake was complete, Marcus would strut into the room like a bantam rooster and sit and be silent with a grin on his face. I employed the traditional silent
neutral stance. We began playing a game of chicken to see who would speak first. He had transformed the authority behind imposed silence into a silence that empowered.

I must admit that he rubbed me the wrong way, strutting into my office acting like he was in charge, as if he was the counselor, the doctor; and I was the client, the patient. I can only imagine that he rubbed a lot of people the wrong way. In supervision, it was suggested that I consider why a person feels that they have to act that way. I stopped being offended and assumed an incarnational Christ-like stance. I determined to receive him unto myself. I asked him to tell me about life at home in Haiti. As he talked objectively about the poverty in Haiti, he began to relate subjectively his life story. He grew up in poverty.

I began to humble myself and took the form of a servant. I began to "mind" him, to offer hospitality. My extending hospitality was a gift of myself that had a will to share a feeling of being at home. I shared power and influence in a collaborative relation of power. My goal was to create conditions in which his lived experience of empowerment was valued as a defining feature for claiming a sense agency and identity. I began to solicit him in dialectic dialogue. It became clear that he was having a problem with identity.

Because of Marcus' intelligence, he was able to escape the physical labor and poverty of his home in Haiti by being chosen to attend high school in America by missionaries. He lived with a European-American family with little or no contact with people of color. He was attacked by the younger adolescent boys of the family without any relief from their parents. He had no social life other than the church. He never felt at
home, faced constant social rejection, and never seemed to fit in relationships, except from the acceptance and succor he received from his play mother. His identity crisis reached monumental proportion in his last year of seminary. He was able to interact with fellow Haitian during his Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) training. He fell in love, got engaged and discovered his fiancée’s infidelity. Everyone in that Haitian community was aware of her unfaithfulness except Marcus. And to make matters worse, his play mother died and his denomination refused to ordain him. He was a stranger in a far country, forced to wear a mask of arrogance to hide his vulnerability, loneliness, and helplessness. There was not a place or relationship where he had a feeling of being at home. He hungered for a relationship of creative fidelity. While his pastor remained faithful, the relationship did not allow Marcus to be creative in establishing his own identity. His pastor wanted him to start a church in the Haitian community, while Marcus wanted an established church with European Americans. I thought of the story of Moses, but Marcus never verbalized the connection. He felt sure that God would transform his situation and make him victorious as He had done before.

The Therapeutic Significance of Thurman Ideas

It is not enough to do practical reflection on Thurman’s ideas about the practical significance of Jesus for fostering identity in community. It is important to also to link the practical significance to Jesus' teaching to the therapeutic.

Jesus taught that believers form an inclusive community. The inclusive community is God’s will for human relationships. Integral to the actualizing of the inclusive community are the concepts of optimism and hope. This optimism is based on
the belief that God is, in creation, working toward harmony, completion and the highest good. God has planted in each individual an urge for wholeness. And, while hope is derived from the feeling of security, power and meaning are derived from religious experience.  

For Thurman, the customary distinction between religion and life is a specious one. Much of the agony of the personal life is due to the lack of awareness of this central reality, that all experience is heavy with meaning and particular significance. It is clear that it is essentially a false reading of life to believe that life is good as contrasted to evil. Life is good in the sense that it contains both good and evil. This is the essential idiom of Thurman’s religion and the quality of his experience. There can be no thing that does not have within it the signature of God, the Creator of life.

African Americans in conflict are sometime confronted with negations of power or sense of agency. Restoration of a sense of power can be achieved through the use of empowering behaviors and a non-exploitativestance. Elaine Pinderhughes believes that although power is often unspoken, it is a central dynamic in cross-cultural clinical encounters. When practitioners fail to help clients change negative cultural identity, they reinforce powerlessness and sub-ordinance in their clients. Responses to powerlessness that are used to gain a sense of power include oppositional behavior. Silence, not talking, can be a way of seizing power, a way of denying the less powerful position and its effects. Oppositional, passive-aggressive and manipulative behaviors are also

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38Luther E. Smith, Jr., *Howard Thurman: The Mystic as Prophet* (Richmond, IN: University Press of America, 1981), 172-177.

39Thurman, *With Head and Heart*, 268-269.
responses to powerlessness used by African Americans, the poor, women and other oppressed groups.⁴⁰

Proactively reaching out to African-American clients, in order to establish a relationship of trust, can serve to establish a therapeutic alliance and overcome suspiciousness and distrust. The task of engaging clients will meet with greater success when procedures can be used that are consistent with clients’ values. These values must be respected and the systems built upon them.

Using openness, mutuality, reciprocity and self-disclosure are strategies for successful engagement. Being tested by African Americans, on interpersonal competence, “sizing up” and “checking out,” can be expected by the clinician. There is a striving to assess trustworthiness prior to engaging in task-related activities. Therapists must be able to “participate in this reality testing and respond with genuine caring and empathy.”

Some cultural groups tend to adopt the therapist as a relative, even assigning the therapist a kinship position. This closeness is different from the distance and objectivity emphasized in most traditional approaches. Engaging behaviors require a transforming of the power differential inherent in the roles of both the client and the clinician. Counselors can achieve this transforming of power by practicing minding, transformative authority to engage clients in collaborative relations of power.

Clients whose cultural identities are distrustful of others, who fear being used or exploited must be responded to in ways that diminish such fears. Equalizing these

relationships and adopting a nonhierarchical, non-power stance accomplishes such a purpose. Helping the client to perceive the therapist as a peer and collaborator can be critical to counseling success with persons from this cultural group. In some situations, the therapist must take a “one-down” position.41

I agree with Pinderhughes that initially in counseling Haitian Americans or African Americans, access to trustworthiness is critical, prior to the use of silence. Once trust has been established, I believe the use of silent active listening can be very effective in facilitating the development of transference. Active listening involves privileging the conversation of the other in order to assist in the restoration of a sense of agency by exposing recruitment into negative self images.

A Pastoral Theologian’s View of Privileging God Conversation

Thurman’s ideas have not been the only ideas that have had practical significance for the use of the idiom of community and oral tradition for developing therapeutic models. The work of Edward P. Wimberly draws on the concept of conversation and biblical story as a way to tie in the role of community, the oral tradition, and Scripture in therapy.

Restoration of a sense of agency, or participation in one’s own life story, can be achieved by privileging conversations that affirm. It is my belief that agency is a cornerstone of the biblical narrative. Edward Wimberly emphasized that African Americans appropriated scripture and theology to understand that we are affirmed by God despite our being recruited into negative self images because of racism and oppression. African Americans resisted recruitment into negative identities and

41Ibid., 165-168.
combed the pressure to become victims of racial conversations existing in the wider society. His thesis is that “we become persons by internalizing the conversations in which we take part, but we become holy persons by giving conversation with God a privileged status over all other conversations.”42

An example of the difficulty of privileging God conversation can be seen in the following dialogue. On one occasion, Joan (from an earlier case study) recalled the treatment she received while on an evangelism trip to India. People were staring at her because she was different. She felt special even though it was embarrassing, feeling special and different at the same time. She wished for that kind of courage. I wondered with her and said ‘Does it have to be either or?’ She replied, I don’t understand? I did not explain as I previously had done. I was later informed by another counselor that she was crying in the bathroom after the session. Joan could not accept the revelation that God was calling her to accept her acceptance as being special and different.

Conversation with God is a personal interchange with God. It transcends human conversation and brings insight into our human condition in profound ways. As a result of our conversations with God, we gain a fuller understanding of our worth and value.

Theologically, African-American Christianity focuses centrally on the person of Jesus. There is a longstanding Christian theological tradition that allows human character to be shaped by the life and death of Jesus. Jesus gives his life for the lives of others43 God through Jesus liberates the oppressed.


43Ibid., 43.
Wimberly cites the works of Michael White, who believes that the major task of therapy is to free human beings from the negative stories into which they have been recruited early in their lives so that they can find authentic ways to story their experiences and give their lives more meaning and vitality. Therapy enables people to participate in the formation of their own stories so that they may live authentically.

Psychologically, the capacity to participate in the stories that shape one’s own life is called agency. Maturity is the ability to define oneself by becoming free from imposed definitions of the self, and the capacity to redefine and re-author the self.

Liberation involves the power to overcome the oppressive and subjugating effects of being recruited into the stories and problems into which one is recruited. Therapeutically, Wimberly believes that the task of therapy is the re-authoring of the stories that people internalize. The concept of practice is helpful to Wimberly in developing his thoughts on re-authoring. He draws on the work of Michel Foucault. For Foucault, practice refers to certain activities that take place within a particular environment. Practice proceeds on the basis of set rules that give order and meaning to objects, activities, and relationships. Practice shapes the reality of life through human conversation. It provides an adequate space for counter – memory and subjugated knowledge to be publicized.

Change comes more from participation in conversations and stories and from examining how one has been recruited into stories that are not compatible with the self. “Re-storying” assists the emergence of a counterplot that gives life new meaning. Re-storying is a practice. The therapist provides an audience for the authentication of a new
emergent identity.44

The practice of internalization of negative conversations resembles the practice of subjugation. Many people bring problems to therapy that are the result of inequality in gender, race, ethnicity, class and age. Power plays a role through its ability to set in motion certain discourses that have the ability to undermine the self-esteem of people. Therapeutic practices should have as one of its goals the dismantling of structures of inequality.45

Wimberly believes that the context of counseling should be a conversational context that shapes the counselee’s life and internal conversations.46 Because the therapist is almost always a representative of power, the conversations within the therapeutic relationship often overshadow the conversations taking place in the everyday world of the counselee. Meaning comes from the process of discourse. It is the role of therapy to help clients learn to privilege conversations in ways that contribute to their growth and development and to limit those internal conversations that have subjugated them.

“Privileging God” conversation is a process that is learned in the practice of human and Divine discourse. Certain images, ideas, sayings, pictures, memories, epiphanies and so forth, increase the character and awareness of the importance of the spiritual real. Learning to privilege the conversations we have, as the result of our spiritual experience,

44Wimberly, Claiming God: Reclaiming Dignity, 96-100.


46Ibid., 8.
is very important. Conversation with God helps us to test what we internalize.\textsuperscript{47}

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, the African-American cultural legacy embodied in the spoken word, the idiom of community, and in religious faith came together to inform a therapeutic approach that is the basis for a proposed model of pastoral counseling which I call minding. The work of Howard Thurman and Edward P. Wimberly were utilized to help explore the significance of this tradition for pastoral counseling.

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., 105.
CHAPTER IV
HOSPITALITY

Introduction

In Chapter I, this author proposed that pastoral counseling, in an attempt to become a legitimate science, has tended to draw upon the psychology of the silent neutral stance far more than the theology of hospitality as a fundamental frame of reference. I proposed that conflict be seen as an occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation. I advocated minding by joining with clients to actively engage them in conversation in order to build trust by disarming their defenses and connecting with them.

In Chapter II, I proposed that the silent neutral stance in pastoral counseling was problematic as a model for connecting with African Americans in conflict, and that revisiting the benefits and outcomes of the silent neutral stance may yield valuable insights in helping pastoral counselors make inroads into the African-American community. I discussed designing a model of therapy, my thesis, definitions of key terms and my methodology.

In Chapter III, I detailed the existence of the African/African-American cultural legacy of nommo, the generative quality of the spoken word. In doing so I demonstrated that the silent neutral stance ignores the “idiom of community” of the African-American cultural experience of which includes a definitional system of collective survival under oppressive conditions. In addition, I have offered that the oral tradition, religious
experience and extended family model as indigenous African-American approaches for coping with contradictions and providing support in the midst of conflict.

I also explored the works of Howard Thurman, who proposed that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazarus provided succor by modeling a “will to share,” a supportive approach for coping with contradictions in the midst of conflict for the oppressed. Conflict is unavoidable and by analogy a Divine initiative. Thurman demonstrates that the idiom of community, the oral tradition and the hospitality of the inclusive community have the power to transform and consolidate one’s identity in the midst of paradox. I advocated *in loco parentis* or acting in lieu of a parent provides a conceptualization for the design of a model of minding as transformative authority.

The work of Edward Wimberly was also drawn on as a pastoral theologian whose thinking used conversation and faith story to develop the therapeutic implication of the African American legacy for pastoral counseling. African-Americans resisted recruitment into negative identities and combated the pressure to become victims of racial conversations existing in the wider society. He advocated giving conversation with God a privileged status over all other conversations.

In this chapter, I will explore the concept of Christian hospitality in an effort to construct a model of a helping relationship as a way of connecting with African Americans in conflict. For I, like Thurman, believe that *will to share* is at the root of Christian hospitality and pivotal to the establishment of the inclusive community. In my discussion of Christine Pohls, I will highlight, among other aspects of her belief system, how hospitality saves the other from the invisibility that comes from social devaluation.
Likewise, in my review of John Koenig, I will demonstrate how he purposes a deliberate partnership with strangers as a way of participating in God’s redeeming work. I will also offer Walter Brueggemann and the concept of kenosis and the process of othering. I will also discuss Marcel Gabrieland the concept of creative fidelity. I wish to highlight the fact that while the kenosis of Jesus can be seen in His coming in the form of a servant, God’s kenotic act was to come in the form of Jesus who came in the form of a servant. Servanthood creates a bond of fidelity. I wish to suggest that offering hospitality using the concept of kenosis from the prospective of othering can create an opportunity for an encounter with the Divine. Kenosis provides a conceptualization of a practical theological model of transformative authority.

In order to move the discussion of kenosis, fidelity, and hospitality in the realm of pastoral counseling, I will use the work of pastoral theologian Emmanuel Lartey and Charles Gerkin. It is not enough to draw on the work of scholars who are not pastoral theologians. The implications of their work for pastoral counseling are often helped by utilizing seminal works of pastoral theologians.

In Chapter III the works of Howard Thurman on hospitality and the work of Jesus were introduced very briefly, but what separates this chapter from the last chapter was that the last chapter focused primarily on the African American tradition. This chapter, however, grounds the dissertation within the general faith tradition of Christianity. It is not enough to ground this dissertation in the particular faith orientation of the African American tradition. Showing that the dissertation is related to the broad faith tradition gives further authentication to the dissertation as well.
The New Testament Concept of Hospitality

According to Pohls, in many societies hospitality to strangers is a moral obligation and remains a highly valued cultural practice. It is an important expression of kindness, mutual aid, neighborliness, and a response to the life of faith. Pohls states that in a number of ancient civilizations, hospitality was viewed as a pillar upon which all morality rested; it encompassed “the good.” In ancient Israel, for example, responsibility to care for vulnerable strangers was part of what it meant to be the people of God.1 In protesting his innocence, Job declared that he never put a stranger to the grind, but opened his doors to travelers. (Job 31:32)

Likewise, hospitality is a necessary moral practice in the community of faith as an expression of respect and recognition. In a vocation that declares ethical and social boundaries irrelevant, hidden patterns of social exclusion should not be kept.2 Pohl states that one of the key words for hospitality, philoxenia, combines the general word for love or affection for people who are connected by kinship or faith (phiileo) with the word for stranger (xenos).3 Historically, personal hospitality has transformed social relations in

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2Ibid., 73.

3Ibid., 31.
the church wherein all members recognize their own guest status. Hospitality resists boundaries that endanger persons by denying them their humanness.

Yet, hospitality is a “two way street.” The gifts of hospitality do not flow in one direction only. Hosts can learn from guests and be ministered by them. Respect and care can be united in a response that truly values the other person. Respect is sustained in relationships in two related ways: by recognizing the gifts that guests bring to the relationship, and by recognizing the neediness of the hosts. A transference of power can be seen in the shift Jesus makes from being dependent on hospitality, to serving as host when He washed the disciples’ feet (John 13:5) as a demonstration of mutuality, recognition, acceptance, equal regard, express inclusion and recognition. Our helping roles give definitions to relationships, but these roles are also decidedly hierarchical.

While acts of recognition can reduce the strangeness of strangers, we often maintain significant boundaries when offering help to persons in need. Some of us struggle with simply being present.

Recognizing shared human experience provides common ground. Simple acts of respect and appreciation, presence and friendship are indispensable parts of the affirmation of human personhood.

Hospitality transcends social differences by welcoming the socially undervalued, and signifying a joining of co-believers and friends in the expectation that new forms of

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4Ibid., 53.
5Ibid., 74.
6Ibid., 96.
reciprocity will take place. When a person who is not valued by society is received by a socialy respected person or group as a human being with dignity and self-worth, small transformations occur.\textsuperscript{7} Christian hospitality, which has always had a subversive, counter cultural dimension, offers an example of the other side of silence and the transference of power.

Moving from Pohls discussion of the social context of hospitality in ancient times, John Koenig’s work will present hospitality with reference to Jesus. He believes that “hospitality” and “partnership with strangers” provide a key to the proclamation of Jesus. The New Testament reveals a concern for guest-host relationships involving God, Jesus, and humanity.\textsuperscript{8} The term partnership with strangers “suggests that New Testament hospitality has to do with the establishment of committed relationships between guests and hosts in which unexpected levels of mutual welcoming occur, whether or not participants are already known to one another.”\textsuperscript{9} Partnership with strangers also suggests the forming of alliances with outsiders in the conviction that God’s redeeming work will be disclosed.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., 4.


\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 9.
I am convinced that an act of hospitality expressing respect and recognition is a necessary moral practice in the community of faith that can reduce the strangeness of strangers. Hospitality saves others from the invisibility that comes from social abandonment and oppression. The gift of hospitality is a way of connecting with individuals in conflict, and is part of what it meant to be the people of God. I firmly believe that any model of care that recognizes the biblical teachings of Jesus Christ should incorporates Christian hospitality.

**Hospitality as Caring Service**

While hospitality suggests the caring service a host may provide a guest, I wish to discuss at this time personal caring service. Hospitality transforms the host, who provides the caring service. My aim here is to highlight the fact that Jesus transformed perceived authority by coming in the form of a servant rather than being served. “(Jesus), being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6-7). Jesus practiced hospitality by being a servant, not a host, yet He had the influence of a host. It is my contention that therapists should transform the authority of their position by becoming servants with influence following the model of Jesus. I wish to suggest that therapy is a service which should include hospitality and therapists should be the servant of those that come to them for care in order to publicize fidelity, like Jesus did. Fidelity is faithful trust.

I want to do an etiological examination of the root word “therapy” for its meaning and illuminate the concept of therapists as servants providing service. The root word for
therapy, the Greek *therpeia*, with its derivatives *therapon*, *therapeuo*, and *therapontos*, means "service." The *therapon* is the servant who renders careful, experience, watchful, meticulous, skilled, obedient, painstaking service to the one to whom he is intimately responsible.\(^{11}\)

The closest Greek synonym for *therapon* is *diakonos*, also meaning "servant," from which has come the term "deacon" and the whole concept of deaconate ministry. In the Latin world, *therapeia* was frequently translated into Latin as *ministerium*. Of the Greek words signifying "servant", the most intimate of these is *therapon*, which always refers to some highly personal, sympathetic, confidential act of service, in contrast to *doulos*, which speaks more of the distance between servant and master. Authentic *therapeia* in its original meaning, whether rendered by the physician, mortician, household servant, tailor or valet, means attentive, caring, intimate skilled service.

In the New Testament, the prototypical image of servant, *therapon*, is Jesus Christ, the person and event. It can be surmised that the theological meaning of therapy is illuminated by Jesus Christ. Therefore, any practical theological model of therapy and the therapeutic stance that resembles the hospitality of Jesus Christ as its model brings an awareness of religious meaning to people of faith that is linked to images of a person and event from which people received kindness and service. Now since the person Jesus as servant has been illuminated, I wish to turn attention to the event or *kenosis* of God in Jesus Christ for implications for design for a practical theological model of therapy.

The New Testament Concept of Kenosis

In this section, I will uplift implications of the servanthood of Jesus. One of the defining features of Jesus’ ministry was His relinquishing of his authority. What is sometimes forgotten is that God relinquished his authority to experience the human condition in the form of Jesus. This process of relinquishing is conceptionally called *kenosis*. I wish to explore the process of kenosis in order to inform the psychology of the silent neutral stance and provide relevant theological features for a design of a practical theological model of therapy called minding. *Kenosis* undergirds a model of connecting with African Americans in conflict.

*Kenosis*, a Greek term, means to empty oneself, to divest oneself of position—to completely remove or eliminate elements of high status or rank by eliminating all privileges or prerogatives associated with such status or rank. It is my belief that *kenosis* provides a conceptual method of a practical theological model of transformative authority.

For Walter Brueggemann, *kenosis* involves the act of asserting one’s self and the grace to abandon one’s self to another. *Kenosis* is a summons to *fill by emptying*, propelled by the love of God. By analogy this act involves humility and exaltation, which can be considered as *to fill by emptying*. Brueggemann suggests that *kenosis* includes both covenanting and spirituality. In Phil. 2:7, Jesus emptied Himself of power, power rightly His, to be available, vulnerable and at risk as a human person. Brueggemann also notes that in Deut. 15:13, the Greek version of the Old Testament is *kenon*, “not empty.” Deut. 15 and Phil. 2:7 share the same summons to *fill by emptying*. 
to be propelled by the love of God—God who as the other practices *mutuality* with us, but who, at the same time, stands in an *incommensurate* relation to us. Sovereignty is an attribute of God. This covenant is likened to a Suzerain / sovereign covenant in which the vassal has parity rights. Such covenanting recognizes that both parties have claims to make. However, God is the suzerain who commands. Yet God’s command is God’s permission. God’s covenanting expresses His ‘will to share.’ This will to share is a participating knowledge.

Brueggemann proposes the concept of *othering*, which involves the biblical principles of covenanting and *kenosis*.\(^{12}\) Covenant is the ancient and contemporary context in which obedience to the Lord of the universe is defined and expected. He defines “other” as a verb meaning the dynamic process of relating to one who is not us, and from whom we receive our very life. In “the dialogical principle,” or “the principle of alterity,” the human self is not an independent, autonomous agent, but is always and necessarily preceded by a Thou, one radically other than us, who evokes, summons, authorizes and “faiths” us into existence as persons. Recognition of our alterity from the subject we see allows us to imagine an affective unity with others, not based on identity but on difference. To this I would add that the ability to cultivate an I- Thou relationship with another person is a spiritual task.

Brueggerman’s idea of emptying oneself to be filled by the other called “othering” is a conceptionalization of the *kenosis* of Jesus Christ for relating to one who is not us, lends itself to a model of care which I will call *minding*. Minding is transformative

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authority which shares power or influence is shared in collaborative relations of power. The concept of minding will be dealt with in more detail in a later section.

Jesus emptied Himself so that God might experience the suffering of the human experience. I suggest that therapist empty themselves of influence so that they may be filled in obedience to God and so that the client may be filled by God through the process of kenosis. *Kenosis* makes room for a creative fidelity.

**Kenosis as Creative Fidelity**

Marcel Gabriel regards the affective unity I have with *other* selves in terms of what he calls “disponibilite” or disposability, i.e., openness, permeability to the other, spiritual availability, which are best illustrated in connection with the relations of love and fidelity.¹³ To understand another person, I have to use a language common to both of us that will allow us to understand one another. I must completely, somehow, make room for the other in my self.¹⁴ I do this through my *fidelity*. Fidelity can be described as a committed claim. Fidelity also implies *presence*.¹⁵ Fidelity, as such, can only be appreciated by the person to whom it is pledged, if it is to offer an essential element of spontaneity, itself radically independent of the will. An absolute fidelity is vowed to God, not to a particular being. The more my consciousness is centered on God, evoked—or invoked—in God’s real being, the more the reality of the bond linking me to some particular being can flourish.

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¹³ Marcel, *Creative Fidelity*, xvii.

¹⁴ Ibid., 88.

¹⁵ Ibid., 154-168.
Many clients who come for counseling bring an appeal that presupposes radical humility; a humility that is polarized by the very transcendence of the one it invokes. I contend that the transcendent dimension of pastoral counseling warrants theology as being its fundamental frame of reference.

Emmanuel Lartey affirms that people who participate in pastoral care and counseling recognize a transcendent dimension to life. This transcendence is real, although we have no objective and external means of gaining access to it. While pastoral counselors are significant participants, they are by no means the sole or even the most important participants. There is a mutuality of participation in pastoral counseling. This recognition of a transcendent dimension to life characterizes and distinguishes the pastoral counselor from other counselors. According to Lartey, at the heart of the "hiddeness" of pastoral care is love. This passion is born of the compassion that lies at the center of the universe deep in the heart of God. In Christian terms, 'we love because God first loved us' (1 John 4:19) Love is a social phenomenon which propels us into relationship with others.

Christianity points to agape, referring to the unconditional self-giving love of God, as the source and sustainer of the universe. The Christian teaching of incarnation, seeks to convey an "enfleshing" of agape in an historic person Jesus Christ, who becomes the symbol and enabler of such love for and in his followers.

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Love is a motivating force. Recognizing the love of God in the created world, pastoral caregivers seek to place themselves within this love and to become agents and conduits of it. Pastoral counseling has a perceived dimension of spirituality.

Spirituality refers to the human capacity for relationship with self, others, world, God and that which transcends sensory experience.\(^{17}\) Spirituality has to be understood as having to do with integration of the disparate aspects of being in a dynamic whole. Spirituality is an integrating center for individuals and a people. What is spiritual about us is our capacity to relate to one who is not us.

The primary way spirituality is to be understood refers to the universal human capacity to experience life in relation to a perceived dimension of power and meaning, which is experienced as transcendent in the midst of our everyday lives. Pastoral counseling exists to nurture spirituality. The nurturing function is the one which is invoked by those who seek pastoral counseling, believing that it to be related to spirituality.

Charles Gerkin says that the task of pastoral counselors is not only to recognize the need of being at one with love ones but the task is also to restore a sense of God’s promise to participate in the crises. Gerkin asserts that the image of the person as a document to be read means that that person’s experience demands “the same respect as do the historic texts from which the foundations of Judeo-Christian faith tradition are drawn.”\(^{18}\) Using modern hermeneutical methods, the pastoral counselor brings a “horizon

\(^{17}\)Ibid., 141-144.

\(^{18}\)Charles V. Gerkin, *The Living Human Document: Re-Visioning Pastoral Counseling in a*
of understanding” to the counselee’s experience, which enables them, together, to interpret and understand that experience in the light of the Christian story and experience. Anton Boisen’s image of the person as a sacred document holds the possibility for restoring pastoral counseling to its theologically defined mission and purpose.19

Charles Gerkin states that the problem of pastoral ministry to persons in crisis is one of facilitating trust in the person who has experienced something which, in its impact of the person’s structuring of his or her life, has undermined the very basis of trust. Trust for modern folk is largely rooted in two immediate aspects of their life, their competence to cope with life’s problems and contingencies, and their valued human relationships.20

Gerkin proposes that pastors engender a style of presence and ministry parallel to what he has called the incarnational style of tending to life experience, by modeling an expectation of God’s disclosure in the ordinary events and relationships of life.21 For Gerkin, the ingredients missing in the lives of despairing people are nurturing, succoring relationships, a sense of authentic personhood, and hope for a better tomorrow.22

I would suggest that pastoral counselors can recover the fundamental frame of reference of counseling as theological by recognizing a transcendent dimension. Pastoral caregivers should seek to place themselves within the love of God and to become agents


19Ibid., 38-39.

20Charles V. Gerkin, Crisis Experience in Modern Life: Theory and Theology for Pastoral Care (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press 1979), 43.

21Ibid., 328.

22Ibid., 180.
and conduits of it. Our spiritual availability can be seen in our extending hospitality modeled after the kenotic act of Jesus Christ who came in the form of a servant. We have been called to participate in the mystery of God’s grace appearing in human existence. What is needed is a reminder of God’s transcendent participation in human crisis.

Implications for Minding

My natural pastoral theological method for engaging in psychotherapy is called minding. Minding is a transformative authority which shares power or influence in collaborative relations of power to create conditions in which lived experience of empowerment is valued as the defining feature for claiming a sense agency and consolidation of identity. It is grounded in the incarnational model of Jesus Christ. I fully receive clients by emptying myself of privileges or prerogatives associated with status. I let my good will be known. My agenda is for the client to experience himself/herself as being fully received. The client acknowledges the acceptance of feeling received by his/her self-disclosure. Clients use the relationship to freely explore the feelings available to them. The relationship serves as a catalyst to precipitate a new horizon of understanding and growth, while providing a climate of freedom.

In what I would consider to be successful therapeutic experiences, there were moments of revelation. The self was at that moment his/her own feelings, which were similar to those of a newborn baby. I believe that it is in this “moment of movement” that the Spirit of God and the spirits of the clients converge. I am merely a vessel that empties itself in order to be filled by the Holy Spirit and the client’s spirit. In the relationship, a client learns to accept acceptance. But, I am not the source of this
acceptance; I only point to an acceptance that has its source beyond me. Acceptance comes from God through Jesus the Christ.

In the minding model, the therapist creates a centered relationship that enables him/her to act as a preparer and witness to a Divine-human encounter in the midst of human crisis. This model of the Christian community is built on the celebrative use of conflict. It is a covenant of creative fidelity. This covenant of servanthood with influence is made known by the spoken word.

My primary purpose will be to uncover human vulnerability as it appears in the throes of crises that come to us in our present lives, and to reflect on the implications of what we then see for pastoral ministry. The help of a gratuitous relationship can enable a self that is in the pit of despair to find his/her life grounded in that more hopeful possibility that with God’s measure and succor, the self is potentiating in a process beyond itself.

By devoting myself to understanding my life as fully as possible, I become a living witness of participation in a centered relationship, by returning to my family of origin and/or extended family, and by working on the resolution of the unresolved issues therein. By embracing the concept of kenosis I can participate in the presence of God in all relationships.

Summary

Any design of a model that seeks to connect with African Americans in conflict can benefit by having a definitional starting point of theology instead of psychology—one that embodies the idiom of community, the spoken word, the extended family and
transformative authority. To this model I would add the concept of Christian hospitality with its *will to share* and highlight *saving the other* from the invisibility that comes from social devaluation or oppression. I advocate the emptying of oneself in order to be filled by the other. It is a model that deliberately seeks partnership with strangers as a way of participating in God’s redeeming work. God’s redeeming work is reconciliation.

The concept of *kenosis* transforms authority. *Kenosis* offers a conceptualization of a design for a model of therapy which I call minding. This model transforms authority by sharing power or influence in collaborative relations of power to create conditions in which lived experience of empowerment can be valued as the defining feature for claiming a sense agency and identity. Minding is transformative authority.
CHAPTER V

OBJECT RELATIONS THEORY

Introduction

In Chapter I, this author proposed that pastoral counseling, in an attempt to become a legitimate science, has tended to draw upon the psychology of the silent neutral stance far more than the theology of hospitality as a fundamental frame of reference. I proposed that conflict be seen as an occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation. I advocated minding by joining with clients to actively engage them in conversation in order to build trust by disarming their defenses and connecting with them.

In Chapter II, I proposed that the silent neutral stance in pastoral counseling was problematic as a model for connecting with African Americans in conflict, and that revisiting the benefits and outcomes of the silent neutral stance may yield valuable insights in helping pastoral counselors make inroads into the African-American community. I discussed designing a model of therapy, my thesis, definitions of key terms and my methodology.

In Chapter III, I detailed the existence of the African/African American cultural legacy of *nommo*, the generative quality of the spoken word. In doing so I demonstrated that the silent neutral stance ignores the “idiom of community” of the African-American cultural experience which includes a definitional system of collective survival under oppressive conditions. In addition, I have offered that the oral tradition, religious
experience and extended family model as indigenous African-American approaches for coping with contradictions and providing support in the midst of conflict.

Also in chapter III, I explored the works of Howard Thurman, who proposed that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazarus provided succor by modeling a "will to share," a supportive approach for coping with contradictions in the midst of conflict for the oppressed. Conflict is unavoidable and by analogy a Divine initiative. Thurman demonstrates that the idiom of community, the oral tradition, and the hospitality of the inclusive community have the power to transform and consolidate one's identity in the midst of paradox. I advocated that in loco parentis, acting in lieu of a parent, in addition to partnership with strangers provides a conceptualization for the design of a model of minding as transformative authority.

The work of Edward Wimberly was also drawn on as a pastoral theologian whose thinking used conversation and faith story to develop the therapeutic implication of the African-American legacy for pastoral counseling. African Americans resisted recruitment into negative identities and combated the pressure to become victims of racial conversations existing in the wider society. He advocated giving conversation with God a privileged status over all other conversations.

In chapter IV, I explored the concept of Christian hospitality as a model of transformative authority, in an effort to construct a model of a helping relationship as a way of connecting with African Americans in conflict. Transformative authority is at the root of Christian hospitality and pivotal to the establishment of the inclusive community. In my discussion, I highlighted how hospitality saves the "other" from the
invisibility that comes from social devaluation. Likewise, I demonstrated how a deliberate partnership with strangers is a way of participating in God’s redeeming work. I discussed Walter Brueggemann and the concept of *kenosis* and the process of othering. I also discussed Marcel Gabriel and the concept of creative fidelity. I wish to highlight the fact while the *kenosis* of Jesus can be seen in His coming in the form of a servant; God’s *kenotic* act was to come in the form of Jesus who came in the form of a servant. I wish to suggest that using the concept of *kenosis* from the prospective of othering can create a bond of creative fidelity. *Kenosis* as transformative authority provides a conceptualization of a design for a practical theological model of therapy. I also lifted up the work of several pastoral theologians who helped to draw implications of hospitality for the model of minding.

In this Chapter, my primary focus is on the psychoanalytic theory of transference and the silent neutral stance. I will also discuss object-relations theory which emerged out of psychoanalytic thought as a corrective attempt to invest interpersonal relations with a more significant role in personality development.

My goal is to revisit Freud’s theories of instinctual gratification, the fundamental rule (to simply listen), and the use of language in psychoanalysis. I intend to explore the works of Sigmund Freud and W. R. D. Fairbairn to portray a model of instinctual needs. Fairbairn is particularly important to my discussion because of his theory that the fundamental drive of personality is *the need to be in relationship*.

Classic psychoanalytic theory relates to viewing people other than oneself as objects. Although Freud talked a great deal about interpersonal relations, his theory rendered
people other than oneself as surprisingly un-influential, except as stereotypic objects of one's instincts. Object relations theory is an intra-psychic psychoanalytic theory that derives from an interpersonal view of development.

After discussing psychoanalytic theory and technique, I will discuss object relations primarily using the works of D. W. Winnicott because of his conception of the "good-enough mother," optimal frustration and transitional space which provides a model of moving from active engagement to therapeutic silence by transforming authority. In addition, I will discuss the works of Thomas Oden on the use of language and Christopher Bolla, offering an alternative to the fundamental rule of Sigmund Freud to "simply listen." Discussions of Freud's theories of religious faith are beyond the limitation of this dissertation. I will note, however, that Freud felt that belief in the God of Jesus the Christ was wishful thinking.

As the chapter moves toward implications for the model of minding the counseling psychology of Carl Rogers, experiential psychology, and family therapy will be introduced and used with similar concepts from object relations theory. The purpose this further introducing of concepts is to make sure that there is adequate theoretical language to talk about the model of minding. While object relations theory is primary in the minding model, it is a personality theory that has implications for therapy. Object relations theory, however, is not adequate by itself to provide all the language needed for the minding model. It needs to be augmented from analogous concepts from counseling psychology.
Psychoanalytic Theory

Classic psychoanalytic theory owes much to Sigmund Freud. Freud thought that mental structure evolved from the organism’s adaptation to instinctual strivings and reality. Freud’s structural theory derived from his views of the infant as organized primarily to seek gratification of instinctual impulses, that the pleasure principle is regarded as the primary principle of behavior.

Freud described the mental structure in terms of *id, ego, and super-ego*. The *id* was portrayed as a seething cauldron of forbidden libido (sexual and life instinct), with aggression as instinctual. Freud’s conception of the origin of the ego is as a structure, which develops on the surface of the psyche for the purpose of regulation *id*-impulses in relation to reality. “Impulses” are oriented toward reality. Repression is a function exercised by the ego in its dealings with impulses originating in the *id*. In Freud’s earlier view, he advanced the theory that repression is primarily exercised against painful memories. In his later analysis of the topic, he advanced the view that repression is primarily exercised against impulses which have come to appear painful or “bad.”

Freud indicated that transference is a patterned repetition of historically determined motives, defenses, anxieties and an interpretation of a patient’s relationship with the counselor. Expectant libidinal impulses will inevitably be aroused, in anyone whose need for love is not being satisfactorily gratified in reality, by each new person coming upon the scene. Those who have not received adequate gratification turn towards the person of

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the physician. In analysis, Freud considered transference as resistance to the cure, whereas in object relations, it is recognized as the vehicle of the healing process, a necessary condition for success.³

**The Fundamental Rule (to Simply Listen)**

Freud’s technique was a simple one: Maintain an “evenly-hovering attention”. The meaning of the things heard is only recognizable later on. All conscious exertion is to be withheld from the capacity for attention, and one’s “unconscious memory” is to be given full play. One has simply to listen and not to trouble to keep in mind anything in particular.⁴

Freud preferred a ceremonial position of requiring the patient to recline upon a sofa, while sitting behind him/her, out of sight, to carry out treatment. His motive was personal since he could not bear to be gazed at for eight hours or more.⁵ Disclosure should not begin until a dependable transference, a well-developed rapport, is established with the patient. The first aim of the treatment consists of attaching him to the treatment and to the person of the physician. Such an attachment develops in the patient of itself, and the physician becomes linked up with one of the images of those persons from whom he was used to receiving kindness.⁶ It is important to remember that Freud realized that transference is linked to images of those persons from whom one person was used to

⁴Ibid., 118.
⁵Ibid., 146.
⁶Ibid., 152.
receiving kindness. This position will be discussed further when we revisit the silent neutral stance.

The therapeutic task is defined as making conscious the repressed material and uncovering the resistances. For Freud, the guiding force runs as follows: Analytic treatment should be carried through, as far as is possible, under privation - in a state of abstinence.7 Abstinence does not mean doing without any and every satisfaction. However, every improvement diminishes the instinctual energy impelling him towards cure. The patient's sufferings should not prematurely come to an end.

Freud believed any counselor commits an “economic error” when out of the fullness of his heart and his readiness to help, perhaps, he extends to the patient all that one human being may hope to receive from another. As far as his relations with the physician are concerned, the patient must have unfulfilled wishes in abundance. The physician keeps a condition of privation during treatment.8

It is my belief the neutral stance encourages deprivation, by abstaining from speaking. Maintaining an evenly-hovering attention alone without extending to a client all that one human being may hope to receive from another may hinder transference. If silence is unsuccessful in the initial phrase of therapy, an attempt should be made to link to images of those persons from whom the client was used to receiving kindness. Publicity of fidelity would not be considered as an economic error if forming transference is the goal. Publicity of fidelity is linked to images of receiving kindness. I purpose that we revisit instinctual gratification, simply listening and the extension of human kindness.

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7Ibid., 184.

8Ibid., 185-187.
Revisiting Instinctual Gratification

I wish to revisit instinctual gratification and propose that the drive to be in relationship is greater than Freud’s pleasure principle. This look at instinctual gratification will be not merely as a need for pleasure, but rather as a need to be in relationship with other persons. I offer this additional insight as seen in the earlier Case Study of “Joan”.

Later, I will suggest that the therapist deliberately forms transference, thus becoming linked up with one of the images of those persons from whom the patient is used to receiving kindness by publicizing fidelity through extending hospitality.

The overwhelming need to be in a satisfying relationship can be seen in the following discussion. I wish to present a client who felt a loss of agency because of the feeling of exclusion from the community. Also, the residual effect on the personality of not receiving kindness or hospitality is illuminated.

Joan was invited to go on a trip with another female student. Upon her arrival, she was surprised to see three other women who were members of a close knit religious group whom she did not know. She felt that something was wrong when she was dismissed by her friend and the other women whose attention was only on themselves. They did not extend common hospitality to her. She felt invisible. It was like *deju vue*. She thought it was like her father pushing her away. She felt cold.

She was tired of being considerate while other people were being inconsiderate. She felt left out. She was upset about being “suckered out” by a disabled friend. She felt manipulated and used. She relates these experiences to giving up her virginity and not wanting to. She returns to this event but cannot recall how she got there.
Joan attracted older men from an early age. She was “eye candy” (a very attractive female). She has had many relationships in her past. Some men paid dearly. Yet the saddest days were the holidays when they did not show up because of other commitments. She was reminded of her last abusive relationship before abstaining and how she tried to end it. Her friend faked a suicide attempt. She called 911 and later found out that he had only taken vitamin pills. She had been suckered out again. Joan, like her mother and grandmother had had a history of being in abusive relationships.

Joan discussed leaving a phone message to terminate her only relationship after five years of abstinence. She knew that her ‘eye candy’ (a very attractive male) was not interested in a permanent relationship. Yet she was a willing participant, and abstinence was not working. She felt triumph and shame, and more shame. I congratulated her on her triumph. She reflected on her past relationships. She had a pattern of choosing men who were not available, to address her need of being wanted and feeling that nobody cared. She would break down in tears after sharing these feelings.

Ronald Fairbairn is important to the discussion because of his theory that the fundamental drive of personality is the need to be in relationship. Further, he developed a system, which detailed the process of internalization and the idea of an accepted object patterned after the infant’s first relationship with his/her mother.

Fairbairn depicts the ego’s strivings and difficulties in its endeavor to reach an object where it may find support. He concluded that the primary human need is to be loved and validated, rather than to be instinctually gratified.

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Fairbairn, Psychoanalytic Studies, v.
The infant psyche at birth is a unitary, pristine, undifferentiated ego (the part of
the self that deals with reality) in relation to its object. It seeks attachment to its mother.
This object is inevitably relatively unsatisfying in comparison to uterine bliss. Because
of its helpless dependence, the infant is acutely vulnerable to the mother’s responses and
to whether its needs for closeness, comfort, and food are gratified or frustrated.¹¹

The more intolerable the anxieties resulting from experience with the mother, the
more intense the repression and the less the ego is left to relate freely. In health, with
“good-enough mothering”, the infant develops a personality that consists mainly of
unrepressed central ego in relation to ideal objects. This central system is capable of
integration and learning, of making transactions with potential objects, and of adapting to
its environment. It takes over eventually from the mother as the first organizer. It is an
open system, flexible and adaptable, and tends to fashion future relationships in a form
reminiscent of the satisfying aspects of early relationships.

The chief novelty introduced into the child’s world by the emergence of the external
Oedipus situation is that he/she is now confronted with two distinct parental objects
instead of only one. Since the child’s relationship with the father as a new object
involves problems of adjustment similar to those already experienced in relationship with
his mother, the child naturally employs a similar technique, resulting in the establishment
of two internalized figures of the father as (a) an exciting object, and (b) a rejecting
object. The adjustment differs, from that which the child originally was required to make

¹⁰David E Scharff and Jill S. Scharff, Object Relations Family Therapy (Northvale, NJ: Jason

¹¹Fairbairn, Psychoanalytic Studies, 179.
to the mother in that it has to be made upon an emotional plane. Analysis reveals that the Oedipus situation is essentially formed around the internalized figures of the exciting mother and the rejecting mother.\(^{12}\)

It is mainly from Fairbairn’s study of the early dyad that conceptualizes the way the baby understands and records the experience with mother, and it is this dyad that provides the blueprint for future psychological experience.\(^{13}\)

Fairbairn proposes that moving from the earliest stage of infantile dependence, when the self develops a schizoid condition because of the internalization of bad object relationships, the self goes to the transitional stage. This stage involves *introjection*, or the literal incorporation of objects into the mind. The process of *identification* comes next. Salvatore Maddi offers a final stage, mature dependency that involves lifelong interdependence between differentiated interacting people.\(^{14}\)

Fairbairn developed a *psychology of dynamic structure* to replace the ‘impulse psychology.’\(^{15}\) *A psychology of dynamic structure* is incompatible with Freud’s description of (a) the *id* as a reservoir of instinctive impulses, and (b) the *ego* as a structure which develops on the surface of the id for regulation of id-impulses in relation to outer reality.\(^{16}\) The *ego* includes the *id* and is the source of regulating the discharge of

\(^{12}\)Ibid., 174-175.

\(^{13}\)Scharff & Scharff, *Object Relations*, 52.


\(^{15}\)Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic Studies*, 84.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., 167.
impulse-tension from the beginning. The function of the ego reminds the same as Freud conception as regulating the discharge of impulse-tension in deference to the conditions of outer reality. Impulses are oriented towards reality.\textsuperscript{17}

The differentiation of ego-structure corresponds roughly to Freud's account of the mental apparatus—the central ego corresponding to Freud's "ego," the libidinal ego to Freud's 'id' and the internal saboteur to Freud 'super-ego.' It is integral to Fairbairn's conception, however, that the three structures just described are all dynamic ego-structures assuming a dynamic pattern in relation to one another; whereas, Freud's "id" is conceived of as a source of energy without structure, and his "ego" and super-ego are structures without energy except such as they derive from the "id"—the ego alone being a true ego-structure, since the super-ego is conceived of as largely an internalized object.\textsuperscript{18}

Repression is primarily exercised against internalized objects, which have come to be viewed as bad. Repression is not a defense against impulses which have come to appear painful or 'bad' (as in Freud's later view) or against painful memories (Freud's earlier view), but against internalized objects, which have come to be treated as bad.\textsuperscript{19}

It is my belief that repression is a technique adopted by the child to reduce the expression of both libido and aggression towards the mother at a stage when she is the infant's only significant object and he/she is almost wholly dependent upon her. Repression plays a tremendous part as a coping mechanism for dealing with painful memories and impulse needs not gratified by the mother. Repression is particularly

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, 88.
\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, 170.
\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, 89.
relevant as a means of dealing with external oppression. In dealing with racism, African Americans have had to repress their feelings while dealing with their instinctual strivings for gratification of wants and needs. Racism demanded silence about one's feelings.

There is a difference in basic theoretic principles. The difference can be summed up in two central points of difference. In the first place, although Freud's whole system of thought was concerned with object-relationships, he adhered theoretically to the principle that libido is primarily pleasure seeking, *viz.* is directionless. By contrast, Fairbairn adheres to the principle that libido is primarily object seeking, *viz.* has direction.

In the second place, Freud regarded impulse (psychical energy) as theoretically distinct from structure; whereas, Fairbairn adheres to the principle of dynamic structure (energy inseparable from structure).²⁰

Finding a model of connecting with individuals in conflict is greatly enhanced if one can gain an understanding of the instinctual needs. Freud and Fairbairn both described mental organization in terms of impulse needs. I would agree with Freud in that we are driven by our impulses. However like Fairbairn, I believe the need is to be in a satisfying relationship instead of merely achieving sexual gratification. Furthermore, I contend, like Fairbairn, that it is the relationship with the mother that first forms a significant pattern for future relationships.

**Revisiting the Fundamental Rule (to Simply Listen)**

Now I would like to revisit the fundamental rule to simply listen and suggest that the therapist deliberately form an attachment that becomes a link with one of the images

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²⁰Ibid., 176.
of those persons from whom the patient is used to receiving kindness by publicizing fidelity in the use of the spoken word.

For Freud, the first aim of the treatment consists of attaching the patient to the treatment and to the person of the physician. He believed that transference develops in the patient of him or her self, and that all the therapist had to do was simply listen. I purpose that we revisit the forming of transference by simply listening only. I am suggesting that silence is vital in the initial phrase of therapy, however, something more might be needed.

In many therapeutic encounters, the silence of the therapist in the initial phase of therapy will receive a silent response from many African-American clients. Silence does not create new relationships. Orality or verbal expression of thought precedes listening.

**The Use of Language in Psychoanalysis**

There are some implications for analysis that illuminate the idea that language is not simply a hindrance to transference, but the medium in which experience is brought to life in the process of being spoken. In the analytic hour, we use our developed capacities for listening to language (both to the patients and to our own) in its spoken and unspoken forms.

The analytic discourse requires of the analytic pair the development of metaphorical language adequate to the creation of sounds and meanings that reflect what it feels like to think, feel, and physically experience at a given moment.²¹

Such use of language is not an inborn capacity; it requires a trained ear which the

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counselor provides. The counselor is like an English teacher in this effort to enhance the patient’s capacity for attunement to the subtlety of language. Likewise, he enhances his capacity to use language in a way that more fully captures creates his thoughts, feelings, and perceptions in the analytic discourse.

Meaning is in the language and the effects created by it. We listen to the language, not through it. There is a growing effort in contemporary analytic practice to listen not only to what the patient is saying, but also to the way he is saying it and to the effect the patient is creating in the analytic relationship at any moment. Counselors are increasingly attempting to listen to the meanings generated, the effects created by the patient’s use of language in addition to the semantic content of the language. Meaning (including unconscious meaning) is in the language being used, not under or behind it.

We must enter into an active engagement with the speaker. Such is the nature of a form of human experience created through and in the medium of words. I am suggesting that this form of engagement (an aesthetic experience) has much in common with the way in which we use ourselves as listeners, speakers, observers, and participants in the analytic encounter.

The capturing/creating of human experience in language is also of central importance to psychoanalysis. Analysis brings together the counselor and clients (person receiving analysis.) The roles of counselor and clients (and consequently the way each uses language to speak to the other) are structured by the purpose of their being together.22

22Ibid., 209-216.
The analytic discourse is not simply a discourse in which there is an attempt to capture and/or create in words something of the experience of being human. Rather, it is, in addition, a discourse centrally concerned with creating language adequate to identifying and describing the nature of the anxiety at its urgent point in the present moment. It is anxiety (psychic pain) that drives and directs the movement of the analytic dialogue. Analytic technique is guided by the effort to speak with the clients about what he or she feels like for counselor and clients to be with one another at that moment. It emphasizes the attempt to describe the most urgent fears that are shaping/constricting the client’s capacity to experience that moment in a more fully human way.

The Counselor’s Language

It is essential for the counselor to use language that aspire to a particular form of evocative, sometimes maddening, almost always disturbing, vagueness. The counselor’s language is an effort to help counselor and clients to break out of the circle of the eddy in which they are caught. The analytic pair never fully succeeds in this endeavor, but struggles in and through language to overcome itself.23

Dead language or silence regularly reflects the fact that the counselor at that moment has nothing to say to the clients in his own voice, from his own mind, in his own words. Creating language with one’s own voice is itself an act of freedom that is a necessary condition for the creation of an analytic setting in which psychological change may occur. I am suggesting that the counselor must actively struggle with language in an effort to create ideas and sentences and a voice of his own with which to speak them.

23Ibid., 217-219.
This struggle to convey one’s experience with one’s own words, in one’s own voice, is a very large part of what is means to be alive in an analytic relationship.\textsuperscript{24}

**Creating Effects in Language**

I will focus on some of the ways in which effects created in the use of language serve as a central medium of communication of unconscious experience in the analytic setting. Effects created in language of course coexist with the use of language to name, describe, and in other ways speak about one’s experience. I am placing emphasis on a dimension of language usage in which the creation and communication of meanings and feelings is indirect, that is, relatively independent of what is being said (at the level of the semantic content of language).

Oden provides insight into a significant purpose of language:

> The purpose of using language is to create an effect in language: the experience of wrapping oneself in the pure sensation sound of words. I am able to serve as a (potentially) human medium in whose presence the patient could engage in relatedness. Engaging in the pure sensations sound of words is a soothing activity. Transference-countertransference meaning lay in the effects created by the use of words to generate a necessary sensory medium.\textsuperscript{25}

A central task of psychoanalysis involves continuing to develop a use of language that is adequate to the task of capturing and/or creating the experience of “what it feels like” for the counselor to be with the patient and for the patient to be with the counselor at a particular juncture.

The development of the counselor’s appreciation of the importance of the way in which effects created in language (what the patient’s language does “alongside and

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., 224.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., 225-231.
beyond” what it says) represents an important medium in which the communication of unconscious experience occurs. Attempts can be made to capture the feeling of people talking to one another. Efforts can be made to capture in the action of language itself the living sound and experience of speech. The vitality of speech is in its sound.26

In summary, I laid the groundwork for introducing object relations theory, which is central to the developing of the minding model. The instinctual model, which is the ground for Freud’s understanding of silence is not adequate, and I have introduced the language of relationship, meaning, and discourse as more suitable language. Creating a safe space and fostering a relationship through the appropriate understanding of language requires more than just silence. The language of object relations provides the appropriate language for describing what needs to take place in the early stages of a pastoral counseling relationship.

Object Relations Theory

I would like to revisit Freud’s idea of receiving kindness. I will explore object relation theories for help in developing a “minding” model of pastoral counseling of receiving kindness. The work of Donald Winnicott is a primary psychological model that undergirds my belief in the use of a more interactive model that achieves transference is examined at this point. This model can be found in Winnicott’s theories of the mother/child relationship. I propose that the concept of “good-enough mother” provides a context for describing the mind model. I suggested that the “good-enough mother” relinquishes her position to serve the needs of her child. Initially the “good-enough

26Ibid., 247.
"mother" is the servant of the child. Lacking succor a child may always search for a "good-enough mother."

An example of an unhappy mother/child relationship can be seen in the case of Joan. Her mother and father divorced when she was two. He had a problem with drugs and other females. She remembers seeing him for the first time when she was eleven or twelve. She remembers seeing her father for the last time when she was fifteen when he flirted with her without recognizing her.

She felt that her mother was emotionally distant and did not receive her. Repeated attempts for succor from her mother went unfulfilled. Her mother didn’t “mind” her, only her grandmother who raised her. Her needs for parental succor were not met growing up. She just wanted people to listen. She was trying hard to figure things out about her mother. She confided that she could not sleep well after our sessions. Afterward, she missed the next session. Upon returning, she said that she initially came to counseling because of depression. She did not want to get out of bed and she would binge on food. She followed this up by saying “I should have said binging has been an issue all my life.” I indicated that she had not told me about this before and she informed me that she cannot talk to me about everything.

She had a crippling fear of disapproval. She wanted to be included in her mother’s life, but felt left out, disregarded. Her mother is emotionally distant and called her high strung for being needy. She had a need to feel wanted, but felt like nobody cared. Joan’s familiar pain was ‘somebody pulling on my apron strings.”
Joan had internalized rejection and it emanated from not having a “good-enough mother.” Her attempts at trying to dance around her anger were unsuccessful. Even when she tried to pick a fight with her mother she lost. Joan felt that she was the victim but her mom turned it around and made herself look like the victim.

Whenever she had a need for money her mother would say that they didn’t have any. Whenever she experienced her mother’s disappointment, she felt like her mother had twisted a knife in her. She reported that “maybe I got tired of arguing. I back down sometimes.” She was trying to keep the peace, yet feeling angry that she didn’t speak up.

When friends suggested that perhaps that her mother was selfish and self-centered and not her stepfather, she would only vaguely consider that her mother was using her stepfather as a smoke screen to hide behind.

I suggested to Joan that perhaps she could set boundaries about controlling or getting involved in her mother’s and other’s situations. Therefore, she would not be offended when they did not reciprocate when she was in need. She began to step back from giving suggestions to her mother knowing that she got upset when her mother ignored her. She began to feel that it was a fine line between stepping back and not caring. Setting boundaries was a new place for her and she began to reflect on what brought her to counseling.

From our previous discussion of Freud and Fairbairn we have found that people internalize good and bad experiences. Like Fairbairn, I believe that human beings strive primarily for satisfactory relationships rather than drive for pleasure. Object relations psychology talks about the need for satisfying relationships that people have. The basic
idea is that human beings become persons of worth when they are in relations with people of positive attitudes, who can be internalized. Such positive persons can become an enduring source of nurture and self-esteem when internalized.

Winnicott details an in-depth view of mothering as a *transitional object*, which I feel is an important aspect of the discussion of ways of connecting with African Americans in conflict. His works demonstrate a model of facilitating a therapeutic alliance and transformation of power in the client that represents a creative fidelity. This model creates the potential for new horizons of understanding of the client in the client/counselor relationship. The parenting of the “good-enough mother” is the model from which all future relationships will be compared.

The “good-enough” counselor displays availability and empathy to her client’s needs. A client, who is sure of his/her counselor’s availability or fidelity will generally want to explore his/her immediate environment and come into contact with whatever else may be in the room. A transitional space is provided for the client. Ultimately, the counselor deliberately fails the client by not responding to his/her every need. The client withstands the frustration and remains securely attached to the counselor.

Winnicott describes transitional object as the infant’s journey from the purely subjective to objectivity, the progress toward experiencing. The transitional object is a possession. The object is not transitional; it represents the infant’s transition from a state of being merged with the mother, to a state of being in relation to the mother as something outside and separate. Winnicott believes the mother and child form a secure attachment that is responsive to the wants and needs of the child. The “good-enough”
counselor relinquishes her position to serve the needs of her client. Initially the “good-enough” counselor is the servant of the client.

Transitional object refers to a “not-me” possession, which is created as well as found, neither internal nor external. This status derives from its use in negotiating transition. It is transitional from the psychic or inner reality of wishes, desires, feelings and ideas to the external world of inter-subjective verifiable things.27

The “good-enough” counselor is one who makes active adaptation to the client’s growing needs. Responsive availability builds trust. The client feels secure enough to explore his environment. The counselor’s responsiveness gradually lessens, according to the client’s growing ability, to account for the failure of immediate responsiveness and tolerate the results of frustration. Normal development demands that at some point the ordinarily devoted counselor must inevitably fail the client. The client is able to tolerate this failure and maintain relationality. The process is described as illusion-disillusionment. This failure of the mother to respond can be likened to that of the counselor who alters his/her stance from joining to silent reflection in the transitional space of the therapeutic encounter—a “holding environment,” a collective psychological space that gives the illusion of safety and protection.28 Ultimately, the counselor will fail the client through the use of silent listening. Feelings of powerless victimization will be transformed into powerful bonds of kinship. The therapeutic alliance will be maintained and the use of silence will facilitate transference.


Upon reflection, I have come to realize that many of my clients did not have a successful relationship with their silent mothers, and that many were still trying to obtain the succor that was not sufficiently given in childhood or adulthood. What I have observed is that my clients used repression as a defensive reaction against the internalized objects that appeared as intolerably bad, yet are “need exciting.”

Donald Winnicott contributed to the psychoanalytic dialogue with his psychological concepts of the “good-enough mother” and transitional space. Transference of power occurs with the timely failure of the mother to spontaneously satisfy the infant’s needs. I believe that it is the timely failure of the therapist to use the spoken word to show kindness that facilitates the shift from active engagement to therapeutic silence. In addition to becoming a transitional object, I propose that therapist become a transformational object.

**Transformational Object**

**Separation and Disillusion**

By serving as a facilitating environment the mother both sustains the baby’s life and transmits to the infant succor, through her own particular idiom of mothering. The mother’s way of holding the infant, of responding to his gestures, or selecting objects, and of perceiving the infant’s internal needs, constitutes her contribution to the infant-mother culture. In a private discourse that can only be developed by mother and child, the language of this relation is the idiom of gesture, gaze and inter-subjective utterance.

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Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic Studies*, 164-165.
The mother provides a continuity of being, she “holds” the infant in an environment of her making that facilitates his growth.\(^{30}\) The mother is less significant and identifiable as an object than as a process that is identified with cumulative internal and external transformations.

The mother is experienced as a processor of transformation, and this feature of early existence lives on in certain forms of object seeking in adult life, when the object is sought for its function as a signifier of transformation. It is an object relation that emerges not from desire, but from a perceptual identification of the object with its function: the object as enviro-somatic transformer of the subject. The memory of this early object relation manifests itself in the person’s search for an object (a person, place, event, ideology) that promises to transform the self.\(^{31}\)

Not only does the infant require separation and disillusion from the transformational mother, but the mother must also suffer a ‘let-down’ brought on by the real needs for the infant, which mitigates the mother’s unconscious wish for an infant to be her transformational object.\(^{32}\)

One of the mother’s crucial functions is her role as the infant’s transformational object. Each mother transforms the infant’s syntax of sense and gesture into language, for she continuously comments on her baby in the baby’s presence. As she comments on the baby’s gesture, she also frequently alters the baby’s environment in his favor, thus


\(^{31}\)Ibid., 14.

\(^{32}\)Ibid., 21.
linking language with actual transformation of the environment. This provides the infant
with a natural passage into speech, since speaking becomes associated with the
transformation of the self and is partial compensation for the narcissistic losses implicit in
the necessity to speak to the other about the self.33

There are times therapist must become transformational objects and make the
unthought known. Christopher Bollas described the infant’s experience of his first object,
the mother, which he termed a transformational object. He described the emergence into
thought of early memories of being and relating, reliving through language of that which is
known but not yet thought, termed the *unthought known*.34

As an example of a therapist becoming a transformational object and making the
unthought known, I shall present a segment of a conversation with Joan. Our time together
was ending and we began to say goodbye. One day, near the end of therapy, I stated that
during our time together I felt like Joan did not really trust me. She asked me to turn the
tape recorder back on. She revealed a secret that she had not shared with anyone else.
Finally, one oppressive ghost of a burden was let out of the closet and exposed to the light.
I thanked her for sharing.

I was always convinced she knew something, an “unthought known,” but had not
yet been unable to speak it. This inarticulate element, a feeling that had previously been
“stuck,” inhibited in its process quality, was now experienced with immediacy. Lartey
refers to immediacy as the awareness within the counseling relationship of the actual

33Ibid., 194.

34Ibid., 4-5.
‘here and now,’ which is verbalized and examined.\textsuperscript{35} Egan refers to it as “encouraging direct, mutual talk” or “you-me” talk. Here-and-now immediacy requires the ability to read clues within self and other, together with the assertiveness and communication skills to raise and explore issues, some of which may be quite difficult. Empathy, self-disclosure and confrontation skills are all called into play within this complex and difficult activity. The primary goal of the helping process is not to establish and enjoy relationships but to explore and work through problem situations.

**Counter-transference Readiness**

Freud said that the counselor “must turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient.” The psycho-counselor establishes mental neutrality through which the patient can live an infantile life anew without the troublesome impingement of the clinician’s judgment.\textsuperscript{36}

By establishing a counter-transference readiness I am creating an internal space. This allows for a more complete and articulates expression of the patient’s transference speech than if I were to close down this internal space and replace it with some ideal notion of absolute mental neutrality or scientific detachment.

Patients create environments. We are being taken into the patient’s environmental idiom. The capacity to bear and value this necessary uncertainty enhances our ability to become lost inside the patient’s environment, enabling the patient to manipulate us through transference usage into object identity.


I think the counselor is more able to achieve that necessary process of drawing an identity together if he/she can tolerate the necessary loss of a personal sense of identity within the clinical situation. By permitting him/herself to be used as an object the counselor is part of a process that facilitates the eventual cohesion of the client’s sense of self, but in order for this procedure to work it is my view that the counselor must maximize his counter-transference readiness, listening to the patient who is using him.\textsuperscript{37}

The transference-counter-transference interaction, then, is an expression of the unthought known. The patient knows the object setting through which he developed, and it is part of him, but it has yet to be thought. The psychoanalytic understanding of the transference-counter-transference discourse is a way of thinking the unthought known.

My intention is to provide a potential space in which the clients can give consideration to the unconscious motives that organize his/her character. In the more classical situation the counselor uses that silence which is the hallmark of most analyses as a background from which speech expressed meaning and patient and counselor listens to the free associations.

The clinician must function openly as a transformational object. He/She must indicate that he/she perceives something, even if the perception is only of an as-yet-inarticulate movement of a potential significance, registered through a feeling state or sense in one’s being. The transformation of the inarticulate sense or feeling into some form of verbal representation that can be put to the clients must be considered. This inarticulate element is the un-thought known: the patient knows something, but has as yet

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., 203.
been unable to think it. The counselor here performs much the same function that the mother did with her infant who could not speak but whose moods, gestures, and needs were utterances of some kind that needed maternal perception (often achieved through a kind of instinctual knowing), reception (a willingness to live with the infant utterance), transformation into some form of representation, and possibly some resolution (the ending of distress). The un-thought known, which can only be thought via the subject’s use of the object in the transference and counter-transference, is given its place in the field of analysis.\(^{38}\)

I would like to provide an example of countertransference readiness and the untought known. During one session Marcus, from Case Study II, spoke about poverty in Haiti and the garden his father had which provided food that kept the family from starvation. He had bitter memories of harsh treatment at the hands of his father. He was frail and not very strong physically and his father picked on him for not being able to carry his share of buckets of water the long distance to the garden. However, he was smart in school and when he did exceptionally well or won an award, his father would say, “There goes my so-and-so son. He did well today.”

While he was talking, I began to wonder about Voodoo as he spoke about the poverty in Haiti and asked him to speak on it. He informed me that contrary to what I had heard, Voodoo consisted of white magic and Black magic. His grandmother was a witch doctor who performed white magic to heal people. Medical attention was not readily available. As he talked, he began to recall a time when he was very sick and his

\(^{38}\)Ibid., 234-235.
father carried him a long way on his shoulder to get him medical attention. As he spoke, he began to get misty-eyed and uttered that he loved his father. This was a revelation of the untought known. It must be remembered that in the initial interview he emphatically stated that he hated his father. I suspect that consciously he disliked his father for allowing his mother to have too many children by too many men. Unconsciously he loved his father for showing him love and fidelity. Later he recalled how his father owned him by signing his birth certificate so that he could come to America. He felt affirmed by him. I highly advocate that counselors use their countertransference thoughts for conscious exploration.

**Counter-transference as Provision: From Reception to Evocation**

Once the counselor has discovered the infant or child element within the patient, who is in search of a holding environment that will permit the quiet evolution of the other elements of the true self, then he will shift his frame of mind. Rather than using dialogue to involve the clients in analysis of the transference activity, the counselor will suspend his interpretation of content and transference. He is needed now as part of the patient’s inner processing of known, partly known, and unthought known self experiences. The counselor can assist clients by helping them to dismiss residual guilt.

**Ordinary Regression to Dependence**

The psycho-counselor’s task is to allow him/herself to be assumed by the patient and not to interpret unless the patient needs it. Regression to dependence is part of almost every person’s analytic experience. Winnicott and others discovered a special need in certain patients to use the analytic setting and process to be unburdened of the false self
and collapse into true self.\textsuperscript{39} He stressed that during regression to dependence “ordinary” analytic work is suspended.

Bollas believes that a generative regression to dependence is characterized by the client’s giving over to the counselor certain important mental functions and managerial duties in order to bring the personality back to its childhood moments of origin and experience. My emphasis is the client’s trust in the counselor’s capacity to keep the room, the space, the time and the process going so as to give up certain ego functions in order to fall into a state of intense inner self preoccupation.\textsuperscript{40} The regressive side of the experience is characterized by the giving up of higher ego functions. And the childlike aspect of it is characterized by a relation to the counselor of which mirrors a child’s “good-enough” dependence on the mother who looks after or supplements the child’s ego. This giving up of aspects of the ego to the counselor induces in the clients earlier memories and experiences.

Regression to dependence is intrinsically generative when a patient experiences the analytic setting and process as an invitation to regress. The counselor must understand this need and be attuned to the elements of the clinical situation that receive the regressive development. One condition for a regression to dependence is the counselor’s frame of mind.

The kernel of regression to dependence is an ordinary abandonment on the client’s part of reporting or thinking oneself out; during silence, he experiences something else.

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., 256-258

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., 269.
Bolla termed this receptive capacity within the patient’s relation to himself as object, a capacity that utilizes the mental process of evolution, so that news from within the deeper parts of the self begins to emerge.\textsuperscript{41} Pleasure is found in the counselor’s presence. There is a transition from hearing, seeing, sensing and feeling the properties of the outside world to hearing, seeing, sensing and feeling the inside world. There is a shift from reception to evocation. The evocation of images inspires some deep affective state.

In one session, counselee Joan was excited as she talked about a conversation with her mother regarding the cruise the family took without her. She was supposed to go home and take care of her grandmother and step grandson. The grandson was uncontrollable. Everybody was happy at Joan’s expense. She returned to Atlanta early. She was still pretty angry and mad, but did not want the confrontation. She felt left out. She was always vying for someone’s attention, yet never doing well enough in their eyes. She painted a picture of a little girl in the kitchen at Christmas time saying “I’m sorry.”

After the stage of imagining and feeling that a person in regression to dependence may suddenly “see” what it is all about. At such a moment a patient may suddenly discover something about the mother, the father and himself that he has never thought before, but which has been part of the un-thought known. Some patients behave as if they have experienced a revelation. It is very important for the counselor to remain silent and to hold the situation and not to act on his curiosity.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., 259-261.
The Use of Therapeutic Silence

Some silences are resistances. Bollas proposes that if the therapist believes that silence is a resistance to be "overcome" by interpretation, or if the therapist is prone to dialogue, the client will not sufficiently develop his/her self-analytic capacity. Such a capacity can only occur if the therapist knows there are certain times when the client needs to be left alone. Winnicott termed this necessary function as the "uninterpretive" act of the therapist.\textsuperscript{42} The therapist who is too eager to put his/her client’s inner experience into words, or who pushes the client into overcoming silence, erodes the creation of new objects. These new objects are an inarticulate sense or feeling of unthought known: the client knows something, but has been unable to think it.\textsuperscript{43}

The silence, which is a necessary condition for regression to dependence, is of a different kind. Silence becomes a medium through which to experience the analytic holding environment. It is a form of musing.

Therapeutic listening is deep, real and penetrating. The experience can be awe-inspiring. Listeners enter into a holy sacred space where personal, and intimate material is brought into play. In this experience silence is usually a necessary condition for the 'processing' of internal world and external reality.\textsuperscript{44}

The Patient's Need to Muse

If the counselor has the capacity to receive transference states through a form of


\textsuperscript{43}Bollas, \textit{The Shadow of the Object}, 235.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., 263.
holding via the counter-transference, and if the client can yield to the counselor some of
the function of the ego, then the client is in a position to evoke certain memories, prior
self states, and new objects.

This mental state, while silent, can be termed musing. Winnicott speaks of a
"formless state."\footnote{Ibid., 270-271.} The nature of the experience at this point constitutes a memory. It is a
memory of the state of being a child in the mother’s care. When the patient is musing,
with the counselor holding the space, the time, and the process, I believe the adult is
“inside” his childhood. The state of mind achieved in regression to dependence may
repair a previously damaged capacity to receive news of the self in this manner. This
memory of the transformational object can only be recalled if both patient and counselor
are living it through together.

Musing is part of the receptive ability, established as a valued part of the analysis by
the counselor’s capacity to receive the clients during silent states. The capacity to receive
may facilitate another mental process: evocation. Evocation describes the passive state in
which the more active elements from the un-thought known arrive. It may have
something to do with the return of the repressed. In musing, the “I” actively moves. In
evoking, the “I” receives.\footnote{Ibid., 272.}

The counselor’s capacity to become part of this inter-subjective process as a
transformational object rather than as a separate object amounts to an act of “provision”
within the counter-transference: it enables the clients to deconstruct ego functions in the
interest of early states of self. At the very core of the concept of the un-thought known, is Winnicott’s theory of the true self and Freud’s idea of the primary repressed unconscious. For Bollas *Phantasy* is the first representative of the un-thought known in mental life. It is a way of thinking that which is there. It is an expression of the idiom of the infant’s being and is the first mental act in the gradual and complex development of an “internal” world.  

The term *un-thought known* stands for that which is known but has not yet been thought, if by thought it is understood that we mean that which has been mentally processed accurately. *Phantasy* does give some mental representation to the unthought known, but it is insufficient to process the un-thought known, and its liability at times expresses its limitation. It is only through the subject’s use and experience of the other that mental representations of that experience can carry and therefore represent the idiom of a person’s un-thought known. Much of my work in the counter-transference will be a struggle to put into imagery and language the experience of being the client’s object.  

In summary, the key understanding of objects relations theory for the model of minding is the concept of good-enough mothering and the way the therapeutic experience mimics this relationship. That is to say, growth occurs when there are relationship failures encountered between babies and their mothers as well as between therapists and their patients. Such failures are growth facilitating when they help move the patient into active engagement in the therapeutic process when the therapist moves from joining to therapeutic

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47Ibid., 277-279.

48Ibid., 280-281.
silence. In the remainder of this chapter the focus will be on relevant relational theories that provide understanding for the minding model that are similar to the concepts we have already presented.

**Relevant Psychological Theories of Therapy**

As referred to in the introduction to this chapter, object relations theory is really a personality theory, and it draws on the mother child relationship to understand how the child grows. Of course object relations theory has implications for therapeutic relationships, but the model of minding presented here requires the use of counseling psychology theories that are analogous to object relations theory to provide additional language not provided by object relations theory.

**Structural Family Therapy**

Salvadore Minuchin suggests that the therapist “join” with clients. To join the client, the therapist must convey acceptance of family members and respect for their way of doing things. It is particularly important to join powerful family members, as well as angry ones. It is also important to listen carefully and acknowledge a person’s position by reflecting what you hear. The family therapist must disarm defenses and ease anxiety. This is done by generously conveying understanding and acceptance. The therapist produces change by joining the client, probing for areas of flexibility, and then activating dormant structural alternatives.\(^49\)

**Client Centered Therapy**

\(^49\)Minuchin, *Working with Families of the Poor*. 313.
Carl Rogers is concerned about the person and his becoming in a modern world that appears intent upon ignoring or diminishing him. Rogers believes that behavioral science has shown empirically attitudinal conditions and methods, which can successfully predict behavior, which is essentially free. He does acknowledge the assumption that this scientific knowledge is power to manipulate. However, Rogers believes that “unless as individuals and groups we choose to relinquish our capacity of subjective choice, we will always remain free persons, not simply pawns of a self-created behavioral science.” 50

Responsible personal choice is the core experience in psychotherapy. In the optimum of therapy, the individual is aware of himself, not as an object but rather it is a reflexive awareness, a subjective living in him/herself in motion. The client rightfully experiences the most complete and absolute freedom. This concept of trusting the individual to be himself would mean that even when his behavior had to be thwarted, he would retain open “ownership” of his feelings. Rogers proposed entering into a relationship by providing a climate which will permit the client the utmost freedom to become him/herself.

As is my custom, in the second meeting, I indicated that I wanted to take a genogram. The genogram is very important in joining with clients because the family is always present in counseling. From the genogram and other discussions it became evident that her grandmother and cousins were the persons who satisfactorily supplied her need for succor. It was during our second session that I inquired why she had elected to make a change of counselors without formally terminating her arrangements with her

other counselor. She felt like the other counselor, a European-American female, could not relate to her. No one hears her pain and she avoids confrontation.

In subsequent sessions, we would go through the same ritual, with her arriving early. I greeted her warmly when the scheduled time for our appointment arrived. I was taught to greet each person as an equal, look them in the eyes and offer a firm handshake. After the greeting and invitation to enter, she would sit at the same end of the couch, clutch a pillow and look down, seldom making eye contact. Unlike Freud, I am a firm believer in making eye contact. While I would look away so as not to stare offensively, I would always return my gaze toward my clients, publicizing the fact that they have my undivided attention.

This pattern on my observing the silent neutral stance initially continued for months. Finally she would ask, "Where did we leave off last time?" to which I would reply that it did not matter; she could begin with anything that was on her mind. Minutes would go by without either of us speaking.

As time went on, I began to engage Joan in conversation about her difficulties in her family of origin, past relationships, school, her childhood, her church and her calling. I received her and recognized her struggles and her achievements against the obstacles she faced. We joined and I discovered that prior to our therapeutic alliance she had never felt received or recognized by anyone except her grandmother and extended family members. Her grandmother provided the nurture and kindness she needed. She felt received by her. She was sure that her grandmother loved her unconditionally. I
received her and became recognized as kind, faithful and nonjudgmental. I suspect she
decided that, similar to what her grandmother had done, I would “mind” her.

Rogers proposes a non-directive or client-centered therapy. Client-centered
psychotherapy is a close and intimate relationship, free of control and evaluative
tendencies that hinder growth-facilitating relationships. The therapist relinquishes the
power to control inherent in traditional therapeutic methodology by providing a
“receiving” climate of acceptance. Receiving involves a warm caring for the client—a
caring that is not possessive and demands no personal gratification. In the optimum of
therapy, the process of personality change is set into motion when the individual
experiences himself as being fully received.

Rogers states that the attitude and feelings of the therapist are important. However,
it is the way in which the therapist’s attitudes and procedures are perceived that make a
difference to the client, and that it is this perception that is crucial. Rogers feels that:
“To withhold one’s self as a person and to deal with the other person as an object does
not have a high probability of being helpful.”

A Helping Relationship

Rogers defines a helping relationship as “a relationship in which I have the intent of
promoting the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, improved coping
with life of another.” When successful, the other person will discover within him/herself

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51 Ibid., 184-185.
52 Ibid., 130.
53 Ibid., 263-265.
the capacity to use that relationship for growth, and change and personal development will occur in the client.\textsuperscript{54}

In a helping relationship, in addition to feeling received, the client should experience or perceive something of the therapist's congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathy. It is not enough that these conditions exist in the therapist; they must have been successfully communicated to the client.\textsuperscript{55}

**A Basic Condition**

A basic condition of client-centered therapy as proposed by Carl Rogers is that the client experiences herself as being fully received by the therapist. There is implied in this term the concept of being understood, empathically, and the concept of acceptance. Receiving involves a warm caring for the client—a caring that is not possessive and which demands no personal gratification.\textsuperscript{56}

In the optimum of therapy, a process of personality change is set in motion when the individual experiences himself as being fully received. It is the client's experience of this condition which makes it *optimal*, not merely the fact of its existence in the therapist.\textsuperscript{57}

Congruencies, as defined by Rogers, is a state in which, "self-experiences are accurately symbolized, and are included in the self-concept in this accurately symbolized form." Rogers defines "congruence" as a condition of being genuine. Being genuine involves being internally consistent and transparently real in the relationship with the

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., 33-40.

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., 282-284.

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., 282.

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., 130.
The feelings the therapist is experiencing are available to him, available to his awareness, and he is able to live these feelings, be them, and able to communicate them if appropriate.\(^5\) For the therapist, being genuine involves the willingness to openly be and to express, in words and behavior, the various feelings and attitudes which at that moment are flowing in him.

Rogers’s third condition is \textit{unconditional positive regard}. He defines unconditional positive regard as acceptance of each fluctuating aspect of the client as it comes to expression.\(^6\) There is acceptance of the client with warm prizing regard as a separate person of positive unconditional self-worth without reservations without evaluation. The therapist feels the client to be a person of unconditional self-worth of value no matter what his condition, his behavior, or his feelings. It involves a sensitive ability to see his world and himself as he sees them with “no strings attached.”\(^7\) The precondition of self-understanding is being understood and accepted. The precondition of self-acceptance is genuinely being accepted. God calls us to accept our unacceptability. The grace of God permits us to be who we are; and, being understood is liberating. The psychotherapeutic injunction that is the basis for acceptance of others is unconditional positive regard. In the Christian proclamation, the basis for the freedom to love the neighbor is the

\(^5\)Ibid., 375-397.
\(^6\)Ibid., 397.
\(^7\)Ibid., 61.

Ibid., 62.
forgiveness of God. One of Rogers’ hypotheses is that the major barrier to mutual interpersonal communication is our very natural tendency to judge, to evaluate, to approve or disapprove, the statement of the other person, or the other group.

For Rogers a fourth condition is empathic understanding. Empathy is “entering the internal frame of reference of another.” A person who is willing to understand each point of view empathically has influence, and thus acts as a catalyst to precipitate further understanding. When the therapist is sensing the feeling and personal meaning which the client is experiencing in each moment, when he can perceive these from “inside,” as they seem to the client, and when he can successfully communicate something of that understanding to his client, then this condition is fulfilled. Empathic understanding—understanding with a person, not about her/him— is such an effective approach that it can bring about major changes in personality.

In optimal therapy, the therapist has been able to enter into an intensely personal and subjective relationship with the client. The therapist is able to let himself go in understanding this client; no inner barriers keep him from sensing what it feels like to be the client at each moment of the relationship. He can convey something of his empathic understanding to the client. It means that the therapist has been comfortable in entering this relationship fully, satisfied with providing a climate that will permit the client the utmost freedom to become herself.

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Summary

The process of receiving a client is similar to minding a client. When I mind a client, I privilege him/her in our relationship. The client experiences him/herself as being received, welcomed, and understood as he/she is. There is a flow of a process of change that occurs. This process involves a loosening of feelings and a change in the manner of experiencing. As I become accepting of the feelings of another, I want this to be perceived as an offer. Therapy is learning, on the part of the client, to accept fully and freely and without fear the positive feelings I have for her/him.

As a therapist I institute certain attitudinal conditions. I have found that I am most effective when I am genuinely myself, fully accepting of the other, while avoiding judgments. I am sensitively empathic in my understanding, seeing the world through the client’s eyes. When I listen with understanding, real communication occurs, without any evaluative tendency. I am able to see the expressed idea and attitude from the other person’s point of view. I sense how it feels to him/her; to achieve his/her frame of reference in regard to the thing she is talking about.

Minding by Using Oneself

In the initial phase of therapy, withholding one’s self as a person by being silent and dealing with African American clients as objects does not have a high probability of being helpful. Actively engaging clients using the spoken word publicizes fidelity. However, once joining with clients and transference has been achieved, I advocate optimal failure on the part of the therapist. The optimal failure involves a shift from active engagement to therapeutic silence. Another shift that is required is the therapist’s
use of transference feelings to counter-transference feelings as a basis for interpretation of the client’s reality. I advocate that therapist move from active engagement to an observer participant stance.

**Observer-Participant**

After joining, the therapist can make a concerted effort to remain neutral and objective, while being attentive to the process, rather than to the content. One goal of the therapist is to control reactivity in order to become a better observer. This, of course, will require maintaining an optimal level of emotional distance to the point at which a therapist can see both the tragic and comic aspects of client’s interaction.

Existential therapy posits that the struggle of human beings is with the “givens”, the ultimate concerns of existence: death, isolation, freedom, and meaninglessness. Yalom advocates that the therapist should assume the role of observer-participant in order to facilitate therapy. The observer status affords the objectivity necessary to store information, to make observations about sequences or cyclical patterns of behavior, and to connect events that have occurred over long periods of time. The observer-participant participates emotionally as well as observes him/her and the counselee objectively. The most common charge levied against the therapist is that of being too cold, too aloof, and too inhuman. However, the observer-participant stance has redeeming, positive value. The stance of the observer-participant utilizes therapeutic silence and shifts from joining to interpretation.

Interpreting the shared world of the counselee and the therapist is the goal of

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successful therapy. I will explore experiential psychotherapy as a way to inform the process of minding as a participant observer. I wish to stress that participation involves using oneself in order to form a symphony of selves.

One day, I began to invite Joan into conversation by asking: “Where are you?” She began telling me that she was in a room. It had no doors. She didn’t know how she got there. She was the only one there, and she was safe in this room.

I joined her in silence. My counter-transference thoughts about the room centered on a play by Sartre called *No Exit*. Initially one woman occupied the room with no exit. There were no windows or doors. While there was anxiety about being alone in the room it was safe. However, when another woman entered the room and wanted to make changes in the room, the first woman felt victimized by the second woman because she did not stand up for herself. And finally, a third woman entered the room with her own selfish needs: existence for the first woman in the room with no exit became hell.

When asked where else she felt safe, Joan replied, living with her grandmother. She began to describe growing up with her grandmother and cousins, her extended family, instead of her biological mother. Later in therapy she acknowledged that she felt received in therapy.

Experiential psychotherapy emphasizes the personal involvement of the therapist to a radical, intimate degree. The therapist is encouraged to access deeply personal, unconscious aspects of his/her self and to bring those to the psychotherapy as a sounding board, intervention, and acknowledgement of the co-constituted nature of the therapeutic relationship. Unconscious communication is understood as the *sine qua non* of the
experiential psychotherapy process.  

Experiential psychotherapy is a way of understanding human experience. The basic intent of experiential psychotherapy is to help the patient (as well as the therapist) to increase his/her capacity to experience, to grow, to become increasingly authentic, increasingly healthy, and more whole.

Three basic principles define experiential psychotherapy. The first principle is that the unconscious is naturally oriented toward growth and wellness rather than regression and pathology. The unconscious, rather than the ego, is looked to as the wellspring of health and vitality. The second principle is that the therapeutic relationship is the ground within which healing takes place. The third principle is that the therapist is deeply, personally and inexorably a part of the therapeutic relationship, so much so that the primary dynamics of the therapeutic relationship are said to reside in the therapist.

**Relatedness**

Existential-phenomenology argues that all aspects of experience exist as an inseparable whole. The primary interpersonal context of our lives is the family of origin. In psychotherapy, the patient typically comes to the therapist in an attempt to break the pattern from his or her family of origin and live a more fully satisfying life. A major focus in experiential psychotherapy is to symbolically provide the relational experiences that have been absent and to provide “corrective” experiences in response. One of the therapist’s tasks is to provide the corrective experiences absent in early parenting.

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66Ibid., 1-3.
Patients typically recreate the dynamics from their family of origin upon entering psychotherapy and then have the opportunity to create new endings.\(^{67}\)

At the beginning of therapy, the patient must re-invest emotionally with the therapist as he/she had originally with the family of origin. I consider the whole family to be my patient. The intrapsychic family is looked upon as part of the patient and, secretly, therefore, my patients. For me, working with the family through the individual patient changes from inadvertent to conscious. I recognize the family as part of the patient.\(^{68}\)

The basic attitudes I have toward my own parents, parental figures, and attitudes toward the value of the extended family as a precious support system is invoked. I learned to try to find in myself whatever the patient was bringing to the interview, and to use my Self, not just my training, in doing psychotherapy.

Establishing relatedness is the foundation of any depth psychotherapy. Working on the issue of relatedness is crucial to the beginning of treatment. There is an inner core that not only desires relatedness, but also is actively seeking it. To establish relatedness you have to first join with the other, to move into a subjective experiencing and appreciation of their world, to see the world as they see it, from the inside-out; to dare to put one foot deeply into the patient’s largely unconscious world of the fantastic, while keeping the other firmly anchored in the world of consensual reality. The role of the experiential psychotherapist is to assist the patient in growing, ignoring the cultural

\(^{67}\)Ibid., 16-31.

\(^{68}\)Ibid., 153-157.
mores that are limiting, and culling from the culture that which is healthy.\textsuperscript{69}

Another fundamental characteristic of the therapist is the ability to tolerate and respect anxiety. The concept of anxiety represents one of the essential differences between the psychotherapeutic relationship and the counseling relationship. In counseling, the primary concern is with the patient’s external realities, and an attempt is made to reduce the anxiety and solve problems. In psychotherapy, the focus is on the patient’s experience, both conscious and unconscious, and on the relationship of patient and therapist. Counseling focuses on the patient’s life outside the office, while psychotherapy concerns the life of the dyadic relationship.\textsuperscript{70}

**The Use of Self**

The therapist’s use of self is, perhaps, the most readily identifiable feature of experiential psychotherapy. It is the person of the therapist, the intangible factors, rather than any specific technique that seems to account for the bulk of therapeutic effect. Psychoanalytic therapists have generally maintained a one-sided view of the therapeutic relationship, attributing the dynamics entirely to the patient’s transference, while seeing the counselor as a \textit{tabula rosa}.\textsuperscript{71}

Experiential therapists have maintained that the therapist’s subjective involvement in the therapeutic relationship is so central as to be the primary determinant of the dynamics of the psychotherapy. It is the therapist’s unconscious anxiety, the anxiety of being and becoming, (which is not always reflected consciously) that determines the

\textsuperscript{69}Ibid., 143-150.

\textsuperscript{70}Ibid., 20-73.

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., 23-24.
power of the psychotherapy. That unconscious anxiety reflects my dissatisfaction with myself, which is my primary motivation for growing and doing psychotherapy. The therapist is also a co-determinant of resistance in the psychotherapy. In experiential psychotherapy, the therapy belongs to the patient. The therapist provides an invitation to greater depth, but it is the patient who determines the agenda, pacing, and depth of the psychotherapy. Alfred Adler defined resistance as the patient's healthy response to a disagreement between the patient and therapist about the agenda of the psychotherapy, what he called a "misalignment of goals." 72

A Symphony of Selves

Experiential psychotherapy encourages authentic, spontaneous use of the self, as it feels intuitively "right." 73 Techniques and in-the-moment expressions of the therapist may help deepen the process of an interview. One technique is listening for a key word or phrase, one which may either trigger a resonance in the relationship to the patient, or one which provides a door to the important material—conscious, preconscious or unconscious. In general, the therapist is well advised to focus on any material that is laden with potential unconscious meaning, rather than getting stuck at the level of symptoms or "problem solving." 74

In experiential psychotherapy, in relationship, there can be a symphony of selves. This can be done by utilizing a process for encountering internal creative forces. The therapist can provide a climate that encourages experiences of creative acts. He or she

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72 Ibid., 25.
73 Ibid., 63.
74 Ibid., 64-67.
can redirect the client toward inner experience, and allow an impasse to develop sufficiently to generate the search for creation. At that point, the therapist’s function is to support creative attempts and, perhaps, to respond, in kind, from an equally hidden resource.\textsuperscript{75}

The following example highlights the family of origin as always present and how the unconscious is naturally oriented toward growth and wellness. Marcus came in for one session without much energy in his stride. After greetings, he fell silent. We were silent for a while. He began by saying that he had received a letter from his brother, who asked that in the future when he sent money for him that it be sent directly to him instead of to their mother. He said that their mother had remarried a man that already had a family and that she had spent the money he sent for the family survival and advancement to pay for her wedding. He could not understand how his mother continually let men take advantage of her. As he explored his conscious feelings about his mother being a victim, his unconscious feeling began to surface. He resented not only her spending of the children’s survival money but her promiscuousness. Also, he resented the fact that she had Marcus, her son, playing the patriarchal role of her ex-husband. He was tired of it and intended to finally tell her that he did not want to continue to wear the mantle that she put on him. He would help when he could, but he would not bear the guilt of being the children’s father.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 137-138.
Tasks of Termination

Every successful symphony must have an ending and so must successful therapy. It is my belief that client and therapist should transition into termination. The patient and the therapist need to share any feelings about each other that have remained unspoken to this point. Feelings of caring and love will have greatly facilitated the therapeutic process, and may or may not have been verbalized at the time. The therapist must be sure they are spelled out at termination. The patient and therapist should also assess, together, what has been done and what has not been accomplished, tying up any loose ends in the process. Sharing views of experience with each other can be very revealing and rewarding. Achieving some feeling of equality with the therapist is an essential phenomenon in a natural termination.76

In our final sessions, Joan reflected on her graduation, saying that it felt wonderful to take her seat. She also wondered if the changes she made would be pleasing to God. We ended the process of saying goodbye, which began about a month earlier. It is my belief that going through anticipatory grief is necessary for transition to life without the therapist.

My clinical experience has taught me the value of silent listening and not robbing clients of the “unthought known.” Destroying the need of the client for solitude through extractive introjection, a procedure in which one person invades another person’s mind and appropriates certain elements of mental life, is theft of mental content, affective

76Ibid., 80-93.
process, mental structure, and self.\textsuperscript{77}

However, counselors need to be sensitive to the African-American lifestyle, language and patterns of behavior. It is my belief that silence by the counselor does not express collective sharing, as the initial use of silence negates sharing or any feelings of kinship. The depth pastoral counseling being discussed involves a relationship between a pastoral counselor and a client that uses the interaction to free the client’s internal resources for growth. A warm, trusting, and empathetic relationship between the pastoral counselor and client is necessary for the emergence and use of nurturing images of kindness that strengthen and support spiritual values. Empathy is an experiential quality developed as one learns to be one’s genuine self.

Experiential psychotherapy encourages authentic, spontaneous use of the self, as it feels intuitively “right.” Counselors are advised to follow their intuition and focus on any material that feels laden with potentially unconscious meaning.

\textsuperscript{77}\textit{Ibid.}, 165.
CHAPTER VI
A PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL METHOD

Introduction

In Chapter I, this author proposed that pastoral counseling, in an attempt to become a legitimate science, has tended to draw upon the psychology of the silent neutral stance far more than the theology of hospitality as a fundamental frame of reference. I proposed that conflict be seen as an occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation. I advocated minding by joining with clients to actively engage them in conversation in order to build trust by disarming their defenses and connecting with them.

In Chapter II, I proposed that the silent neutral stance in pastoral counseling was problematic as a model for connecting with African Americans in conflict, and that revisiting the benefits and outcomes of the silent neutral stance may yield valuable insights in helping pastoral counselors make inroads into the African-American community. I discussed designing a model of therapy, my thesis, definitions of key terms and my methodology.

In Chapter III, I detailed the existence of the African, African-American cultural legacy of nommo, the generative quality of the spoken word. In doing so I demonstrated that the silent neutral stance ignores the “idiom of community” of the African-American cultural experience which includes a definitional system of collective survival under oppressive conditions. In addition, I have offered that the oral tradition, religious
experience and extended family model as indigenous African-American approaches for coping with contradictions and providing support in the midst of conflict.

Also in chapter III, I explored the works of Howard Thurman, who proposed that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazarus provided succor by modeling a “will to share,” a supportive approach for coping with contradictions in the midst of conflict for the oppressed. Conflict is unavoidable and by analogy an opportunity for a Divine initiative. Thurman demonstrates that the idiom of community, the oral tradition and the hospitality of the inclusive community have the power to transform and consolidate one’s identity in the midst of paradox. I advocated acting in lieu of a parent and partnering with strangers provides a conceptualization for the design of a model of minding as transformative authority.

The work of Edward Wimberly was also drawn on as a pastoral theologian whose thinking used conversation and faith story to develop the therapeutic implication of the African American legacy for pastoral counseling. African Americans resisted recruitment into negative identities and combated the pressure to become victims of racial conversations existing in the wider society. He advocated giving conversation with God a privileged status over all other conversations.

In Chapter IV, I explored the concept of Christian hospitality as a model of the “will to share,” in an effort to construct a model of a helping relationship using hospitality as a way of connecting with African Americans in conflict. Like Thurman, I believe that will to share is at the root of Christian hospitality and pivotal to the establishment of the inclusive community. In my discussion, I highlighted how
hospitality saves the other from the invisibility that comes from social devaluation. Likewise, I demonstrated how a deliberate partnership with strangers is a way of participating in God’s redeeming work.

I offered Walter Brueggemann and the concept of *kenosis* and the process of *othering*. And I discussed Marcel Gabriel and the concept of creative fidelity. I highlighted the fact while the kenosis of Jesus can be seen in His coming in the form of a servant; God’s kenotic act was to come in the form of Jesus who came in the form of a servant. I suggested that using the concept of kenosis from the prospective of emptying oneself of privilege can create a bond of creative fidelity. *Kenosis* provides a conceptualization of a design for a practical theological model of therapy. I proposed that *kenosis* provides an opportunity for an encounter with the Divine.

In Chapter V, I demonstrated how psychology can aid us in gaining an understanding of the other by conceptualizing the inner world of the other. My primary focus was on psychoanalytic theory of transference and the silent neutral stance. I discussed object-relations theory which emerged out of psychoanalytic thought as a corrective attempt to invest interpersonal relations with a more significant role in personality development.

My goal was to revisit Freud’s theories of instinctual gratification, the fundamental rule (to simply listen), and the use of language in psychoanalysis. I noted that Freud did not like to look at clients and talked very little so that clients could have anxiety in abundance. Freud felt that transference or the semblance of someone who showed kindness was a hindrance and should not be fostered. I purpose that theologians took a
wrong turn. Instead I purposed the extending of hospitality to satisfy the instinctual need for a relationship. Fairbairn was particularly important to my discussion because of his theory that the fundamental drive of personality is the need to be in relationship.

I proposed that we engage silent clients in generative conversation in order to lessen some anxiety and symbolize the attachment of someone who was kind in order to deliberately form an alliance and form transference. I suggested that contrary to Freud, theologians seek the development of interpersonal relations and view people other than oneself as more than un-influential objects.

Primarily using the works of D. W. Winnicott, I proposed that the minding model include the concepts of the “good-enough mother”, optimal frustration and transitional space as a design of a model of minding capable of moving from active engagement to therapeutic silence. I suggested that the “good-enough mother” relinquishes her authority to serve the needs of her child. Initially the “good-enough mother” is the servant of the child.

In this Chapter, I will do pastoral theological reflection on relinquishing as a design for a helping relationship. I shall begin with a brief discussion of pastoral care and counseling in order to determine our focus for evaluation of foundations upon which the critical judgments are made. I will then proceed to a discussion of pastoral theology concerning ways of interpreting experience..

I will then explore the concept of relinquishing drawing on the therapeutic concept of empathy as provided by Carl Rogers and the biblical concept of Kenosis drawing on Thomas Oden’s concepts. I will explore the dialectic relationship between a God-
centered theology of Divine self-disclosure as defined by Karl Barth and a client-centered psychology of human self-disclosure as defined by Carl Rogers as a way of interpreting experience.

I would like to deal with interpreting any experience, event, or phenomenon as religious and psychological. I would like to argue for the use of language as a tool for articulating.

I intend to explore a theory of therapy, the helping relationship, from a phenomenological point of view. This view of the experience of therapy is more from an external frame of reference, in an attempt to capture those qualities of expression, which may be observed by another, of the point of view from within God and the client’s frame of reference.

From this dialogue, I will draw out elements of my own natural pastoral theological method. My intention is to develop a design for a model of a helping relationship that transforms authority. This model promotes freedom by acceptance. This model is based on the client experiencing himself as being fully received by me. This caring act is a process of humility and exaltation and can be considered as filling by emptying. (Phil 2:7). This process of filling by emptying is likened to the kenosis of God in Jesus the Christ. My thesis is that a caring act is best received in a climate of freedom and acceptance that gives permission to exercise subjective choice. I propose an ontology of acceptance as a definitional stance for a model of minding.

In addition I wish to propose that any concept of a design for a model of minding include love as the basic enabling reality and power of therapeutic help. I further propose
that a practical theological model of love is the *kenosis* of God in Jesus Christ. The illuminating point of certainty of participating knowledge for most of my clients was in the God of Jesus Christ.

**Pastoral Care and Counseling**

Anton T. Boisen has been identified as the father of clinical pastoral education. It can also be argued that he is the father of modern pastoral theology. In 1920, Rev. Anton Boisen suffered a mental illness. Boisen understood his illness as a religious experience. At stake were issues of spiritual life and death.\(^1\) His hypothesis was that “such experiences are to be explained in terms of the disorganization of the inner world consequent upon the upsetting of the foundations upon which the critical judgments are made and that, as such, it is closely related to certain types of religious experience.”\(^2\)

Boisen saw the seminarian’s hospital experience as a “theological education-via the clinic.”\(^3\) This training expressed the importance of narrative. Their work confirms the view that the experience of salvation is potentially an experience of emotional health.

Rev. Boisen suggested that pastoral counselors should include in their preparation “the study of living human documents” in addition to classical texts of theology. The troubled person’s own reporting of his or her inner world of experience was to be respected and heard as having an authenticity and rights of its own, no matter how peculiar its language.


\(^3\)Thornton, *Theology and Pastoral Counseling*, 129.
The idea of God was much in evidence in all of his acutely disturbed patients as one element of their characteristic religious concern. That idea represents to the individual who uses the term the composite impress of those with whom he seeks identification, those whose love is necessary to him, and those who stand supreme in his hierarchy of loyalties. Whether a man is consciously religious or not, there is deep in his heart the need of being at one with those whom he loves and to whom he owes allegiance. The idea of God is to be regarded as a symbol of that need and of that allegiance. Boisen concluded that the idea of God is not without therapeutic significance. It stands for a unifying principle in both the individual and the social philosophy of life.⁴

The case of Joan illustrates the idea of God and a need for unity. Joan’s presenting problem was depression with her sense of victimization also surfacing in her calling and her faith. God was distant. God did not mind her, and she was having trouble minding God. She was having difficulties remaining celibate as demanded by her church. Before, being celibate had been a sanctuary; now it was like being in hell. Yet, Joan still hoped for a meaningful relationship and a secure trust.

Joan’s denomination expected her to be celibate. Her pastoral identity and her sexual identity were in conflict. She summarized it as sacred or profane. We began to explore her theological beliefs and her responsibility to honor them. She began to evaluate and explicate her understanding of her calling, Scripture, and faith in God.

The pivotal question I would ask my clients, whenever they introduced contradictions with issues of faith, was: “How does your faith inform you?” She replied

that she felt like the woman at the well and also Mascal, Saul’s daughter and David’s first wife. She was a sexual pawn in the hands of men. She was a victim of circumstance. Joan, like her mother, grandmother, and cousins had histories of being in abusive relationships.

As she began to honor her beliefs, she was able to question the role of ministry demanded by her church and pastor. She no longer had the feeling of “being at home” in her church community. Together, we explored what Thurman would call the “inclusive community” of God. Eventually, Joan began to claim her authority to form and act upon her own understanding of what God required of her. Her fidelity was to God. She clung to her belief in the God of Jesus Christ who proclaimed hope for the disinherited in His inclusive community.

Hope is an outcome of two factors. Citing Maurice L. Farber who calls the personal factor “competence,” is the basic, pervasive feeling in the individual that he or she has the resources within the self to cope with the demands of living. The situational factor is the “degree of threat leveled against the individual’s being able to sustain a minimally acceptable existence.”

The counselor’s perceptive sensitivity moves beneath and within outward appearance to the level of faith and interpretation. Here, the counselor will find the primary rootage and the hope for his or her ministry. That rootage and hope is manifested through participation in the disclosure of God’s activity on the human behalf and the

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transformation of life by the power of His incarnation.\textsuperscript{6} Our claim rests upon the faith that we have been called to participate in a mystery—the mystery of God’s grace appearing in human existence.\textsuperscript{7}

I wish to present an instance of a remembered experience of empowerment attributed to faith and prayer where participation in a mystery was felt. Marcus from Case Study II, provides a prime example.

At the end of Marcus’ junior year in high school he returned to Haiti. His host family in America had refused to extend him any further hospitality because he would not agree to return to Haiti after graduation from high school. That summer was a low point of his life. He was depressed at the idea of having to stay in Haiti for the rest of his life. He lost weight. Summer was ending and he still did not have permission to return. He prayed to God for deliverance. As summer worn on his condition worsen. Just when his hope was waning, a messenger arrived with notification that his denomination had found him a new sponsor. Communication system difficulties delayed the good news of his deliverance. His prayers had been answered. He returned to America, where he excelled educationally, finishing high school, college, and seminary while staying with his “play mother.”

Gerkin describes hope as not simply a psychological possession of the individual, but a social phenomenon that to a greater or lesser degree pervades the atmosphere of the community or society. It cannot be maintained alone, but depends upon the availability

\textsuperscript{6}Charles V. Gerkin, \textit{Crisis Experience in Modern Life: Theory and Theology for Pastoral Care} (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979), 332.

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., 18.
of succorance and hopefulness in the social situation in which the individual finds himself or herself.⁸

The pastoral care tradition that is an analogy for the pastoral relationship with which we are concerned comes from the *kenotic* image of the incarnation in Jesus. As Jesus emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and became one with the human condition, so the counselor as God’s representative must empty himself/herself on his/her own different perspective on the events of judgment in the life of the despairing in order to understand and identify with the despair of the other. To the extent that the counselor is able to do this, the way is opened for the despairing to experience the relationship as gratuitous, unearned and accepting, despite the unacceptable, “condemned” state of the despairing. Only when such an unearned relationship of gracious understanding, alongside their despair, has been achieved with consistency and *unintrusive intentionality* is offered and received can the despairing begin to feel a ray of hope for emergence from the pit of despair.⁹ The loss of a *centered relationship*—*any* relationship central to the meaning of who one is as a person, a relationship in which one’s identity is centered—can undermine trust and competence. These relationships are central to us, and our lives are in a deeply-rooted way centered in them. To lose such a person, is to lose part of one’s self, a meaning central to one’s identity. The centered relationship for most people includes one’s spouse and other members of the nuclear and extended family. Persons draw their identity from those with whom they are identified; persons in whom our lives

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⁸Ibid., 166.

⁹Ibid., 185.
are centered become part of us.\textsuperscript{10}

For Gerkin, what is needed is a \textit{reminder of God's transcendent providential participation} in human crisis. The counselor's task is to assist persons in crisis in searching for a ground upon which a renewal of the power of Divine providence in times of human crisis can be restored. The task is one of searching for viable ways of restoring to modern persons a more potently functional sense of God's promise to participate in and, ultimately, assure the outcome of human life in the crises.\textsuperscript{11}

Reflection on the pastoral methodology suggests that the counselor must attempt to ferret out and bring into the community of awareness between himself or herself and the despairing person those experiences of other relationships, untended and overlooked events that may speak of hope, self-affirmation, and authenticity. These newfound contexts of awareness can often counter or contradict the despairing style of awareness. It is as though there are numerous allies to the counselor's succoring efforts that remain in the shadows of the person's life, un-responded to and not given significance.

The problem is that of breaking the despairing hermeneutic circle so that an enlarged context of awareness and interpretation that includes forgiveness, acceptance, and a growing expectation of God's activity on human behalf can be fostered and a hopeful style of tending to experience engendered.\textsuperscript{12}

In the midst of the givenness of our individual situations, each of us must somehow

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 142.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., 17.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., 186.
retain a sense of ownership of our own agency, our own ability to do and be someone with power to act and choose. We must exercise our need and capacity to make meaning of the interpretations of who we are, what the world is, and what, given our situation, is most meaningful. Like Gerkin, I believe that to be successful in establishing connectedness with African Americans in conflict, a centered, valued, human relationship must be formed. This affective unity is what I refer to as creative fidelity. Restoring memories of deliverance is a way of breaking the despairing hermeneutic circle of conflict and despair.

**Pastoral Theology**

One of the questions raised earlier in our discussion of the problem was 'How can conflict be seen as an occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation?' I wish to address the issue of seeing conflict as an occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative. I shall begin with a discussion of pastoral theology.

The study of the interpenetration of theology and pastoral care and counseling has emerged today as pastoral theology. Pastoral theology is a discipline sustained by the hope that the concrete realities of pastoral ministry will contribute to a valid synthesis of both theology and pastoral care.

Edward E. Thornton defined pastoral care and counseling as forms of religious ministry that integrate the findings of behavioral science and theology in the effort to prepare the way for Divine-human encounter in the midst of human crisis. Pastoral care

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participates in the continuing incarnation. It may prepare the way for Divine-human
encounter in the midst of crisis experiences.14

Thornton states that the Christian community is built on the celebrative use of
conflict. The counseling process stimulates spontaneous expression of both tender and
hostile feelings. Counseling and psychotherapy are, by definition, processes in which
persons test the spirits that move them personally.15

Method of the Dissertation

I will use a pastoral theological method. This method is a process of theological
reflection or “theologizing” in the pastoral context or from a pastoral perspective such as
pastoral care and counseling. This theological method is a three-order reflection on the
manner in which judgments are made concerning: (First Order) religious language
designated as the collection of phrases employed to give expression to the way in which a
person’s or community’s life is related to God; (Second Order) the explication and
critical evaluation of the basic meaning of religious language for yielding theological
judgments; and (Third Order) is critical reflection of the caring act. This theological
method is concerned with the evaluation of the sources, norms and procedures of
theological judgments.

Phenomenological Method

The interdisciplinary methodology I wish to use for relating theology, psychology and
other human sciences is the phenomenological method. My goal is to enter into the


15Ibid., 113-118.
experiential internal frame of reference of the counselee(s). It is a method that "brackets the worlds" constructed by disciplinary structures. The method proposes to gain, via an intuition of Being, what the sciences of both theology and psychology obscure, \textit{a priori} by their disciplinary systems. I propose that we give precedence to how relationships are established in actual experience over some methodology that dictates that one must be a silent observer.

My starting point is the human situation, the experience of being in the world. Added to this is the experience of being a person in crisis in the world. The human person is a participant in and not merely a spectator of reality and life in the world. Personal experience is the basis for any inquiry into how to form relationships with persons in crisis.

From a phenomenological approach, understanding takes place from within, by bracketing the natural world and attending, instead to the inner experience that is the author of that world. The phenomenological point of view of the experience of therapy centers more on an external frame of reference, in an attempt to capture those qualities of expression, which may be observed by another—the point of view from within God and the client's frame of reference. The phenomenological method is a model of conversation that often lies at the center of human and pastoral encounters, an expression of faith and personal and group experience—a product of the direct reflection of particular situations and events which some may regard as non-systematic. The
phenomenological point of view of the experience is dialectical, in that it proceeds by way of critical conversation between different voices so that all can be heard.16

The struggle of human beings is with the “givens,” the ultimate concerns of existence: death, isolation, freedom and meaninglessness.17 The awareness of being a child of God tends to stabilize the ego and results in a new courage, fearlessness and power. My task is to help reflection to reach the vital and ever religious element concealed in the use of language that is otherwise obscured by belief in reason alone in achieving a total grasp of crisis.

The proper realm of the study of human beings is consciousness itself, employing an “as if” dimension. Gabriel Marcel distinguished two kinds of consciousness, ‘first reflection’ and “second reflection.” The silent neutral stance is an example of first reflection in that the counselor is expected to stand back from publicizing fidelity in order to describe and objectify the relationship. Silence in the relationship then becomes a problem in need of explanation. In second reflection, the immediacy of the relationship is restored, but additionally there is an awareness of participation in Being: the recognition that we inhabit a ‘mystery.’ In minding, the immediacy of restoring the relationship is primary. Rather than viewing our primary task to separate ourselves and objectify the relationship, we can create an awareness of participation in being.

The position that I occupy is felt as mediatory, in that I view myself as a link between powers whose communication with one another is my responsibility. I act as a

16 Stephen Pattison, A Vision of Pastoral Theology: In Search of Words that Resurrect the Dead (Edinburgh: Contact Pastoral Limited Trust, 1994), 8-22.

17 Gerkin, Crisis Experience in Modern Life, 171.
mediator in a such a way that this blinded consciousness turns toward the will that I
serve, that it unfolds to the light which is supposed to illumine me. With this in mind, I
must be absolutely sure that the other consciousness does not feel that I am acting out of
personal motives. I am truly a mediator between him/her and an unknown will that
refrains from revealing itself as a material power; and that this love must go out to the
soul as it is. With the belief that nourishes it, and which must also be included in my
embrace; my love must be strong enough to allow this soul to be transformed and to
renew itself, to expand and to be reborn as an image of the God whose interpreter I say I
am.  

**Interpreting Experience**

I wish to discuss in more detail the statement made earlier that the religious
experience can be defined as a dynamic encounter between man and God through the
experience of human suffering. I will deal with interpreting any experience, event, or
phenomenon as religious or psychological, and will argue that the use of language as a
tool for articulating. I will also highlight some psychoanalytic concepts that refer to
phenomena bearing an unusual resemblance to certain kinds of religious phenomena.

For purposes of this discussion, religion or "religious matters" refers to a kind or
quality of life, a particular way of experiencing, engaging, and symbolizing a dimension
of reality. Language is a tool used by scripture, tradition, preaching and communities to
spread the good news of the *kerygma* or Christian proclamation that said God is for us.

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19 Chris R. Schlauch, “Neglected Questions at the Interface of Psychology and Religion,” *Pastoral
Language has some of its origin in the process of acquisition of word-object connections. All words and language in general correspond to reality, real or imagined. Language exists independently of the learning process. A word cannot be understood apart from the network of terms in which it is situated. Words are social.

Jesus Christ spoke to the multitudes as a way of doing therapy. A basic tool of the therapeutic encounter is words. Words are part of a community. In acquiring a language, one is socialized into a way of being in the world, “a form of life.” Articulating is a necessary ingredient of meaning making. The creation of meaning emerges in the coordination of the “felt sense” and concept, in the process of articulating. In the process of coordination, one negotiates a “slippage” between felt sense and concept, between an “unthought known” and symbolization.

**Interpreting Experience**

I wish to coordinate a psychological investigation of the subject and the religious investigation of the object to formulate methodological and conceptual ways of negotiating the gap between humanity and the Divine. Human beings in pastoral counseling can find an analogous context with the freedom to participate. I will explore some of the many images and meanings of being human. Being human means being vitally connected to a caring relationship. Because human beings in relationship are both subject and object, I am assuming the role of participant observer in order to facilitate the process of meaning making.

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20Ibid., 216.

21Ibid., 220.
Also, I wish to highlight some psychoanalytic concepts, which refer to phenomena bearing an unusual resemblance to certain kinds of religious phenomena. I seek the coordination of the psychological investigation subject and the religious investigating object to formulate methodological and conceptual ways of negotiating the gap between subject and object.

**The Relationship**

As therapist we should try to create a relationship with our client in which they feel free and safe to go in any direction they desire. It is my purpose to understand the way he feels in his own inner world, to accept him as he is, to create an atmosphere of freedom in which he can be more in his thinking and feeling and being, in any direction he desires. By setting up conditions of psychological safety and freedom, creativity is fostered. Psychological safety means providing a climate in which external evaluation is absent. To see the client and what they are feeling and doing from their point of view, enter their private world and see it as it appears to them and still accept them is safety indeed. Psychological freedom is a permissiveness that gives the individual complete freedom to think, to feel, to be, whatever is most inward within himself. This type of relationship is called a “helping relationship.”

**The Basic Conditions**

**Client Centered Therapy**

Carl Rogers proposes a non-directive client centered therapy. It is an example of scientific knowledge. Client-centered psychotherapy is a close and intimate relationship, free of control and evaluative tendencies that hinder growth-facilitating relationships.
Client-centered therapy assumes the attitude that the individual has resources within himself for appropriate self-direction, if given a safe opportunity in which to explore him/herself. The burden of healing in psychotherapy is on the individual themselves.

The attitude and feelings of the therapist are very important. However, it is the way in which these attitudes, and procedures are perceived by the client that makes a difference and it is this perception that is crucial. It is the client’s experience of this condition that makes it optical, not merely the fact of its existence in the therapist. This concept of trusting the individual to be himself would mean that even when his behavior had to be thwarted, he would retain open “ownership” of his feelings. I accept my clients and promote their freedom to exercise their subjective choice by minding them.

Client-centered therapy calls for climate of congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathy. When I am genuine, openly being the feelings and attitudes that at each moment are flowing into me, I am in congruence. The feelings I am experiencing are available to me, available to my awareness, and I am able to live these feelings, be them, and able to communicate them if appropriate. By being internally consistent, a condition of transparency occurs, in which I am my real feelings.

When I project outgoing positive feelings for clients without reservations, without evaluation, I display unconditional positive regard. This means caring for the client in a non-possessive way. I provide a climate in which external evaluation is absent. This permissiveness gives the individual complete freedom to think, to feel, to be, whatever is most inward within him/her. Therapy is learning, on the part of the client, to accept fully and freely and without fear the positive feelings of another.
A very important condition for facilitating growth is empathy. Rogers defines empathy as “entering the internal frame of reference of another.” This condition is fulfilled when I am sensing the feeling and personal meaning which the client is experiencing in each moment, when I can perceive these from “inside,” as they seem to the client, and when I can successfully communicate something of that understanding to my client. Empathy involves a sensitive ability to see his world and himself as he sees them. Empathy has a phenomenological “as if” dimension.

The attitudes used in forming a helping relationship have the intent of promoting the growth, maturity and improved coping with life of clients. I use myself as a medium to facilitate psychological growth in clients. The reaction of the client who experiences this relationship is reciprocal of my attitude.

Like Carl Rogers, I launch myself into the relationship having a faith, that, my liking, my confidence, and my understanding of the other person’s inner world, will lead to a significant process of becoming. I let myself go into the immediacy of the relationship where it is my total organism that takes over and is sensitive to the relationship, not simply my consciousness. I am comfortable in entering this relationship fully satisfied with providing a climate of freedom, which will permit the client, the utmost freedom to become himself.

When a client experiences himself as being received, welcomed, and understood as he is, there is a flow of a process of change which occurs. When a facilitating counselor permits the individual a complete freedom of symbolic expression, a creative fidelity is fostered.
It has been my experience that providing a climate which will permit the client the utmost freedom to become themselves fosters growth. The mode of approach that I have found to be most helpful is offering me as a tool to establish a growth facilitating relationship. I relinquish the power to control inherent in traditional therapeutic methodology by providing a “receiving” climate of acceptance.

I have been able to enter into an intensely personal and subjective relationship with my clients as person to a person. Sometimes in my attempt to convey something of my empathic understanding to the client, a “moment of movement” occurs. By being internally consistent, a condition of transparency occurs, in which I am my real feelings and the client who experiences this relationship is reciprocal of my attitude. It involves the client prizing himself as a person of worth, as a separate, different individual in the relationship. Clients learn to exercise their capacity for subjective choice by choosing to disclose themselves to me and using the disclosure as a referent for future therapeutic growth.

In this section I will examine a moment of movement as a Divine encounter. I will use the work of Karl Barth to illustrate articulation relating religious meaning about the Divine. In addition, I will highlight the work of Thomas Oden, Sidney Jourard and Walter Brueggemann to illustrate articulation relating religious terms and psychological concepts about encountering the Divine.
Thomas Oden hypothesizes that "an adequate theory of therapy must not only understand therapeutic growth as a product of human self-disclosure, but authentic human self-disclosure as a response to the self-disclosure of God in being itself."²²

For Oden, the work of Carl Rogers can be viewed as a kind of dekerygmatized (dialogue without conversion) theology. He proposes that the secular counseling situation can be perceived as the arena of God’s self-disclosure. Oden believes that there are hidden similarities, despite basic differences, between a Barthian theology of Divine self-disclosure and the Rogerian therapy of human self-disclosure. Oden’s thesis is that “there is an implicit assumption hidden in the Christian kerygma and clarified in faith’s response to revelation.”²³ The psychotherapeutic process, although distinct from revelation, implicitly presupposes an ontological assumption-Deus pro nobis—which is made explicit in the Christian kerygma and clarified in faith’s response to revelation. It is, therefore, possible by means of the analogy of faith to perceive Christologically, the so-called secular counseling situation as the arena of God’s self-disclosure.²⁴

Oden sees the task of Christian theology as clarifying the meaning of the Christian faith, faith being understood as man’s affirmative response to God’s self-disclosure in Jesus Christ. The authority for speaking of revelation in the Christian community is four-fold: Scriptural, truth experienced in life and illuminated by reason and tradition. Faith receives this Word through a community tradition which moves through history bearing


²³Ibid., 9.

²⁴Ibid., 17.
witness to the earliest witness of the apostolic community to this Word (Scripture): this Word becomes intelligible to one only when a person symbolizes it in terms that are meaningful to him and others (reason) and when it becomes relevant to his existing situation (experience). 25

Effective therapists foster growth by spontaneously being themselves and avoiding compulsions to silence. Sidney Jourard emphasizes that it is not the theoretical orientation of the therapist that fosters growth, but the manner of the therapist’s being when in the presence of the patient. Effective therapists seem to follow this implicit hypothesis: If they are themselves in the presence of the patient, avoiding compulsions to silence, to reflection, to interaction, to impersonal technique, and kindred character disorders, but instead striving to know their patient, involving themselves in his situation, and then responding to his utterances with their spontaneous selves, growth is fostered. In short, they love their patients. Evidently, it is only the therapist’s good will that needs to be predictable, not his specific response to a patient’s disclosures. 26

Theological Reflection

Our search for a practical model of using disclosure as a referent for growth can be found in God’s self-disclosure through the kenotic act of Jesus the Christ as proclaimed in the biblical narrative. The purpose of theology is clarification of faith’s understanding of that Divine self-disclosure which enables the sufferer to perceive himself and his neighbor anew from the vantage point of God’s own care and love for man amid the

25Ibid., 31-33.
26Ibid., 38.
limitations of his existence. One grasps insight, one is grasped by revelation.\(^{27}\)

Revelation has the character of a gift that comes from beyond the resources of the individual.\(^{28}\)

In Christianity, we have an original union with God, given the creative kenosis of God at the ground of our being, and we can obtain a realization of this fact through a redemptive union with God.\(^{29}\) God as sovereign intends to succor humanity through the kenotic act of Jesus the Christ. In more client-centered approaches, the counselor divests himself of his own point of view, and by a process of kenosis or self-emptying, enters fully into the private and subjective world of the client. As therapists, we can only imitate the kenosis of God. We do not take anyone’s sin or estrangement upon ourselves. Our understanding, however, is not Divine understanding. The “as if” of the therapist is not the incarnation. "Even as God participates in our estrangement without being estranged from himself, likewise the therapist participates in the estrangement to the client without losing his self-identity."\(^{30}\) Oden hypothesizes that an adequate theory of therapy must not only understand therapeutic growth as a product of human self-disclosure, but authentic human self disclosure as a response to the self-closure of God in being itself.

Rogers defined empathy as the process of "perceiving the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy, and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto, as if one were the other person, but without ever losing the "as if"

\(^{27}\)Ibid., 34.

\(^{28}\)Ibid., 66.

\(^{29}\)Ibid., 55.

\(^{30}\)Ibid., 50-60.
condition. The *incarnation* means that God assumes our frame of reference, entering into our human situation of finitude and estrangement, sharing our human condition even unto death. Jesus experienced the knowability of humanity in the flesh.

Sidney Jourard argues that the crux of the process of psychotherapy is self-disclosure. God is not known, according to Hebrew-Christian thought, unless and until he makes himself known, and thus the knowability of God is dependent upon His self-disclosure or revelation. Regarding the knowability of the self in psychotherapy, Jourard argues that "You can truly know me only if I let you: only if I want you to know me." As the *kerygma* announces Divine revelation always was an act of sovereign Divine freedom, so does Jourard speak of therapeutic self-disclosure as an unmanipulable act of human freedom: "Man's self, as near as we now know, can never be known to any save the experiencing individual unless the individual man unequivocally cooperates and makes his self known."\(^{32}\)

A person cannot know himself except by disclosing himself to another person. We know who we are because we are known. "No man can come to know himself except as the outcome of disclosing himself to another person." People need psychotherapy because "they have not disclosed themselves in some optimum degree to the people in their life." This thesis is an existential expression of personal change, which is centered on a concept of self-disclosure analogous to the Christian understanding of revelation.\(^{33}\)

According to the *kerygma*, God reveals himself because he loves. The motivating

\(^{31}\)Ibid., 58.

\(^{32}\)Ibid., 41.

\(^{33}\)Ibid., 42.
force behind the process of self-disclosure is *agape.* Genuine love motivates self-disclosure. Jourard argues that love is the basic enabling reality and power of therapeutic help. Actively accepting love provides an invitation to authentic being. According to the kerygma, God reveals himself because he loves. He accepts because he loves. According to scripture, the grace of God permits us to be who we are. The precondition of self-acceptance is genuinely being accepted.34

**Karl Barth’s Analogy of Faith**

Karl Barth reassured the authority of scripture and the significance of theology in the life of the church. Barth laid particular emphasis upon the Holy Spirit as the instructor in personal sensitivity and upon Jesus Christ as the only model for living in this world.35 Barth wishes to substitute an *analogia fidei* (‘analogy of faith’) for the traditional *analogia entis* (‘analogy of being’—the view that God and man share sufficient in common to justify the use of the same predicates, however greatly qualified).

Barth’s *analogy of faith* begins with God’s word or activity as it is received in faith, and views the natural relationship, which begins with the concept of being, from the vantage point of the Divine activity. Barth proposed that one should read from the Christ event to human events, from God’s gracious action to human action, from God’s interpretation of man to human interpretation, understanding human words under the illuminating power of the Divine word.

34 Ibid., 62.

Instead of religious terms gaining their meaning first from the secular context and then being transferred to the religious, the process should be seen as being reversed. Meaning first comes from the context of revelation. For example, we first understand the meaning of “father” from everyday discourse. We have no clear idea of what the word properly means until that meaning is disclosed in the context of revelation. I wish to suggest that we cannot properly understand the meaning of transformative authority until that meaning is understood in the context of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

**Revelation**

Barth believes that there is no knowability of God apart from revelation. Faith is special knowing of oneself as known. Redemption or reconciliation does not result from man’s initiative; we are grasped by God. For Barth, God intersects our lives constantly and it is at the point of acceptance and obedience to the commands and permissions of God that man is awakened to conversion and knowledge of covenant participation. The Holy Spirit awakens man to his covenant existence.

Revelation is a Divine initiative. In revelation what happens is that “above and beyond the apparently infinite series of possibilities and visibilities in this world there breaks forth, like a flash of lighting the Truth of God which is now hidden.” Revelation is not at all something that natural reflection would suggest. Revelation is an asseveration of God calling man to be free and no supporting evidence is necessary. Revelation is a delivering event.

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Therapy as Delivering Event

I would like to show by analogy the theological basis of revelation and the illuminating point of the certainty of this participating knowledge. In the Christian faith, the illuminating point of certainty of participating knowledge is the God of Jesus Christ. I propose that a practical theological model of participation and silence looks like the God of Jesus Christ.

Oden proposes that “as the relationship of the redeeming God to the estranged world is constant, sympathetic, and active, and knowable as such in Jesus Christ, so is the relation of the congruent therapist to the troubled client constant, sympathetic, and active.” Psychotherapy concerns the *kerygma* of Biblical witness. Psychotherapy is defined as the service rendered to man in his internal self-relation, *therapeia* for the *psyche*, the attentive careful helping of the self toward authentic internal existence. Psychotherapy does not consist merely in talk, but in the power mediated through this unique personal relationship, which finally consists in making transparent the power of the accepting reality present in life itself. (I Cor. 4:20) Talking is merely functional to that more essential process of making unconditional acceptance transparent. (I Cor. 2:1-5) The authentic proclamation of the *kerygma* involves the demonstration of the power of God’s acceptance, binding up the demonic powers and embodying forgiving love in concrete interpersonal relationships.

Clients come to therapy in the hope that something might be revealed which will illumine the meaning of their lives. They come in the expectation that the health (salvus)
for which they have long yearned may now be within their grasp. This day of
expectation might be called an eschatological hope, in the sense of a hoped-for *eschaton*,
an end time, final day of fulfillment of the promise of human existence. Some such
expectation is an indispensable element of the revolution that we call effective
psychotherapy.

There is a profound sense in which all persons seriously engaged in psychotherapy
are expecting the Christ, if Christ is understood in the sense of a delivering event which
will bring human existence to fulfillment and wholeness. To affirm that Jesus is the
Christ is to affirm that the reality which we meet in the *now* is the reconciling, forgiving,
renewing reality which is proclaimed and celebrated in the therapeutic ministry of Jesus
of Nazareth. 38

The central purpose of therapy is the discovery of a relationship in which a troubled
individual is free to explore his feelings and share them for self-clarification. I have
adopted an ontology of acceptance as a definitional system to enhance my forming such a
relationship. I am not the source of acceptance; I only points to an acceptance that has its
source beyond me. From a religious point of view, some of my clients have internalized
me as a positive significant other person who enabled them to engage God.

Like Barth, I believe that God is with us, *Deus pro nobis*, which is made explicit in
the Christian *kerygma* and clarified in faith’s response to revelation. God reveals himself
because he loves. The motivating force behind the process of self-disclosure is *agape*. It
is because of God’s Divine love. God utilized a process of *kenosis* or self-emptying to

38Ibid., 162-170.
fully enter into the private and subjective world of creation. God showed his empathy by assuming our frame of reference, entering into our human situation of finitude and estrangement, sharing our human condition even unto death through the incarnation. God’s Divine love is unconditional. His Divine love and acceptance provides a model for unconditional positive regard. Unconditional positive regard is more than acceptance, it is active affirmative prizing and reaching out for the neighbor in positive love, concern, sympathy, and care.

In my client-centered approach, I divest myself of my own point of view, and by a process of kenosis or self-emptying enter fully into the private and subjective world of the client. My understanding is not Divine understanding. I do not take anyone’s sin or estrangement upon myself. Like Barth, I believe that there is an analogy between the relationship of the redeeming God to the estranged world, which is constant, sympathetic, and active, and knowable as such in Jesus Christ, and the analogy of the relationship of the congruent therapist to the troubled client constant, sympathetic, and active.

Another analogy is the word therapy and the Christian kerygma to announce the good news. The root word for “therapy,” the Greek therpeia, with its derivative therapon, means “service.” The therapon is the servant who renders careful, experience, watchful, meticulous, skilled, obedient, painstaking service to the one to whom he is intimately responsible. Of the Greek words signifying “servant”, the most intimate of these is therapon, which always refers to some highly personal, sympathetic, confidential act of service, in contrast to doulos, which bespeaks more the distant between servant and master.
According to the *kerygma*, God reveals himself because He loves. The motivating force behind the process of self-disclosure is *agape*. The troubled person is allowed the freedom to discover the covenant at the center of his or her own personal existence through dwelling in the presence of a person who mediates the reality of God’s acceptance relationally. Talking is merely functional to that more essential process of making unconditional acceptance transparent. I display my love by disclosing my acceptance of my clients.

**Summary**

There is a tacit ontological assumption of all effective therapy not that it is merely the counselor who accept the client but that the client is acceptable as a human being by the ground of being itself, and that the final reality that we confront in life is for us-Deus pro nobis (God is for us). The counselor is not the source of acceptance; he only points to an acceptance that has its source beyond himself. This implicit assumption is precisely what is explicit by God’s self-disclosure in Jesus Christ. The counselor is performing a *representative ministry* implicitly communicating to the individual through this relationship that he is acceptable in the midst of his guilt. This acceptance is by creation itself.

An implicit assumption of effective psychotherapy is “an ontology of acceptance.” An *ontology of acceptance is identifiable in any truly therapeutic process.* We are accepted not by our own initiative, but, in fact, whether we accept it or not, we are called to accept our acceptability. The counselor assumes a ministry of witness allowing clients

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39Ibid., 21-31.
the freedom to discover the covenant at the center of their own personal existence through dwelling in the presence of a person who mediates the reality of God's acceptance relationally rather than verbal proclamation.
CHAPTER VII

ESSENCE OF THERAPY

Introduction

In Chapter I, this author proposed that pastoral counseling, in an attempt to become a legitimate science, has tended to draw upon the psychology of the silent neutral stance far more than the theology of hospitality as a fundamental frame of reference. I proposed that conflict be seen as an occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation. I advocated minding by joining with clients to actively engage them in conversation in order to build trust by disarming their defenses and connecting with them.

In Chapter II, I proposed that the silent neutral stance in pastoral counseling was problematic as a model for connecting with African Americans in conflict, and that revisiting the benefits and outcomes of the silent neutral stance may yield valuable insights in helping pastoral counselors make inroads into the African-American community. I discussed designing a model of therapy, my thesis, definitions of key terms and my methodology.

In Chapter III, I detailed the existence of the African/African American cultural legacy of *nommo*, the generative quality of the spoken word. In doing so I demonstrated that the silent neutral stance ignores the “idiom of community” of the African-American cultural experience which includes a definitional system of collective survival under
oppressive conditions. In addition, I have offered that the oral tradition, religious experience and extended family model as indigenous African-American approaches for coping with contradictions and providing support in the midst of conflict.

Also, in Chapter III, I explored the works of Howard Thurman, who proposed that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazarus provided succor by modeling a “will to share,” a supportive approach for coping with contradictions in the midst of conflict for the oppressed. Conflict is unavoidable and by analogy a Divine initiative. Thurman demonstrates that the idiom of community, the oral tradition and the hospitality of the inclusive community have the power to transform and consolidate one’s identity in the midst of paradox. I advocated acting in lieu of a parent and partnership with strangers provides a conceptualization for the design of a model of minding as transformative authority.

The work of Edward Wimberly was also drawn on as a pastoral theologian whose thinking used conversation and faith story to develop the therapeutic implication of the African American legacy for pastoral counseling. African Americans resisted recruitment into negative identities and combated the pressure to become victims of racial conversations existing in the wider society. He advocated giving conversation with God a privileged status over all other conversations.

In Chapter IV, I explored the theology of Christian hospitality as a conceptualization of a design for a model of minding in an effort to construct a model of a helping relationship of being kind as a way of connecting with African Americans in conflict. I believe that will to share is at the root of Christian hospitality and pivotal to
the establishment of the inclusive community. In my discussion, I highlighted how hospitality saves the other from the invisibility that comes from social devaluation. Likewise, I demonstrated how a deliberate partnership with strangers is a way of participating in God’s redeeming work. I offered Walter Brueggemann and the concept of kenosis and the process of othering. And finally, I discussed Marcel Gabriel and the concept of creative fidelity. I highlighted the fact while the kenosis of Jesus can be seen in His coming in the form of a servant, God’s kenotic act was to come in the form of Jesus who came in the form of a servant. I suggested that using the concept of kenosis from the prospective of othering can create a bond of creative fidelity by transforming authority. Kenosis provides a conceptualization of a practical theological model of transformative authority.

In Chapter V, I demonstrated how psychology can aid us in gaining an understanding of the other side of silence for African American individuals in conflict by conceptualizing the inner world of the other. I explored the psychoanalytic theory of transference and the silent neutral stance. I discussed object-relations theory as a corrective attempt to invest interpersonal relations with a more significant role in personality development. I revisited Freud’s theories of the fundamental rule (to simply listen), and the use of language in psychoanalysis. I explored the works of W. R. D. Fairbairn to portray a model of instinctual needs and determined that the fundamental drive is the need to be in relationship. I advocated the “good-enough mother” as a model of transformative authority which displays availability, empathy and optimal frustration.
A client, who is sure of his/her therapist's availability or fidelity, will generally want to explore his/her immediate environment and disclose the nature of the crisis.

My goal was to revisit Freud's theories of instinctual gratification, the fundamental rule (to simply listen), and the use of language in psychoanalysis. I noted that Freud did not like to look at clients and talked very little so that clients could have anxiety in abundance. Freud felt that transference or the semblance of someone who showed kindness was a hindrance and should not be fostered. I purpose that theologians took a wrong turn by deliberately not showing any semblance of kindness. Instead I proposed the extending of hospitality to satisfy the instinctual need for a relationship. Like Fairbairn, I believe that the fundamental drive of personality is the need to be in relationship.

I stated that the "good-enough mother" provides a model of transformative authority. And proposed that therapists should transform the authority of their position by engaging silent clients in generative conversation in order to lessen anxiety and symbolize the attachment of someone who was kind in order to deliberately form an alliance and form transference.

In Chapter VI, I did pastoral theological reflection on the concept of relinquishing drawing on the therapeutic concept of empathy drawing and the biblical concept of Kenosis. I explored the dialectic relationship between a God-centered theology of Divine self-disclosure and a client-centered psychology of human self-disclosure as a way of interpreting experience. I dealt with interpreting any experience, event, or phenomenon as religious and psychological. I argued for the use of language as a tool for articulating.
My conversational inquiry focused upon freedom of personal choice as the core of experience in psychotherapy and theology. I explored a theory of therapy, the helping relationship, from a phenomenological point of view. This view of the experience of therapy is more from an external frame of reference, in an attempt to capture those qualities of expression, which may be observed by another, of the point of view from within God and the client's frame of reference.

From this dialogue, I drew out elements of my own natural pastoral theological method. This method was the client experiencing himself as being fully received by me. This caring act is a process of humility and exaltation and can be considered as filling by emptying. (Phil 2:7). This process of filling by emptying is likened to the kenosis of God in Jesus the Christ. My thesis was that a caring act is best received in a climate of freedom and acceptance that gives permission to exercise subjective choice. I proposed ontology of acceptance as a definitional stance for a model of minding.

In addition I propose that any concept of a model of minding include love as the basic enabling reality and power of therapeutic help. I further proposed that a practical theological model of love is the kenosis of God in Jesus Christ. The illuminating point of certainty of participating knowledge for most of my clients was in the God of Jesus Christ. Therapy is an occasion for revelation which is a Divine initiative.

In this Chapter, I will discuss the essence of therapy as pointing to an acceptance that has its source beyond oneself. Acceptance comes from God through Jesus the Christ. The caring act of God through Jesus the Christ was a process of humility and exaltation. I propose that pastoral counseling can make greater inroads into the African-American
community if it were to adopt the biblical concept of *kenosis* as a practical theological model of engagement and participation. For many African Americans, scripture is the supreme authority for the Word of God through Jesus the Christ. Jesus saves. Jesus cares for the disinherited. Therefore, any model of counseling that patterns itself after the teaching and life of Jesus the Christ will be linked to images of those persons from whom clients were used to receiving kindness. I contend that the essence of therapy is to use oneself, following the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, as a link to images of those persons from whom one person was used to receiving kindness from. The use of oneself can produce moments of revelation and reconciliation.

**Jesus as Model**

My natural pastoral theological method for doing psychotherapy is to *fully receive* clients. I empty myself of authority and power associated with the position of being a therapist in order to receive my clients. My agenda is to join clients so that the client experiences herself as being fully received. I want my clients to feel at home, to feel as if it is their own.

In my culture the spoken word provides an ontology of acceptance. It is a structure of being which has power and is encountered in every meeting of reality where freedom prevails. I disclose myself in conversation as accepting in order to form a therapeutic alliance. My acceptance asks for receptivity. The client acknowledges acceptance of feeling received by her/his self-disclosure. In this helping relationship, my service to my client is to understand his/her thoughts and feelings thoroughly, with the meanings they have for her, and to be thoroughly understood by her in return. My influence upon the
client is my willingness to understand each point of view empathically and acceptingly. Clients use the relationship to freely explore the feelings available to them. The relationship acts as a catalyst to precipitate further understanding and growth. I privilege the relationship to the client. The relationship provides a climate of freedom.

In what I would consider successful therapeutic experiences, there were moments of revelation. Rogers calls these moments definite referents. At those times, a feeling, which has previously been “stuck,” has been inhibited in its process quality, is experienced in its immediacy. The self as an object tended to disappear. The client becomes aware of herself as being in a reflexive awareness, a subjective living in herself in motion. The self is at that moment her own feelings, similar to a newborn baby. I believe that it is in this “moment of movement” that the Spirit of God and the spirit of clients converge. I myself am merely a vessel that empties itself in order to be filled by the Holy Spirit and the client’s spirit. I become what Bolla refers to as a transformational object. Clients learn to accept acceptance. I am not the source of acceptance; I only point to an acceptance that has its source beyond me. Acceptance comes from God through Jesus the Christ.

Like Oden, I am persuaded that there is an implicit assumption hidden in all effective psychotherapy, which is made explicit in the Christian proclamation. The Christ event demonstrates a role that serves as a model for my helping relationship. I humble myself in order to create a relationship that facilitates the growth of others as separate persons. It is my belief that a caring act is best received in a climate of freedom and acceptance that
gives clients permission to exercise subjective choice. This caring act is a process of humility and exaltation and can be considered as *filling by emptying.* (Phil 2:7).

**Scripture as Authority**

For me, Scripture proclaims God’s climate of freedom. Scripture is the supreme authority for the Word of God through Jesus the Christ. While I believe in the *kerygma,* I do not proclaim the reign of God to clients. I simply model myself after Jesus the Christ as a devoted servant. It is in this caring relationship that clients find themselves in a covenant relationship, feeling received by God. This process of being received is likened to the *kenosis* of God in Jesus the Christ. God assumes our frame of reference, entering into our human situation in the form of Jesus Christ. Many clients identify with God’s self-disclosure in the revelation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ as recorded by Scripture without my proclaiming the good news. I propose that pastoral counseling can make greater inroads into the African-American community if it were to adopt the biblical concept of *kenosis* as a practical theological model of engagement and participation:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:5-8).

This caring act, *filling by emptying,* reflects the concept of relinquishing, drawing on the biblical concept of *kenosis.* Like the early Oden, I am persuaded that there is an implicit assumption hidden in all effective psychotherapy, which is made explicit in the
Christian proclamation. The Christ event demonstrates a role that serves as a model for a helping relationship to African Americans. I, therefore, humbly submit myself to the other, in order to create a relationship that facilitates the growth of others as separate persons. My role is servant with influence. It is my belief that a caring act is best received in a climate of freedom that gives permission to exercise subjective choice. That freedom is expressed in a will to share.

The model I am describing that seeks to connect with African Americans in conflict has a definitional starting point of theology. This model embodies Christian hospitality with its will to share—deliberately seeking to partnership with strangers as a way of participating in God's redeeming work. The therapist's good will needs to be known

Further, this model includes the concept of othering. I propose that this model mimics the kenotic act of God in Jesus. I wish to call this model of the mimicking of the kenotic act, "minding." Minding can be defined as privileging a relationship of creative fidelity wherein another feels like being at home. Minding involves authentic human self-disclosure as a response to the self-disclosure of God in being itself. Minding is an implicit assumption hidden in the Christian kerygma and clarified in faith's response to revelation that is reflected in the "will to share."

Pastoral counselors practice a particular style of linking felt sense and symbolization. Having a prior history of the coordinated felt sense and concept of religious matters, I find the religious in counseling encounters. I presented case studies that were be articulated, experienced and processed via these psychological concepts as well as via traditional religious terms.
CHAPTER VIII

Conclusions

Introduction

In Chapter I, this author proposed that pastoral counseling, in an attempt to become a legitimate science, has tended to draw upon the psychology of the silent neutral stance far more than the theology of hospitality as a fundamental frame of reference. I proposed that conflict be seen as an occasion for connectedness to a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation. I advocated minding by joining with clients to actively engage them in conversation in order to build trust by disarming their defenses and connecting with them.

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In Chapter III, I explored African Americans as having a definitional system of collective survival under oppressive conditions. I proposed that persons of African descent can be defined by the use of speech as a way of establishing and maintaining connectedness, and I demonstrated the linkages in the use of the spoken word between
and among Africans and African Americans. I detailed the existence of the African/African-American cultural legacy of *nommo*, the generative quality of the spoken word. In doing so I demonstrated that the silent neutral stance ignores the “idiom of community” of the African-American cultural experience. In addition, I have offered that the oral tradition, religious experience and extended family model as indigenous African-American approaches for coping with contradictions and providing support in the midst of conflict. I demonstrated that speaking and having the ability to speak is a legacy and cultural idiom of the African American community. Even while being oppressed, the community developed ways to have parity of participation and publicity. This was especially evident in the church.

I also explored the works of Howard Thurman, who proposed that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazarus provided succor by modeling a “will to share,” a supportive approach for coping with contradictions in the midst of conflict for the oppressed. Thurman demonstrates that the idiom of community, the oral tradition and the hospitality of the inclusive community have the power to transform and consolidate one’s identity in the midst of paradox. I advocated that *in loco parentis*, acting in place of the parent and partnership with strangers provides a conceptualization for the design of a model of minding as transformative authority.

The work of Edward Wimberly was also drawn on as a pastoral theologian whose thinking used conversation and faith story to develop the therapeutic implication of the African American legacy for pastoral counseling. African Americans resisted recruitment into negative identities and combatted the pressure to become victims of racial
conversations existing in the wider society. He advocated giving conversation with God a privileged status over all other conversations.

In Chapter IV, I explored the theology of Christian hospitality as a conceptualization of a design for a model of minding in an effort to construct a model of a helping relationship of being kind as a way of connecting with African Americans in conflict. I believe that *will to share* is at the root of Christian hospitality and pivotal to the establishment of the inclusive community. In my discussion, I highlighted how hospitality saves the other from the invisibility that comes from social devaluation. Likewise, I demonstrated how a deliberate partnership with strangers is a way of participating in God’s redeeming work.

I offered Walter Brueggemann and the concept of kenosis and the process of othering. And finally, I discussed Marcel Gabriel and the concept of creative fidelity. I highlighted the fact while the kenosis of Jesus can be seen in His coming in the form of a servant, God’s kenotic act was to come in the form of Jesus who came in the form of a servant. I suggested that using the concept of kenosis from the prospective of othering can create a bond of creative fidelity by transforming authority. Kenosis provides a conceptualization of a practical theological model of transformative authority.

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model of instinctual needs and determined that the fundamental drive is the need to be in relationship. I advocated the "good-enough" mother as a model of transformative authority which displays availability, empathy and optimal frustration. A client, who is sure of his /her therapist's availability or fidelity, will generally want to explore his/her immediate environment and disclose the nature of the crisis.

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freedom and acceptance that gives permission to exercise subjective choice. I proposed ontology of acceptance as a definitional stance for a model of minding.

In addition I proposed that any concept of a model of minding include love as the basic enabling reality and power of therapeutic help. I further proposed that a practical theological model of minding is the kenosis of God in Jesus Christ. The illuminating point of certainty of participating knowledge for most of my clients was in the God of Jesus Christ. Therapy is an occasion for revelation which is a Divine initiative.

In Chapter VII, I discussed the essence of therapy as pointing to an acceptance that has its source beyond oneself. Acceptance comes from God through Jesus the Christ. I proposed that pastoral counseling can make greater inroads into the African American community if it were to adopt the biblical concept of kenosis as a practical theological model of engagement and participation. For many African Americans scripture is the supreme authority for the Word of God. Jesus saves. Jesus cares for the disinherited. Therefore, any model of counseling that patterns itself after the teaching and life of Jesus the Christ will be linked to images of those persons from whom clients were used to receiving kindness. I contend that the essence of therapy is to use oneself, following the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, as a link to images of those persons from whom one person was used to receiving kindness. The use of oneself can produce moments of revelation and reconciliation.

In this Chapter, I will summarize my response to the seminal question this proposal addressed. Should the practice of the silent neutral stance in establishing the therapeutic relationship be revisited? I wish to reiterate my belief that the extension of hospitality via
the spoken word can promote joining and the establishment of faithful trust. In addition, I wish to recap my position that theology provides the prefect model of minding as transformative authority in the *kenosis* of God in Jesus the Christ and that conflict should be seen as a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation of the inclusive community. It is my contention that conflict is the definitional starting point for participating in God’s redeeming work. And as a religious experience, counseling can provide clients with power and meaning to cope with the paradoxes of life. I advocate that counselors should be mediums who deliberately try to partner with strangers as a way of participating in God’s redeeming work.

I have shown that the silent neutral stance in pastoral counseling is a problem for many African Americans and should be revisited. The silent neutral stance ignores the “idiom of community” of the African-American cultural experience. Silence does not promote the *will to share* to those who need a nurturing, succoring relationship that enables them to live in the present with hope instead of despair. The idiom of community, the spoken word, can inform the use of silence and its relationship to succoring, agency and power.

The extended family model of the oral tradition provides a conceptualization for the design of a model of minding as transformative authority. The African-American extended family exists out of necessity as a way of surviving an oppressive class system. In place of the parent, *in loco parentis* provides a model of parenting, participation, and transformation of power. Kinship adoption into the extended family is offered to anyone
who wants to join whether related or unrelated. Extended family members mind each other and privilege the worth and value of the other.

Minding, or privileging the other facilitates, a therapeutic alliance and transforming of power through self disclosure of intent. Providing succor through a more interactive model of conversation, of speaking and being silent with the intent of joining and receiving African-American clients facilitates therapeutic relationships. And, finally, a practical theological model of silence and participation looks like the concept of kenosis. Theology provides the prefect model in Jesus the Christ, “Who made Himself of no reputation, and took the form of a servant.” (Phil 2:7) Kenosis provides a conceptualization for the design of a model of minding as transformative authority.

My thesis is that the idiom of the oral tradition can inform the use of silence in counseling African Americans. The spoken word facilitates the joining and receiving of African-American clients, so that there is the transforming of authority or power necessary to establish a therapeutic alliance with a cultural group that has experienced the victimization of oppression. The extension of hospitality via the spoken word can promote joining and the establishment of faithful trust. Silence can then be used to facilitate transference and vocalization of the “unthought known,” an inarticulate element the client perceives, but has not experienced in full awareness. The oral tradition restores a sense of faithful trust and participation in the world. The oral tradition is transformative authority that publicizes fidelity.
Summary of the Model

In analyzing what I do to establish therapeutic alliance with silent clients, it is clear that I start with the greeting and initiate conversations in the beginning of therapy after respectful periods of silence. I attempt to join with clients by the use of the spoken word to solicit dialogue. I use myself as an object to form a relationship. While I extend hospitality to all my clients, some clients need more succor in order to receive acceptance and equal participation. I “mind” clients who appear to need succorance. I privilege conversation with clients. I have the intent of establishing a relationship of creative fidelity where clients feel like being at home. It is my belief that the primary drive in life is not pleasure but to be in relationship.

When conversation becomes generative, I disclose less of myself. I decease so that the clients can disclose more of themselves. I empty myself so that I can be filled with my client's experiences and feelings. This model resembles the kenosis of Jesus Christ. Jesus emptied Himself so that He could experience the human condition.

I have found that once joining, a conscious effort, has occurred and a consensus has been reached between the client and myself, I become more of an observer participate. I shift my attention from content to process. Like the “good-enough mother,” I withdraw instant gratification and tolerate the anger and hostility of assuming a hovering stance.

Minding as a Contribution

I feel that African Americans will respond more to pastoral counseling when counselors “mind” the idiom of our community. I propose that counselors “join’ with clients as extended family members and become linked up with one of the images of
those persons from whom they were used to receiving kindness. Counselors must convey
acceptance and respect for the client’s way of relating. The spoken word as the idiom of
the African-American community relates speakers and listeners in a collaborative
encounter. Clients will “mind” the therapist when they are treated like invited guests.
The idiom of the oral tradition makes room at the table of recognition and participation.
I believe that in the African American cultural experience the spoken word establishes an
invitation for a bond of sharing. Traditional, or classical, psychoanalytic psychotherapy
focuses on scarce and minimal responses, i.e. the silence of the therapist as essential to
facilitating the transference relationship with the counselee. A proactive approach to
counseling, using the spoken word to convey care and respect for African-American
clients, may establish a relationship of trust that silence would not foster. Once a
working alliance has been formed, therapy can proceed, with the therapist taking a
greater listening stance instead of being silent.

Therapeutic approaches that focus on an initial statement of the difficulty, followed by
a neutral stance, may increase hesitancy and suspicion rather than facilitate the processes
of a working alliance and transference. It is my belief that counseling involves more
narrative interaction with clients than is considered necessary in traditional therapeutic
approaches that emphasize silence. I have a “will to share” that must be communicated.
My task is to engage and empower. I solicit silent clients to engage them in dialogue.

I propose that pastoral counseling utilize silence initially as a way of connecting
with African-American clients in conflict. If this approach is unsuccessful, I advocate
using the spoken word. The spoken word establishes parity of participation. I proposed
that therapist deliberately join or seek to attach themselves to clients and become linked up with one of the images of those persons from whom the client was used to receiving kindness. Once transference has been established, I suggest that counselors maintain respect, generative silence and an ‘even hovering’ stance that is attuned to countertransference feelings. I mind my clients by being my kind self, using the spoken word to extend an invitation to participate and using my feelings as a way of privileging and mirroring my clients so that they feel at home in the midst of conflict.

**Conflict and Divine Initiative**

Conflict can be seen as a Divine initiative, providing an opportunity for reconciliation of the inclusive community. Conflict is the definitional starting point for participating in God’s redeeming work. I propose that conflict is a religious experience, the dynamic encounter between man and God through the experience of revelation in human suffering. The will to share, as practiced by the inclusive community, illuminates the message of Christianity and provides a model for connecting with African Americans in conflict. I contend that persons in conflict seek to find a sense of identity through a relationship of faithful trust. Human beings have an instinctual need for a satisfying relationship for consolidation of identity. Human beings seek acceptance and in the religious experience God calls us to accept our acceptance. Now since everyone knows, as Job can attest, conflict is unavoidable and by analogy conflict is part of God’s Divine design as a call to conversion. Like Barth, I believe that God crisps/cross our lives constantly. It is when the sleeper who was neither convinced nor convicted of the presence of God awakens that conversion takes place. It is my belief that many of my
clients accepted the acceptance the God of Jesus Christ and realized anew the revelation that they were called to be free. God has planted in each individual an urge for wholeness. While hope is derived from the feeling of security, power and meaning are derived from religious experience.

A practical theological model of the engagement process looks like the Christ event. Jesus joined with humanity as a servant with power. He engaged others through the use of the word, “You are a child of God.” In the Christian faith, the illuminating point of certainty of participating knowledge and fidelity is the God of Jesus Christ. Jesus publicized God’s creative fidelity. Jesus transformed authority by becoming a servant and through the kenosis of Jesus, God engages us as a transformative authority.

A practical theological model of “A Transition from Silence to Active Engagement to Therapeutic Silence” looks like the silent God who enters human existence in the form of Jesus the Christ. This silent God enters and engages humanity in active dialogue in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and returns to therapeutic silence as the God of authority, reconciliation and redemption. God calls us to accept our acceptance and chose freedom. Choosing God is choosing freedom.

To the question of “Who am I to the client?” my answer is that I am an image of the person from whom my clients received kindness. I am merely a medium deliberately trying to partner with strangers as a way of participating in God’s redeeming work. I practice minding, transforming the authority of my position by sharing power or influence in collaborative relations of power to create conditions in which lived experience of empowerment are valued as the defining feature for claiming a sense
agency and consolidation of identity. My model for transitioning from silence to active engagement to therapeutic silence is the God of Jesus Christ.

**Implications**

There is a need for additional detailed case study focused on the role of silence as an idiom of oppression in dominant and subordinate cultural groups. Further inquiry is needed to determine the effects of the minding idiom of other cultural communities. It is hoped that the very same practices that facilitate and foster therapeutic alliances with African American clients will have relevance and yield implications for working with other marginalized cultural groups.
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