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Limits and Costs of the Current Model

INTRODUCTION

IN CHAPTERS 1 AND 2 I took up the critique of individualism in pastoral care and counseling and, using empirical data, investigated whether it is appropriate. What I found is that, while there is awareness of this charge among practitioners, there remains deep ambivalence about making concrete changes in the field; many of those I interviewed worry about losing their well-honed ability to attend the persons who come to them for care, a loss they believe is implied in a turn toward the social. As a result, progress beyond the individualistic paradigm has remained primarily ideational and theoretical. That is, scholars *are* making significant contributions to our thinking in more socially adequate terms, and the dominant theoretical resource in contemporary pastoral counseling is object relations/selfpsychology, a more relational view of persons and their development than early thinkers imagined. However, these theoretical changes have not shifted significantly our basic model of care and counseling, one borrowed from medical approaches to healing.

In this chapter I review the arguments of those who worry about the costs of not prioritizing social change more intentionally. Pastoral theologians have highlighted a number of ways the historical shift from seeing the person as part of a whole to seeing the person as a discrete entity *apart from* the whole is increasingly problematic. Five criticisms (including ideational and practical) are particularly salient to this project: (1) pastoral theologians and practitioners do not understand adequately the social nature of selfhood, and (2) they miss the social nature of suffering; (3) pastoral counseling centers have institutionalized individualism; (4) pastoral counselors have lost their religious identity as well as

their prophetic voice; and (5) local churches have become blinded to the ways they are complicit in a culture that creates suffering. I will review briefly each of these charges below.

IDEATIONAL LIMITS

Overly Individualistic/Existentialist Anthropology

Pastoral theologians such as Archie Smith Jr. and Larry Graham have criticized pastoral care and counseling's emphasis on individuals' self-expression and self-realization, arguing that the goal of the church's ministry of care and counseling is best as achieved by linking inner transformation with outer social reform.[1]

Graham has been critical of pastoral practitioners' overly narrow focus on what he calls the individual/existential anthropology. In *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds*, he argues that the field of pastoral theology and its practices are rightly criticized as overly individualistic, and have been slow to respond to new information we have about the human subject. Graham worries that pastoral caregivers are increasingly out of touch with current social, cultural, and theoretical issues.[2] He notes that the practices of care and counseling have become increasingly geared toward individual fulfillment and the negotiation of primary interpersonal relationships, creating a "widening split between care of persons and care of the larger environments in which persons live."[3] His basic assumption is that the care of persons creates new worlds, and to care for the world makes new personhood possible.

The nature of human personality is best understood in contextual rather than individualistic terms and, ideally, change is extended from the personal to include modifying or enhancing the environments that hold us all. Graham critiques various models of pastoral care and counseling that privilege freedom, personal responsibility, growth, health, and self-realization, and proposes a model that does not contradict these principles but rather puts them in a context of mutuality, partnership, reciprocity, and emphasizes ongoing processes and transactions.

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1. Though there are other internal critics, Smith (*Relational Self*) and Graham (*Care of Persons*) will serve as representatives of this critique here.

2. Graham, *Care of Person*, 12.

3. Ibid.

Thus, Graham seeks to turn caregivers' attention toward the interconnectedness of all systems and forces that shape human life. Reality is organized into a complex whole in which everything is related to everything else, and the maintenance of homeostatic balance is both critical and very difficult. To care for persons means, then, to care for (and perhaps transform) the worlds that the systems surrounding persons have created. The defining purpose of ministry is not the personal enhancement of one individual, although that is important; rather, it is to increase love, justice, and ecological partnership. Graham writes, "The general purposes of a ministry of care are to increase the love of self, God, and neighbor, and to enable care-seekers to develop the capacity to work for a just social order and to engage in partnership with the natural order."[4]

Consequently, a proper task of pastoral practitioners is to develop, individually and corporately, strategies that will reverse the consequences of "lovelessness, injustice, and ecological disarray."[5] In other words, it is not enough to respond pastorally to the people whose lives are loveless: the systems of injustice that perpetuate that lovelessness are also in need of transformation. As Graham argues, "A major goal of the ministry of care is to move from contextual impairment to contextual integrity."[6] This work of systemic transformation ought to be a part of the ministry of care and counseling. The caregiver has "agential power," and is called to be an advocate for those in need of pastoral attention, care, and justice.

Like Graham, for Smith, the fundamental "relationality" of the self is a key concept underscoring the need for an ongoing effort to engage the distresses of persons; caring and liberating ministries cannot be separated. Relationality is a term used to indicate that people are "constituted in their relations with other people and within a particular historical context and specific social practice. The relations between people are not only external, e.g., historical, but internal as well. We not only live among other people, but also they live in us and we in them."[7] From this perspective the self is not given at birth, but rather "originates in activity and in a social process, and unfolds through

4. Ibid., 48.

5. Ibid., 45.

6. Ibid., 211.

7. Smith, *Relational Self*, 14.

interaction, and communication and reflection."[8] However, as Smith points out, a relational theme is not readily apparent in a culture that has overstressed self-mastery, autonomy, and individualism on the one hand, and conformity on the other.

Because the self is embedded in particular political, cultural, and economic arrangements, many of which are oppressive, personal problems cannot be adequately addressed apart from socio-political structures; *both* must be changed in adequate care. Indeed, pastoral care and counseling that does not seek to liberate the suffering from oppressive social and cultural systems permits both caregiver and receiver a kind of "false consciousness"—the uncritical acceptance of prevailing social practices of society as absolute, complete, or self-evident. Smith writes,

> False consciousness further means that a particular interpretation or social outlook has become an enshrined reality, a closed circle of certainty that precludes recognition of alternative possibilities for humanity. False consciousness functions to distort the individual's grasp of reality and to adjust the person within the prevailing and taken-for-granted outlook of society. [False consciousness creates] *the overidentification of the human subject with the existing power arrangements and the confirmation of infallibility, divine or absolute status upon the existing society . . .*[9]

Smith argues that theories and practices that are based upon and supportive of modern bourgeois individualism and materialism, or approaches that fail to analyze the system and history of exploitative capitalism, "serve to delude both victims and social scientists while claiming to be value-neutral."[10] In other words, they create and support a kind of false consciousness. The primary role of critical social science, biblical faith, and critical theology is to engage in radical criticism of the existing structures of domination without losing sight of those transcending values that can guide a truly emancipatory interest. Insofar as pastoral care and counseling has participated in perpetuating this false consciousness, it has lost its way.

Smith argues that despite this trend, psychoanalysis and its heirs (including pastoral care and counseling, at least as they have been framed in the last century or so), have been and can be a source for

8. Ibid., 59.

9. Ibid., 29; italics original.

10. Ibid., 26.

criticism and change. "Ideally, [psychoanalysis's] task is to free the inner life of the human subject from repressed fears, neurotic obsessions and other forms of internalized oppression so as to enable persons to make more realistic appraisals of themselves and their worlds" and to disrupt the status quo that creates distress.[11] Yet psychoanalysis (and those disciplines that have borrowed from it) has not always been free to accomplish its task of critique of and offering alternatives to the status quo. In fact, Smith contends, the psychotherapeutic tradition has "served to adjust the individual *within* the established norms and structures of society, thereby strengthening the status quo" and thus it has helped to "legitimate established social systems and practices and dull the potentially critical, emancipatory, reconciling and healing task called for in the suffering of victims."[12] Consequently, though the ministries of the church such as pastoral care and counseling could challenge and work to transform oppressive systems that represent much of the status quo, they fail to live fully their mission and so are complicit in the oppression of those they seek to serve.

As helpful as his work is for helping us understand the interdependent relationship between persons and their social contexts, Smith overly emphasizes the negative dynamics between the two. I will argue later that such a relationship is not the only possibility, and propose a more nuanced position that will, I hope, prevent some of the self-*against*-society paradigm that I will argue is part of the reason for individualism's entrenchment in the field.

The "Valorization" of Narcissism

The fact that pastoral theology and its contemporary practices are so heavily influenced by object relations theories and selfpsychology suggests that our dominant operative anthropology is significantly informed by such a perspective. As briefly noted in the previous chapter, contemporary psychologies such as object relations theory and selfpsychology have provided significant theoretical weight to the assumption of a masterful, bounded, subjective and all-important self that develops by taking in, or consuming.[13] Heinz Kohut, for example, argued that the primary

11. Ibid., 32.

12. Ibid., 38.

13. Cushman, *Constructing the Self*, 245–48.

tasks of a healthy self are to develop, maintain, and enhance the cohesion, autonomy, esteem, and emotional vitality of the self. Fundamental to this developmental trajectory is Kohut's idea of "healthy narcissism," which he argues is vital for appropriate personal development.

Like early object relations theorist D. W. Winnicott and others, Kohut assumed that the development of the self required the merging with and taking in of selfobjects, or the qualities and functions of the primary caretakers. By being attuned to the infant's experience through empathy, by admiring and enjoying the infant (and communicating this admiration through their attention), and by mirroring to their child the fact that she is beautiful, attractive, powerful, and interesting, parents allow the infant to develop a healthy narcissism. According to Kohut, this narcissism is crucial for unimpeded development because the feeling that one is all-important and powerful is required for one's development into a mature, self-assured, strong adult.

If adequate mirroring does not occur, if the child does not feel loved or interesting or powerful and healthy narcissism does not develop, then the child will begin to exhibit symptoms such as rage, low self-esteem, and a sense of shame, and will experience a psychic fragmentation. Healthy narcissism is something we always need and continually build on, though its expression eventually is turned into adult confidence and one's sense of self-esteem.

Kohut believed psychopathologies (which are often interpreted as symptoms of clinical narcissism—borderline personality disorder, for example) could be effectively treated if the psychotherapist would offer herself as a selfobject to the client—in effect become a parental substitute. For Kohut this meant that the therapist must be tuned in and empathic to the experiences and feelings of the client and allow the client to merge with and idealize the therapist. By filling the gaps in the self left by unavailable or inadequate parents, the therapist could help the client develop his healthy narcissism, provide the appropriate selfobjects for merging with and internalizing, and thus continue on the road to maturity.

Psychiatrist and social critic Philip Cushman argues that the emphasis on the importance of healthy narcissism for proper development has created a tolerance for, and even valorization of, narcissistic tendencies, furthering the individualistic impulses already inherent in the psychological theories that currently dominate contemporary pastoral

theology, care and counseling. In addition to valorizing the romantic, expressivistic, universal self, Cushman contends, Kohut "favors the realm of values and ideals, the victories of ambition and the development of self esteem over intimate relationships."[14] Object relations theory values personal achievements that are the products of individual, isolated pursuits, not those that involve cooperative activities developed in adult relationships of mutual obligation, trust and involvement. He worries that social structures and other people are heavily valued if they are needed; they are to be "used and then left, so that the principal figure, the expressive self, can go on to achieve great things, alone."[15] One of the most prominent psychological resources for contemporary practice, then, if the critiques of it are taken seriously, risks valuing the self above all else, something religious professionals especially ought to find troubling. Certainly in the Christian tradition, for example, preoccupation with oneself is understood to be sinful, the result of passion misdirected.

Overemphasis on Personal and Interpersonal Origins of Suffering

Pastoral theologians such as Smith and Graham as well as Pamela Couture, Christie Neuger, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, and Daniel J. Louw are among those who have criticized the tendency to diagnose and treat the individual as if she could be abstracted from a wider web of persons, cultural, social institutions, and of meaning.[16] These scholars' imply that pastoral caregivers' blindness to social and institutional structures and cultural values has meant that the non-complexified and universalized self that is operational in pastoral theology, care and counseling looks suspiciously like the self of the white middle-class.

The focus on the white middle-class self and its problems to the exclusion of other demographics and etiologies of need has led to the obfuscation of the distresses of those who do not live in and whose difficulties do not emerge from this social context. More specifically, pastoral caregivers and counselors have become best equipped to attend to the distresses or anxieties that they believe are the products of unsatisfying relationships, difficulties at work, or change in one's life. As one brochure for a prominent pastoral counseling center advertises, "Pastoral counsel-

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14. Ibid., 269.

15. Ibid.

16. Couture, "Weaving the Web"; Miller-McLemore, "Living Human Web"; Neuger, *Counseling Women*; and Louw, "Pastoral Hermeneutics."

ing can provide effective help in the face of a wide variety of problems, including anxiety, depression, loss and grief, adjustment to major change, difficulty in personal relationships, marital and family conflict, job dissatisfaction, divorce and recovery, and crises of faith or meaning." While on the surface these might seem to apply to all persons at one time or another, those who come to these centers for help are predominantly white middle-class folk looking for and expecting one-on-one counseling with a therapist trained in psychodynamic psychotherapy. This suggests, among other things, that this list of problems (or at least the individualistic diagnosis and treatment of them) maps well a middle-class lifestyle and is best suited for persons interested in personal growth, spiritual development, and individual change, as does the dominant mode of healing (most consistently fee-for-service, one-on-one talk therapy). The implication is that persons whose needs differ from those of the dominant class and culture and whose suffering derives from structural injustice and oppression, for example, will not be understood or served as well by the dominant theoretical lenses and the most common practices of contemporary pastoral care and counseling.

Some critics of contemporary pastoral care and counseling practices such as Pamela Couture argue that it has not only been influenced by, but has actually contributed to the spread of "the contagious disease of individualism."[17] While these critics agree with the Christian belief in the worth of the individual, the Reformation notion of *sola fide*, and the Enlightenment assertion of the rights of all persons, all of which provided a "powerful lever against the abuse of power in a hierarchically organized society,"[18] they worry these values have been used to rationalize individualistic practices and to blind both the client and the caregiver to the distressing realities of the broader social context. For example, Couture notes that as women and people of color began to stake their claims to equal access of social, cultural, and institutional resources with new urgency, the commitment to the individual went from being the force behind social criticism to legitimating the status quo. Couture writes, "This transformation has created a prominence of individualistic values in personal growth, family life, social institutions, including the church, and public policy. As we face the twenty-first century, these individualistic values have become the basis not only for personal and

17. Couture, "Weaving the Web," 94.
18. Ibid.

interpersonal lifestyles but also for national and international policy."[19] Couture challenges purveyors of pastoral care and counseling practices to think about the individual not only as she is formed "in the nexus of intrapsychic, interpersonal and family dynamics, but also as she is held secure or let loose by public and ecclesial policies and the beliefs of the culture in which she lives."[20]

Couture herself takes up that challenge by studying extensively the effects of women's poverty, political policy, and the ways these inform the kinds of suffering experienced by disadvantaged groups, especially, for her purposes, single mothers and their children.[21] The rhetoric of self–sufficiency and personal responsibility, Couture believes, has led to public policies such as welfare reform that have left the most vulnerable among us with very little support. In other words, the values of utilitarian individualism have been ratified, and these public policies affect profoundly individuals' lives and can create ongoing suffering.[22]

Consider, for example, how the needs of a single mother stuck in a low-wage job or perhaps unable to find work that provides wages, time flexibility, schedule, and access to public transport sufficient to allow her to care for her two young children might differ from those of a university professor seeking to reduce his performance anxiety.[23] Couture asks us to consider that in the U.S. alone more than six million children under the age of six (almost twenty-three percent of that age group) live in poverty, and that almost fourteen million children under the age of eighteen (almost twenty percent of that age group) live in poverty.[24] This

19. Ibid., 95.

20. Ibid.

21. See Couture, *Blessed are the Poor?* and *Seeing Children, Seeing God.*

22. In *utilitarian* individualism the ideal is an individual who, it appears, is self–made. According to the position of utilitarian individualism, society only provides the environment in which it is possible for an individual to get ahead on his own, "for when each man (sic) is allowed to pursue his own interests, good will emerge." Bellah, et. al., *Habits,* 37–38. Benjamin Franklin and his modern counterpart, the entrepreneur, serve as exemplars of this. The entrepreneur—a person who is driven by the bottom line of economic enterprise and who cultivated Franklin's virtues of hard work, delayed gratification and industrialism—is best suited to live in the conditions of a "competitive market in which trade and exchange would replace traditional ranks and loyalties as the coordinating mechanism of social life." Ibid. See chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion of this and other forms of individualism.

23. See Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed* for an implicit discussion of this.

24. Data on poverty are collected by varying methods; therefore, statistics can vary. However, Couture notes that when analysts in the U.S. calculate statistics to argue that

is a critical issue in pastoral care and counseling because it has so many implications—not just for the lives and futures of the children who grow up with extraordinary deprivation, but for ourselves and our society as well. Couture has argued that adequate caregiving, especially with women and children, necessitates that we investigate the socio-political systems of support available to them, as well as the ways institutions like church and the workplace may "let them loose or hold them secure" in times of great distress.[25] To pay attention to suffering *adequately* means we must expand our horizons and address the social contexts of that suffering.

Christie Neuger provides another example of how typical approaches to care and counseling can miss the complexities of the roots of suffering.[26] In her work on women and depression, Neuger notes that more women than men experience severe depression in the United States, and that by some accounts, depression among women is at an all-time high.[27] One of the more traditional psychological approaches to dealing with persons who are depressed has interpreted depression as "anger turned inward," and has described the anger as originating in childhood when we realize that our parent is not able to meet perfectly our needs. This anger, it is assumed, must be suppressed in order to avoid risking rejection by the parent. Consequently, the child turns this anger against herself, setting the stage for depression.

The problem with this interpretation of depression, argues Neuger, is that it misses the link between cultural practices that are oppressive to women and women's vulnerability to depression. Without these con-

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a certain percentage of children are poor, they are usually referring to children who live in households with income below the official poverty line, and base their claims on data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau. In the most recent census (2006) children in households of three persons with a household income of less than $16,100 were officially considered poor; children in households of four persons with a household income of less than $20,700 were poor. See "Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage," 13.

25. Couture, "Weaving the Web," 94.

26. Neuger, "Women's Depression."

27. As a way to challenge to DSM categories that "map the world," social theorist Kenneth Gergen notes that many of the DSM categories are recent constructs, and wonders how the "disease of depression—which was never 'discovered' until the present century—now inflicts one in ten persons in our culture?" (Gergen, *Social Construction in Context*, 12). Such a question implicitly directs our attention to the cultural roots of illnesses, both in their designations and in their etiologies.

nections, depression becomes something that exists in women's psyches alone. These women experience depression, anxiety, and other related distresses to be sure, but an individual diagnostic is not adequate to understand their etiology fully. Among the factors Neuger would have us pay attention to when working with a depressed woman in a pastoral care or counseling situation, for example, are the possibilities of a violent domestic environment, the prevalence of wage and promotion discrimination in the workplace, and the pervasive challenges to a woman's self-esteem in a society that is still deeply patriarchal.

As Neuger's work reveals, the individualistic frame simply leaves out too much. It blinds us to the full causes of human distress. To understand and treat depression simply as an intrapsychic or even relational problem does not go far enough. Not surprisingly, perhaps, it has been feminist and pastoral theologians of color who have most insistently pointed out the problems of ignoring the cultural and social realities that can engender the presenting issues of many of our clients. In other words, suffering does not affect persons in ways that are separate from their contexts; while it always takes a particular form, suffering is culturally constituted and institutionally structured. Among these critics is Carroll Watkins Ali, who argues that care of underrepresented, often oppressed groups (in her case, African-Americans) must begin with analysis of sociocultural context, utilize the resources of the community, and expand the operations of ministry to include empowerment to resist and even transform the oppressive structures (such as slavery and racism) that create ongoing suffering.[28]

These pastoral theologians have served as examples of those who argue that individualism functions as the legitimating ideology of American social arrangements at great costs to those they seek to serve. Within this orientation, both personal and social problems are explained away in individualistic terms—for example, the breakdown of the family, the problems of pornography, drug abuse, or the corruption of individual politicians, etc.[29] Because the sources of problems are individualized, the solutions consequently tend to be also: the return to "family values" and the shoring up of the institution of the family, the treatment of addiction, getting single mothers off welfare, and helping people function better in the arenas of love and work represent the moral responses of

28. Ali, *Survival & Liberation*.
29. Ibid., 168.

an individualist ideology. Individualism obscures from view the deep, structural impediments to meaningful and healthy selves, and theologies and religious practices can be complicit in this obfuscation. As Archie Smith puts it,

> When religion moves in this vein, it obscures the contradiction and the connection between personal life and the social structure. Whether intended or not, it serves to reproduce and to strengthen the separation of the personal from the social in consciousness and fosters the idea that personal life can be transformed apart from a transformation of relational patterns, the system of production and its sustaining ideology.[30]

This accusation makes the church and its unwillingness to examine its own assumptions and practices complicit in others' oppression.

Pastoral theologian James Poling represents well those who argue that contemporary ministries of care and counseling actually avoid (and thus become complicit in) the ways the abuses of power create suffering. Poling's primary interest is in the dynamics of power, both interpersonal and in social/institutional relationships, and the ways these dynamics function to privilege those at the center of a society while excluding those at the margins. To provide a potent example of this, Poling explores the problems of sexual abuse and victimization and the churches' silence on these issues. By ignoring the social or corporate roots of suffering, the church runs the risk of perpetuating the systems that create ongoing suffering.

In his book *The Abuse of Power: A Theological Problem*, Poling maintains that the abuse of power is possible even in situations in which the minister seeks to provide care.[31] Poling notes that in its ideal form, power is the energy of life itself as it is organized into the relational web that includes us all. However, this primal relational power is distorted through sin as it is manifested by individuals and the sociocultural structures in which we live, and the abuse of asymmetrical relations of power are the cause of much human suffering.

Poling explores the prevalence of intimate violence in the United States and notes three aspects he believes are most salient in its perpetuation. First, he points to the prevailing belief that one's home and family are "private" and "personal." The increased privatization of the family has

30. Ibid.
31. Poling, *Abuse of Power*.

meant that women and children are vulnerable to abuse because male tendencies (usually sanctioned, though implicitly, by culture) to dominate women are not mitigated by social or legal structures. "Although many of the legal barriers for women have changed in this century, inequality between women and men is now preserved by family privacy and inequality," Poling writes.[32] He points to the fact that there is significant reluctance on the part of police officers and other public officials to intervene in the domestic sphere, and, consequently, that there is more sexual and physical violence, including homicide, in the family than in any other social institution. This suggests that the sanctioned privacy in the home means that male dominance of women is not mitigated by legislated equality.[33]

Second, Poling points to the devaluation of women and children as the second contributing social factor to sexual abuse and victimization. He writes, "The hatred expressed in sexual violence is not only an attitude of individual men who are abusive, but it is also a culturally organized attitude."[34] This culturally organized tendency to devalue women "can be documented by examining the economic position of women or by looking at the access women have to positions of power and influence in society."[35] He cites the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace and the glass ceiling for professional women as evidence of a cultural devaluation of women that contributes to their victimization at the hands of men.

Third, Poling argues that the ways sexuality and violence are confused and sometimes conjoined contributes greatly to the prevalence of sexual violence and to the inability of our society to face the "massive problem" of sexual abuse.[36] Furthermore, insofar as the church is silent on these issues borne of a deeply patriarchal culture, the church is complicit in this suffering. Poling writes, "The church has practiced a historically all-male clergy, the subordination of women in leadership, authoritarian and moralistic preoccupation with sexual fidelity and heterosexuality, and an impotent critique of a society that is sexist and racist. On the issue of sexual violence, there is scarcely a difference between church and

32. Ibid., 130.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., 134.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 140.

society."[37] Patriarchy in the Bible is not challenged to Poling's satisfaction in most mainline churches, and he believes this results in the church's sanction of the abuses wrought by a patriarchal culture. The split between public and private, the devaluation of women, and the joining of sex and violence set the stage for churches' abdication of responsibility for significant ills because they are private and not social.

Poling uses domestic violence and intimate abuse to make problematic the preservation of discrete and separate private and public spheres. In his attempt to perforate the boundaries often drawn between them, he proposes the ongoing examination of the dynamics of power and its abuses, encouraging truth-telling and the establishment of communities where justice prevails. The dynamics of power in every relationship as well as in social and institutional structures can be abusive when they are not repeatedly evaluated and systematically analyzed. In the process of this critical analysis, pastoral caregivers need to be equipped to help persons name their own experiences of the dynamics of power, and to judge these experiences in light of the will of God. Power is a social dynamic, embedded in social relationships and organized in our institutional practices. To adequately attend to power requires us to move beyond an overly individualistic diagnostic and treatment schema. To the extent that churches, their leaders, and other practitioners such as pastoral caregivers and counselors ignore the dynamics of power inherent in their work and refuses to engage critically those in the wider social environment, they are complicit with the abuses of asymmetrical power and their work for change is, finally, limited.

Poling's hope is that churches will begin to claim their own complicity in the abuse of power. This would mean, in part, that the church and its practitioners would examine their assumptions about the split between public and private and be a prophetic and practical voice against abuses that can occur because members of churches (and their ministers) have come to believe that the cultural, "public" issues, such as the devaluation of women, as they are manifested in "private" realms such as abuse in the family, are not within the purview of their call. The implications of Poling's work derive from his belief that even the "personal" relationships conducted in the "privacy" of the home have sociocultural roots and must be addressed both at the individual and social levels.

37. Ibid., 146.