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Model and Myth in Pastoral Care

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The Importance of Models

One of the most interesting challenges facing any minister is the question of what to do with the time when we are not praying, leading public worship, attending meetings, doing essential administration or taking time off. If various surveys are correct, this remaining time – time available for the task we call 'Pastoral Care' – may constitute as much as sixty per cent of the available hours of the minister's working week.

Of course the multiplicity of pastoral tasks and personal emergencies on the one hand, and of meetings and administrative tasks on the other, ensures that the issue doesn't arise often in quite this form. The reactive rather than proactive nature of much local ministry is as much a commonplace feature of the consciousness of most ministers as it is of many other groups of professional carers. This makes it a useful exercise, when we do take time to reflect upon our ministering, to use models or patterns of pastoral care derived from wider experience. To locate fixed points on a map enables us to establish both an informed knowledge of our present position and take deliberate decisions about directions we might take. Indeed, to fail to engage in such an exercise will ensure that personal ministry becomes limited increasingly to a form of (sometimes idiosyncratic) self expression and that the activities of the Christian community are more likely to be governed by the need to assuage its corporate conscience than deliberately to find the right praxis for its gospel vocation.

However, it is important to be aware tht reflection upon models of pastoral care or anything else, is meant to be an exercise in *orientation* not of *imitation* – orientation towards our eschatalogical vocation rather than of harking back to a golden past in order to liven up a leaden present. If the status of the models used is more than advisory and contingent, the risk of the church's merely reflecting societal authority patterns rather than exhibiting prophetic values and structures of the Kingdom is greatly increased.

This tendency has been clearly recognised in the US by Hough and Cobb.[1] Drawing on earlier work by Ronald Osborn they demonstrate how the development of preferred patterns of ministerial character in American

1 Joseph C. Hough and John B. Cobb, *Christian Identity and Theological Education,* Scholars Press, Chico, California 1985, pp 5-18.

churches, over the past two centuries, have reflected the dominant societal leadership models of the time. These included the Work Master, Pioneer/ Revivalist, Builder/Organiser, Manager (of systems), and a variety of other 'professional' role models the most influential of which has been that of Therapist. In the UK this modelling of ministry on societal authority types has been clearly documented by Anthony Russell[1] and others.

The focus of such modelling in the main line churches has been almost exclusively on understanding the role of ministers – Hiltner's 'clerical paradigm'. (The emphasis in Pentecostal and other free church groups has been on alternative authority models such as those found in family groups or 'immigrant communities'. But even this is still demonstrably reflective of the societal authority structure of the group and is predominantly minis- terial in character). The greatly increased profile of the laity has generally served to emphasise particular ministerial pastoral models rather than to introduce radically new ones. Thus the models of Pastoral Director and of Manager (and even of Politician) have become more marked in local church polity, suitably euphemised in such expressions as 'enabler' and 'helping the helpers'. At best these models result in a liberating approach to the life of the local church;[2] at worst they risk becoming manipulative ploys to ensure the equilibrium of leaders and community thus reducing the eschatalogical agenda to secondary status. The point is that each model of ministerial leadership reflects a series of understandings both of the nature of the Church as the people of God and of the roles of those who are not perceived as leaders.

Further, the more persistent models, by virtue of being lived and owned by the (local) Christian community, develop their own mythological character both in the technical theological and in the popular sense; and this may have a profound effect not only on how the ministerial task is understood and practised by individual leaders, but also on how the Christian community conceives of itself in relation to the wider world.

This contemporary potency of myth in the formation of the self understanding of Christian ministers and communities has been recently explored in the important discussion of the pastoral significance of narra- tive theology by James Hopewell.[3] One of his key contributions is to show the importance of making connections between contemporary narrative and primal myth so that the former can be set free as an instrument of liberation in the present.

'Myth' can be a problematic expression because of the variety of its usages. Here it means a literary form whose energising force and potency derives from the presence within it of primal images and symbols; and from symbols which have become central to the understanding of (Christian)

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1 Anthony Russell, *The Clerical Profession,* SPCK, London 1984.
2 See e.g. John Finney, *Understanding Leadership,* Daybreak, London 1989, chs. 3-7.
3 James F. Hopewell, *Congregation – Structures and Stories,* SCM, London 1988, parts 2 and 3.

faith and practice because of their origins in the Bible or the traditions of ministry. The point of its inclusion here is that the 'myths' inherent in the traditions and practice of Christian ministry are often unrecognised. This means that pastoral ministry frequently takes place in the context of a 'story' whose powers cannot be acknowledged because the story is not being told.

An obvious historical example of the pastoral model becoming a fixed and powerful 'myth', which has been well critiqued by Campbell,[1] is the way in which certain (mis)understandings of the Shepherd paradigm has engendered inappropriate authoritarianism in the pastor and passivity in the 'flock'. The interplay between theological and popular understandings of myth is also a powerful component of the current debate in the Church of England concerning the ordination of women as priests. Comparatively few of the protagonists on either side could justifiably claim incontrovertible historical 'evidence' for their case, but there has been little reticence in making claims about divine intention, early tradition, the universal Church, notions of justice and so on. There is an important epistemological task to be done regarding models and myths if a mere clash of imperialisms is to be avoided in relation to this and other issues of how we should interpret contemporary ministry. Because of such dangers it is essential that the fundamentally contextual nature of the models we adopt be recognised; otherwise the rejection of the eschatalogical dimension of the Church will ensure a comfortable slide into an accommodation with the idolatry which grows up around this or that 'system'.

The picture is further complicated, as Stephen Pattison has pointed out, by the fundamental nature of God and of Christian ministry: 'The Christian God is paradoxical in character. He is thought of as being loving, accepting and compassionate, full of mercy and loving kindness to all. But he is also perceived as being just and moral, a judge who demands righteousness and obedience to his commands.'[2] Put briefly, we need to be aware that the contextual nature of models is not just socio-historical but also theological.

Given the complexity of this background it would be understandable if engagement with models of pastoral care was regarded as something to be avoided in the interests of sanity rather than embraced in the interests of eschatological freedom! However pastoral care has never been able to avoid such creative tensions and pastoral praxis can only benefit from clear and deliberate thought about its theological and human motivations and actions. It sounds almost pietist to assert that Christian pastoral care is a continuation of the ministry of Jesus which longs, seeks, and works for the coming of the Kingdom, but such a basic assertion has to be kept before us if a retreat into uncritical formulations is to be avoided. As a continuation of the ministry of Jesus, such pastoral care must include activities focussed

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1   A. V. Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, DLT, London 1986, pp 26ff.
2   Stephen Pattison, *A Critique of Pastoral Care*, SCM, London 1988, p 33.

on identification, proclamation, the search for righteousness, forgiveness, signs of the Kingdom, service, consolation, confrontation, grief, death, resurrection, the life of eternity in the present . . . . In a word, it is essentially cross-shaped and cross-formed. *⨍*

The possible range of models available for reflection upon the nature of Christian pastoral care is limited only by the imagination. It can be a creative exercise, for example, to select a particular model of human service or leadership almost at random as an aid to exploration of the activities of a local church ministry group. More serious theological reflection however will be more likely to identify pastoral praxis with models derived from biblical, historical, or theological tradition or from a more general trend in the contemporary experience of Christian living. We will briefly consider five such models before considering the question of the distinctive nature of Christian pastoral care.

Five Models of Pastoral Care

1 Moral Theology Model

The Catholic tradition of pastoral care has tended until recent years to be understood primarily in terms of the administration of the sacraments with particular attention to the sacrament of reconciliation of penitents. It has therefore had a direct and intimate connection wth moral theology. This places particular demands upon the priest since, in order to administer the sacrament with faithfulness to the righteous claims of the tradition and sensitivity towards the penitent, he had to be an ethicist and an expert in the moral law. 'He had to have a moral perspective out of which to determine the severity of moral sins, calculate penances and grant forgiveness.'[1] This model of pastoral care is closely linked to an understanding of the person's place within the context of divine and natural law as a person created to live God's way, by God's grace, in God's world. The aim is to enable people more genuinely to become what they are created to be in God's kingdom, and to this end the moral law is perceived and interpreted as a gift and a means of grace. This lively, practical and optimistic interpretation of the notion of law shows a certain similarity of approach between Catholicism and Judaism:

'It is not unreasonable to suggest that this role of the priest is more similar historically to one aspect of the office of the rabbi in traditional Judaism than it is to the role of the protestant minister. Both the priest and the rabbi function as teachers of morality. They are the instructors of their congregations in the requirements of morality and indeed of moral law . . . . To be a wise judge [the rabbi] must know the law, just as the priest must know the moral and canon law to be a sound and wise confessor. To make judgments both the priest and the rabbi exercise their capacities to reason – granted in

1   Don S. Browning, *Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care,* Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1983, p.42.

quite different ways . . . . Rabbinic rationality and logic are parallel in function to the rationality of canon lawyers and moral theologians. Law, on the whole, has not had a similar centrality in Protestant History.[1]

This model of pastoral care has been heavily criticised because of its tendency towards ossification, crude physicality and hard-headedness at the expense of tender-heartedness. At least some of this criticism has depended on Protestant interpretations of law as necessarily implying legalism, and even perhaps on a crude and uncritical anti-semitism in popular preaching and biblical interpretation'.[2] However, as indicated above, at its best this can be a most grace-full model of pastoral care because of the profound and potentially dynamic theology of nature and grace that underlies it. Where this basic orientation in pastoral care has been positively influenced by such movements in spirituality as mature Christian mysticism (cp. St John of the Cross) or the mature charismatic renewal, a most lively and compelling pastoral care may result.

There are, however, certain difficulties of principle and practice. For example the moral theology model is inherently dependent on presuppositions about the nature of pastoral authority and within these about the nature and responsibilities of Christian adulthood. The pastoral relationship between priest and penitent it presupposes seems to fit more easily with a time when authority structures were more vertical and well defined than with the current more democratic and horizontal climate. A penitent may welcome most warmly the suggestions and godly counsel of a wise and loving priest but is less likely to want to be *told* what to do in private life. This caricature is not necessarily always a feature of such pastoral relationships, of course, but there has built up such a popular mythology about this model that the entire issue of confession and penitence has become a matter for vigorous contemporary debate and private agonising among many catholics today. The powers at work within the myth need to be acknowledged and interpreted if a creative way forward is to be found. This is bound to be an extremely costly process since an acceptance of adult roles on both sides of this relationship (whether at personal or institutional level) cannot simply be imposed upon a moral theology model without the model itself being subjected to serious scrutiny. At the most basic level however, attention to the dynamics of the pastoral relationship and the spiritual powers at work within it is likely to be generously repaid. There are encouraging signs of progress in this direction such as the considerable developments that have taken place in the Roman Catholic church following Vatican 2 as the sacrament of confession and penance has begun to give

1 James M. Gustafsen, *Protestant and Roman Catholic Ethics*, SCM, London 1978, pp 2-3.
2 For a creative discussion of law, legalism and grace see John E. Goldingay, *Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, IVP, London 1981, ch. 2, and Bernard S. Jackson, 'Legalism', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, XXX No. 1, Spring 1979, pp 1-22.

way to a much more adult approach to the reconciliation of penitents; and as holy unction has more overtly included the anointing of the sick with prayer for healing, with the more active participation of the patient.

2 Ministry of the Word Model

Generally protestants have shown comparatively little interest in the sacrament of penance. Justification by grace through faith alone has been the , central theological theme:

'[they have been] sceptical both of the category of law and of any rational attempt to discern it and to measure people by it . . . . On the whole . . . Protestants have emphasised sin in general rather than particular sins, and practised general corporate confession within the context of worship rather than specific individual confession in either public or private forms. In the the main there has always been in Protestantism an ambivalent relationship between pastoral care and serious theological ethics.'[1]

Browning characterises the protestant approach until well into the twentieth century as 'deontological – an ethic of divine command as revealed in scripture.' This model of pastoral care requires that the pastor's primary role toward the community of faith is that of preacher, teacher, instructor and interpreter of the Word of God. The corporate complement to this is that the pastor is to be the arbiter of discipline and order within the local congregation (and towards the community among which the congregation aspires to wield power of various kinds). It is an ethical/theological scheme which is found readily to appeal to the individual Christian's need for clarity and order in the inner life. It has the drawback, however, of failing to cope well with secularising pressures which promote an unspoken theological pluralism in the life and practice of Christian people from such a spiritual background.

At its best this model may promote a sense of clarity of vision and thought which enables Christians to locate themselves in the tensions of the world and therein to develop lives of wholesome and practical holiness. At · ' worst it can promote notions of doctrinal purity which accord ill with the actual experience of Christians, whilst providing no discernible or usable route by which they may engage with the tensions they experience. For some, the gulf that may develop between the projected life of ideal holiness and the earthy life which is actually experienced may become unbridgeable, even in imagination. The result may be that a splitting occurs within the individual between the public (and religious aspects of living) and an inner tormented reality, or between the individual and the Christian community, or even within a divided mind where the realities of the issues encountered are not even recognised. ·

Although this is to some extent caricature, it is also perilously close to the experience or many ordinary believers. Structurally it is not very dissimilar from the moral theology model in terms of its assumptive world of authority structures and attitudes to adulthood. There is some evidence that

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1   Browning, op. cit., pp 42-43.

this model is being born again in parts of the contemporary house church movement. As one person put it, 'some Christians need to learn that the New Testament way (!) is to demonstrate and evoke the gospel rather than to explain it.'

Clearly neither of these models is likely to exist alone without reference to some other aspects of normal pastoral ministry. Nevertheless they do represent key types whose influence colours the entire approach to pastoral ministry of their practitioners.

3 Casework Model

One of the most important recent developments in pastoral care has been the casework model. This has arisen from two main sources. The first is the 'professionalisation' of the clergy as documented by Anthony Russell. Russell uses a number of professional role models to demonstrate his thesis that Anglican clergy are ministers in search of role and identity in relation to the communities they serve. Professional structures have provided a set of viable typologies for this purpose, including those of Law and Order, Teacher, Politician, Doctor, etc. Russell's account of the distinguishing features of entry into professional roles is highly evocative of imagery of the clergy in general and the casework model in particular:

> 'That knowledge is the basis of authority and legitimation of a profession is clearly demonstrated by the process of initiation. A professional body may be regarded as a separate sub-culture into which a postulant enters only after selection, training, examination and certification, culminating in a ritual which has something of the significance of a *rite de passage*. This period of initiation is characterised by instruction in a body of knowledge which has been organised into a coherent system . . . . This preoccupation with systematic theory is one of the distinguishing marks of profession . . . .'[1]

Although this alliance between clerical self-perceptions and the practice of other professionals has emerged slowly it has contributed greatly to pastoral practice not least in the way the self-image of ministers has been formed. It has also affected attitudes towards lay members of the church, and approaches to pastoral care. No doubt this has in part been an overdue reaction to the caricature of the bungling amateur as well as partly to the need to work on terms of parity with other professionals within the community. But it is also likely that a sense of insecurity in relation to clerical identity in the face of the increasing secularisation of society has played an important part, with an attendant (rarely spoken of) crisis of confidence in relation to status – another example of an interplay of mythologies at work?

The still increasing influence of the medical casework model of pastoral care is well documented. The roots of this are various but the most important single factor (apart from the rise of psychoanalysis) has been the Clinical Pastoral Education movement which began in the USA in the 1920s. Since that time the movement has developed in a number of different directions, but the common themes tend to be an emphasis on casework,

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1   Anthony Russell, *The Clerical Profession*, SPCK, London 1984, p 11.

analysis of pastoral situations using language and ideas borrowed from therapeutic contexts, and the corresponding evolution of the minister's role to varying degrees as that of pastoral therapist. This development, together with the issues of professionalism already mentioned, has contributed widely to the self-understanding of many ministers.

The single most dominant development of the casework model has arisen in the area of counselling as the principle activity of pastoral carers. The vast range of available counselling theories and approaches has been well described by (among others) Hurding[1]; but there are other expressions as well, such as a casework approach to pastoral systems analysis and the development of many sorts of healing ministries. Many of the latter express themselves in the provision of healing services where the 'clients' are invited to receive ministry for a wide variety of problems in the quest for personal wholeness. This medical casework model has clear attractions as well as raising important questions. The attractions include the seeming resolution of the role identity problems of pastors, the obvious bringing of relief to troubled persons, the accessibility of the resources and methods (the body of knowledge), the non-judgmental nature of the approach (in counselling) and the bringing together of pastor and 'client' in an adult relationship of apparent parity.

However there are several important questions to be asked of such an approach at both practical and theoretical levels. Questions need to be asked about the inherent individualism of much pastoral casework, as well as about the transferability of whole conceptual frameworks (such as those of secular psychotherapies) into the pastoral situation without subjecting them to critical analysis. Such analysis would need to raise issues not only of the kind of models of humanity inherent in the therapeutic system, but also questions of the nature of the 'salvation' being sought, the powers to be enlisted to bring that about and the eschatalogical framework within which the helping relationship is enacted. For example it is pertinent to ask whether suffering has replaced sin on one hand and therapy forgiveness on the other as key components of the human condition within the assumptive world of this kind of model; and whether concepts of justice and righteousness have been significantly affected by the concentration of pastoral attention so closely on the (inner) life of the individual. This is not to seek a retrogressive approach to suffering but to indicate that key theological issues must be raised so that the powers at work in the myth can be explored, understood, interpreted and where appropriate owned.

A significant critique of casework models has been offered in the context of a reflection on the church's healing ministry by Stephen Pattison.[2]

4. Socio-Political Model

Here the emphasis is on 'ministry to the structures', involvement in the local, national and international community, often on the basis that the

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1 Roger Hurding, *Roots and Shoots,* Hodder and Stoughton, London 1985.
2 Stephen Pattison, *Alive and Kicking,* SCM, London 1989, ch. 3.

Kingdom of God is not so much to be proclaimed as to be discovered, made visible and interpreted. Inspiration is drawn from the life and witness and from the writings of liberation theologians working in some of the most deprived communities in the world, and from the Scriptures reinterpreted under the spotlight of the hermeneutic of suspicion. Often, in fact, the living out of this model may arise from a deliberate pragmatism in response to urgent personal and social needs that cannot be ignored. The problems of gross deprivation which present themselves have to be solved and the theological outworking will naturally follow later. The proclamation of the Kingdom takes the form of vigorous seeking for social justice and the demonstration in word and deed of God's preference for the poor. This model has the clear advantage that something significant is perceived to be effected by the presence of Christians, and much good is in fact done.

At best, this approach is a prophetic demonstration of the gospel as 'the breaking in of God's future into the present'.[1] The eschatological dimension is well integrated into its action. However the danger is that the action/reflection circle is either not deliberately engaged or is left to run on 'automatic pilot'. The opposite danger to that of the casework model may become apparent as individuals (especially powerful or rich ones) are categorised into groups and their motivations and needs seen on the basis of projected fantasy rather than on that of firm evidence, interpersonal exploration and shared reflection. The result may be that the nature of justice is only partially understood and that the eschatalogical dimension is privatised in the interests of one group at the expense of another. (This could of course, be right but it should not be uncritically assumed). There is a crying need at the moment in the UK for a thoroughgoing theological critique of suburbia as well as of the inner cities.

This characterisation is not meant to be a dismissal of the socio-political model – far from it. But as with the other models the powers of the emerging myths (in both theological and popular senses) need to be recognised, explored, interpreted and addressed.

5. Metanoic Model

Included in this category are the renewal of interest in spiritual direction, retreats, and so on among Evangelicals as well as Catholics, the emergence of new interest in the theology and practice of blessing and the work of those who are concerned with connections between worship, liturgy and the work of pastoral care.[2] At first sight, the title itself may suggest some kind of right wing backlash against some of the trends of previous models but this is far from the case. The notion of metanoia – repentance – is viewed by many pastoral carers with a certain amount of reserve, as projections of an inherent judgmentalism and pietism are attributed to it.

1 Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*, SCM, London 1961, pp 124ff.
2 See eg, Robin Green, *Only Connect*, DLT, London 1987 and Michael Perham, *Liturgy Pastoral and Parochial*, SPCK, London 1984.

Certainly popular imagery of ministries calling for 'repentance' might seem to justify such reserve, since simplistic approaches have seemed to promote the disintegrative nature of the acts and attitudes involved in particular cases. (Turn your back on your old life forever, etc). However, even a cursory reading of the New Testament references to repentance suggests that we have here a fundamentally integrative concept and experience in which the renewal of both individual and community are involved to their roots. 'Conversion as Jesus understands it is not just negative. It is more than a break with the old nature in the face of the threat of eschatalogical judgment. It embraces the whole walk of the man who is claimed by the divine lordship. It carries with it the founding of a new personal relation of man to God, ie, of pistis, "to convert", "to be converted", embraces all that the dawn of God's kingdom demands of man.'[1]

The metanoic 'model' thus differs from the other models in not having a well defined ministerial role set in relation to it. Rather it is more suggestive of a flavour or principle which needs to permeate the activities we designate as pastoral care. Its importance is that it treats as central the need to locate the foundations of Christian pastoral care in the person and call of Jesus Christ and in the struggles of the early church to be authentically the gospel community. It takes seriously the need to deal with the experience and reality of sinfulness across the wide range of its expressions and in its half-articulations in the life of the believer, without thereby taking into the pastoral role the dangers of judgmentalism and manipulation. There is an urgent need to take seriously the human experience of guilt and appropriate Christian responses to it.

However this upsurge of interest in 'spirituality' should not be accepted uncritically as self evidently 'of the Lord' any more than should the other models we have discussed. The metanoic has as much tendency towards individualism and distortions of notions of justice and righteousness as the casework model. In this respect, an important critique of some modern trends in spirituality has been given by Kenneth Leech[2] who emphasises the need to recover a genuinely social and eschatological dimension in contemporary spirituality as a foundation for relevant world-aware pastoral care. Moreover in the area of personal and corporate worship the importance of ritual which cares for the individual and for the the world is being recognised and explored.[3] Again the need is for the powers at work in the emerging myth to be recognised, explored and owned.

This process of theological reflection which I have termed 'exploring the myths which are inherent in the models' calls for a deliberate process which is in my view best carried out by groups of lay people and ministers together reflecting on stories which embody characteristics of whatever

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1   Kittel (ed), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1967, p 1003.

2   Kenneth Leech, *Spirituality and Pastoral Care*, Sheldon, London 1986, chs. 2-3.

3   Elaine Ramshaw, *Ritual and Pastoral Care*, Fortess Press, Philadelphia 1987, ch. 3.

model is being explored. This is almost impossible to do alone and very difficult indeed to do on the basis of a simple questionnaire or audit approach. The powers of the myth are contained and experienced through the lived story of the local congregation in its local and world awareness. It is this story which needs to be identified as belonging to the local church and its ministers. A useful approach to this exercise, which combines questionnaire and other ways of identifying the narrative and its meaning is to be found in Hopewell.[1]

The Christian Character of Pastoral Care

The question is often asked as to how we may know that the pastoral care exercised by Christians is actually 'Christian'. Sometimes this may reflect an unhealthy desire for 'knowledge' such as that seen in Genesis 3, or a quest for doctrinal purity in the interests of securing church allegiance to a particular community project. Certainly those who seek to follow a God who chooses incarnation as a means of being known must be reticent about making wider distinctions between 'God's Way' and 'Man's Way' than God does. However the question has to be taken seriously at the level of theological principle if the models and myths of Christian pastoral care are to be explored at all. The American Franciscan, Regius M. Duffy raises this issue in connection with professional models of pastoral care.[2] Duffy suggests that we can trace from the life of a local Christian community the doctrine that it actually holds in relation to (for example) salvation, church, sin, mission and ministry – in other words the lived proclamation. He suggests that three key questions should be put to situations where Christian pastoral care is exercised as a means of reflecting upon their authenticity. Some brief quotations will suggest the flavour of what he is expressing:

The first temptation . . . is to confuse psychological congruence with ongoing religious conversion . . . . Pastoral care must deal with God's goals as they challenge our own. It must attend to conversion.

A second temptation . . . . is to describe in static terms the commitments that conversion involves at each stage of our lives. . . . Any adequate definition of pastoral care must allow for the dynamic character of conversion. It must attend to commitment.

A third temptation . . . is to mute transcendence . . . . Besides limiting God to the parameters of human definition, we may forget that God's presence – the source of all pastoral care – is discovered precisely in our human experience. Pastoral care in its fullest sense must attend to transcendence.

Clearly Duffy's three questions have their limitations, but for our purposes they illustrate the kinds of issues that may need to be raised as we embark on the vitally important task of exploring the powers at work in

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1 Hopewell, op. cit., ch. 4 and pp 203ff.
2 Regius M. Duffy, *A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1983,pp 15f.

the models and myths of pastoral care as it is experienced in local ministry situations. In the interests of pastoral integrity the characterisation of Christian pastoral care needs to the understood much more comprehensively than is indicated in the opening paragraph of this article, but with such attention to particular context as will make the exploration possible. The question remains as to how this process might be encouraged. The answer to this must surely lie in a deliberate commitment to identifying and telling the stories of particular ministries being exercised in particular contexts. Theological reflection of this kind could be included in the programmes of local church life where clergy and lay people participate together or separately. In my view it is essential that this activity of identifying the models by telling our stories is taken seriously by the contemporary churches. Failure to do so will ensure a further lapse into unreflective pragmatism.

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